

1

The EXPO is HUGE

Hosted by PMMI, The Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies, with 2000 exhibiting companies located across 900,000 ft² exhibit floor in 4 enormous exhibition halls. The event was expected to attract 30,000 attendees including 5000 international visitors from 125 countries plus 1 PAC NEXT US Director who lives next door in Henderson, Nevada.

2

Interest in all things Sustainability was HUGE

All education sessions that included SUSTAINABILITY in the title were overrun with attendees. The on-going war-on-plastics along with legislation on the horizon in EU, Canada and California for single-use plastics had attendees on edge, many looking for guidance and the silver bullet that would make all of this uncertainty go away. Presentations covered topics from Plastics Pledges, Plastics Legislation and Design for Recyclability to the Circular Economy. I was particularly impressed by the Klockner Pentaplast presentation and you can find details of their Positive Plastics Pledge [here](#).

3

Presence from the plastic films and flexible packaging industry was also HUGE

Consistent with the growing trend for flexible packaging, there was a large presence representing the film and pouch suppliers industry. Several indicated significant business growth in 2018 of 25% or more. All are offering mono-material recyclable options with and without barrier coatings or layers. In parallel, there were several suppliers offering BPI certified compostable bags and pouches (predominantly PLA). All suppliers noted the prevalent challenges of cost effectively collecting and recovering flexible materials for recycling and / or composting.

4

Many PAC Members were exhibitors

It was great to see so many PAC members as exhibitors at the show and I was delighted to be able to visit many of the booths and talk with their representatives:

ABB, Aesus Packaging Systems, Amcor, AstroNova Product Identification, Balluff, BI-AX International, Busch Vacuum Pumps and Systems, CAM Packaging Systems, Capmatic, CGP Expal, DOW, Fortress Technology, Graphic Packaging International, Heat and Control, Henkel, Hood Packaging, Multivac, Omron, Pano Cap Canada, Peel Plastics Products, PFM, Plexpack, ProAmpac, Robatech, RIT, Ryerson, SGS, Siemens, Silgan, TC Transcontinental, Tetra Pak, UBE America, UniTrak, Valco Melton, Weber Packaging Solutions, WeighPack Systems, WestRock, and Yaskawa.

5

Robotics, Artificial Intelligence and Digital Twins were on display

Plenty of interesting robotics and AI to see e.g. PAC member Omron had a robot that would play dice with you (I won), there was object detection and flexible grasping with artificial intelligence and a robotic arm that mimics the human hand to grasp and manipulate items of varying size and weight. Siemens were demonstrating digital twins used throughout the product lifecycle to simulate, predict, and optimize the product and production system before investing in physical prototypes and assets. Watch this [space](#).

6

Other Areas of Interest

WestRock unveiled a new Shelf Ready Packaging (SRP) case former with a servo adjustable mandrel that offered rapid size changeover, Peel Plastics were offering their Think Green pouches using plant based materials, DOW sponsored a Showcase of Packaging Innovations. There was a Reusable Packaging Pavilion as well as a Printing Pavilion exploring all things digital printing and labeling.