

## Stacking Success

By Esther Durkalski, Editor

Great Northern Corp. produces an eco-friendly pallet that also is high-performance.

With the concept of sustainability gaining momentum throughout the industry, Great Northern Corp. saw an opportunity to produce a pallet that was eco-friendly yet dependable and efficient.

“We had two objectives when developing the new Stackable Pallet System,” says Pat Graf, vice president of sales for Great Northern’s Consumer Packaging and Display Group. “One was to reduce material and costs while remaining 100 percent recyclable. The other was to maintain or increase performance.”

The idea for the patent-pending Stackable Pallet System was conceived in mid-2007 as part of Great Northern’s Green By Design initiative. The beauty of the design, Graf notes, is that it uses existing materials (50 percent of which are recycled or reused) in an innovative, yet simple and straightforward manner.

The display’s corner posts are VBoard®; the product trays are B-flute corrugated and the divider supports are B/C-flute double-wall. The trays are printed four-color flexo, while the VBoard can be printed up to two-color flexo

or six-color litho, depending on customer needs. In addition, Graf notes that the displays are easily transformed from a shrouded pallet into a ready-to-shop display in less than 30 seconds.

With a standard footprint as its base, the pallet system allows for custom-engineered designs, including the capability to handle product in excess of 1,000 lbs and still allow for double stacking during transportation. A variety of

calipers for VBoard and a multitude of corrugated options allow components to be designed based on the need of the specific product. It can be shipped at all levels, from all four sides.

“This allows our customers to respond quickly with a retail-specific promotion by printing a different graphic on a tray, and still utilize 90 percent of the common display components,” Graf explains. “The ability to increase from a quarter pallet into a half or full pallet utilizing all common components is a direct response to the retailer’s desire for customization, by region or even by store.”

To Graf, the design is win-win in the dual quest for being environmentally responsible and effective.

“We were able to reduce the number of components and still upgrade compression strength for better performance in transit and in the warehouse,” he concludes. “Using less is definitely better for the environment, but reducing costs and increasing performance are business sustainability goals that are just as important to our customers — and ultimately, the retailers.”



The first customized configuration of the Stackable Pallet System was created for The Scotts Co., which since September has used it to ship and display its Roundup® Extended Control Weed killer in home centers.