

CONVERTING®

www.convertingsmagazine.com

PRINTING, PACKAGING, LABEL SOLUTIONS

EQUIPMENT REVIEW



The unwind (left) and rewind (above) of Carestream Health's new Faustel Lab-master pilot coater are shown in action.

High-tech coating extends far beyond medical films to solar energy, fuel cells and flexible electronics.

New pilot coater helps contract manufacturer expand

By Contributing Editor Melissa Larson

In the two-and-a-half years since Carestream Health, Inc., was formed from the operations of the former Eastman Kodak Health Division, managers have been boosting the coating capacity for the company's medical and dental film products, while seeking to expand to coated products for other markets.

Purchased by private-equity firm Onex (Toronto, Canada) in May 2007, and headquartered in Rochester, NY, Carestream Health now operates as a stand-alone business. Its core products include medical imaging films, mammography films, and

dental and orthodontic X-ray films. In addition, the company performs contract coating for new customers in markets that include display and touchscreen applications, automotive, and flexible electronics.

A recently-installed pilot coater from Faustel (German-town, WI) has helped the White City, OR, operation of Carestream Health stay versatile and flexible, attracting new customers who work with Carestream's solid technical staff to explore new coated substrates.

"This operation is intended to help customers by providing fast and low-cost product and process-development capability,"



The Faustel LabMaster line is described as "Plug & Play"—a pre-engineered pilot coater/laminator designed for R&D and narrow-web production coating/laminating.

SPECIFICS:

**CARESTREAM HEALTH, INC.
WHITE CITY, OR, FACILITY:**
Slot-die, 3-roll and slide coating;
aqueous and solvent coating; sub-
strates of 1-15 mils; lamination and
UV curing. 300-mm-wide Faustel
Labmaster pilot-coating line with
corona discharge treatment (CDT)
and UV curing.
WINDSOR, CO, FACILITY:
Aqueous curtain coating of sub-
strates 3-10 mils thick. Pilot coating.



Some of Carestream Health's 30 on-site R&D, engineering and technical staff meet to review production schedules.

says Bruno Merry, general manager of Carestream's Advanced Materials group in White City. "In the few months since the pilot coater was commissioned, we've been very happy with the number of people who have taken advantage of the facility."

Just plug it in

The Faustel LabMaster line is described as "Plug & Play"—pre-engineered pilot coater/laminators designed for R&D and narrow-web production coating/laminating. Pre-engineering allows both a lower price and a shortened delivery cycle. The compact unit arrived at the facility preassembled on a unitized frame. There was virtually no mechanical installation, no electrical interconnections to be made, and no internal ducting was required, Merry explains.

LabMaster is available in two versions. The standard Version A comes with an 8-ft, single-zone dryer. Carestream chose the Version B unit, which comes with a 20-ft, two-zone

dryer. The system includes two unwinds, coater, laminator, dryer, and rewind with integrated drives and controls. It can process webs up to 300 mm (11.8 in.) wide, accommodate material rolls up to 300 mm (11.8 in.) OD, and run at speeds up to 30 m/min (100 fpm, nominal). Among its abilities are wet-bond lamination and standard slot-die coating.

"Our coating operation is now more versatile and flexible since adding the pilot coater," says Merry. "Potential customers can use it for small-volume production, product development, and to experiment with various combinations of substrates and coatings."

According to Merry, Carestream Health has invested millions of dollars in equipment in the past few years to add further capabilities. "Contract coating involves a commitment to R&D and a solid technical

staff to help customers with product development," he says. Carestream boasts 30 on-site engineers and chemists from various disciplines. The staff applies the knowledge gained during decades of experience working with 3M and Kodak's medical-film production into the manufacture of other high-technology products that require a clean environment, extremely high standards and tight tolerances, explains Merry.

Getting the word out

To emphasize its contract-coating capabilities at both the Oregon facility and a separate Windsor, CO, plant,

Carestream launched Tollcoating.com as an innovative way of presenting and promoting the facilities, capabilities and expertise the company has to offer. As the number of applications that require clean and high-precision coating grows, services such as those offered by Tollcoating.com should prove increasingly valuable to

prospects. In addition to the current successful applications, new coating development is underway for solar, battery and fuel-cell assemblies; membranes and other high-value coating applications.

"We deliver safe, efficient production and high-quality products using lean manufacturing. With planning, logistics and purchasing competencies available onsite, we offer a full supply-chain solution," summarizes Merry. "Our advanced processes and capabilities enable us to bring new products into production quickly and cost effectively." ■

MORE INFO:

CONVERTER:
CARESTREAM HEALTH, INC.,
888/777-2072,
www.carestreamhealth.com

SUPPLIER:
FAUSTEL, 262/253-3333,
www.faustel.com