



When Filmquest, the exclusive supplier of Questar polyester (PET) film, discovered that certain customers were using advanced inspection technology that made their technology lag in identifying extremely small defects, Filmquest responded with bold and proactive measures. They added state-of-the-art high resolution inspection technology by incorporating Unilux LED strobes into a rigorous quality program at its Bolingbrook, IL, converting facility.

“Cost never entered the picture,” said Kevin Burdwood, general manager, but opportunity costs and value did frame the decision. In a highly competitive global market, Filmquest depends on its reputation as a high quality global film supplier to keep current and new customers on the cutting edge of quality and technology. Of course, this helps everyone meet their objectives, but Burdwood and his management team saw far more than goals and objectives.

“Our primary customer base is printers and converters that have a variety of camera-based inspection systems and strobe lights on their presses, so they see any flaw in the material,” said Richard Farnsworth, performance film manager. “Before upgrading our current system, we were only able to identify most issues; the smallest defects in film could reach the customer’s facility, and in some cases, film reached the customer’s production process.

“A converter can add tens of thousands of dollars of value to our polyester film through their processes of printing, laminating, and finishing,” he said. “If a minor defect makes it all the way through all the processes, the printer can lose their cost of investment and may seek a claim from the raw material supplier, which can be many times more than the original cost of the material.

“It’s critical for us to make sure even the smallest potential flaws are identified and corrected before this material leaves our facility,” Farnsworth said. “There is no margin for error.”

Filmquest, the exclusive supplier of Questar polyester (PET) film, has added Unilux LED strobes into the rigorous quality program at its Bolingbrook, IL, facility. Equipment includes a fixed-mount LED2000 strobe and handheld H2 LED strobes.



Filmquest supplies Questar PET film in slit-to-width rolls, cut sheets, and fabricated

With that said, Farnsworth received authorization from Burdwood and John Felinski, president and CEO, to find a solution to this problem. Launching an extensive search, he focused on Unilux, a global company that was familiar to Burdwood from another company where he had worked and spearheaded a very successful inspection project working with Unilux.

“We knew how it helped others,” Farnsworth said. “Now, we needed to see what Unilux could do for Filmquest in improving its quality inspection system.”

FINDING THE PERFECT COMBINATION OF COVERAGE AND BRIGHTNESS REQUIREMENTS

Burdwood and Farnsworth arranged for an on-site demo from Tim Dixon, Unilux’s Midwest manager, who was able to supply several handheld models, giving Filmquest an opportunity to review various options of light patterns and coverage areas, specific to Filmquest’s unique coating requirements.

In addition to the management team, several Filmquest operators participated in the testing process, and according to Burdwood, they remarked on the ease of working with the lights and calibrating the angle and speed to match their inspection objectives with maximum visual effectiveness.

“The benefits were profound,” Burdwood said. “They were able to detect the smallest defect patterns with far more accuracy, and they were able to see tiny voids in the coverage that would be measured in microns.”

With Unilux’s unique rent-to-buy program, Filmquest chose to install a fixed-mount Unilux LED2000 strobe on its coating production line, where film widths can be as wide as 60 in. The company was able to test the strobe lights through rigorous protocols, including several handheld Unilux H2 LED strobes for additional flexibility benefiting accuracy and continuity.

“The LED2000 gives us the wide coverage we need, and from the fixed position, we have fewer operator adjustments,” Farnsworth said. “It gives us a simple set-up routine and the results we require. We can use the handheld lights to inspect any location on the process line; including one key area where the coating is applied—the anilox roll. Using the handheld instrumentation, they are able to quickly detect any plugged cells or particulate buildup and correct the problem before it impacts the coated material quality.”



To watch a video to see how Filmquest uses Unilux LED strobes, [click here](#).



The handheld Unilux H2 Series LED strobe can be used to inspect any location on the running process line for defects like skips or voids that can be caused by plugged holes in



The Unilux LED2000 Series strobe gives Filmquest the wide coverage area it needs on a 60-in.-wide coating line.

If the operators do detect a coating defect, they can quickly correct the problem's cause and mark the affected area for downstream secondary inspection to minimize any downtime.

Filmquest's quality system also relies on as many as 12 other tests to assure it ships only perfectly coated product, but adding the Unilux LED strobes have easily made the biggest difference in quality improvement to the quality system.

WASTE REDUCTION

"We know that the LED2000 has helped us reduce our waste dramatically and improve our line speed which improves our profit, but even better, our customers are reassured when they see Unilux's Strobes operating on our coating equipment, said Burdwood. "Customers require and appreciate the investment we made into improved quality and to see our proactive partnership with Unilux. It gives them a higher level of confidence in our products, our quality and our company."

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It is that credibility which Filmquest has taken extra steps to protect along with the company's reputation, which is the foundation and key to the long-term success of Filmquest and their customers.

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