

Case Studies

SPEEDY SPROCKET EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

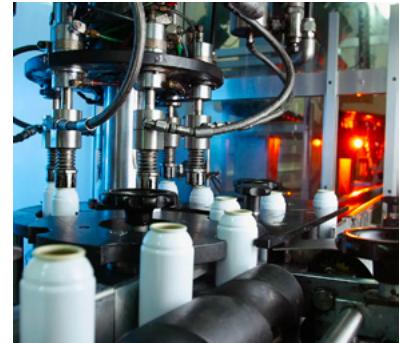
Challenge

The Wisconsin plant of an international manufacturer of packaging and bottling filling machines was producing a new beverage filling line for their customer. To stay on schedule, they needed a custom machined plastic sprocket within two weeks. The manufacturer has a large internal machine shop and normally makes all plastic components in house. However, their internal shop was at capacity, and they did not have the resources to create the part.

Solution

Slideways was able to turn around and ship the part in nine days meeting the manufacturer's two week deadline. Initially, the manufacturer was wary of the service and quality they would receive by outsourcing. However, Slideways had produced these types of products before, and was confident they could meet the customer's specifications.

The manufacturer was impressed with how quickly Slideways was able to interpret their drawings, produce a quality part, and ship it to them. With the part completed, the manufacturer could ship out their new beverage filling line to their customer on schedule and maintain their reputation as a service level leader in the industry.



CONVEYOR MANUFACTURER GOES LENGTHS TO FIND GUIDE RAIL

Challenge

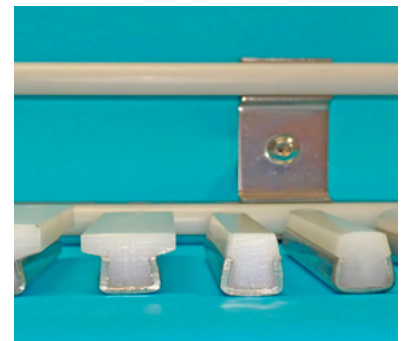
A manufacturer of food processing conveyors in South Carolina was facing a shortage of guide rail. The primary application for their conveyors is canning. A vital and high-volume component used in the canning conveyors is natural UHMW stainless steel backed round top guide rail. The plant uses miles and miles of this rail every year in their conveyor builds.

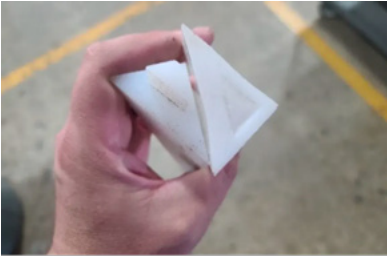
The plant's long-time guide rail supplier is a well-known name in the industry. However, the supplier continually pushed out lead times from weeks to months and was poor at communicating. This was frustrating for the plant and caused them to lose trust in the supplier. After months of waiting for guide rail from the supplier, the plant ran out of stock. Their end-user was going to start back charging the manufacturer as the conveyors weren't complete without guide rail.

Solution

Slideways found out about the plant's guide rail dilemma. Natural UHMW stainless steel backed round top guide rail is a stock standard for Slideways. The plant placed an order with Slideways and received their first release of 1500ft in days. This prevented the end-user from back-charging and reduced downtime at the plant.

The manufacturer was pleased with the excellent service they received from Slideways. Slideways was responsive and quick to act on their request. For the balance of the order, the plant was surprised with how short the lead-time was. Slideways had the agility to get stock quickly and deliver a level of individual service that the manufacturer was not receiving from their other supplier. The manufacturer appreciated how easy Slideways was to work with and has since made Slideways their primary supplier.





CUTTING COSTS WITH A CUSTOM EXTRUSION

Challenge

An OEM specializing in agricultural equipment aimed to enhance their troughed-belt conveyor, traditionally featuring steel profiles. These conveyors faced rapid wear due to abrasive, dirty produce, leading to frequent replacements and customer dissatisfaction. The OEM recognized UHMW plastic's superiority for abrasion and impact resistance. However, in-house cutting of UHMW sheets proved inaccurate and laborious, with substantial time spent on edge smoothing. Outsourced sheet lead times also posed concerns.

Solution

The Slideways sales representative in the region learned of the difficulties the OEM was experiencing. They proposed the idea of designing a custom UHMW extrusion to replace the profiles that the OEM was cutting in-house. Slideways worked closely with the OEM on the design, material selection, and performed a cost-analysis to create the custom extrusion. The OEM was delighted with this solution. It was estimated that the OEM saved six-hours of labor per 10-feet of extrusion. With the initial 2,500-feet of extrusion purchased, over 1,500 man hours were saved. Additionally, Slideways identified another opportunity for improvement in the conveyor design. Slideways designed and custom machined a transition end cap that fits neat neatly into each end of the extrusion. Made of UHMW for its high wear properties, these end caps increased the conveyor's overall efficiency by allowing the belt to transition to flat before reaching either pulley. By partnering with Slideways, the OEM improved their product's performance while saving time, labor, and money. With this project, the OEM utilized the versatile extrusion and machining capabilities of Slideways to develop a solution that will create years of value.

SCRAPER BLADE

Challenge

A Wisconsin facility producing stainless steel tanks and silos for food industries faced an inventory crisis due to a shortage of specialty scraper blades essential for their mixing tanks. Normally made by injection molding with resin, the supply chain disruptions rendered their regular supplier unable to deliver, threatening to halt production.

Solution

Slideways arrived onsite and offered to develop a solution by custom machining the components. The customer explained that material selection was key due to the high temperature application conditions. The scrapers would be submerged in a solution that reached temperatures of 210° F. Additionally, the scraper had to be metal detectable. This was not a standard, off-the-shelf material.

Using their expertise and supplier connections, Slideways was able to locate a suitable material that met all specifications. A sample was produced and sent to the plant. When the plant received the sample, they realized that their drawing was not up to date. Slideways worked closely with the customer to modify the design and print to meet their current specifications.

Once the design was finalized, Slideways custom machined the scrapers in mass. Releases to the plant were scheduled over a period of months. The plant was able to continue production and their end-users received their orders on-time.

The plant appreciated the ease of working with Slideways. Attention to detail was crucial in meeting the multiple unique specifications of the part. Additionally, Slideways went above and beyond the original request by updating their drawing. With Slideways help, the plant avoided a production stall, late deliveries, and irritated end-users.