

INTEPLAST GROUP

Sustainability in a Bag

Inteplast Group manufactures innovative reusable bags and mailer bags through its Integrated Bagging System division to reduce retailers' environmental footprints. **BY STEPHANIE CRETS**



Tony Myers,
vice president and
general manager for
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Inteplast Group is a completely integrated company that strives to offer products with quality, people and resources in mind. Inteplast's three divisions produce items that are vital to a host of industries.

Its earliest established division, Integrated Bagging System (IBS), produces plastic bags, can liners, foodservice bags, gloves and supplies, retail and grocery bags and janitorial and industrial supplies. The AmTopp division makes stretch films and biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP), plus plastic concentrates and compounds. Lastly, its World-Pak division manufactures corrugated plastic sheets, PVC boards and cross-laminated film and bags.

Founded in 1991, the company is the largest manufacturer of integrated plastics in North America. Many of Inteplast's goods are manufactured from raw material to finished product on a 575-acre site in Lolita, Texas – the biggest plastics plant in the state. “We do it from the ground up to the finished product,” says Tony Myers, vice president and general manager for the company's grocery and retail unit. “And each business unit focuses on a market segment so we can penetrate the market deeper.”

Inteplast – now celebrating its 25th-year anniversary – is actively growing. The company has made 22 acquisitions throughout its history, including a sizeable trashcan liner producer. Acquisitions solidify Inteplast's position in the market and increase its reach as well.

Inteplast's diverse product lines are a competitive advantage that help lower costs for its customers. A



Inteplast's reusable wave top bag production supports increased sustainable bag usage in North America.

retailer might need garment bags, trashcan liners, vinyl gloves and several other plastic-related products, but instead of getting each item from a different company, that retailer can get everything from Inteplast.

“Using one vendor and one delivery – that drives costs down,” Myers says. “It improves cash flow and reduces the inventory they have to carry because we become their warehouse as well. We try to improve the supply chain. The more products you bundle, the less you keep on the floor and the more it comes in through one channel and improves the cost of the supply chain and cash flow.”



Inteplast mailer bags are a convenient option for shipping and in some cases can be reused.

New Trends

As a manufacturer of plastic products, including different kinds of bags, Inteplast is always aware of the regulations and bag bans in cities across the United States. But it overcomes these challenges and restrictions by producing reusable plastic bags.

Myers says plastic is recyclable and that it's a great opportunity for Inteplast to use to its advantage. "We don't encourage cloth or vinyl bags because of cross-contamination when people don't wash those bags," he explains. "If you happen to get blood from your chicken or steak [in the fibers of] the bag, it can lead to health hazards."

Inteplast has two types of reusable plastic bags on the market: the t-shirt bag and wave top bag. The t-shirt or pull bag is used in supermarkets, big-box retailers like Walmart and for carryout, and it meets California standards. The wave top bag is the most popular because it's shaped like a wave at the top with a handle in the middle. Retailers can print graphics on the front and back of wave top bags because these bags have a wider surface area than a typical t-shirt bag.

"We have the ability to produce those bags in many plants throughout the country," Myers says. "We're ready for the transition to reusable bags in multiple areas, which will only complement our expansive product lines."

Despite the transition to reusable bags, Myers doesn't see the end of the single-use bag for now. But it will continue to be a hot-button topic in today's evolving market. For example, another trend Inteplast is capitalizing on is mailer bags.

Shipping products in cardboard boxes is costly in both freight and postage, along with increasing a retailer's carbon footprint. But many online retailers are turning to mailer bags because most products sold online can be put in a plastic mailer bag that has its own seal. That saves the time, money and extra packaging efforts such as tape that the traditional cardboard box requires. "Mailer bags are in their infancy of taking off because you just put whatever you want in the bag and mail it out," Myers adds.

Inteplast produces billions of bags a year to serve many industries while it keeps pace with economic and environmental trends. The company takes risks with new innovations but with its wide market reach, Inteplast usually comes out ahead of the curve.

"We aim to maintain our integrity within the industry," Myers says. "We won't provide a customer with less than they've asked for. And we have the culture and the mindset that you should never produce anything you can't be proud of." ♻️