

Perfect Packages

Ellis Packaging embraces the latest printing technologies to showcase products of every kind



INNOVATION

Brad Weale can point to a wide array of awards when describing the success of Ellis Packaging's innovative products. Each certificate and plaque on the wall demonstrates the quality of the company's lithographic and flexographic printing processes, and shows why the Pickering business continues to serve some of the leading names in Consumer Packaged Goods.

Then Weale, the vice-president of sales, reveals a stack of other awards hidden in a boardroom cabinet. There simply isn't enough space to display them all.

It would be difficult to walk through a retail aisle without finding an example of the company's products. Ellis Packaging's work showcases goods as diverse as Peller Estates ice wine, a Ferrero Kinder Surprise, packaged foods, or boxes of medication such as Benylin and Tylenol.

"We pride ourselves on being very diverse," Weale says. "We go where our customers take us."

The Ellis Group actually consists of three facilities. Ellis Paperbox is

in Mississauga, and Ellis Paper West is in Guelph. But the original Pickering head office is the one known as the "mother ship", and this is where many of the ideas have been born.

Evolving printing technologies have allowed the company to create new generations of packaging options which leap from store shelves. Weale, for example, pulls out a box of Prilosec medication. The intricate printing on this package includes a shimmering "holocoat" to catch a consumer's eye. A box holding a bottle of Peller Ice Wine, meanwhile, actually demonstrates four different processes addressed by one pass through the flexographic printing press, including the embossing, metallic ink, printing inside the carton and UV coating.

"There's nothing we can't produce," he says.





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Of course, the industry's latest trends have hardly been limited to appearance. Companies searching for ways to reduce costs have slashed their traditional inventories, meaning that these high-end graphics need to be generated in shorter print runs and meet tighter deadlines than ever before. Orders that were once filled in eight weeks now need to be completed in as little as five days.

Growing commitments to sustainability have also had a dramatic impact on the products which are used, and that led Ellis Packaging to become one of the first industry suppliers to embrace environmentally friendly Forestry Stewardship Council paper. "We realized this wasn't another trend," he says. "We knew this was going to stick."

The finesse used in packaging can even help to support modern security efforts. A close inspection of the box holding a brand new Blackberry, for example, will reveal the hidden corporate name that identifies an authentic product. And rather than installing Sensormatic security tags by hand,

Ellis Packaging also helped a customer automate the entire process, reducing the price of every package along the way.

As important as all of this technology is, however, Weale suggests that the skilled workforce makes the real difference, and the company's locale plays an important factor in protecting this valuable asset. Many employees have been with the company for three decades or more, he says, and Pickering is their home.

"It's all about family here," he adds.



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