

AMG[®] automates adhesive cartridge filling for expanding business

CASE STUDY

After expanding through acquisition, an adhesive manufacturer needed a partner to help optimize their new capabilities. We used our adhesives packaging expertise to streamline a previously manual process and help them meet demand, reduce costs and unlock new business opportunities.

In 2016, a leading manufacturer of industrial coatings and tapes for high-reliability applications acquired an advanced adhesives and sealants manufacturer that specializes in applications like PCB assembly and enclosures, medical devices, connector sealing, EMI shielding, structural bonding and thermal management.

While formulating and blending adhesives was a core competency for the new acquisition, filling the cartridges that are used by end customers to apply those adhesives was not. Because they previously focused only on selling industrial-sized totes and 55-gallon drums, the team struggled to fill the much smaller cartridges efficiently. The process was being done manually, with employees pouring adhesives into the cartridges by hand. As their business grew, this inefficiency created a significant problem because the process was too slow and soon they could not keep up with demand.

FINDING A STREAMLINED SOLUTION

The client recognized the need for outside help and reached out to Hisco's [Adhesive Materials Group[®] \(AMG\)](#) because of our expertise in customized adhesives packaging solutions. They wanted a partner who could manage the cartridge filling process while also meeting specific requirements for cleanliness and contamination control. Their acquired company was manufacturing epoxy and urethane products, but needed to ensure that silicone would not enter the formulations because it can be detrimental to some manufacturing applications. So the company requested that AMG package their adhesives using silicone-free equipment in a silicone-free environment.

AMG accommodated the request by purchasing new equipment and operating out of a different facility than our main production area. The location had not been used for packaging activities previously and was quickly adapted to satisfy their quality control needs because no silicone products were being manufactured or processed on-site. Ultimately, AMG created a white room that was customized based on the company's designs, adding UV-protective films to lighting and windows, and adding filtration to the HVAC system, among other improvements. Through these efforts, we were able to meet the needs of their quality team.



“A lot of people’s time and effort went into getting it set up the way the client needed,” said Chris Irwin, sales manager for AMG. “It may not be a classified cleanroom environment, but there’s a lot of attention around keeping that room really, really clean.”

With the new facility in place, production ramped up and the team is filling cartridges at least 5x faster than the customer had before.

The maker of protective materials is now able to meet customer demands, fill orders in a timely manner and they are able to attack business opportunities they couldn’t previously.

The AMG team has implemented other measures to optimize and reduce costs for this process as well. For example, the client had been spending a significant amount of time and manual labor printing labels for their packaging in-house and applying them by hand. AMG took over the printing process, consolidated labels and shifted to a roll format to increase application speed and reduce costs.

“They used to have to manage inventory on cartridges, manage labels, send us labels, and we’ve streamlined all of that,” Irwin said. “So, we’ve been able to create some efficiencies that help reduce costs for these guys.”

A PARTNERSHIP BUILT ON TRUST

Filling cartridges is the latest collaboration between our client and AMG. Trust was firmly established a year and a half ago when they found themselves in a serious jam. It was a Friday night when a line went down in their production facility. They needed to fill orders for an important automotive customer but no longer had the ability to get everything packaged and delivered in time. So, they reached out to AMG who moved quickly to find a solution. The team went above and beyond, working late into the early morning hours to create a plan and coordinate services so they could get the order out on time. Ultimately, the company

sent the materials on the following Monday, and we repackaged and shipped the order out the same day the material arrived.

“I think it really demonstrated our level of service and our commitment to customers,” Irwin said.

WORKING TOWARD THE FUTURE

AMG now packages around 45 different sku’s of unique materials for the company, helping expand their business and keep customers happy. In the future, leaders from the two companies said they are looking for more ways to collaborate, including the potential for a project involving another Hisco company, [Precision Converting, a 3M Preferred Converter](#). But with a foundation of mutual trust and respect, AMG and our client are positioned to help each other succeed for a long time to come.

“The initial impact is that we eliminated or at least significantly reduced a lot of stress they had on filling orders,” Irwin said. “Now, they’re just letting us handle that and they’re focusing on what they do well, and the business with these products is increasing because of it.”

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