

We are pleased to present to you our latest "Focus On FILAMATIC" eNewsletter - Volume 1, Number 10



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SEASON'S GREETINGS

and best wishes for a bright and
Happy New Year

National Instrument's Holiday Schedule



Your Friends at:
National Instrument / **FILAMATIC®**

With the end-of-year holiday season upon us, please note that National Instrument will be closed on the following

weekdays:

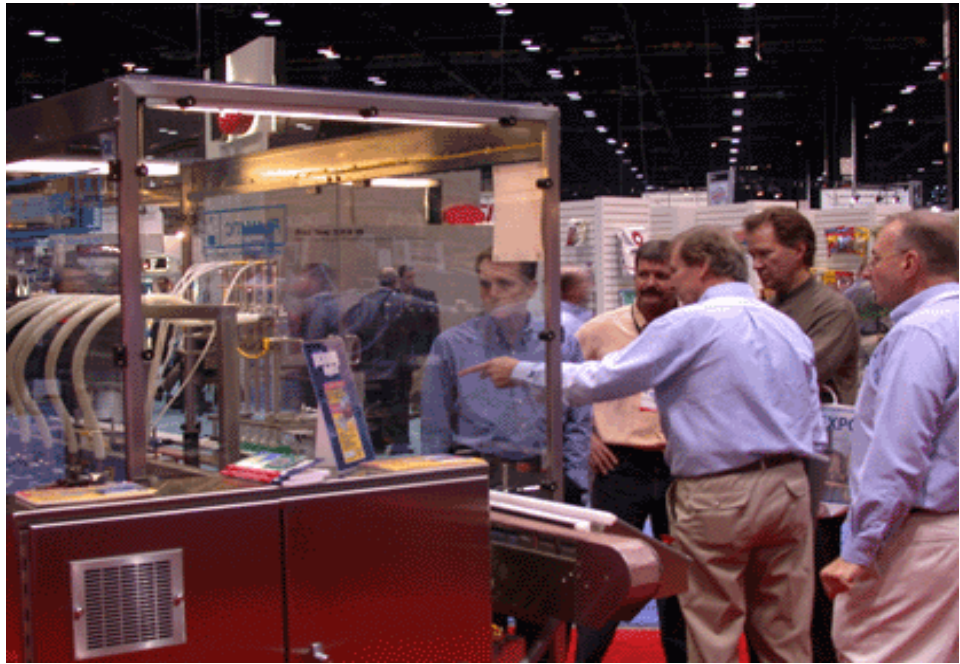
Friday, December 24, 2004

Monday, December 27, 2004

Friday, December 31, 2004

As always, should you require emergency assistance over the holidays, or at any other time outside of normal business hours, contact us at (800) 526-1301 extension 301.

On behalf of all of us at NIC, we wish you a happy, healthy, and safe holiday season.



PackExpo '04 International

A Few Post-Show Comments and Observations

With PackExpo '04 International behind us, it seems appropriate to take a moment to reflect on what we saw, what we didn't see, and to share some thoughts on the recent Chicago show. With PMMI reporting official attendance of 71,113, visitor and exhibitor attendance dropped slightly this year as compared with PackExpo '02.

We looked internally to collect feedback and evaluate the recent Chicago show. As National Instrument has expanded its workforce to include several seasoned individuals that have spent years working in the packaging industry, we thought it appropriate to begin our analysis by talking with some of those new team members. With the addition of just three new hires, FILAMATIC® has gained nearly 100 years of packaging industry experience and acquired renewed focus to further support its filling, capping and integration of filling systems. We are pleased to introduce Conrad Porter, our National Sales Manager; Pat Hogan, our Integrated Products Applications Engineer; and Nick Perazzo, our Senior Engineer.

Conrad and Pat reviewed the show from a sales perspective and confirmed that show attendance was noticeably lower. Initially, Pat noted, "the majority of equipment exhibited was not new or did not focus on innovation." Circulating the tradeshow floor provided good opportunities for discussion with other exhibitors, many of whom had suffered lackluster sales as a result of 9/11. Various exhibitors confirmed that as orders were not placed, monies were not devoted to research and development and as a result, the PackExpo '04 show was more of a repeat of what was featured previously. Many exhibitors downsized their booth space, minimized the number of personnel manning the booth, and displayed fewer equipment models in order to meet more stringent budget requirements.

www.filamatic.com Website Update

Don't forget to check out National Instrument's (NIC) multimedia, interactive, www.filamatic.com website.

Navigation tools, including pull-down menus and key word searching, allow visitors to readily access company and product line information organized by equipment/machinery type and customer industry. The website is continually updated with new information regarding NIC's diversified line of FILAMATIC® packaging machinery.

The most recent additions to our website's content include:

- [FILAMATIC®'s New Corporate Video](#) – A comprehensive four-minute introduction to our company's core competencies. (File Size 7MB)

- A [press release](#) previewing FILAMATIC®'s participation in the PackExpo '04 International Show.
- An [announcement](#) of FILAMATIC®'s plans to exhibit at the Interphex 2005 show in New York.
- An updated webpage of [frequently asked questions \(FAQs\)](#) including all of the FAQs from the first nine editions of "FOCUS on FILAMATIC®"



But, there is good news. Pat stated, "many exhibitors have begun to diversify their product lines, expanding their offerings to incorporate related machinery and generally getting into a systems approach, something that had been avoided in the past". Vendors have become more sensitive to the market and what the customer requires in filling, capping, conveying, and even other upstream and downstream systems.

Nearly all of the exhibitors saw the future as bright. The 4th quarter of 2004 brought some positive signs of an economic recovery, but not soon enough to affect R & D efforts in time for PackExpo '04. However, vendors that had been in business for many years expressed strong confidence in a sales rebound for the new year of 2005. They

confirmed that new research is currently taking place, and they expect to introduce the new technology in the near future.

Coming attractions include:

- A Spanish-language portal providing access to significant Spanish-language content
- A site map to provide for even easier website navigation
- A webpage showing our Customer Care statement
- A webpage containing FILAMATIC® Testimonials
- Video of our molten products filling systems
- Information regarding FILAMATIC® integrated systems

The "[Press Releases](#)" and "[Newsletters](#)" webpages, accessed via the "About Us" menu found on our homepage, are noteworthy. The former

The engineering perspective came from Nick. Nick reaffirmed Pat's comments by saying, "capping competitors are expanding to fillers and belt wheel cappers to rotary cappers. There is a definite push to expand R & D efforts currently in process and to provide additional new development."

Nick's research indicated that nearly every large machinery manufacturer provided HMIs (Human Machinery Interfaces) and touch screen controls, complete with descriptive text. The touch screen provides a sealed, flat surface for easy cleaning. Touch screens offer easy to read "next action" prompts and often provide the added convenience of incorporating the operating manual as part of the menu. Many systems had set-ups and recipes for easy recall and were very user-friendly.

There was visible progress in packaging system guarding. The newest guard assemblies featured an overhead hinged configuration that minimized space and could be moved away from the machine work area when necessary. With new vendors offering make-it-yourself guard assemblies, the stainless steel or polished aluminum products provided a very finished look. With pre-measured and pre-cut components, the guarding is easily set in place and attached for a smooth, aesthetically pleasing appearance. More and more manufacturers of packaging machinery are choosing to outsource guarding design, manufacturing, and assembly to third parties, thereby minimizing their own time spent in system fabrication and maximizing overall equipment appearance.

With the continued development of new technology, the customer is better served on many levels. Equipment pricing has been positively affected. Nick said, "vision systems that once cost \$8,000.00 are now sold for \$1,600.00". New electronic and technological advances can provide definite cost savings to the customer. Technology also favors the show visitor when large-screen televisions are used to bring full packaging systems to life. Nick notes, "even when the actual equipment is not displayed at the show, viewing the media assures the prospect of the vendor's capabilities and helps in the presentation of specific

provides a listing of and access to all press releases, typically new product information, issued by NIC after October 2002. The latter allows a website visitor to access all previous editions of NIC's "FOCUS on FILAMATIC®" eNewsletter.

packaging solutions".

National Instrument enjoyed demonstrating our semi-automatic and automatic liquid filling systems at PackExpo '04. We look forward to the New Year in anticipation of new packaging challenges. If you are working on a current liquid filling project or would like to hear more about our packaging solutions, give us a call. Our team of packaging professionals can help with your liquid filling needs. *For now, we wish you a safe and Happy Holiday Season!*

FAQs

Q: I have a project in the works and have a general idea of what I want to accomplish, but I need help in maximizing my investment. What can I expect from your organization in the way of help or suggestions?

A: As NIC is experienced in the manufacturing of liquid packaging systems, we first work to understand what you are trying to accomplish in your liquid filling project. We accumulate information on the types of containers you are using, viscosity of product(s), and number of fills per minute. We also collect data on capping, plugging or labeling requirements, if applicable. Your data is then thoroughly analyzed for maximum system effectiveness, space considerations that you might have, integration with other equipment, and plans for future product changeover or expansion. We partner with you to understand your current needs, to evaluate that information, and finally, to recommend the ideal liquid filling solution for your project.

Q: What is the best way to become familiar with National

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If you enjoy reading this eNewsletter, and have a friend or colleague that you believe might also benefit from it, [click here](#) to refer them to us so that we may forward future issues of "FOCUS on FILAMATIC" to them. Please type their email address(es) in the body of the provided email form. Anyone may sign up for a free, privacy-protected subscription by [clicking here](#). Please provide Name, Title, Company, Email Address and any other information you feel is relevant in the body of the provided email form.

Do you have any comments or suggestions regarding this eNewsletter or a specific feature of FOCUS on FILAMATIC? Please forward any comments or suggestions to [Mark Bennett](#), or call 1-800-526-1301 extension 219.

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Instrument's equipment?

A: That's easy. Visit our website at www.filamatic.com.

We continuously update our website to provide a good representation of our product lines and the various services we offer. Check out our website to view information on our semi-automatic and automatic filling systems. You can download specification sheets on the equipment and view video of actual machines in operation. Use the "Contact Us" tab to reach us with any questions.

If you have a question, or questions, that you would like to have addressed in the FAQ section of FOCUS on FILAMATIC®, please forward it/ them via e-mail to [Mark Bennett](mailto:Mark.Bennett@filamatic.com). Your question(s), and the associated answer(s), will be included in the next edition of this eNewsletter.

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