

A Fresh Approach

The move towards returnable transit packaging is gaining ground as companies see the benefits of renting reusable packaging versus outright purchase. This is particularly relevant in the agricultural field, where fruit farmers may have a harvesting season of just a few weeks.

Traditional returnable packaging made from wood, is making way for hardier, more environmentally-friendly products which are more expensive, but are likely to outlive their dated counterparts by years.

Palogix saw an opportunity in this area right



Peter Friedman and Chris Allen, Palogix

at the outset and took advantage. "We're the first company to work purely with plastic," says director, Peter Friedman, during an interview with "Supply Chain Today". "None of our products are made of wood or metal." The company teams its product offering with a service to companies in the form of management of returnable transit packaging.

Wood constructed packaging may contaminate the products it carries

Getting fresh

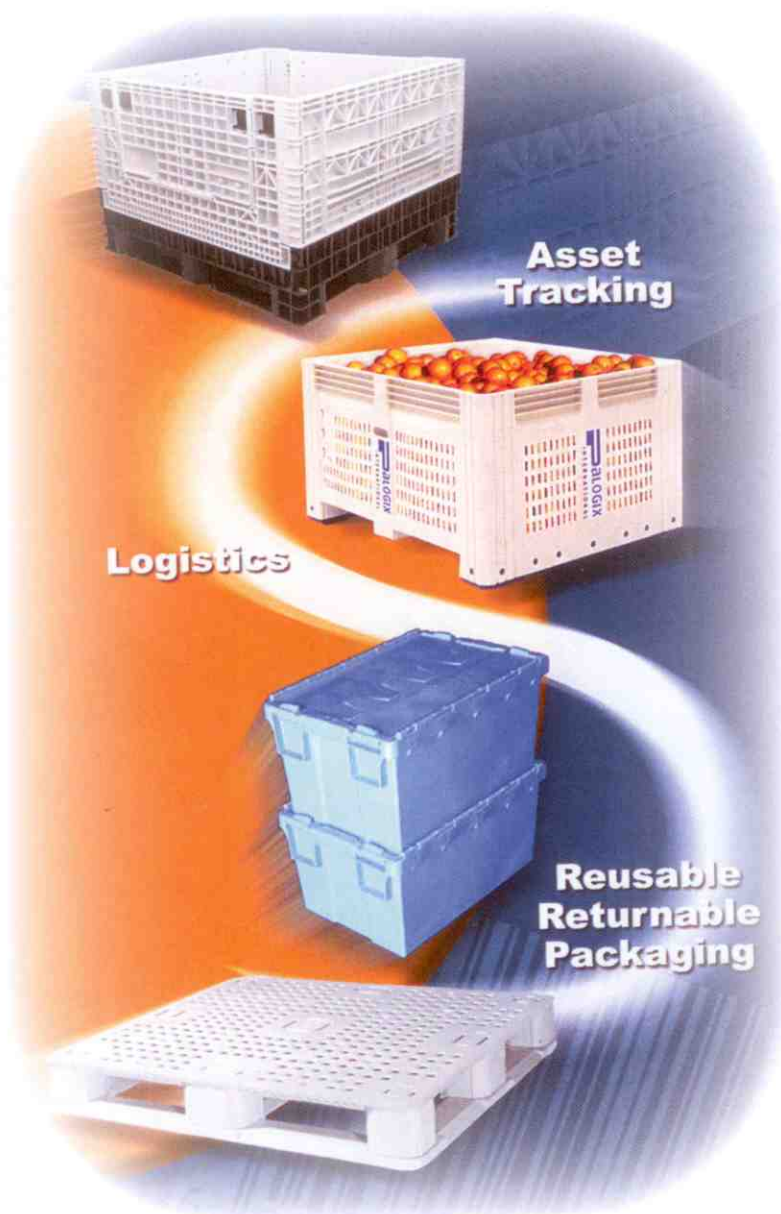
"We've made inroads into the agricultural market, specifically with growers of fresh produce," he tells us. "We've converted a sector of major fruit growers who traditionally used wood containers for harvesting, to plastic. It's a tough market, so we're pleased to have made an impact. We're also active within the automotive and pharmaceutical industries."

"There's a global trend away from using wood based products including cardboard," says Chris Allen, who joins us to give technical input. "In the field of food processing, this has a lot to do with hygiene. It's also critical for protecting food, because some wood constructed packaging may contaminate the products it carries."

Peter continues, "From a depot environment we provide growers and producers with harvesting bins. We also manage the process of getting them back to the farmer once the product has been delivered." This process involves cleaning, repairing any damage and getting the bins back to the farmer for the next load.

Money in mangoes

An example is the service Palogix provides in Limpopo, renowned for its mango crop. "Part of the crop is dried, some is juiced and fruit is sent to various markets both locally and over-



Asset
Tracking

Logistics

Reusable
Returnable
Packaging



Plastic containers are ideal for fresh produce

In the great debate over wood versus plastic, wood is rapidly losing ground to plastic

seas. The problem goes beyond simply packing mangoes into a box and shipping them off. It's a delicate fruit," says Peter. "Our product is

able to maintain the integrity of the fruit post harvesting. Air vents in the bins also keep fruit fresh, which is an important consideration.

Great debate

"During the recent mango harvesting season, we managed some of the logistics between the growers and a juicing plant and provided a bin exchange service to the growers," says Peter. "Fruit is picked directly from the trees into the bins and shipped to the processor. It's not a new concept, except that we're offering a product that is lighter and re-usable," he says.

In the great debate over wood versus plastic, wood is rapidly losing ground to plastic. This is important from an environmental point of view, since wood is becoming increasingly scarce

and more expensive. "A big advantage of our bin is that it's totally recyclable," says Chris. "Major damages are rare, but if you drive an Interlink over it, which we've seen, damage is inevitable." Forklift damage is also a concern but this is as true for other materials as it is for plastic.

Safer option

Plastic packaging also results in fewer injuries on duty, because of its lighter weight and the fact that it doesn't splinter. Wooden bins weigh 60/70kgs and become even heavier when they absorb water, which is an unavoidable part of handling fresh produce. As for splintering, let's face it, the term was pretty much invented for wooden products.

Chris adds another consideration: "If you're tipping fresh produce into a processor and a nail is dislodged, it'll damage the machinery." Replacing processing parts is expensive, thus working with plastic bins far outweighs anything you may have saved in working with their wood counterparts.

So what's the next big thing? "We have such an open mind to new opportunities that it's impossible to say what we see happening next. Our biggest challenge is changing mindsets. We're happy to be flexible, but sometimes it's harder to convince those we're pitching to," chuckles Peter.

For those clients who successfully embrace something new, they invariably ask why they didn't do it before," he concludes.

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Gauges
Chain: Complete range up to 2" (50,4mm) including 2% & 3% wear limits
Fork: Go-no-Go for 10% wear

Very durable - Both gauges 1, 6mm+ steel & powder coated
 Denim pouch with both gauges & instructions



Cradle: Department of Labour approved, Standard pallet size, 2 persons/250kg, Colour optional



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