

Tissue/It focuses on doing one thing well

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and trimming and they were in this building.”

Those three businesses all operated under one roof until 2007. Then, the issue of diminishing space forced the ownership group to make the decision to either expand the facilities or go in a different direction.

It was decided that facial tissue would be the sole area of focus for Precision Paper Converters.

This was a bold choice as still to this day they are the only company in North America that has facial tissue as its main product. However, the decision to make facial tissue the focus had sound reasoning behind it. “It was a niche that the company could really do well in,” Anderson said. “It was well enough established here that they saw enough potential for it and they had a reasonable competency making it. They decided the other two businesses were more commodities. There’s a lot of people doing rewinding, a lot that did sheeting and trimming, but not many that did facial tissue and none that focused on facial tissue.”

This specialization on the production of facial tissues has made Precision Paper Converters the go-to supplier for many companies across the country and in Canada

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Kaukauna

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that want to offer facial tissues to their customers without having to participate in the production.

Although they do offer a niche product line called Sniffles that is mainly found in gift shops and Festival Foods, the majority of the business comes from these companies that are interested in outsourcing this arduous task.

“If you think about bath tissue, you just rewind it from one jumbo roll onto a smaller roll, cut it, wrap it in plastic and it’s ready to go,” Anderson said. “Facial tissue is much harder to make and it’s a small category. Other

people don’t want to mess with it.”

For those not familiar with the conversion process, it is a simple, yet challenging system. It starts with jumbo rolls of tissues that weigh close to a thousand pounds. These rolls are put onto inner fold lines, cut to the correct size, and then inner folded so the tissues pop out of the box. Next, the tissue is put onto a conveyor belt and is fed to a log saw. Finally, they go into a cartoner that puts the tissue into the box. It is this folding process that makes facial tissues the most difficult product to make within the tissue market.

While the task is highly challenging, Precision Paper Converters has gotten it down to a science. “We’re really, really good at that one thing,” Anderson said. “We’re very specialized. It’s a niche market. It’s not high growth, but it’s a good place for one company to be.”

This specialization at doing one thing really well combined with the fact that facial tissues are locked into a stable, non-cyclical market has allowed Precision Paper Converters to steadily grow its business and thus expand its facilities. The company recently completed a facility expansion that cost close to \$6 million and added an additional 28,000 square feet to the 44,000 square feet of the original building.

Anderson mentioned that future expansion is on the horizon and it won’t be limited to

simply increasing the size of the Kaukauna building again.

“The plan is to start to expand around the country,” he said. “We need to get closer to some of our customers. Facial tissue is pretty freight intensive. It costs a lot for the value of that box to ship it around the country. Our plan is to get closer to some of our customers that are in the Southeast.”

While business continues to grow for Precision Paper Converters, the company knows there is a natural process that will prevent it from resting on its laurels.

“Our customers over time, as they grow their products, there’s a natural interest in making their own,” Anderson said. “You outsource it for awhile until it makes sense to bring it in house. From that perspective, we need to keep up growing because we’ll lose some naturally over time.”

Continuing to grow in a market that grows approximately one percent a year is another challenge the company faces, yet Anderson and his team have a strong driving force to keep expanding the business. “We have 45 families here, including mine. All those people and families depend on this business to keep doing well and grow so they can do the things they want to do with their families and improve their lot. That’s why we’re here, right?”

Planning is key to successful public meetings

Public meetings are often held by governmental entities on projects that impact the public such as road construction or replacing water or sewer lines. Private businesses also may feel the need to host public meetings if something they are proposing impacts the public (i.e. power transmission lines, pipelines for gas or oil, increasing truck traffic or the construction of a new facility).

How you plan in advance of these meetings will, more often than not, determine the meeting’s outcome. Here are 11 key things to keep in mind:

1. Most people attend public meetings because they have a concern or oppose what you are proposing. Prepare a list of questions that you may be asked, including the most difficult questions, and develop responses to them. Sometimes, there isn’t a clear answer at that time, but, that in itself, is an answer.

2. Location is important. Choose a site that is convenient for the public. People generally attend public meetings because they aren’t sure with what’s being proposed or they oppose it. Don’t add to their frustration by making it difficult for them to get to the meeting. Schools, libraries and government buildings are generally good locations. (Tip: Avoid locations that serve alcohol.)

3. Be sure the location meets all of your needs. This may include audio and visual



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(AV) equipment for formal presentations, plus open space for displays and ample room for the public to move from display to display comfortably without feeling crowded. A site visit is recommended to get a feel for the room. Always test AV equipment in advance

to ensure it works properly.

4. Choose a meeting date far enough out that you have plenty of time to prepare your materials. Developing display boards and a PowerPoint presentation takes time. Don’t rush yourself.

5. Equally important, understand your audience and plan the meeting date and time that accommodates their schedules, not yours. Send out meeting invites a minimum of two weeks in advance of the meeting. Three weeks is even better. If someone is directly impacted by your proposal, meet with them one-on-one in advance of the public meeting. You may be able to quell their fears or design a workaround.

6. Rehearse with your presentation team. This ensures everyone is conveying the same message. It also provides opportunity for the team to discuss difficult questions they are likely to be asked and develop responses. Plus, it gives the team an opportunity to review the materials for typos.

7. The day of the meeting, arrive early to set up the room. It’s not unusual for the public to arrive 15 to 20 minutes prior to the official start of the meeting. Make sure you’re ready for them. Providing refreshments and cookies is a welcoming gesture.

8. During the meeting, be polite and friendly. Understand the attendees are there to share their point of view and can be very

emotional. Even more important, understand that your facts will never outweigh their emotion. Often times, they want to share a personal story with you about their property. Listen to what’s being said and don’t cut them short.

9. If there is a formal presentation, followed by a Q&A session, consider setting time limits for comments and the number of questions that can be asked. Take control of the Q&A session and know when to end it.

10. Take copious notes of the comments and feedback provided. Truly listen to what is said. You never know when you may hear a good idea your team hasn’t thought of or identify something that needs to be addressed.

11. Finally, complete a debrief with the team immediately after the meeting while conversations are still fresh in their minds. Discuss what concerns were shared, the good things that happened at the meeting and, equally important, what could be improved on next time.

Depending upon the project being proposed, you may or may not develop public support. However, how well you prepare and manage the meeting will determine its success and help minimize opposition.

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