

PICK UP SPEED

Service center expands options and output by installing a high-production lamination line

BY LAUREN DUENSING

Productive employees are a core component of efficient processing and distribution operations. Canrack Metal Center Systems

aims to help distributors with their everyday tasks, such as transforming metal and filling customer orders, by providing equipment that can increase transactions and pounds per man-hour, reduce labor

costs and increase throughput. For companies looking to upgrade, replacing manual processes with automated machines can pay big dividends in efficiency.

At Liebovich Steel & Aluminum Co., Rockford, Illinois, replacing an older manual machine with a Canrack high-production lamination line has allowed the company to provide a better product to its customers and increase production.

Liebovich is a division of Reliance Steel & Aluminum Co., Los Angeles, and has been in business since 1939. “We are kind of soup to nuts,” says Patrick Tulley, vice president and COO.

“We stock anything from bar, beams, angle, channel, plate, aluminum, and stainless. We flame cut plate, and we have a tool steel division.”

Canrack’s vinyl applicators are available in standard widths of 48 inches, 60 inches, 72 inches and 84 inches. They can be equipped with powered or non-powered infeed and outfeed rollers and are fitted with replaceable urethane discs that promote scratch-free surfaces. Customers can choose from options to increase the automation capabilities of the equipment, such as top and bottom application, a width splitter and rewinder, an automatic crosscut knife, and an anti-static bar.

Damage-free product

Tulley says he previously worked with Canrack when he bought a bundle splitter for Liebovich’s Iowa division. Canrack’s bundle splitters allow for sheet order filling without any lifting, processing material at a higher volume than traditional meth-



Canrack's high-production lamination lines are fitted with replaceable urethane discs for scratch-free handling.

ods of order filling. The equipment, he says, “takes a mill bundle, and you can split it out within a couple minutes, versus doing it one piece at a time.”

The high-production lamination line aims to solve similar workplace issues, ensuring the material—top, bottom and edges—remains free of scratches and nicks during handling and processing. Tulley says the new laminating line replaced a manual machine that “was not as well built and not as heavy duty.” He notes it took two or three employees to complete the process on the old equipment, and the rollers weren’t as rugged, which was causing damage.

“With the new line, the process can actually be done by one person, if need be, or we can put two people on it to apply the PVC even quicker. It’s also faster to change out the PVC when you have to switch to a different kind,” he says.

Application

“Most entry-level manual laminators are very slow and produce poor film results on sheets,” says Jason Clark, president of Canrack. “Today’s variety of films are much higher tack and require the best possible application to be used on current laser beds. Most inexpensive lines cannot handle that well.”

However, Canrack’s double-sided laminator “produces a clean finished product, eliminating the need to reapply manually, and in a lot of cases, it removes the need to run small order batches off a CTL line that has inline lamination. Customers now have the choice to run stock inventory material and apply the film as needed.”

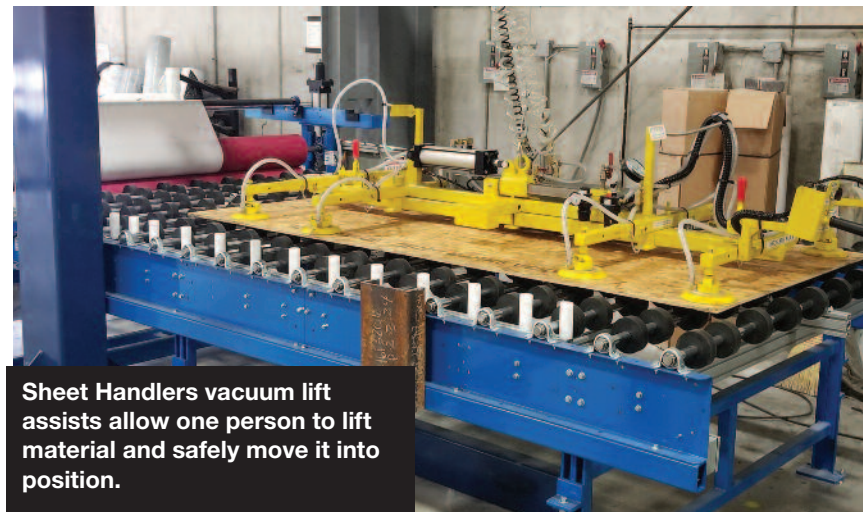
Safe handling

Tulley has found that the new equipment is much safer than the previous line. “Operators have to hold on to a switch or depress a pedal to move the material through, which ensures they aren’t in the way or have their hands in the wrong areas.” The system also is equipped with Canrack’s Sheet Handlers vacuum lift assists, which provide operators with the flexibility needed to handle sheets without damage and in the most efficient manner.

Canrack worked with Liebovich to en-



The line can handle high-tack films and has built-in lift equipment for safer operation and increased productivity.



Sheet Handlers vacuum lift assists allow one person to lift material and safely move it into position.

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sure the new equipment was built to fit into the allotted floorspace. Clark notes that the Liebovich team had seen the Canrack laminator set up at another Reliance subsidiary, and “wanted to have exactly the same configuration because they saw the value in having a high-production, double-sided lamination line that had integrated lift equipment built in.”

Once it was in place and running, Clark says that Liebovich immediately saw improvements to its order fulfillment capacity, as well as the opportunity to fine tune the equipment to be even more precise. “Canrack worked with the operators to customize their newly installed line to better suit their specific material handling needs, including options on manually

handling special orders.”

“Anything that can help us complete jobs quicker, faster and with fewer people is helpful,” Tulley says, adding that the Canrack high-production lamination line has “probably doubled our output on that machine with the same amount of people. It’s given us the ability to not have to staff that piece of equipment 24/7. We can go over there, get what we need to get done and these guys can go and perform other jobs.” ■

Canrack Metal Center Systems, Toronto, Ontario, 905/564-6250, www.canrack.com.

Liebovich Bros. Inc., Rockford, Illinois, 800/892-2981, www.liebovich.com.