

The packaging specialists

WIHURI IS AN INTERNATIONAL TRADE AND INDUSTRY CONGLOMERATE.
ONE OF ITS FOUR DIVISIONS IS PACKAGING

+ The equation Finland + packaging = paper is no longer valid. Wihuri's packaging film business is truly international. Wihuri's two major players in the world of packing films are Wipak in Europe and Winpak in North America. bbi visited Wipak, the German company located in Walsrode. In the 19th and 20th centuries, the Wolff family set up an industrial empire, a world-wide leader in the paper, chemicals and plastics business. It is located in the less industrialized, but highly recreational area between Hanover, Hamburg, and Bremen. Today 900 employees are commuting daily to this company. Firstly the company was acquired by the Bayer group which sold the packaging film division in 2001 to the Finnish Wihuri group. This was a positive move. The Finnish parent company has not only invested almost 30m Euros so far but also raised the number of employees by 100 to 900. The Walsrode company is highly specialized. In the field of multi-layer films, in particular films with barrier function, Wipak is the technology leader. The company offers rotogravure printing on films with up to 11 colors. Two-thirds of the products made in Walsrode are destined for the food industry with the meat, cheese, bakery and confectionery industries being the largest customers. The products are sold all over the world in coordination with the other subsidiaries.

The films are produced in a coextrusion process either as blown film or cast film and delivered on reels. There are numerous processing steps. After production, the films are further processed according to the customer's specifications: laminated or coated, printed, cut and wound up with highly sensitive cutting and winding techniques, also with tear tapes from 1 – 15 mm width and run lengths of more than 100,000 meters – everything is possible. Which of the films will be combined in which way is dependent on the respective products that are packed. Properties available are for example vapor tightness and oxygen barrier, high transparency, peelability, flexible or semi-rigid films, various thicknesses (better to be called thinness). Wipak is well-equipped to meet the customer's requirements in terms of core sizes, web widths, run lengths and winding tension. A number of product developers and engineers are available to work out the proper individual film concept with the customer. Wipak is very proud of its printing art. The rotogravure plant for up to 11 colors is an example of an investment of several million Euros. Each rotogravure cylinder is the precise printing plate for one of the 11 colors. The highly efficient rotogravure printing operation is supported by its own digital cylinder engraving facility, automatic ink storage and blending

plant and a computer-controlled cylinder store. This production process for a rotogravure cylinder in this plant configuration at Wipak is unique in Europe. According to export manager Astrid Sander, this process saves a lot of time which might be a decisive factor for a special order. The latest highlight is a demetallized film, a new development presented at interpack in Düsseldorf this year for the first time. Metallized films in general are appealing because sophisticated multicolor print designs in conjunction with high-gloss decorative elements enhanced by the metal coating make the products visually attractive. Demetallization means that specific parts of the metal-coated film surface are selectively removed. Whether these are areas, lines or text, positive or negative artwork – there's no limitations to the design. High-quality graphics and partial demetallization on the wrapping, whose design elements are enhanced by the glossy and reflecting metallization, give products a classy and exclusive appearance while the appealing gloss has no adverse effects on product freshness or shelf life. With the barrier located within the sealing layer, the film's functional and barrier performance is fully maintained. Demetallization provides transparency where the customer wants it, and a barrier which protects the product in the accustomed manner. +++

WIHURI GROUP, HELSINKI, FINLAND

Annual turnover: 1.6bn Euro, employees 6,000

Divisions: Daily Goods, **Packaging**, Technical Trade Specialty Products & Services

PACKAGING DIVISION

Wipak, Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada, turnover: 335m Euro

Wipak-Group, Europe, turnover 365m Euro

Wipak-Group, Europe | Wihuri Oy Wipak Nastola, Finland | **Wipak Walsrode GmbH & Co KG, Walsrode, Germany** | Wipak Gryspeert S.A.S, Bousbecque, France | Wipak B.V., Sittard, The Netherlands | Wipak UK Ltd, Welshpool, UK | Wipak Walothén GmbH, **Walsrode, Germany** | Biaxis Oy Ltd, Lahti, Finland | Wipak Iberica, Spain

WIPAK WALSRÖDE UND WIPAK WALOTHEN, WALSRÖDE, GERMANY

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