



## MGM's Increased IG Production Proves that GED's i-3 Really Works

by Tara Taffera

When GED Integrated Solutions of Twinsburg, Ohio, introduced its i-3 system in January 2005, it sought to offer customers increased production of IG units through improved automation and flexibility. But even they may not have been prepared for how it would change and improve manufacturing operations.

Rick Hobby, plant manager at MGM Industries in Hendersonville, Tenn., was using GED's Intercept Generation 2 system before converting to the i-3 system in January 2005. He says the change increased production of IG units at MGM from 1,200 to more than 3,000 per shift.

### A Look at the i-3 Technology

With its one-piece flow design and integrated i-3 technology, the new Intercept i-3 frame machine from GED delivers up to 100 percent improvement in output and savings of up to \$3 per window, according to GED. The company adds that approximately 20 manufacturers are currently using the i-3 system.



Intercept i-3 can be fed by ten different sized coils of spacer material instead of just one and allows for a 30-second changeover from one spacer width to another rather than the 5-10 minutes required for other systems. The rest of the equipment in the IG production process also adjusts automatically, improving flexibility, efficiency and lean manufacturing. The lack of manual intervention and manual width adjustment results in accurate and consistent high quality production.

The one-piece Intercept spacer design provides good thermal performance, durability and strength, according to PPG information. The company also says it is faster and less expensive to produce than other spacers.

This next-generation equipment is tied to every part of

the window manufacturing process using GED's i-3 technology and LeanNet software. This platform coordinates machines, processes, software and people to streamline the manufacturing process from the trucks forward and get orders out the door fast. Results of i-3 integration include reduced floor space, reduced work-in-progress inventory, reduced labor and reduced scrap.

### i-3 at Work

Hobby did research equipment from other manufacturers but was familiar with GED as he used its equipment in his previous job.

"I knew about i-3 and I knew what it could do," he says.

He adds that the final decision was made when he traveled to Cleveland to see the system up close.

"That did it," he says simply.

Seeing really was believing.

"I didn't look at any other systems that could run as many as 3,000 units in one shift," he says.

The biggest benefit for MGM, according to Hobby, is the system's 10-reel uncoiler which reduces set up time and man hours dramatically. The previous machine only had a 2-reel uncoiler.

"Now, when we say go to size X everything changes automatically," he says. "We used to lose a couple of hours per day so we are now saving in labor costs due to reduced overtime."

Hobby says the system works particularly well for MGM since the company produces such a wide variety of glass thicknesses, thus saving a tremendous amount of time.

Aside from the afore-mentioned advantages Hobby says GED personnel were extremely responsive to meeting MGM's needs, particularly during initial set up.

"They basically stayed with me while we were setting this up," says Hobby. "At one time I had as many as eight people here. They were just exceptional. That's why I went with them as I had experience with them from my prior job."

MGM also purchased GED's stainless steel washer with water purification system, which features automatic set-up and the new i-3 self-adjusting oven.

"That's made a huge difference as well," says Hobby.

With claims of reduced labor and promises of streamlining processes it looks like at least for MGM, the i-3 exceeded its claims. ■

Tara Taffera is the publisher and editor of DWM magazine.