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## Contract Slitting: All in the Family at Matthias Paper



Subtle clues throughout the Matthias Paper facility in High Point, NC, tell visitors that this is a close-knit, family-run business. Children's artwork adorns the break room cabinets and refrigerator. Plant workers, who boast an average seniority of 13 years with the company, joke easily with the owners as they pose for pictures. Here in the "Home Furnishings Capital of the World," where high-paying jobs are not hard to get, the Matthias family evidently knows how to treat its employees.

But just because Matthias Paper has been in business since 1915 doesn't mean it's done things the same way all that time. The converter started out distributing decorative papers for high-end retail candy boxes during the days when Godiva and its many competitors—and fancy hosiery and shirt brands too—spent quite a bit of money on their packaging. Today, that much-appreciated candy business is just a fraction of the company's pie. It's been bolstered by aggressive expansion into contract converting of lightweight synthetics for furniture, bedding and textile labels, as well as slitting and sheeting of lightweight papers for tobacco and pharmaceutical use; and label and tag converting.

All in the family

"The business, which was founded by my grandfather, depended on box-cover papers through the 1960s," says president John R. Matthias. "In the late 1960s and early 70s, we had already bought our first converting equipment and were evolving into converting both paper and synthetics." Today, with facilities in both High Point and in Swedesboro, NJ, the company's operations fall into two main strengths: sheeting in Swedesboro, and slitting at High Point—although the company is able to perform both operations in both locations.

The two facilities, and the latest in equipment, make Matthias a formidable force. Pharma customers, for instance, appreciate the company's prompt delivery and excellent quality of finished, print-ready materials. Slitting of specialized tobacco papers, some imported from Belgium, are big business right here in North Carolina. Both Matthias locations are ideally located to serve customers for toll converting of paper and synthetics, as well as distribution of tag and label grades.

Then there's the converter's expertise working with Tyvek. A longtime converter of the spunbonded olefin synthetic, Matthias has mastered the ability to slit and sheet the various grades of Tyvek that it uses to supply customers who make horticultural and industrial hang tags, clothing and furniture tags, water-park wristbands, pressure-sensitive labels, and other products from the waterproof, outdoor-friendly material.

“We've been slitting here at High Point for 20-30 years,” says Matthias general manager Neal Dagenhart. “In 2005 we needed to replace an older slitter to achieve better quality. We needed a versatile slitter that could run papers and synthetics from 20-pound to 28-pt stock. Other objectives were: good cut separation on certain sizes, a two bowed-roll system, an upgraded knife system, a 50-in. rewind diameter, and speeds up to 2,000 fpm.”

Matthias Paper has had a longtime relationship with Bob Mastriani of machine builder REM Mfg. Inc. ([www.remmfg.com](http://www.remmfg.com) [1]), and it was REM that John Matthias turned to for the new slitter. With son John R. Matthias Jr. now serving as executive vice president, John put in the order for a REM Model 4040 two-drum slitter/rewinder in September 2005, and it was installed in April 2006. A High Point operator traveled to REM's NJ facility for the approval run of the machine. One week of formal training followed the installation.

“The 4040 slitter, which we supplied to Matthias with a Model 4520 shaftless unwind, was designed for thermal-transfer paper grades, as well as nonwovens,” says Frank Pozar, REM vice president and general manager. “With their history of using Maxcess equipment for the previous slitter they bought from us for the Swedesboro facility, they wanted Maxcess [equipment] for the High Point machine, so there would be interchangeability.”

The new REM 4040 slitter is equipped with Tidland knives and knifeholders, a MAGPOWR Cygnus tension-control system, a Fife web guide, and Raptor chucks.

Matthias staff are mindful of the toll on slitter knives that Tyvek and other synthetics take beyond normal wear and tear. “When the new slitter was installed here, we ordered duplicates of all the knives and knifeholders,” says John Matthias, Jr. “Some are indeed interchangeable with the slitter model that was installed at the Swedesboro plant, in case of a major knife problem here or there.”

Who serves as the link between Maxcess and Matthias? Steve Chapman, a factory-trained representative for Maxcess Intl., serves as Matthias' local field engineer to help with its web-guiding, winding, slitting, inspection or tension-control processes. In other cases, a Maxcess customer will contact the OEM (in this case, REM) who will then contact the supplier. In total, there are 23 district managers that cover North America for Maxcess, some of whom have specific niche training in materials (i.e. metals, rubber and nonwovens). (In other cases, Fife, MAGPOWR and Tidland customers may choose to call into the factory, and there is a toll-free number on the product label for this purpose.)

John Matthias also specified the DMS (digital measuring system) feature available on the 4040, which allows the operator much closer access for accurate measurement of the knife intervals on the web, without having to use a ruler. The 4520 shaftless unwind features auto edge-guiding, dual pneumatic brakes—and- the obvious ergonomic benefit of lifting 6,000-lb. rolls off the floor.

With purchasing plans for the next slitter already well underway, this is clearly a converter with eyes on future growth. Its presence in both North Carolina and New Jersey has it well positioned both in the geographic regions and in the markets where it can grow best. Having proved itself in some exacting applications, Matthias Paper is in a position to hand over a healthy business to the next generation.

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[Tidland Raptor Series Air Powered Lug Chucks](#) [2]

[Tidland Performance Series Crush Knifeholder](#) [3]

[Fife SP-5, SP-11, SP-12 Pneumatic Sensor](#) [4]

[Tidland DMS Digital Measurement System](#) [5]

[MAGPOWR Cygnus Tension Control](#) [6]











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