

FLEXIBLE AUTOMATION CHANGES PRENT'S OPERATIONAL APPROACH

Prent is working on an automated cell to produce its Pretect™ thermoplastic polyurethane (TPU) tip protector packaging. “The purpose of the initial cell is to produce the Pretect™ TPU packaging for our customers in a fairly hands-off fashion to improve efficiencies,” says Prent Janesville VP of Engineering Greg Lofgren. “Prent Janesville plans to extend that technology to other secondary operations processes as time goes on.”

“Although flexible automation represents a change in its approach to secondary operations, many of the concepts we built into the cell are not new technology to Prent, Lofgren says.”

Prent is building the cell as a system with stations that have their own control systems so they can be exchanged for other functions relatively easily, he explained.

“This is similar to the way many packaging lines are constructed from several manufacturers’ subsystems,” Lofgren says.

“Prent is also using this cell as a test bed for technologies it hasn’t used often for applications on its thermoformers and other production equipment that may be needed,” he said.

Lofgren says Prent is also integrating collaborative robots for some part-handling functions, along with extra sensors, to allow operators easier access to the system without compromising their safety. And, the operators will get help from vision cameras to help them place things more accurately.

“Prent continues to collaborate, as it successfully does in thermoformer tooling, with the development team to design the tools and mating machine parts to help them work well together,” he said.



Above is an example of Prent's AmeriStar award-winning medical device packaging.

PRENT PURPOSE GIVES EMPLOYEES BETTER PERSPECTIVE ON PRODUCT USE AND IMPACT

Research shows that when a job has purpose, it affects both workplace happiness and productivity. Because Prent understands that purpose is powerful, it recently implemented a new strategic initiative called the Prent Purpose. “The initiative helps define the ‘why’ behind the products we create packaging for, and the markets they serve, so our employees understand the impact they have on our medical customers and their patients,” says Prent Purpose Project Lead Steven Baertschi.

“Through the Prent Purpose, employees gain a deeper appreciation and understanding that what we do goes well beyond a plastic component,” says Tom Schaffner, Prent Senior VP of Sales. “It’s our responsibility to ensure every employee recognizes how his/her job can positively impact someone’s life, which hits home with the wide array of healthcare products for which we design and manufacture the packaging.”

The Prent Purpose is communicated at all staff levels through monthly meetings that highlight a specific medical device packaging project. To date, Prent has showcased a heart valve and an orthopedic implant.

Employees have had the opportunity to see the physical product in the package, learn why it is important, and how it improves a patient’s life, according to Baertschi. Many employees from leadership to the manufacturing floor have commented on the impact the Prent Purpose has had. “At our last meeting, our manufacturing floor leads said their employees were interested in the purpose behind their jobs. Even employees from departments who don’t interact with manufacturing on a day-to-day basis found meaning in the initiative,” Baertschi said.

“I found the information about how our packaging is used very fascinating. I had no idea that the packaging Prent makes could help save a life, Prent Inspector Packer Dylan Walls said.”

Phase Two of the Prent Purpose will showcase the purpose and impact behind the products Prent packages on kiosks in its facilities. Prent sales staff and designers will keep gathering ideas for unique packaging and products to share with Prent staff.

PRENT IMPROVES EFFICIENCIES WITH MASTERCONTROL

A new migration of MasterControl software is helping Prent Corporation streamline its employee training program.

Prent Corporation migrated to a newer version of its integrated quality management software system, MasterControl, this past year. Prent was using three different training systems and wanted to streamline the process to focus more on training and less on administrative work, according to Prent Quality Engineer Tanya Gomez-Alverson, who was the lead on the migration.

“This MasterControl training module allows Prent to have all of its training needs met with a single system that allows for greater transparency, efficiency, and agility in implementing and controlling our training system,” Gomez-Alverson said.

This version is also more user friendly for Prent employees. “Tasks and notifications are communicated via email and the system automatically sends reports to Prent managers to connect with those who do not have access to emails to follow up,” she said.

Another benefit to the software is its auditor access capabilities. “With the use of MasterControl, ISO procedures and work instructions can be accessed and viewed along with revision history,” says Gomez-Alverson. “This allows customer and ISO auditors to review Prent training documentation more efficiently.”

There are many efficiencies with this new migration, including the ease in which Prent employees can verify if training is completed, and the ability to upload completed training checklists to a trainee’s folder that is located in the MasterControl training module, says Gomez-Alverson.

“The automatic email notification sent to each supervisor for situations where a team member will be nearing a due date on training courses is helpful as well,” she said. “I also find it beneficial to track what step a document is on during approval or review routes,” Gomez-Alverson said.

“Prent has also noticed more cross-departmental collaboration where leaders are working toward the same goals to ensure their employees are trained,” she said.

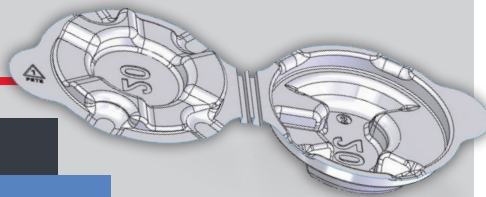
The MasterControl document module is in use at Prent facilities globally. The training component was implemented in Janesville, Flagstaff, and Puerto Rico, with plans to implement that module at every Prent facility in the future.



FOCUS ON

SUSTAINABILITY

RE•COVER™ CP305 is a medical-grade PETG that is extruded with virgin cap layers and lot-traceable regrind in the center of the sheet. By maintaining full lot-traceability of the regrind, it gives the medical device community an opportunity to source PETG—a critically-important material to medical packaging—in a more sustainable manner. GOEX developed this product specifically for the medical market to address the ever-increasing demand for sustainable material solutions, while maintaining PETG’s familiar performance characteristics. RE•COVER CP305 PETG promotes waste reduction and material re-use while complying with critical medical device packaging standards.



Above is an example of a formed “W” hinge.

LET’S GET

TECHNICAL

Did you know Prent has six different hinge styles used for adding value and functionality to customer packaging? Hinges can be coined, channel, fade away, “W,” strap (no form), or perforated. Although hinges can be necessary and may add value in some cases, Prent designers recommend using them only when necessary. Since all plastics are susceptible to cracking when stressed, the Prent design team always shares any challenges and concerns with customers in the beginning of the design phase. General rules of thumb for hinges include:

- Use coined hinges for thicker gauged materials and formed hinges, like the channel hinge, are best for thinner gauged materials
- Use fade-away hinges for deeper formed hinges to reduce crush cut depth
- “W” style hinge is the most preferred of the formed hinge styles for its increased flexibility
- Strap-style hinges are less prone to cracking

For more information on hinges and other thermoforming application questions, contact sales@prent.com to get started.

A FOND FAREWELL

Steve Zimmerman, CIO and VP of IT



In 1993, Steve Zimmerman was just 23 years old with a new house and a two-year-old when he chose to apply at Prent and tour the Janesville facility. At that time, he only knew that Prent was a good company, had a clean facility, and seemed like a decent place to work for a while. He was hired as a Network Engineer that fall and stayed on for 29 more years!

During his tenure, Zimmerman's roles at Prent expanded to include Management Information System (MIS) Supervisor, MIS Manager, Information Technology (IT) Director, Chief Information Officer, and Vice President of IT.

When asked what he liked most about working at Prent, Zimmerman says it was the great people with whom he worked, in Janesville and around the world, who also became good friends.

Zimmerman quickly realized that working with people he could learn from at Prent was fantastic over the years. "I could always learn something from everyone I had the pleasure to work with," he said. "Traveling around the world working with people from all different countries, cultures, languages, and experiences is something I will always remember."

He also appreciated the Pregont family's commitment to Prent's success. "The Pregont family was constantly investing money back into the company to keep it world class. Their decision to keep the company private and make good decisions have contributed to the company's long-term health and success."

Zimmerman feels he was also fortunate to participate in Executive Agenda, a professional development organization. "As often as I could, I would attend and also speak at conferences, which were great and challenging learning opportunities."

He found trying to make multiple people happy with the systems they used to do their jobs the most challenging part of his job. "Trying to please many different people from different countries with different perspectives was an almost impossible task, for sure!" Zimmerman said. "I was also constantly challenged with keeping the systems secure, regardless of what Prent employees clicked on or downloaded to their systems."

Zimmerman plans to work on a few entrepreneurial businesses, including an ice fishing tip-up concept, during his retirement. "I have a lot of projects to do at my cabin and a few at home. I also intend to do a lot of fishing, some hunting, traveling, and spending time with the family. I'll probably do some advisory consulting as well," he said.

05 [PACK]OUT CONFERENCE
09 May 9-11 • Booth #2
The LINE Hotel
Austin, Texas

05 CMEF SHANGHAI
14 May 14-17
National Exhibition & Convention Center
Shanghai, China

05 PRMA CONVENTION
18 May 18-21
El Conquistador Resort
Puerto Rico

06 CINDE MEGAMINDS/TRENDS
01 June 1-2
Costa Rica Convention Center
San Jose, Costa Rica

06 MD&M EAST
13 June 13-15 • Booth #1539
Jacob Javits Convention Center
New York, NY

09 MEDICAL FAIR THAILAND
13 September 13-15
BITEC
Bangkok 10260, Thailand

09 MEDSUMMIT-BAJA
20 September 20-21
Baja California Center
Rosarito, BC

10 MD&M MINNEAPOLIS
10 October 10-11 • Booth #3115
Minneapolis Convention Center
Minneapolis, MN

PRENT JANESVILLE exhibited at the MD&M West Conference in California in February. The event brought together 10,000 attendees across multiple levels of medtech to network and share insights on opportunities and trends in the field.



PRENT

Plants



PRENT MALAYSIA

Since Malaysia's equatorial climate is hot and humid throughout the year, Prent chose to implement a new solar power system at its facility there to promote green technology and save on its electricity costs. This initiative will ultimately contribute to the global carbon neutrality program by reducing CO₂ emissions.

The planned system is a grid-tied solar power system where the generated power is fully utilized. Any excess or unused power that is produced will be directly channelled and sold to the local authority's power grid.

"Considering the uncertainty of future electrical costs and, based on the positive feedback from one of our raw material suppliers that benefited from its solar power system, this is the best time for Prent Malaysia to proceed with the solar power implementation," says Prent Malaysia General Manager James Lai. "Furthermore, this green initiative promotes significant goodwill with our international customers."

Prent Malaysia has invested \$450,000 in the 740kWp solar power integration project that began last quarter. It is targeting the end of this quarter to see the benefit from the solar power. Prent feels this system is the right decision for a long-term energy savings program since it is expected to save 18.5% of the annual energy consumed by the Prent Malaysia facility.



PRENT CHINA

Prent China was recently awarded the Zimmer Biomet's Supplier of the Year Quality Excellence Award out of 700 other suppliers. This award highlights Prent's commitment to surpassing the stringent quality requirements in the global medical industry. Congrats to Prent Shanghai QA Director Sean Xiao (pictured at left) and the entire Prent team!



PRENT JANESVILLE

Prent Janesville recently implemented a Safety Spotlight Program allowing its employees to submit an initiative or idea on a card (at left) to improve overall safety. Selected winners receive up to \$500 for implemented ideas. Prent VP of Human Resources Amanda Pellizzi says they are already evaluating and implementing 10 ideas since beginning the program.



PRENT CHINA

Prent China held a celebration honoring its service award recipients at the end of last quarter. 91 Prent employees celebrated work anniversaries, including 8 who celebrated 15 years, 46 who celebrated 10 years, and 37 who celebrated 5 years. Prent China leadership presented to over 100 employees at the Hyatt Regency Shanghai Jiading hotel.



PRENT JANESVILLE

After two years without a Santa Claus due to Covid restrictions, Prent Janesville employees were able to bring their young children to a Christmas holiday party last December. 100 children enjoyed some Christmas magic with Santa, gifts, crafts, and treats. 600 Prent employees also gathered that month to enjoy a holiday party with music, food, and fellowship.



PRENT FLAGSTAFF

Snowfall totals over the past winter have broken records in Flagstaff, Arizona! The city's airport saw the second highest snowfall ever recorded from July 1 to March 1 at 140.1 total inches, according to the National Weather Service. Pictured in front of Prent's facility are Chris Higgins, Shireene Myers, Delynn Peters, Mowana Honyumptewa, and Melodi Robbins.

“Years ago, Prent’s Unit 3 made Q-tip trays. Since then, it has advanced to Tesla, SpaceX, and Covid-related face shields and test tray projects.”

— Debbie Beers, Prent Janesville, looking back on 30 years at Prent

PRENT ANNIVERSARIES

30 YEARS

Sheri Miller Janesville

20 YEARS

Michael Baker Janesville

15 YEARS

Rosaidi Bin Che Me Malaysia

Gary Dong China

Faye Kelm Janesville

Christine Sweeney Janesville

Edward VanRyswyk Janesville

Daniel Wiesenbergl Janesville

10 YEARS

Khairul Azuan

Bin Che Yusoff Malaysia

Hizwan Bin Mahmod Malaysia

Siti Rafhan Binti Mohamad Malaysia

Steven Donovan Janesville

Lucy Guo China

Tonya Hanson Janesville

Steven Koralesky Janesville

Henry Wang China

5 YEARS

Wenjuan An China

Xiaojuan An China

Patrick Barry Janesville

Muhamad’Ariff Bin Mohd Ali Malaysia

Mohamad Shahrul Izwan Malaysia

Bin Rosman

Zachary Burtness Janesville

Yanira Canchani Puerto Rico

Ram Sundar Chaudhary Malaysia

Jing Chen China

Yingchun Chen China

Otica Hagen Janesville

Gitte Helledie Denmark

Dipendra Kumar Singh Malaysia

Yan Liu China

Laura Mulis IIsø Denmark

JC Qin China

Travis Sallee Janesville

Hairui Wang China

Jiaojiao Wang China

Pei Wen China



GET TO KNOW
Our Prent Employee
James Soto
Prent Costa Rica
Process Technician

James Soto has been in charge of validating new tools and troubleshooting the manufacturing process in his role as Process Technician at Prent Costa Rica since he was hired in 2012. He also currently handles preventive and corrective maintenance for the thermoformer machines and auxiliary equipment.

Soto was born in San Jose, Costa Rica and raised between San Jose and Limon, on the Caribbean side. He recently earned a degree in industrial engineering while at Prent.

He enjoys working at Prent because it completely relates to his education and work profile. Soto says he also appreciates that the staff at Prent’s World Headquarters made him feel at home every time he went there for training. “They made my training process easier because they are always open to explaining what I have needed in order to do my job duties in the best way possible.”

In his free time, Soto likes to spend time with friends and family. He really enjoys photography, but his true passion is surfing, which he does at least once a week.

Soto remembers the first time he came to Janesville, he stepped outside and couldn’t believe how cold the weather was! It was his first experience with colder weather as the lowest temperature in Costa Rica isn’t less than 50 degrees. He says his colleagues had a good laugh about it.



SERVICE AWARD
Celebrating 30 Years
Debbie Beers
Prent Janesville Lead
Quality Associate

Debbie Beers (pictured above with Joe Pregont II at an award ceremony) recently celebrated 30 years at Prent. When she started at Prent in 1992, she was looking for part-time evenings so she could be with her two daughters during the day. “I was only going to do this for a short period of time ... 30 years later, I’m still here!” she said.

Beers was a mini-shifter working 8 pm to midnight. She was a backup lead for several years and was hired full-time in Unit 3 (now Unit 60), which she was permitted to choose when promoted. Beers says she enjoys the challenge these Units offer with different sized thermoformers that run very small to very large/long parts.

When she first started at Prent, the manufacturing floor was one big area with a dozen thermoformers. “There were no robots, everything was hand picked,” Beers says. “We did have a few trim presses and the first robotics job we did was for contact lens trays.” Beers says Prent has expanded a great deal since she began in 1992—from building the cleanrooms and upgrading all the thermoformers to upgrading the cleanrooms and expanding manufacturing into other locations around the world.

Beers has enjoyed getting many new projects up and running, the people she works with, and the challenges her Unit offers. “I have put a lot of time in throughout the years ... weekends, 12-hour days, whatever it has taken to get the job done!”



2225 Kennedy Road
Janesville, WI 53545

PRENT DENMARK EXHIBITS AT PHARMAPACK IN FRANCE

PharmaPack, held annually in Paris, France, is the European hub for the pharmaceutical packaging and drug delivery device industries and brings together 5,000 attendees and 300 exhibitors over two days.

Prent Denmark exhibited at PharmaPack in Paris, France on February 1-2. Prent Denmark Sales Manager Philip Madsen and Prent Denmark Account Manager Jakob Friis (pictured above) were in attendance to help attendees with their custom thermoforming needs.

“Many of Prent’s strategic business partners came to our booth, and we had new customers stop by with exciting projects that we look forward to working on,” says Prent Denmark Managing Director Peter Bay. “Overall, it was a great exhibition with attendance nearing pre-Covid levels, which was fantastic to see!”

PRENT FLAGSTAFF UPGRADES TO CERTIFIED CLASS 8 CLEANROOM

Prent Flagstaff is currently in the process of upgrading its manufacturing area to a certified Class 8 cleanroom, according to Prent Senior Vice President of Satellite Manufacturing Mark Rothlisberger. “Prent Flagstaff was the first Prent satellite facility built and has always maintained a clean environment, equivalent to a Class 8 cleanroom,” Rothlisberger said. “We will now be undergoing construction to lengthen the room, add additional HEPA filters, and certify the space as a cleanroom.”

This will be the final Prent facility to complete these upgrades and will bring Prent Flagstaff in line with the rest of our locations around the world. The construction and certification will be complete this summer and Prent’s customers will not see any impact to their orders during the transition.

PRENT STREAMLINES ITS OPERATIONS WITH A NEW MOBILE ROBOT

Prent took another step toward innovation with the addition of an Autonomous Mobile Robot (AMR) in its manufacturing and warehouse facilities at its World Headquarters in Janesville earlier this year. The AMR assists the grinding room by carrying scrap material from cleanrooms and returning empty bins. “This automation improves quality of life for Prent employees because it transports items quickly and efficiently, keeps production areas clean, and eases the load on our production team,” says Prent Senior Manufacturing Engineer Josh Peterson. “The AMR is designed to assist with transportation of materials around our facilities, allowing us to streamline operations and increase efficiencies.” This newer automation also has obstacle avoidance which improves workplace safety and makes our operations more sustainable, he said. Agilox, the manufacturer, hasn’t had a single safety incident with this unit to date.

Prent Corporation remains committed to providing customers with the latest technology and its continued investment in emerging automation like the AMR is key to Prent’s growth and leadership in the market.



CONTACT PRENT

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