

Phoenix
Captions

Fall 1998



**The Art
Of Closure
Innovation**

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The *Art* of Closure Innovation

What keeps innovation on a roll at Phoenix Closures?

Whether measured by the number of patents granted in recent years, or by the number of new caps entering the marketplace atop high-profile products, innovation at Phoenix Closures has never been more vigorous. This has prompted *Closures* editors to ask those who are most involved in developing new closures for customers to comment on the nature of innovation. What sustains it? How does it translate into value for our customers?

Sales and Marketing VP Jeff Ullrich says our value to customers is in how we find ways to make innovation practical. "Our approach to product development rests upon a 'Customer First' strategy. We don't design products that we think people will buy and then market them, rather, we focus on the particular needs of existing customers with whom we've built solid, trusting relationships." Jeff says one of the ways we make innovation practical is to negotiate a two-stage marketing agreement. "Under favorable conditions, we will develop a product based on a customer's need and then we will sell that same

product to markets that don't infringe on our customer's. Our being able to concentrate on products we can extend in this fashion helps offset costs that might otherwise make product development prohibitive for some customers."

Director of Engineering Len Ekkert describes the innovation process as embracing far more than just the functional or esthetic attributes of a closure. Len reminds us that a new cap is a team player in the very fast-moving, precision environment of filling and capping. "The sorters, chutes and cappers whose job it is to orient and apply closures to containers have been designed for the most part—for conventional closures," Len says. "When a truly innovative design comes down the pike it can challenge these existing systems.

"That's why we place such a strong emphasis on assisting at line trials and line start-ups. Many times our getting the bugs out requires innovation in the field. Sometimes we'll even team-up with machinery suppliers and work together to devise new parts for the equipment so that everything will work smoothly."



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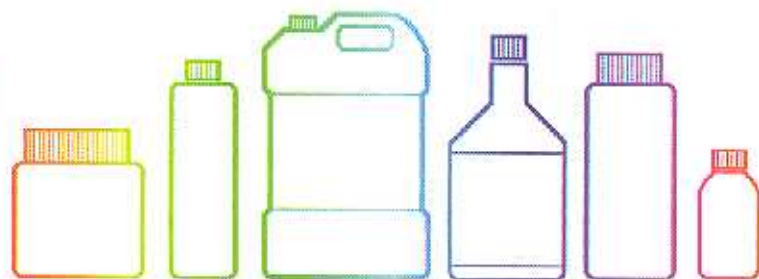
When asked about innovation, Director of Tech Services Dave Moore focused on the importance of developing what might be called a Wholistic Mindset at the outset of a new closure project. Dave pointed-out how a new cap represents a convergence of many materials and systems, and how each one has its own unique affect upon the final product. For innovation to go smoothly, these variables—and their interrelationship with every other variable in the program—must be well understood.

“Our being able to anticipate how everything is going to come together is crucial,” says Dave. “This requires a good knowledge of containers, cap liners, tooling options, heat-induction equipment, sorters and cappers, to name a few. We’re well-poised to evaluate these things because many of our key people have had decades of diverse packaging experience. Much of what we bring to the table, in fact, comes down to our having this broad-based knowledge to offer our customers.”

As to what sustains innovation, Len Ekkert points to an empowered management culture. “Key people can act with autonomy here and bypass multi tiered sign offs. Our teams can start quickly and proceed with turn on a dime maneuverability. Rapid adjustment to abrupt changes wouldn’t be possible any other way.”

Dave Moore believes our collective experience in many areas of packaging brings a practical viewpoint to the diverse tasks of innovation. “We’re able to bring a point-of-view to a new closure program which results in solutions that customers might not have otherwise thought of,” Dave says.

Jeff Ullrich credits a special breed of sales professional and their knack for turning opportunity into innovation. “Our sales force is technically well versed and thoroughly trained to understand our customer’s business. This allows us to sense a customer’s need early on, then proceed to assemble the technical resources necessary to transform that need into an innovative product.” ❖



Distributor Commitment Reaffirmed

Vice President of Distributor Sales Duncan Giles recently reaffirmed Phoenix Closures commitment to meet the special needs of its distributor customers.



Duncan Giles

“Service is a top priority,” Duncan says. “Our goal has been to answer all of our inquiries on the very first phone call—price, availability and ship date. Our customer service department offers superior dedication in meeting the demands of our valued distributors. In addition to superior service, our fully stocked sample room ships sample requests within 24 hours in most instances.”

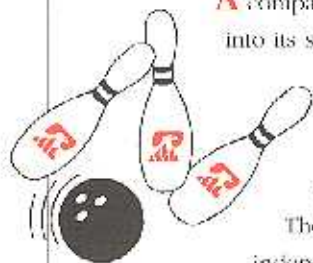
“Our strong suit has always been the breadth and flexibility of our stock line,” Duncan added. “We have all the standard sizes in all the popular styles, from 22 to 120 millimeters. We also stock many special purpose caps: linerless, dispensing caps, sifter filaments and tamper-evident closures. Our No-Minimum-Order inventory exceeds 100 million stock caps available for quick shipment.”

“We’re not standing still,” Duncan concluded. “We continue to retool in new sizes and styles. Our new, high-cavitation molds have helped make pricing even more competitive.”

“Our strategy is to offer quality, service and price. We want distributors to think of us as their sole source for *all* their closure needs.” ❖

SHORTS & FLASHES

Bowlers On a Roll



A company-sponsored bowling team is going into its second year. Team members include Machine Maintenance Supervisor Mike Bernard, Quality Specialist Aurora Chavez, and Machine Maintenance staff member Rich Thornton. The new team is part of an independent league. Employees interested in joining the team should talk to Rich

Thornton for more information. 🍷

Kohs Scholarship Winner Announced

This year's winner of the annual Kohs Scholarship is Alejandro Aquino, shown at right with his father, Mauricio, and his mother, Elekia. Alejandro is a graduate of Marmion Military Academy and will attend the University of Notre Dame. He played varsity football, attained the rank of company commander, and worked as a tutor to other students. The scholarship will provide Alejandro with \$6,000.00 over the course of the four years he'll attend Notre Dame. Mom is a lining operator here. 🍷



Wheaton Science Award

We are happy to announce our receipt of a Certified Supplier Award from Wheaton Science for "demonstrating excellence as a supplier to Wheaton Science Products in the areas of Quality, Service and Value". 🍷

Language Barrier Falls

Manuel Herrera is hurdling life's biggest barrier—the *learning* barrier. By taking advantage of Phoenix Closures' tuition reimbursement program, Manuel has completed his second year of English language courses. He says it was well worth the time and effort. He has developed better language skills and finds that he's engaging in more extended English conversations.



The unexpected bonus? Manuel says knowing the English language better has given him with more self confidence. Congratulations Manuel—And thanks for serving as an inspiration to others. 🍷

New E-Mail Address

Net surfers should note our new e-mail address: greatcaps@pclosures.com 🍷

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Captions is published by the Marketing Department of Phoenix Closures. Your comments and suggestions are always welcome. Please send them to:

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