

Case Study: FillPak® vs. Loosefill



Filling Their Customers with "Sunshine"



On a daily basis, over 15,000 products are shipped out per shift at each of Nature's Sunshine four distribution centers

At Nature's Sunshine, Inc., a national leader in herbs and health supplements, uncompromising quality is not an option but an obligation. For over thirty years, the company has been supplying its customers with nutritional supplements, minerals and herbal combinations and some skincare products.

Nature's Sunshine relies on independent distributors to sell their products, and on a typical day, each distribution center averages about 1,000 orders or 15,000 products per shift. Multiply that by four distribution centers, located in Ohio, Texas, Georgia and Utah, and there are a lot of packages being packed and shipped out via UPS on a daily basis.

The FillPak Introduction

Nature's Sunshine had been using loosefill to fill the remaining voids in their packages. Unfavorable feedback from their customers about the mess and non-recyclability of the loosefill made Nature's Sunshine look at other packaging material alternatives. Since Nature's Sunshine had already researched several other brands of loosefill and airbags, the company decided to consider paper as a natural alternative.

In the spring of 2004, Nature's Sunshine switched from loosefill to Ranpak's FillPak® and FillPak TT® void fill systems. The singleply fanfold paper systems addressed customer concerns about mess and non-recyclability by providing a clean packaging material that their



customers could recycle with other paper waste or reuse in other packages. In addition, it provided a clean packaging environment for each of the distribution centers. Dustin Simons, Supervisor of the Utah Distribution Center, states, "Nature's Sunshine's number one concern is getting a package out to the customer without damage. Number two is the cleanliness of the packaging material - not only to the customer but also to the facility." Based on initial cost studies, Nature's Sunshine expected to experience some cost savings with FillPak. According to Chuck Bruton, Director of Global Distribution, "our biggest concern was not cost as long as Nature's Sunshine stayed neutral. We were more concerned about the clean up issue and the customer liking it better."

Using FillPak

The installation of the FillPak converters was an easy process for most of the Nature's Sunshine distribution centers. The FillPak converters were just wheeled up to the packaging line, plugged in and within minutes the machines were ready to be used. The distribution center in Ohio proved to be the most "technically" difficult because the company had to figure out how to mount the FillPak TT converter to the workstation. However, with some simple mounting brackets, this minor problem was solved.



Another big advantage of the FillPak system is its ease of use. According to Simons, "Nature's Sunshine looked at other paper products, but they were really manual to pack with. However, FillPak was a lot easier to use and the packers really enjoy the system." As expected, the packers were apprehensive about the change and were concerned that it would take a lot longer to pack with FillPak. This has not been the case according to Bruton who states, "on peak days, we are stretched a little bit. But, obviously some of that is made up because we don't have to spend over thirty minutes cleaning up the loosefill after the fact."

The Partnership

With Ranpak's help, the switch from loosefill to FillPak has been a smooth transition for Nature's Sunshine. "Our distributor representative has been good to us," states Simons. "If he doesn't show up here at least once a week, then he is e-mailing or calling us." Bruton adds that "we have been pleased with the service and with the equipment. I don't know of anything Ranpak hasn't met its commitment on. It's been a great partnership for Nature's Sunshine and Ranpak Corp."

Satisfying Results

Nature's Sunshine's independent distributors are very pleased with not having to mess with loosefill anymore. Gone are the days of comments like "we sure wish you would get away from peanuts because we hate messing with them when we get the products." In place, Nature's Sunshine has received feedback that their customers are pleased with the FillPak paper. As to be expected, most of this feedback centers around the fact that the FillPak paper is clean and easy to recycle. It's a win-win situation for Nature's Sunshine and its happy customers.

