

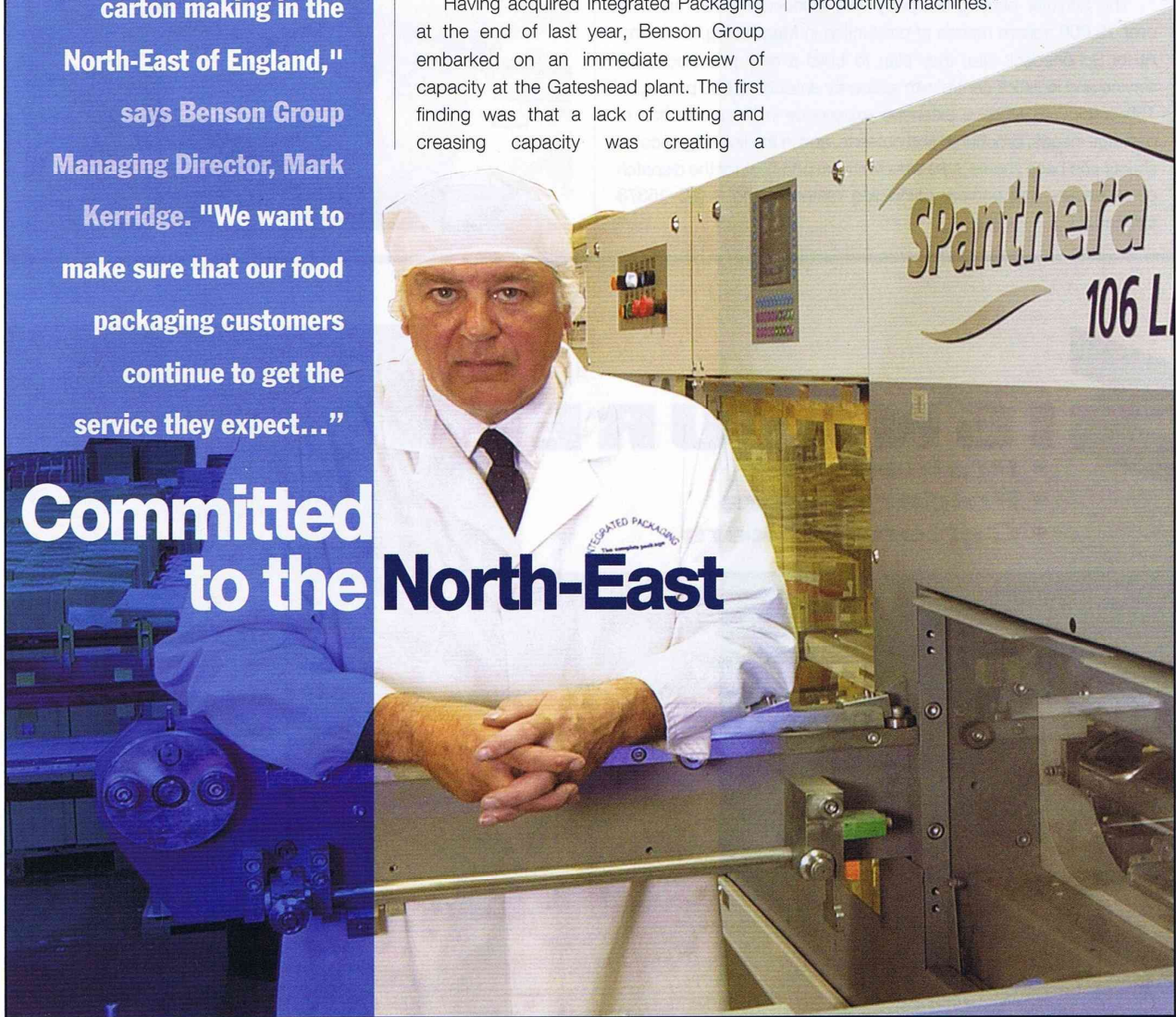
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Committed to the North-East

Having acquired two of the best known cartonmakers in England's North-East, Benson Group is expanding their diecutting capacity. "We wouldn't have acquired Integrated Packaging, or Print Design and Graphics, if we weren't committed to carton making in the North-East," says Benson Group Managing Director, Mark Kerridge. "We want to make sure that our food packaging customers continue to get the service they expect. That's why we acquired these businesses and it's also why we are investing in new equipment."

Having acquired Integrated Packaging at the end of last year, Benson Group embarked on an immediate review of capacity at the Gateshead plant. The first finding was that a lack of cutting and creasing capacity was creating a

bottleneck, one which was holding back print output. With some up-to-date cut and crease technology already in the plant, in the form of a recently installed Bobst SPanthera 106-LER, Mr Kerridge says it was soon clear that rolling such technology out through the plant was imperative. "We needed to achieve substantially higher running speeds as well as faster makereadies, something we simply couldn't achieve while still using the old Bobst SP102-SE that was supporting the SPanthera and SP104-ER blankers. Replacing the 102-SE with a second SPanthera has given us three high-productivity machines."



John Nouch, Cut & Crease Manager at Integrated Packaging, says that the new diecutter has balanced the workflow in the plant. "Before the arrival of the SPanthera, diecutting was always running behind print. Now, thanks to its productivity, the number of sheets that we diecut per operating hour has increased significantly. In fact it's gone up so much that we have all but eliminated printed sheet work in progress, something which has never been achieved at Integrated Packaging before."

Mr Kerridge says that the SPanthera has released the latent capacity in the plant. "Modern technology like this is not only more productive, but the fully blanked product it turns out also improves the quality and performance of everything downstream."

PDG and Medica

The availability on the pre-owned market of a completely refurbished Bobst SP104-ER, set Benson Group brains thinking about their various machine parks, and attention

soon focussed on the Print Design and Graphics (PDG) plant on Tyneside. Here, a pair of Bobst SP104-ER's provide high performance blanking, supported by a pair of, non-blanking SP102-E's. "We wanted to increase the amount of work we blanked at PDG, and buying the SP104-ER for the plant has given us the opportunity to do that," says Mr Kerridge. "On top of this, it freed up a fairly new SP102-E which we could usefully use at our Medica pharmaceutical packaging business."

Medica Packaging, in England's North-West, has recently acquired a new Bobst Alpina II gluer which has increased capacity in the plant's folding and gluing operation, putting pressure on cutting and creasing. "We are currently having the machine from PDG completely overhauled by Bobst, and it will be used to replace an old machine at Medica," says Mr Kerridge. "Its superior speed and consistency will improve diecutting at Medica and make it much easier to keep up with customer demand."

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