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Bell Inc. Adds Staff, New Business and Distribution Center

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SIOUX FALLS, SD—July 25, 2011—Summer 2011 has brought a spate of new hiring at Bell Inc., including 38 new positions, with more openings anticipated, and the addition of a director of sales, a new position needed to drive even more growth expected by Bell. The company also has added a new distribution center that adds 40 percent to the company's existing warehouse space.

CEO Ben Graham attributes the company's continuing growth, despite the economy, to the ongoing execution of a strategic plan begun years ago. The plan includes aggressive investment in technology and continuous cost control—not always compatible goals—along with a commitment to stay independent in a rapidly consolidating industry.

Bell's recent growth has included more than \$25 million in new business in the past two years, plus expansion of business with existing customers that include some of the world's largest food companies. Its purchase two years ago of the first Heidelberg Speedmaster XL 162 VLF press to be installed in North America added large-format sheetfed offset printing to the company's web offset and flexo printing capabilities, creating a springboard for the growth the company hoped for.

“Purchasing managers at big companies are under pressure to buy from multiple vendors,” noted Graham. “It's how they create leverage to drive better prices and improved service.”

That's gotten harder, though, with a long-term consolidation trend that has resulted in just two large players remaining to serve most of the biggest consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies. As an independent, mid-sized company whose operations and investments in technology mirror those of larger companies, Graham believes Bell is now better positioned than any other independent converter to be the alternative packaging source for those companies.

“The CPGs tell us it's refreshing to have Bell as an alternative and they talk in terms of partnering with us for the long haul,” he reports. “We like to hear that.”

New Distribution Center to achieve compliance for food-safety standards

Bell's brand-new 64,000-square-foot distribution center (which opened on July 15) will allow the company to stay a step ahead of customer needs, according to Graham, particularly those in the food industry where safety throughout production, including handling and storage, is paramount. More national and multi-national food companies are turning to Bell to take on portions of their business,

pointed out Graham, so the goal is for the new warehouse to be compliant with the most stringent food-safety standards.

“Plus, we’ll be able to service customers very quickly, and manage more of their inventory, flexibly—that’s critical in an industry where there are frequent changes in things like product coding, marketing and promotions,” he adds.

More shifts, more jobs both skilled and unskilled

Bell is adding six crews, according to Marianne Von Seggern, vice president, strategic development, including distribution center support, as well as more shifts on the very-large-format press. There are 30 new plant-floor positions, as well as eight administrative positions, including quality, engineering and sales positions at Bell.

“And with new business rolling in, I think we’ll be looking for more people beyond that,” Von Seggern said.

New director of sales

Bell’s director of sales, Robert Rosebraugh, joins the company from Graphics Packaging International, where he was sales manager for the Midwest region. His previous employer is one of the two largest packagers. Rosebraugh landed there after a series of mergers and acquisitions, the most recent of which was Graphics’ acquisition of Altivity Packaging, where he had been vice president of sales, Midwest region.

“I grew up in small-or mid-sized family-owned businesses,” said Rosebraugh. “I like the action, growth and nimble responsiveness of a company like Bell—where you can walk into the corner office, have a discussion and contribute directly to the company’s future. It’s a better fit for me.”

Graham says Bell’s five-year plan calls for significant additional growth, with Rosebraugh in the key position to drive it. “We are thrilled to have someone of Bob’s expertise and tenure in our industry onboard. He will be instrumental in developing the skills and team needed to hit our growth targets,” Graham said. Rosebraugh will work out of Bell’s Chicago office.

About Bell

Bell Inc. is one of the 10 largest independently owned folding carton companies in the country, the world’s largest supplier of paperboard envelopes, and provides packaging services to some of the world’s largest food manufacturers.

The company business model is unusual for a mid-sized manufacturer in that it invests significantly in the latest high-speed converting technology, while maintaining a lean, cost-focused organization. As a result, Bell has remained a strong independent player in a mostly consolidated industry, and an alternative source for the world’s largest consumer packaging companies.

Bell has headquarters and two plants in Sioux Falls, SD, and offices in Chicago. For more information, visit www.bell-inc.com.