

PHARMACEUTICAL PACKAGING MACHINE BUILDER FINDS NEW VENDOR A PERFECT FIT

Micron PharmaWorks gets configurable metric components, in any quantity, with 3D part downloads, no tooling cost and more

Micron PharmaWorks, Incorporated of Odessa, Florida, provides pharmaceutical blister packaging machinery, vision and quality control systems, as well as custom machines for the pharmaceutical packaging industry. Founded in 2002 by industry veterans, President Peter Buczynsky, VP & Sales Director Ben Brower and VP & Technical Director Ingo Federle, the company first began rebuilding blister machinery and providing custom packaging solutions for the pharmaceutical blister packaging industry. Today, Micron PharmaWorks is a thriving manufacturer of new and rebuilt pharmaceutical thermoformers, pharmaceutical product inspection equipment, card sealing machinery, tablet feeders for pouching, flood/track feeders, foil pinhole detection systems, plus package transfer and handling systems. The company's reputation for application-specific problem solving and turnkey line integration is fast growing.



The TF1, a standard blister thermoforming pharmaceutical packaging machine from Micron PharmaWorks, is built with substantial MISUMI USA component content, including shaft, bearings, urethane rollers, pulleys, support sections, standoffs, locating pins, rest pads, even the levers and knobs.

One of the ways this rapid advancement continues to occur is the result of careful vendor selection by the company's staff of engineering, technical support and procurement personnel. As Ben Brower notes, "We bring decades of hands-on engineering talent to our customers, who include many of the major packaging OEMs in the pharmaceutical industry. But, we realized that fact alone was no recipe for success. We needed to secure vendor relationships that would benefit us in several areas, including metric standards, low quantities of specialized components, full integration into our engineering models with downloadable 3D files and, as all companies need nowadays, cost containment and delivery strategies to satisfy our procurement objectives."

This challenge was met by Micron PharmaWorks Engineering Manager Michael Ruth. After an extensive search of trade shows, engineering publications and online resources, he located one company that seemed to satisfy all those criteria. At first look, the company appeared to be another catalog house, with hundreds of thousands of mechanical and automation components, but this one had something quite different. It was the MISUMI USA configurable component. Through a unique and highly sophisticated CAD Configurator engine on its website (www.misumiusa.com), this company allowed the Micron PharmaWorks engineers to configure a particular shaft, bearing or support to the exact dimension required for a machine build, in metric sizes. Once configured, a native CAD file could be downloaded directly into the assembly online for full specification verification. Then, if acceptable, the part number created could be ordered, in quantities as low as one piece, with no tooling charge or minimum order requirement. From the procurement perspective, the MISUMI USA business model also allowed Micron PharmaWorks to archive configured components for future reuse on other machine builds, gang

components purchases for immediate or staged shipment, bundle orders for quantity discounting, even utilize the online web ordering system for paperless transactions. With standard shipment times of six days, plus options for three-day, even same-day shipment of configured components, this vendor quickly looked attractive to many on the Micron PharmaWorks team.

As Ruth explains, "We also realized this source was not only suitable for our custom and rebuild work, but also for our standard machines, where we could reuse component selections to improve machine section design, cost efficiencies and just-in-time delivery schedules. From our side, there was also a substantial reduction in machine design time, using the MISUMI CAD Configurator, interfaced to our own product design, design validation and product data management software." Ben Brower confirms that many of the company's standard blister machines today use a wide variety of MISUMI USA components.

One example is the Micron PharmaWorks TF1 blister packaging thermoformer, a standard machine in the company's line. The MISUMI USA content on this machine is substantial, including shaft, bearings, urethane rollers, pulleys, support sections, standoffs, locating pins, rest pads and even the levers and knobs. By utilizing the vendor's configurable components, considerable savings were realized in the building of the machine, with no loss in performance, reliability or component finish quality, all critical aspects of the machinery used in this industry.

As Brower explains, "Our decision to begin using MISUMI USA was based on their metric component availability and breadth of line. As our relationship grew, our engineers became increasingly more confident in this vendor's quality and found it very easy to configure and download the part models directly into large 3D MCAD assemblies. Configuring components to our specific needs, without any tooling costs, allowed us much greater flexibility in our designs and, at the same time, offered us easy and economical procurement upsides. MISUMI USA has provided and continues to provide Micron PharmaWorks with good quality products and services in a build-to-specification marketplace with minimal problems. They are an asset to our company, in many ways."

The procurement department mirrors this satisfaction. As Purchasing Manager Kyle Massey notes, "We typically realize a 50% or better reduction in our turn times. We currently use eight outside machine shops, as well as two shifts daily in our own shop, to make components and structures for our machines. MISUMI USA has filled a real niche for us, namely, on shorter runs and especially on the configured parts, where we couldn't beat the cost if we did the work ourselves," she said, also commenting there have been zero quality issues with this vendor. Micron PharmaWorks buyer Teri Sorrell echoes that sentiment, noting her company has worked with MISUMI USA since May, 2004 and has always been satisfied with the quality, delivery and price of the products supplied. MISUMI USA recently augmented its inside sales staff with an online web ordering system and the results have been most satisfactory, in terms of savings and efficiencies, according to Sorrell. "In their web ordering system, even configured parts are quoted in minutes and we've been very pleased with the results of this streamlining in their process," she noted.

For more information on Micron PharmaWorks, please visit www.pharmaworks.com