



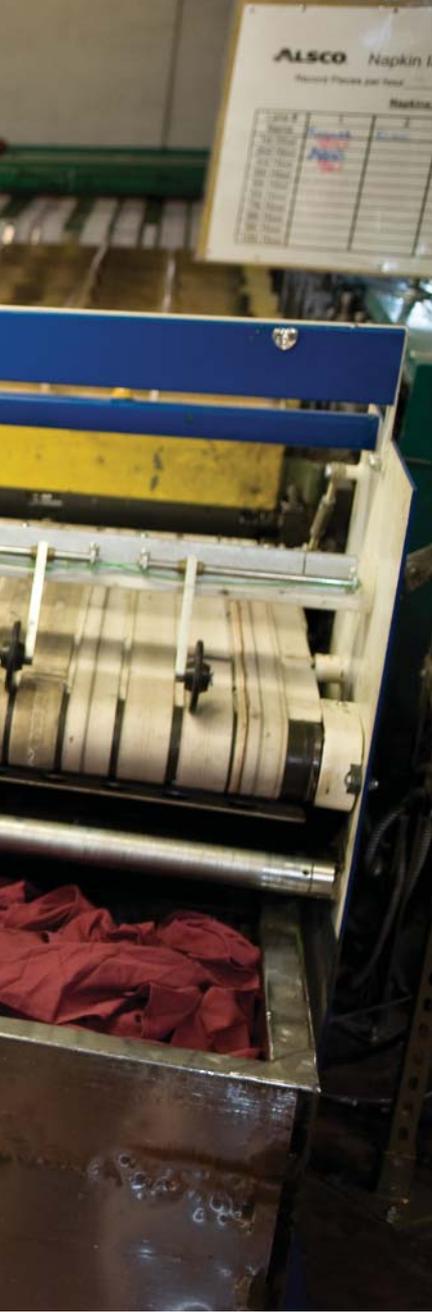
(l/r) Brian Johnson, AlSCO, and Ray Esparza, Tingue, Brown, stand beside the ironer that a Tingue team disassembled, moved, reassembled, tested and made ready for duty on the Monday morning after a weekend move from a plant across town.

Weekend at AlSCO—Crosstown Ironer Move Revs Up Two Plants For Growth

Tingue team applies systematic approach to dismantling, moving and reassembling flatwork ironer

By Randy Vansparrentak

When investment bankers consider a merger or acquisition, they talk about efficiency. Business 101 professors theorize about synergy. But the actual work involved in blending the strengths of two organizations, realizing efficiencies and harnessing synergies to yield bottom-line results usually takes sev-



eral years and often falls on the shoulders of real people like Brian Johnson.

Strategic equipment realignment

As general manager for AlSCO Inc. in Denver, Johnson oversees operations at the company's two processing facilities in that city. The Cook Street plant has been part of the company's lineup since 1970. Its production has gravitated toward a specialty in food and beverage (F&B) linens such as napkins and tablecloths. The Elm Street plant was acquired in 1995 from National Linen & Uniform Service (AlSCO acquired all of National in 2006). AlSCO stocked the Elm Street

to develop expertise in the textiles and chemistry of each product line. "We had a long-term strategy in place that called for continuous improvements in production efficiency," says Johnson. "Efficiency creates capacity without requiring investments in facilities or new equipment and that allows us the flexibility to grow as markets grow without having to incur exorbitant capital costs to meet demand."

When Johnson's team made an acquisition of upwards of 25,000 lbs. per week of healthcare linens, he saw the additional volume as an opportunity to separate the workflow of his two plants and bring their operations more in line with corporate strategy. This meant equipping the Elm Street plant to specialize in medical and hotel linens and the Cook Street plant for F&B linens. To make room on Elm Street and accommodate the extra volume, Johnson wanted to transfer the 10,000 lbs. per week of F&B linens to Cook Street. This would eliminate the sorting process altogether and permit the F&B linens to be managed more efficiently as part of the Cook Street operation. But the transfer also required moving the American eight-roll Super Sylon ironer through which the linens were pressed. "This had been a reliable, relatively low-maintenance ironer for years and its output was always top quality, so we wanted to keep using it across town," says Johnson. And once the determination was made

plant with a tunnel washer and other equipment to handle mammoth loads of healthcare and hotel linens such as sheets, pillowcases and towels with speed and efficiency. But the plant also was handling 10,000 lbs. per week of F&B linens from preexisting contracts. This wasn't enough to justify investing in dedicated equipment or logistics systems, but it did require the addition of a separate step in the process to manually sort incoming linens for direction to the proper production line.

Johnson saw this workflow complication as a thorn in the side of his plan to boost efficiency at both plants. Separating their workloads by focusing on specific product lines—F&B in one and medical and hotel linens in the other—would streamline the process, eliminate any potential for error in separation and allow employees

to do this, "We needed it done as quickly as possible so we could handle our newly purchased business."

Deconstructing an ironer

Dismantling an ironer of this size, transporting it safely through city



The addition of 25,000 lbs. per week of healthcare linens convinced AlSCO management to separate the workflow of the two plants. The Elm Street plant would specialize in healthcare and hotel linens, while Cook Street would focus on F&B textiles.

Transporting Machinery

streets and reassembling it properly was no easy task. Completing the job in a single weekend without disrupting production at either plant required particular expertise. That's when Johnson called on his Tingue, Brown & Co. representative, Ray Esparza. For 10 years, Johnson has relied on Esparza for guidance in specifying and installing aprons, pads, covers, lubricants and other flatwork ironer products. Esparza also had recently managed the removal of an old continuous roll towel machine from the Elm Street plant. "We weren't using it to full capacity and it didn't fit into our long-term plans," says Johnson. "Ray and his team did a fine job on the disassembly and removal of the CRT ironer, and I was confident he would not only know the most efficient way to move our Super Sylon, but that his team would also be able to execute a project of this magnitude safely and smoothly."

Esparza contacted teammates at Talley Machinery to devise the project plan. Founded in 1902, Talley Machinery is a global supplier of parts, equipment and rebuild and rigging services to the commercial laundry industry. Like Tingue, Brown & Co., and laundry cart manufacturer Meese Orbitron Dunne Co., Talley is part of

ously knew the drill."

Then they began putting the ironer back together. During the reassembly process, they checked parts for wear and replaced a few from a spare parts kit they had sent in advance of the project. The kit had been stocked with the parts most likely to need replacement based on the ironer model, volume of production, type of linens and other factors. The ironer was reassembled and rewired, the chests were reset and it was leveled and squared. Then the team installed new covers, pads and aprons. Johnson used the Tingue, Brown & Co. Heavy Longlife aprons and Perma padding with Tingulon Nomex covers, except on the first roll, on which the company's Pureflex Polyflex cover was installed due to its ability to promote safe, smooth, even feeding of polyester linens. Now it was time for a test run of AlSCO's linens to make sure everything was operating properly. Napkins were run repeatedly through the ironer, and as each one came through with squared corners and not a crease to be found, everyone was elated. "Back on that Friday, I wondered if this could really be done in time for Monday morning, but these guys put in a lot of 'blood, sweat and tears' and they did it—safely and



When Tingue staff disassembled the ironer down to the chests, rolls, frames and cross members, there were over 200 parts weighing more than 30,000 lbs. The larger sections were tied down for safety and moved out of the plant and onto a truck for their crosstown journey through Denver.

the Tingue family of companies. Joined by colleagues Ralph Whallon and Joe Flesher, Esparza arrived at the Elm Street plant on a Friday morning with a fully choreographed project plan designed to have the ironer up and running on Cook Street in time for the plant to start up on the following Monday morning. First, they disassembled the ironer down to the chests, rolls, frames and cross members, totaling nearly 200 parts weighing more than 30,000 lbs. Then they rigged the larger parts to move them safely and securely out of the plant and onto their truck for transport through the city.

Upon arrival at the Cook Street plant, each part was unloaded and rigged inside the plant for reassembly. This process went on virtually around the clock over the weekend. "It was clear they had done this type of job before," says Johnson. "Ray, Ralph and Joe obvi-

ously—and by the end of the weekend everything was up and running," says Johnson. "Recently, when I asked an interior design company to install our new office furniture over a weekend, they looked at me like I had two heads. Talley Machinery understood we couldn't have the reassembly going on in the middle of our plant during operating hours, and they really came through for us."

PM program fuels efficiency

To ensure the Super Sylon—and Johnson's 11 other ironers—continue to operate at a high level without unplanned downtime, Esparza set up an automatic preventative-maintenance program, whereby he visits one of the Denver plants each month. Over the course of the year, he examines each ironer for wear and replaces

Ironer Takedown Tips

Taking a flatwork ironer apart isn't especially difficult, according to Randy Vansparrentak, general manager of Talley Machinery. It's putting the ironer back together properly with every component in the right place so that it operates at peak performance day in, day out, that requires substantial knowledge and hands-on experience. If you decide to undertake a project like the one Talley Machinery managed for AlSCO, Vansparrentak offers these recommendations:

- If the people handling the disassembly haven't memorized every component part of the ironer, then be sure to label each and every part as it is dismantled to eliminate the potential for confusion and delay during reassembly. Similarly, grouping and packaging related parts, and using color-coded containers helps ensure the parts are easily found and reassembled as intended.
- A thorough test after reassembly is critical to ensuring that every system and every part is functioning as intended. For ironers equipped with three-phase motors, for example, ensuring proper phase rotation is essential. The entire electrical system and control center cannot be checked and rechecked enough, given its importance in the ironer's safe operation.
- It is the seemingly simple aspects that can cause trouble. Measurements, for example, need to be conducted on the largest parts of the ironer in relation to the docking bay, doors and clearances inside the plant. If additional space is needed to safely transport each part into its new location, then staff should clear the area before the move. Also, staff must take care to replace rolls in the proper order.
- Be realistic about the time needed to complete a project of this scope. Our people train, study, prepare for and perform this type of work every day and are able to squeeze it into a long weekend. But it's not uncommon for this process to take up to two weeks. Allotting sufficient time for the job alleviates pressure that could lead to errors, while allowing for flexibility in accommodating contingencies that may arise.
- Take advantage of the project as an opportunity to upgrade older ironers with modern systems and accessories to maximize safety and performance. Such installations may be performed more efficiently and at a lower cost when the ironer is already disassembled and fully accessible and skilled employees are already on-site.

parts as needed. He also replaces the covers, pads and aprons of one ironer each month, among other details. "A little bit spent now pays off a lot later," says Johnson. "Downtime for a sudden repair, or due to a decline in product quality doesn't exactly contribute to high efficiency and throughput." TR



Randy Vansparrentak is general manager of Talley Machinery, a Tingué family company. He has over 30 years' experience in equipment installation/repair. Previously, he was a chief engineer and corporate engineer for two of the largest linen suppliers in the United States. Contact him at 800/222-9954 or rvansparrentak@talleyparts.com.

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