

# Board Converting News™

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## PCG Hits The Mark With Kiwi's DART

*by Len Prazych*

**F**or President Container Group (PCG), operating an extremely large box plant is no small undertaking. With sales, design and customer service based in its Moonachie, New Jersey, headquarters and all manufacturing relegated to its massive 522,000-square-foot production facility 60 miles north in Middletown, New York, there needs to be constant communication between both operations to ensure the company's primary goal of taking care of the customer is achieved on a daily, if not hourly basis.

Since opening the doors of its new plant in Middletown in October 2010, President has added one machine after another, beginning with its Fosber 110-inch double-down corrugator, and added one employee after another so that a little more than three years later, the family-run independent, one of the largest operating under one roof in the country, has 23 fully operational machine centers and approximately 250 employees on three shifts to manage and operate them.

As it has grown, President Container continues to be driven by a Kiwiplan solution, including its Corrugator

Scheduling, Production Scheduling and Unit Load Tracking modules, fully integrated with Amtech's Imaginera ERP software so that all the company's systems - from design, sales and customer service to production, tracking and shipping - “talk” to one

another. More recently, however, President has added Kiwiplan's Data Analysis and Reporting Tool (DART) with the goal of becoming as efficient as possible.

“It gave us things we didn't have,” says Rich Goldberg, President Container's Vice President of Operations. “It shows us where we are ‘long in setup’ and where we are ‘short in speed’ in regards to our efficiencies. Kiwi's DART has

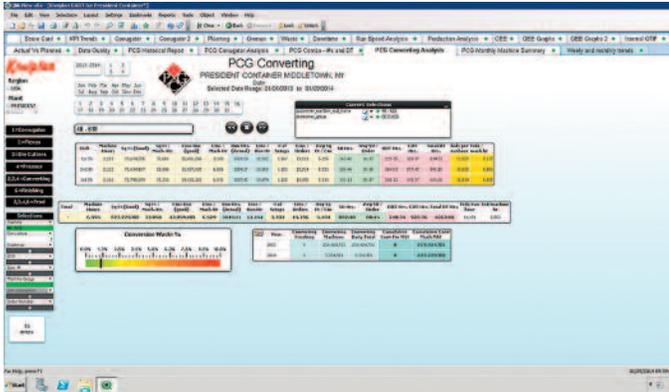
allowed us to become more efficient and more productive, which gives us more opportunities for success in time management. Remember, while we do make boxes and wish to make as many as we can of good quality and safely, we are really selling machine time, in my opinion, and must make best use of what we have.”

Efficiency is the name of the game, especially when you're an operation running a Fosber Corrugator that



**President Container's VP of Operations, Rich Goldberg, center, is flanked by Production Statistician Domenick Zingaro, left, and Superintendent Larry Gaitley. The company's use of Kiwiplan's DART has allowed it to achieve greater efficiencies.**

is guaranteed to produce two billion square-feet of board per year, or an average of about seven million square-feet per day. This is a significant jump from the five million square-feet per day the Fosber corrugator was generating in the early days of the plant's operation and before President Container had all its converting equipment installed and operating. Among its prime converting machinery are six Martin flexos – a



**The Kiwiplan dashboard permits access to data from all PCG machine centers.**

924 3-color, a 1224 3-color, two 1228 3-colors, a 1632 5-color, and a 1636 2-color – that were rebuilt to OEM specifications prior to the move to Middletown. The company has since added a 618 mini flexo and a 1628 DRO rotary diecutter, which were purchased new. All the Martins are equipped with Alliance prefeeders. A Bobst 1575 flatbed diecutter complements the Martin machinery.

Part of President's challenge was not only keeping all its machines operating at capacity, but finding the personnel to operate it. No small task given the skills required to run cutting-edge converting equipment. The responsibility was assigned to Brian Sizer, who was hired as President's Corporate Trainer but has since been named Converting Production Manager. Sizer has worked in both integrated and independent environments during his 28 years in the industry and saw the potential of Kiwi's DART as not only an efficiency tool but an education and training tool, as well.

"One of the most challenging things we've had to do is train a lot of people, some with little or no experience in a manufacturing environment," says Sizer, who estimates that he has trained 80-90 President employees. "Using DART, we can break down everything about our machines and our processes to educate all the employees on the floor."

To begin, Sizer focused on three of President's Martin flexos, the 618 mini, the 924 and a 1228. He held meetings with operating crews and talked about set up times, machine speeds and run hours because these are the most fundamental parameters by which to measure production.

Using DART, Sizer was able to establish baselines from machine histories and categorize machine performance by job, by shift and by crew. Then he presented weekly challenges to President's operators in an attempt to increase their speeds and production goals on all three machines on all three shifts.

"This wasn't meant to be destructive or punitive, but it was a way for our operators to understand the importance of time and the 'whys' behind our processes," says Sizer. "They needed to understand that our goal is to run the machines efficiently so we can complete a job in a shorter amount of time and move onto the next job to get more quality product out the door safely and effectively. And it is not necessarily about



**President Container's Converting Production Manager, Brian Sizer, has leveraged the power of DART as an efficiency tool and a training tool.**

how many boxes were run, but how efficiently we were at running them."

The training using data generated from DART has inspired healthy competition among shifts. Operators are now watching each other's numbers and how fast another shift is doing a similar job. It's pulling them together as a crew. They know if they achieve their standard, that their machine is running well and they're doing a good job, which increases morale. This, in turn, creates more efficient and productive operators.

From a shift leader's perspective, crews are communicating more regularly. There is an open, non-confrontational dialogue. Now that the operators have taken more ownership in their work, there is more feedback as to why a crew can or can't achieve a standard on a particular machine, i.e. the calibration is off or a machine needs maintenance. Once a problem is discovered, adjustments are made or problems are corrected quickly so that all machines are working properly and operators can stay focused on their production goals.

"Another big plus is that on a weekly basis, we've been able to monitor our growth while our operators are learning to become more efficient. And they're

doing it by working smarter, not harder,” says Sizer, who took the program he’s been working on with his operators and handed it off to President’s shift superintendents and supervisors, whose goals are to maintain what’s been emphasized and learned by the operators and have weekly meetings of their own with their own crews. Supervisors are tasked with reinforcing the lessons down on the production floor so they are not forgotten.



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— Brian Sizer

With the goal of educating its entire workforce, the training process at President Container is fluid and ongoing. There is always more to learn, ways to enhance efficiencies and areas in which to improve. And with the technological advancements of today’s newer, faster converting equipment, the importance of training is magnified. For example, President will be adding a new specialty folder gluer as well as a new diecutter, so operators will need to be trained on that equipment so its performance can be maximized.

“We’ve discovered that you can’t just tell someone to run faster and harder,” says Sizer. “They have to understand why we’re doing what we’re doing and the purpose behind it.”

The results speak for themselves. Using DART, President Container has seen increased speeds, decreased set up times, reduced down time, greater production and improved efficiency on the three Martin flexos it initially focused on. The process will be applied to another machine group until all 23 machine centers in the plant have been optimized.

Efficiencies offered by Kiwiplan’s DART extend beyond the production floor. By allowing President Container to determine which machine is most effective for a particular job, George Di Iorio, the company’s Planning Manager, can determine what job he can schedule on a specific machine on a particular shift. “Using the data, we have a better idea of what we can get accomplished in a certain period of time,” says Di

Iorio. “As we become more efficient, scheduling can improve an order to better meet customer demands and commitments. If we need to get a job to a customer in two days, we can and will schedule it accordingly because if we don’t, a competitor will.”

President Container can account for the 10,000 tons of paper it turns every month, it knows every discharge from its corrugator, and it can monitor every kick on every flexo and diecutter on its production floor. Kiwiplan’s DART has allowed the company to distill the data and generate the reports that allows the company to monitor its progress, optimize its scheduling and train its employees. The ability to drill down



**Using DART, President’s Planning Manager, George Di Iorio, can determine which machine is most effective for any given job and can improve scheduling to better meet customer demands and commitments.**

into the DART statistics to fully understand the efficiencies at the order level has tremendous potential in understanding the nuances of the shift crews and their abilities.

According to Goldberg, the training program President Container has developed using DART has proven to be effective and has been accepted by ownership and the company’s employees. There have been increased efficiencies and improvements in morale, enthusiasm and healthy competition among employees.

“DART has been a great, user-friendly tool,” says Goldberg. “It has allowed us to be more efficient and ultimately, satisfies our customers’ ever changing needs.”