

# A DIAMOND IS...



By Erin J. Wolford, Editor-in-Chief

**F**or Diamond Flexibles, creating a pouch is more than just converting. It's a learned skill.

*Flexible Packaging*

interviewed Scott Hansen, director of sales and marketing for Diamond Flexibles, to learn about how the company came about its bag-/pouch-making capabilities.

**FP:** What makes your company unique in its offerings?

**Hansen:** "Diamond Flexible Packaging is a toll converter of printed

and laminated films from a variety of customers. While some of our capabilities are the same as other converters, we do have capabilities that are unique to us. Diamond has been in business for over 85 years having gotten its start manufacturing and supplying cellophane bags, then BOPP and polyethylene bags to the Midwest regional market.

"In 2004, we decided that pre-made pouching was a market that we needed to enter as it is the future of flexible packaging. We purchased a stand-up pouch converting machine, along with a Pactiv Slide Rite slider attachment to be the first converter in the market to successfully add Pactiv's hooded slider technology to premade stand-up pouches. Talk about putting the cart before the horse! Not only did we have learn how to make stand-up pouches, we had to learn the slider application as well.

"Over the following couple of years, we ended up becoming experts at converting slider pouches and added a

significant amount of capacity. During that time, we acquired two additional pouch machines and two additional Pactiv slider attachments. These included both exposed slider technology that utilizes clips for better slider end retention and an additional hooded slider attachment. We were working with two companies that had customers who were growing their presence at club stores and wanted slider pouches for those product lines.

"Based on this information, we acquired that additional slider attachment so that we would be able to meet our customers' demand and this was intended to run on our new Mamata Vega 610. As a result of having three Pactiv slider attachments, we have become very adept at running slider pouches of various configurations. As a result of our experience, we have manufactured numerous slider pouch configurations – hooded for both top and bottom fill, exposed utilizing the ergonomic slider, exposed with clips, extra wide exposed slider pouches (i.e. 30+ inch-width), and pouches with handles."

he Pactiv hooded slider being converted on a KHS Bartelt pouch converter.



**FP:** Within the last 12-18 months, what packaging innovations or upgrades are you most proud of and why?

**Hansen:** "We recently added a new pouch converting machine that we are especially pleased with regarding its capabilities. This is the Mamata Vega 820. Why are we so excited about the capabilities of this particular machine? It will convert recloseable side gusset quad seal pouches with registered side gussets. This allows us to enter the pet food market as the flexible packaging configuration for these companies is of the side gusset quad seal format. With pet food companies using the side gussets as a company advertising billboard, it is very important to them that the gussets be registered so they can consistently display

their message to the consumer. The most appealing aspect about our format of side gusset quad seal pouches is that the gussets are terminated below the zipper, which allows the consumer to open the package through only two webs, just like a regular stand-up pouch. This makes for a much more consumer-friendly package versus having recloseable feature that runs through the gusset. Those that are familiar with this style of pouch manufacturing will note that it requires two webs – one for the front and back panel and one for the side gussets. And our capabilities range from small format side gusset pouches to medium/large format to cover the 15 to 20 pound pet food packages. Our Mamata 820 is also slider ready as it has been proven out on our plant floor.

"The Mamata 820 capabilities do not stop there though. We can also convert side

gusset pouches using a single web. This pouch style does not have a reclose feature as this machine does not have the ability to insert the press to close zipper transverse to the machine direction. Since the gussets are formed and plowed in machine direction, we have the ability to run this style of pouch using a single web. That is especially important for the printer/laminator who is looking to provide a more cost effective solution versus having to run two separate print jobs for the pouch."

**FP:** What is your specialty? What is the company's bread and butter?

**Hansen:** "I would have to say that our specialty, besides slider capability, is service. We really try to accommodate our customers' requirements with quick

## The Man Behind the Machines

**FP:** What kind of converting industry problems has your company solved with your machines?

**Patel:** "Mamata Universal Machines has addressed the need for quick and easy changeovers, from side seal to bottom seal to twin seal bag styles. Converters can shift from side seal to bottom seal to twin seal within 10 minutes on the same machine. This has eliminated the need for separate side seal and bottom seal machines for a converter.

"Converting zipper poly bags at high speeds have always been a challenge for converters. Mamata's Wicketers can convert zipper poly bags at speeds up to 250 CPM, whereas Mamata Flat Bed Machines can convert zipper poly bags at speeds up to 200 CPM. This changes cost conversion equations for such bags and gives more value for the money.

"Processing bags with wide pouch style seals had always been a challenge for converters. Mamata offers its Flat Bed Machines and Wicketers with this capability to produce bags with wider pouch seals at speeds up to 200 CPM. This allows converters to address needs of leak proof bags or hermetic seal bags.

"Processing unsupported coex films to make pouches was a big challenge for converting industry. Mamata has addressed this issue very efficiently with its Pouch Machines. Mamata is one of the unique companies that offers this capability on its Pouch Machine to make 3 side seal pouches, zipper pouches, stand-up pouches from single web or multiple webs, side gusseted pouches from single web or multiple webs.

"What you can expect to see from us within the next year is a Flat Bottom Pouch Capability on Mamata Pouch machines."



**Dharmisth Patel**

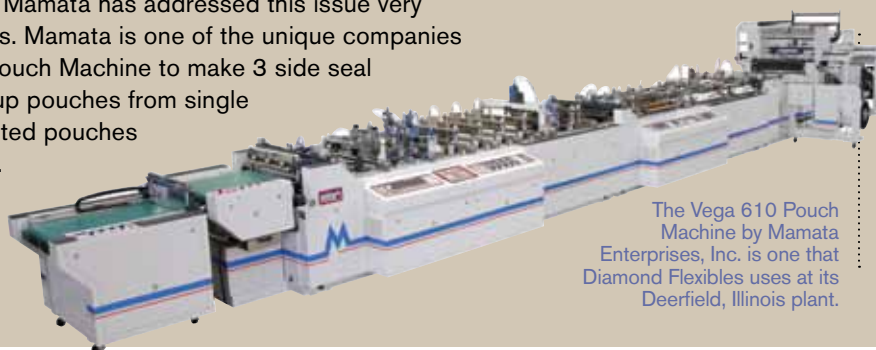
President

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7 years with the company

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The Vega 610 Pouch Machine by Mamata Enterprises, Inc. is one that Diamond Flexibles uses at its Deerfield, Illinois plant.



The Mamata Vega 610 (foreground) converts press to close pouches at competitive speeds.

turns and short lead time. I believe that the industry standard is to not even schedule an order to the production floor until the roll stock has arrived. Well, for a company that is trying to differentiate itself from some very worthy competitors, we need to do something different. Competitive price is a given and so is quality in today's market, so we have to depend on our service levels to set us apart. It is our goal to have a machine ready within a few

days (or even immediately) from when the shipment of film arrives at our dock.

"Another area that is a specialty for us is the conversion of unsupported monolayer polyethylene films into stand-up pouches. That is a special capability of the Mamata brand of pouch conversion machines in that they have numerous servo controlled tension areas that allow us to make pouches from monolayer films without stretching the structure. The Mamata also

has the ability to double cut and we have successfully run e-beam coated PE with a double cut. We have also run successful trials of monolayer structures in a single web side gusset configuration.

"Even though we are very excited about these capabilities, our bread and butter business is the basic stand-up pouch. Go look at the retailers' shelves and you can see the tremendous growth pouching that has occurred in the packaged food industry. And as older technologies are replaced by new, flexible packaging will gain a stronger foothold here in the U.S. market. Look at the growth overseas of unique ways to package your product in a pouch – shapes, liquids, spouts, stick packs, retort. We want to be well positioned to participate in the growth that this industry is experiencing as technologies and ideas hit the U.S. market."



### **FP:** What can we expect to see from your company within the next year?

**Hansen:** “We have some exciting things planned for the coming year and some I can share with you here. An issue that is very important to every employee at Diamond is being food safe

and producing a high quality product for our customers. As we focus on continuous improvement, we will be striving to improve our score with AIB certification each year. We have been audited by third parties that include our customers, as well as AIB, and have performed well in the past few years, but the goal is to improve with every

audit. We decided that the best path for success was to implement ISO 9000 policies and procedures. This pursuit will best position our manufacturing environment to ensure a consistent and quality product for our customers. Producing a high quality product is essential to our success and every employee, from machine operators to top management, is focused on producing pouches with the lowest defect rate possible. Our continuous improvement efforts through our quality assurance team target zero defects as our ultimate goal. These efforts will ensure that we become a better supplier to our customers. We are very excited to announce that we have hired a new quality control manager to lead this charge.

“As far as manufacturing capability, our plan is to add the ability to provide a folded over and glued bottom to our side gusset pouch line. I have found that numerous pet food companies like that look for their packages as it provides an additional billboard on which they can advertise to the consumer. In addition to the glued bottom, I have also had a number of requests for adding fitments such as spouts to our pouches. We have looked at this capability off and on for the past couple of years, but just have not had enough demand to justify the capital expenditure. Based on what I am seeing in the market, we will be looking very closely at adding that capability in 2012.

“And, we are always looking to acquire additional pouch capacity with another stand-up machine. We are working on a couple of fairly sizeable projects that will utilize a large portion of our open capacity, so if those come to fruition, then additional capacity will need to be acquired. As for the other projects we are working on for the coming year, you will just have to wait and see. 2012 should be a fun year for the Diamond team.” **FP**



### **Roland VersaUV from Anderson & Vreeland**

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