

Partners in Innovation with a  
Commitment to Sustainability  
**COATED FINE PAPER**



By MARTIN KOEPENICK

From the branding firms to the printers, paper merchants, and even suppliers to Appleton Coated, sustainability is not just a phrase

## THE NEW MODEL?

**A**ppleton Coated, a subsidiary of Arjo Wiggins, is based in Combined Locks, WI. Its Utopia line of premium coated papers is the brand of choice for marketing campaigns, corporate communications, brochures, and fine art books. Appleton Coated could be called an embodiment of sustainability, as well. Producing more than 400,000 tons/yr of fine paper on three machines, its marketing and sales team sells through paper merchants.

Appleton Coated, known for its Utopia family of premium coated papers, lives and breathes customer support, combined with an honest “green” commitment. Is this the road to the future for a wide range of paper producers? Who better to ask than the customers?

Says Bill Thorburn, owner of the Thorburn Group, “As a branding design firm, we must make paper choices without compromise—meaning that high performance and green go together. Utopia contributes to the creation of powerful marketing pieces

with uniqueness and personality that people often want to keep. Our customers are also assured of social responsibility.”

Adds Linda Hartinger, president and CEO of Anchor Paper, an independent paper merchant in Minneapolis, MN, “We have become true partners with our customers. We are constantly strategizing and generating new ideas, technologies and techniques to help them maximize growth and profitability. Appleton Coated is an ideal fit for us, because they fill orders quickly with consistent quality. Their product range allows us to meet customer needs from offset to rotogravure to digital and their prices are competitive.”

Notes Patti Reppucci, senior sales executive with Universal Millenium, a leading printer in New England, “Our customers don’t want any excuses for “green” papers, performing at a lower level. And green or not, we can’t afford waste from poor print runs due to inferior paper. We value the full Utopia range, including the new inkjet offering. We can now also offer the efficiency of shorter runs, and the variability that ink jet allows in terms of content — without giving up quality.”

To say there is an enthusiastic following for Utopia may not be an overstatement. Appleton Coated’s Utopia brand has been a market leader for more than 16 years, and has continued to maintain a preferred position, especially since the broadening of the brand to embrace sustainability issues. More recently, the launch of Utopia ink jet grades represents yet another plus for their position in the high end coated paper market.

### A SENSE OF URGENCY FOR CUSTOMERS

Ann Whalen, senior vice president, marketing &



According to April Van Camp, Appleton Coated process engineer, “Our ability to improve consistency and save money is facilitated by an open relationship with strategic suppliers



**Dale Kohl, Appleton Coated, technical services representative, inspecting the color bars of a test print to insure proper ink and water balance of the Komori press**



**Mark Pikturna, Appleton Coated director of operations, believes that "Versatility is designed into the way we run our paper machines"**

## Some green facts

Appleton Coated research indicates that there is, in fact, an increasing role of "green" in the US economy. More than 80% of consumers are buying green products and services; 43% of companies plan to increase spending on green marketing; 85% of employees believe corporate sustainability programs generate greater employee pride and engagement. Sixteen out of 18 companies, recognized as focusing on sustainability, outperformed their competitors.

Says Van Ert, "Strategically, many businesses are leading with a genuine concern for social or sustainable choices.

Thorburn adds, "Appleton Coated satisfies our customers and us for all the right reasons; the power of print combined with social responsibility."

customer services, for Appleton Coated, emphasizes flexibility and a sense of urgency on behalf of customers. "We are known for reliability, knowledge and availability. While most paper mills schedule in block scheduling, we make the grade when a customer places an order."

Mark Pikturna, Appleton Coated director of operations, believes that "Versatility is designed into the way we run our paper machines. Fast grade changes and high machine efficiency are mandatory. Adapting formulations, monitoring key parameters closely, and employing advanced chemistry allow for continuous improvement."

Says Sandy Van Ert, CEO of Appleton Coated, "Sustainability is our way of life, centering around customers, and everyone who touches our products, or connects to our mill and our community. Far more than political correctness, our objective is to make products that serve a purpose in society, made by self-motivated people, who care about others. Quality for a fair price demands extreme efficiency, and a commitment to minimizing waste. So, we have our work cut out for us.

"We make paper to match beliefs of customers and ourselves. The sustainability branding of Utopia is not just a gimmick to satisfy popular trends. We actually offer an environmental calculator to help customers better understand the facts about our mutual practices to make the world a better place."

Continues Whalen, "Our marketing themes, The Green Zone, and Print With a Purpose actually represent the essence of who we are. We respond quickly to customer needs, but our dedication to premium and green performance are beliefs that can inspire others."

Go to <http://www.appletoncoated.com/green-zone/> for more information.

### PUTTING FLEXIBILITY INTO PAPERMAKING

A decisive difference over the last five years has been the determination to increase flexibility for faster grade changes, reduced breaks, adjusted raw material mixes, reduced energy consumption, and the development of entirely new grades for the digital and inkjet markets.

Says Pikturna, "Our goal to raise efficiency

began with a complete reevaluation of formulations and methods of running our paper machines. We explored avenues of paper science on a conceptual and practical level to impact runnability, quality, and consistent output. One important step forward was the application of a 4th generation nanoparticle system that boosted production on one machine, and saved a lot of energy on another. Greater clarity and control of the wet end allowed for adopting grades faster and more effectively, and developing new grades more easily.”

According to April Van Camp, Appleton Coated process engineer, “Our ability to improve consistency and save money is facilitated by an open relationship with strategic suppliers. Eka Chemicals has played a critical role in our success, because they have been part of the team striving to meet very tough objectives. We challenged them, and they came through.

“Being a lean organization can actually be an asset if suppliers are prepared to take on risks, including extensive lab testing and trials. It’s only natural that they should gain from our success by getting a greater share of the business.”

Pikturna proudly confirms that millions of dollars were saved in 2010, based upon projects to optimize runnability and efficiency, while at the same time opening the way for greater flexibility to accommodate customer requests. “We improved the cost basis and running statistics for PM 6 and PM 7, having fewer breaks and faster grade changes. We became faster and more nimble, while at the same time reduced raw material costs.

On the environmental front, Pikturna notes that the application of advanced wet end chemistry also reduced the amount of solids in water systems. “The saveall and whitewater systems are now cleaner. Fewer pounds of solids go into waste treatment, and less into the ecosystem. Another plus from the silica nanoparticle products is an improvement in solids at the forming section, which produces a dryer sheet, requiring less energy to dry.”

Pikturna and his team all point to the importance of extending their capabilities through close relations with strategic suppliers.

Adds Pikturna, “Our goals demand participation in brainstorming, diligence and hard work. When a supplier contributes creative input and hands-on benefits

like prescreens in our own lab, this can make the difference between marginal success and a big win.

“One valuable development has been the switch to new alkyl ketene dimer emulsion (AKD) formulations, which size more efficiently. In addition, being higher in solids, transport costs are lower, so the



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## Propelling inkjet

Appleton Coated recently introduced Utopia® Inkjet and Utopia® Book Inkjet products for high-speed, four-color, inkjet web platforms in North America. Utopia Inkjet coating technology was developed jointly with HP to supply coated product to early adopters of high-speed, inkjet web presses. With the optimized coating of Utopia Inkjet, printers can run high-quality, full-color jobs faster than 400 ft/min, an industry first for high-volume continuous-feed inkjet production platforms.

For the publishing market, Utopia Book Inkjet is offered in a 45-lb matte text.

“High-speed, inkjet web press technology is a game-changer for the book publishing business,” says Paul Bradshaw, Appleton Coated’s senior vice president of publishing papers. “This technology can have a dramatic impact on improving the publisher’s supply chain by lowering finished goods inventories and reducing the cost of obsolescence. It will immediately improve the supply chain by lowering costs for the custom publishing business and has even more potential for improvement on the short-run offset side of the business.”



**Jeff Alderton, process engineer with Appleton Coated, April Van Camp and Mike Sigman, Eka Chemicals, AkzoNobel**

product costs us less. On PM 7 we introduced a new formulation of AKD and saw immediate cost savings, before of lower dosages with equal or better effectiveness. Less sizing in the system also allowed our retention aids to work better.”

### RETHINKING COATING FORMULATIONS

Comments Jeff Alderton, process engineer with Appleton Coated, “You have to closely watch gloss performance, and make sure that mottle does not occur. We have been very successful with improving coatings, while at the same time lowering costs through new formulations.”

Van Camp and Alderton worked closely on the issue of grade changes. Taking a holistic view, they documented a wide range of factors, ranging from the way dyes are set up, fiber blends, where caliper needs to be and so on. They developed tools that operators now use to plan, and adjust as needed. In fact, they shaved off 20% of the time previously required.

Pikturna has assigned energy teams for each machine. Projects range from a reduction in silo temperature on PM 7 to work around doctor blades to improve the coefficient of friction. Energy efficiency

has risen because of synthetic doctor blades applied at the dryer section. Variable speed pumps have been implemented to tune into the need at the moment; based on the demand.

Appleton Coated’ annual financial support of the Fox Valley Literacy Coalition helps fund textbooks, student workbooks, picture dictionaries, and learning software for the computer lab. Book Publisher, Scholastic Inc, works closely with Appleton Coated responds generously to provide a large selection of books to national and local organizations. Appleton Coated feels that it is important to give back to the community and to support our employees in their volunteer efforts.

Concludes Van Ert, “Making money for our customers, our shareholders and ourselves—all with the environment and community in mind, makes it easy to sleep at night, and know that we are making a difference every day and for the long term.” **PPI**

*Martin Koepenick, Innova, Atlanta, GA, has been writing about the forest products industry for many years*



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# Inspiring great effects. Every time.



In Eka you'll find a global partner with expertise close to your operations. In the form of Dan Pernsteiner in North America and Martin Chen in China, for example.

Intimately acquainted with papermaking, Dan and Martin spend most of their time working with mill operators. Both of them admit to the rush when solutions exceed expectations (including their own) – and that's why they're dedicated to Compozil.

As Dan says, Compozil is a blend of experience, know-how and

business sense. (His High-Speed Video Audit can show all the details, if you like.)

Proof can be found at Gold East, where Martin has worked closely with the mill on the application of Compozil Fx. Today, Gold East's huge, advanced machines are running even faster and even better.

Put simply, Compozil is how we make papermaking everywhere smoother.

Inspiring paper all over the world is our inspiration. Meet us at [eka.com](http://eka.com).

