

A&R leads the way in meeting Europe's folding carton needs with its advanced, integrated workflow

The pedigree of A&R Carton goes back to the beginning of the past century, when Åkerlund and Rausing, the inventors of the Tetra Pak, founded the Swedish company in 1929. Nearly a century and several buyouts/acquisitions later, AR Packaging — A&R Carton's owner — earned a place as one of the top 3 European folding carton converters. Some of that success is due to a robust business and production workflow solution, the EFI™ Packaging Suite, with Radius® ERP software at its core.

A&R Carton decided to adopt an advanced, packaging specific workflow system in 2001 to manage production. General manufacturing ERP systems were quickly ruled out as candidates due to the specialist nature of the business. Initially, one of the plants in Finland installed the core Radius ERP system for production, estimating and scheduling. A&R Carton subsequently installed Radius in its remaining plants.

A&R Carton uses its ERP system – which has since been upgraded to an EFI Packaging Suite – to get realtime access to production data. The system allows the company to make better decisions, produce higher quality products, reduce waste and inefficiencies and increase on-time delivery of jobs. With many of its customers, A&R Carton works from a service level agreement describing the requirements of the finished carton products, together with delivery timing expectations. The company then provides pre-order planning and logistic support. In some cases, A&R Carton also provides its clients with machinery needed to assemble the final packaging — e.g. barrier packaging — integrating the equipment with the clients' filling production lines. Given the various complexities of what A&R Carton offers, the EFI Packaging Suite can be crucial to ensuring that the company's service level agreements are met.



Challenge:

“Like the majority of packaging enterprises, A&R Carton required a system that can enable the company to manage stocks in such a way that just-in-time deliveries can be supported, while keeping overhead costs as low as possible.”



A&R Carton was founded in 1929 in Sweden by Erik Åkerlund and Ruben Rausing, the inventors of the Tetra Pak. In 2000, the carton businesses of Åkerlund & Rausing merged with the Franco-German carton business FCP Group to form A&R Carton.

In 2011, A&R Carton became a member of AR Packaging, a corporation that also includes Flextrus, a flexible packaging company. AR Packaging/A&R Carton's latest acquisition took place in 2015 when it acquired MeadWestvaco Corporation, which included folding carton plants in Austria, Poland and Russia. Following that acquisition, AR Packaging became one of the top three folding carton converters in Europe.

A&R Carton is not a typical folding carton converter. The firm is the exclusive developer and supplier of Cekacan® packaging, a unique packaging system offering high consumer convenience and outstanding product protection. In addition, A&R Carton develops and sells Cekacan folding, sealing and filling machinery, a total solution that is the result of continuous R&D.

Today, A&R Carton has 2,850 employees, with 16 facilities in 10 countries. Annual turnover for A&R Carton is 490 million euros.

A&R Carton

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A workflow designed to meet specific production needs

The business and production workflow in use at A&R Carton has evolved from the company's initial implementation of the solution's standard features. Over time, the company has worked closely with EFI to add additional enhancements to tailor-fit the system to A&R's unique process requirements.

“Because the Packaging Suite is designed specifically for the packaging industry, it fits what we do out-of-the-box. But with the enhancements EFI has developed over the years, our system is a true hand-in-glove solution,” says Jonas Kretz, Group IT Manager at AR Packaging, the group that owns A&R Carton.

A&R Carton needed the system to be scalable and the EFI Packaging Suite proved to be a perfect fit in this area as well. When a new plant is added as a result of an acquisition, the work A&R Carton has to do to bring the plant on line is mostly just comprised of setting up a new database.



Solution:

“ Because the Packaging Suite is designed specifically for the packaging industry, its workflows fit our industry out-of-the-box. ”

- Jonas Kretz, Group IT Manager, AR Packaging



Like the majority of packaging enterprises, A&R Carton requires a system that can enable the company to manage stocks in such a way that just-in-time deliveries can be supported, while keeping overhead costs as low as possible. Being able to accurately forecast raw material stock requirements was an additional requirement. To that effect, A&R Carton actually counts every sheet that is processed through the plant. The data collection system feeds this information back to other areas of the Packaging Suite, allowing the company to schedule and plan the plant's work. This shared information proactively provides warnings about possible processing problems, bottlenecks, etc., and allows scheduling staff to test different scenarios to fine-tune the plant's processing for optimum results. A&R Carton's growth strategy, being partly built on buying out and acquiring interesting companies within its market, makes it important to standardize new acquisitions on the company's core Packaging Suite. Controlling all of A&R Carton's production plants with the same system, with consistent business and production processes used across the business, makes it easier for A&R Carton to discover new opportunities for increasing efficiencies and lowering costs.

Technology backed by packaging industry know-how

The biggest reason, according to Kretz, that A&R Carton has not even considered another ERP system after all these years, is that EFI's specialists make a point of knowing their users' businesses inside out. "They know exactly what you do, and how you do it. They understand the machines you work with and what you need to improve your workflow and efficiency," adds Dmitry Kochegarov, A&R Carton's ERP manager. "The Packaging Suite controls and tracks production across plants, and the amount of data we receive allows us to streamline

Result:

“EFI's specialists know exactly what you do, and how you do it. They understand the machines you work with and what you need to improve your workflow and efficiency.”

- Dmitry Kochegarov
ERP Manager
A&R Carton



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