

CASE STUDY

Educational resources specialist Cengage relies on AirPouch® FastWrap™ and its EarthAware® block-and-brace tubes to ensure books arrive in perfect condition.

Background

Cengage is one of the world's leading suppliers of specialist educational resources to universities and learning institutions globally. It serves major markets throughout Europe and the Middle East from its headquarters in the UK.

Cengage operates two AirPouch FastWrap systems, one on each of its packing lines, feeding EarthAware tubes into a central hopper for easy drawdown. The tubes are used to block and brace heavy books, singly or in multi-book orders, inside cardboard boxes.

The Challenge

Cengage Shipping Manager Rob Lawrence explains: "We're shipping high value, heavy books that represent a major, life-long investment for students and institutions – they need to arrive in perfect condition. That means no bent corners and no damaged or stained sleeves. Historically, we used a paper packing system, but it wasn't up to the job. Once the boxes had been handled a couple of times, the paper compressed and the goods inside the box began to move about. We were getting too many returns and reports of damaged goods."

The Solution

"My colleague Barry Jenkinson saw the FastWrap system at an exhibition. We were attracted to the option of the recycled EarthAware material Automated Packaging Systems offered. There was initially some reluctance to switch from paper, an option that was perceived to have good green credentials, to plastic. However, since EarthAware is recyclable and biodegradable it addressed those concerns, and we're no longer paying for extra PRNs when we fill out our annual waste packaging reports.

"In fact, we knew our customers didn't like paper. They find that it dries out the skin and is unpleasant to work with. The green EarthAware tubes have gone over very well."

Company Name

Cengage Learning

Equipment Used

AirPouch® FastWrap™

Materials Used

EarthAware® block-and-brace tubes



The Results

"Compared with our old paper system, the FastWrap is saving us 46% on the cost of packaging materials. Plus, we also have saved between 5-10% on our international shipments as the airbags are lighter. In addition, we're packing the boxes up to 30% faster. The old system fed paper through a foot pedal feed, which took a long time to pack each box. In contrast, FastWrap tubes are always at hand, and the EZ-Tear™ perforations mean you can quickly pull off just the right number of tubes or pillows for the job. The operators tap a foot pedal when they notice the hopper stocks are low, and the system runs for 3 minutes to reload; they are never actually waiting for a supply of tubes."

"We've also saved on storage space. Historically, a pallet of paper would last less than two weeks, whereas a pallet of tubes in boxes lasts us approximately three months."

"The tubes are definitely more secure too. We tested several systems, and all except FastWrap had issues with burst bubbles. The sharp corners of the books were deflating the bubbles and pillows. There's something about the FastWrap tubes – a combination of material quality, larger surface area and fill pressure – that means they flex around even the sharpest corners. The result is that we're seeing lower returns levels and more goods arriving in perfect condition meaning higher customer satisfaction."

The Future

"The systems have been extremely reliable. In fact, we haven't had another system that's been easier to install or use, or that's given us less hassle," Lawrence added.

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