

# Six New WITTMANN Integrated Injection Molding Machine Workcells Fuel Medical/Packaging Manufacturer Comar's Newest Applications

*Four New Workcells Purchased for Highly-Automated Lid Production at Comar West Bend Plant; Two More Purchased for Stack Mold Medical Part Applications at Other Comar Facilities*

During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Comar – a contract manufacturer of medical and packaging solutions – saw an opportunity to expand its operations by purchasing a plant across town from a building it had outgrown. To outfit the plant, Comar once again relied heavily on WITTMANN all-electric injection molding machines and easy-to-program robots to add to its capabilities.

Comar's primary focus at its original 26,000-square-foot plant in West Bend was molding three sizes of container lids for multiple disinfectant wet wipe customers. The production of 80MM, 105MM, and 120MM wet-wipe lids rose over 50% and "could have doubled that during the pandemic because demand was so high," according to Plant Manager Jim Spalding. Comar also began producing the canisters by adding an extrusion blow molding cell, which is complemented by additional blow molding cells in Comar's Sheboygan, Wisconsin facility.

In addition to manufacturing wet wipe canisters and lids, Comar's ISO 9001 and SQF certified West Bend facility can produce products for other industries, including nutraceutical packaging. Automation is vital to Comar's operations and customer value proposition – their West Bend facility alone houses 20 WITTMANN robots and seven complete workcells.

In the summer of 2020, Comar was nearing maximum capacity at its West Bend facility. Spotting an established molding plant across town, Spalding alerted his bosses about that building becoming available – and Comar's corporate leadership leased it. Built in 2005, that plant had been occupied by another molding group, so it was already designed to house molding machines and plant infrastructure.

On Labor Day 2021, Comar "ripped the bandage off" and officially shut the smaller West Bend plant. By October, the new plant was online, with some brand-new equipment thanks to having a much roomier 160,000 square feet to work with.

Comar's new West Bend facility features 22 injection molding machines ranging from 180 – 550 US Tons, seven of which are WITTMANN all-electric EcoPower Express IMM with B8 controls – including four new turnkey units that joined three others ordered and delivered during the pandemic. While keeping a fraction of the existing machinery and equipment, Comar added many improvements to the new facility, including central resin systems, chillers, cranes, reinforced concrete



Each of the four new WITTMANN machines at Comar's West Bend plant feature dual high-speed WITTMANN 833 Pro Series Robots

flooring, and other infrastructure. The new machines that Comar added in 2020 were the first WITTMANN EcoPower Xpress Machines purchased in the USA. These all electric high-speed molding machines manufacture thin wall lids produced in stack tools. The lids are for round blow molded containers. Each machine was equipped with dual high-speed WITTMANN 833 pro series robots.

Comar employs high cavitation precision molds on the new WITTMANN machines that perform ultra-fast cycle times. "These are sophisticated, high-precision tools, making lids as well as other challenging molded products," Spalding explained. Comar optimizes its molding processes by installing RJG eDart® systems on machines, which enables precise monitoring and control of key plastic variables.

Comar partnered with WITTMANN representative Norstech Plastics Equipment in Burlington, Wisconsin, to outfit and service the new facility. "I can't say enough about WITTMANN and Norstech, including Brian Heugh and Dan Luke, for their support in getting the new machinery up and running during the pandemic," Spalding said. He also said Chicago-based DevLinks, a WITTMANN integrator that developed the IML workcells, was instrumental in providing much-needed support.

As part of its diversification, Comar's West Bend facility will produce closures for vitamin bottles and jars and lids for the nutraceutical industry.

➤ (Continued from page 1: Comar's Newest Applications)

Molds for those items will come from Comar's LaMirada Plant in California. In-mold labeling (IML) is also a growing part of Comar's business, and the facility features two cells for producing labels embedded in wipes canisters.

are proprietary, Comar says it is a stack mold application integrated with other equipment in a fully automated line in an ISO-8 cleanroom environment to manufacture devices for a plasma apheresis process.



Jim Spalding with EcoPower XPress 500

### Two New WITTMANN Workcells Purchased for Stack Mold Medical Application

"All Comar plants have the autonomy to buy the machines and equipment they need," said Spalding, who joined the company in April 2009 when it was West Bend Plastics, which Comar purchased in 2018. "We had discussed trying to standardize companywide but found that was sub-optimal in some cases." Instead, Comar created guidelines that all new machinery and equipment must meet and focused on standardizing machine platforms within plants where technically feasible.

When researching what machinery to buy for the latest Comar medical molding application, management asked Spalding for his opinion. "We had some Comar representatives attend the recent K show in Germany, where they saw a stack molding demonstration at the WITTMANN booth," he said. "They reached out to me as someone with a lot of experience with WITTMANN. I was able to provide feedback on the great experience we had with all of our WITTMANN machine and robot additions."

Comar ultimately purchased and now operates two WITTMANN workcells, one in California, and one in New Jersey, running what Spalding calls a 'highly visible medical project'. While details of the application

### WITTMANN Robots and Ease of Programming

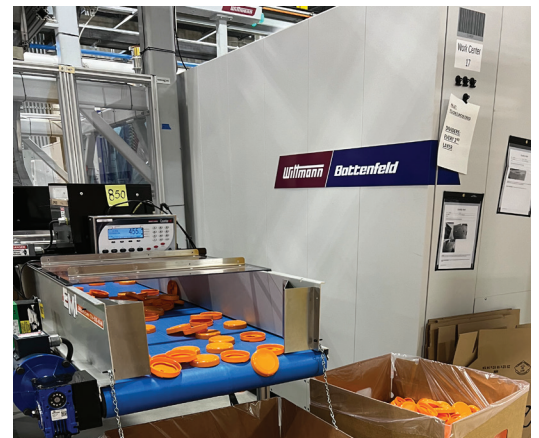
Before joining West Bend, Spalding worked with Philips Medisize and MGS Manufacturing — he first encountered WITTMANN robots in that period.

"Learning and training folks to use robots is easy with WITTMANN," Spalding asserted. "Our new technicians love them. It's hard enough teaching technicians how to use multiple IMMs — it's almost impossible with multiple brands of robots. And, the ease of working with WITTMANN robots helps to recruit and keep workers."

Comar uses mainly WITTMANN's R8 robots and some older R7s from 2005 that still work well. "We plan to upgrade these older models at some point," Spalding

noted, "and WITTMANN programs are really easy to use, so that won't be a major issue."

Not only are WITTMANN robots exceeding expectations, he added, but "WITTMANN's one-stop shopping is incredibly important — and one phone call is all you need for service and support." This played a large part in Comar selecting WITTMANN integrated workcells, which include the company's molding machines, robots, and auxiliaries.



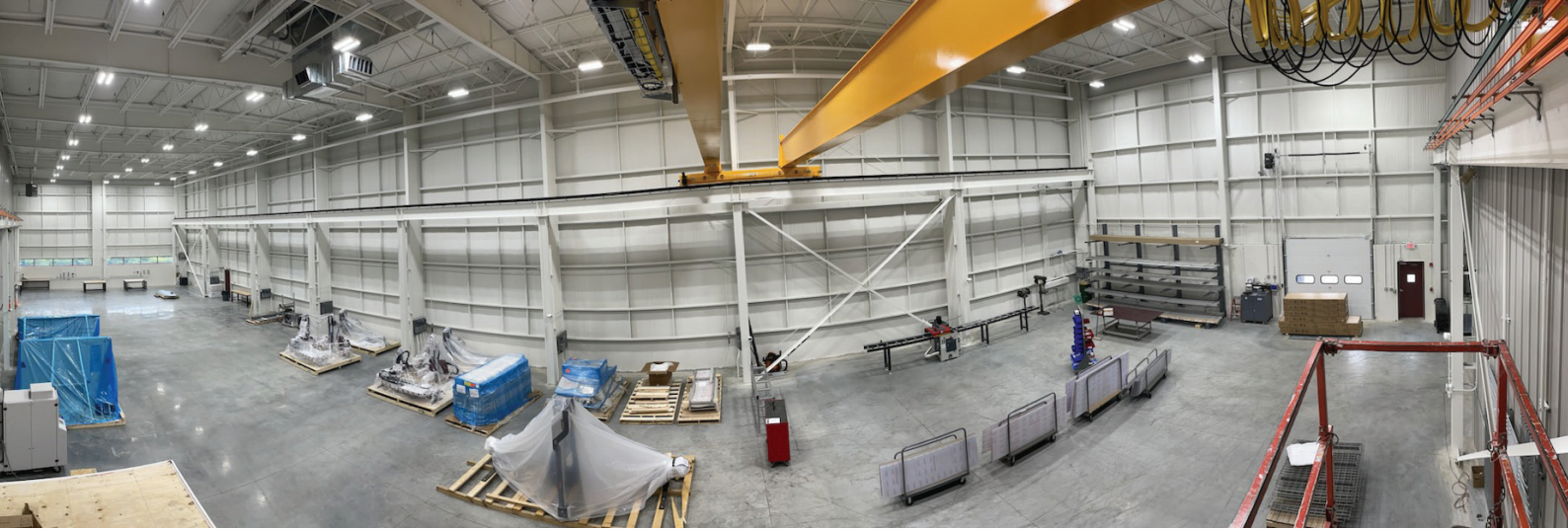
Thin-wall lids for round containers are produced on WITTMANN IMM's at Comar's West Bend, WI plant



An E-newsletter from WITTMANN USA



# WITTMANN USA Plant Expansion Update



WITTMANN USA is in the process of moving into its new 9360 sq.ft. addition

After a year-long process, the WITTMANN USA plant expansion is complete! The final 2 milestones, the installation of a new 15 Ton Crane and the completion of the expanded parking lot, were finished as of June 1st.

"This is really the 1st phase of the transformation that is in process at our Torrington headquarters," said Duane Royce, Vice President – Robots & Automation at WITTMANN USA. "The next phase – moving into and using the new 9360 sq.ft. of space – has already begun."

The area that was formerly the Automation Assembly Department is now part of the Robot Assembly and Startup Departments. "We now have more room to build large robots, more room to work on modifications to completed stock robots, and more room for our Robot Production lines, more room for our Robot Production lines. It also offers us more room for turn-key complete molding systems." said Royce.

This project also included adding two new Shipping and Receiving docks, and the company has added additional EV chargers in the parking areas (four chargers at Plant 1, and two chargers at Plant 2). In addition, complete solar panel arrays are up and running, helping the company convert to solar power.

While most of the expansion has taken place in Plant 1 (IMM's and Robots), Plant 2 has also seen improvements including installation of all-new custom racking systems for efficient storage of stock robots, and Material Handling Equipment. The 2 dock doors are also being expanded, which will be complete early July.

"We're happy that our latest expansion project is near completion, as it gives us much-needed new space for our continued growth," said David Preusse, President of WITTMANN USA.



Plant 1 shipping docks



Plant 1 New Electric Charging Stations

# WITTMANN USA Updates Popular WiConnect! App



**Wittmann**

**WiConnect!**  
*is on your side*

We've made staying in touch with WITTMANN USA easier!

- ✓ Choose your department
- ✓ Connect via email, chat or phone!

**Download today!**




Once you have the app you will have the ability to:

- 1) Select which of our product divisions you want to communicate with: Robots, Material Handling & Auxiliaries, or Injection Molding Machines Division.
- 2) Select Sales, Service or Parts.
- 3) Select Text, Phone or E-mail.

This **Smart QR code** will automatically send you to the app store to quickly and easily download the new WiConnect! App. Download it today!

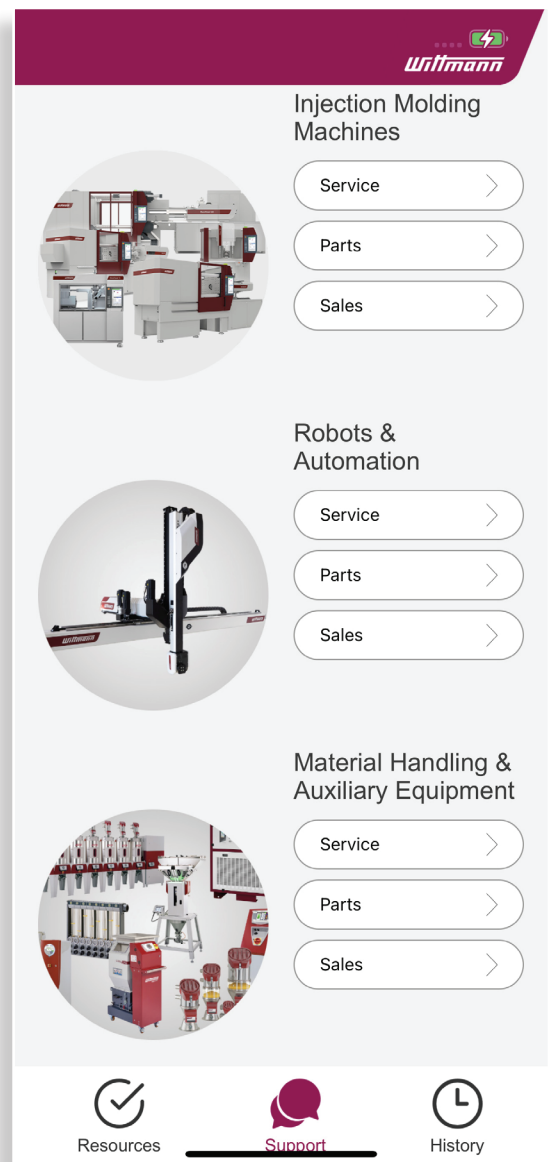
With thousands of downloads since its introduction in 2014, the original 'WiBa Connect' app has been extremely popular with our customers as an excellent way to communicate with our sales and service teams, in real time.

How do you improve on the original? After surveying our customers and gathering information, we are pleased to announce the newly redesigned app, now called WiConnect!

"We are always committed to providing the best customer service experience possible," said Sonny Morneault, WITTMANN USA VP-Sales. "With the newly designed WiConnect! App, we've made communicating with WITTMANN easier than ever."

WiConnect! kept all the best functions of the original app, but also includes these new features:

- Ability to send photos and videos in the chat function. (This is especially useful for plastic part questions)
- Resources tab gives quick links to our YouTube Page, including to our R9 & R8 Training video Playlists, Material Handling & Equipment, and Injection Molding Machines playlists.
- History log, which allows users to see which department and division they contacted last, and lets you connect again with 1 click.



**Wittmann**

**Injection Molding Machines**




- Service >
- Parts >
- Sales >

**Robots & Automation**

- Service >
- Parts >
- Sales >

**Material Handling & Auxiliary Equipment**

- Service >
- Parts >
- Sales >

 Resources
  **Support**
 History

## OPC-UA robot options – WITTMANN has them!



Recently, WITTMANN has received numerous requests from customers asking if our robots are OPC-UA compatible. The answer is yes!

OPC-UA is a cross-platform, open source standard for data exchange. It is used for industrial communication, specifically between sensors and the cloud.

In plastics injection molding applications, OPC-UA is being used to extract data from robots and other equipment and transferring that data to the customers' MES software.

This is a growing trend amongst molders in many industries, including medical, packaging and others.

"Depending on the model of robot being used and its cell architecture, WITTMANN offers hardware and software options for MES Data Exchange using the OPC-UA Protocol," said Jason Long, National Sales Manager – Robots & Automation at WITTMANN USA.

"Every molding application is unique, and we encourage molders who want to explore OPC-UA options to contact us," said Long. "We can work with customers to ensure that they can get the data they need for their particular application."

Users will be able to share important production data from the robots. Examples of information that can be shared include:

- View Alarms
- Upload/Download Teach Programs
- Clear Pending Alarms
- View Cycle Time
- View Counters
- View Cycle Counter
- Edit Counter values
- View Operating hours
- View Peripheral Inputs & Outputs
- View Mold Open Time & Robot Withdraw time
- Change state of Peripheral Outputs
- View and Reset Lubrication Counter
- View Operation Modes of Robot

***Congratulations to Lisa Buono on her upcoming retirement! Lisa has been Human Resources Manager at WITTMANN USA since 2013. Her replacement, Cian O'Dowd, started at WITTMANN in March. We recently asked Lisa and Cian to comment on their careers and positions at the company:***

### ***Lisa Buono Retires***

**What year did you start at WITTMANN?** 2013

**Where had you worked before joining WITTMANN?** Medical insurance carriers, and construction and manufacturing HR positions. The most recent work before I joined WITTMANN was 12 years with a group benefits broker, learning group benefits inside-out and selling along with supporting the HR departments of our clients. When I joined WITTMANN, it was the best new relationship that I could ever have imagined. Anyone that knows me personally truly understands that.

**Where did you grow up, in CT, what schools did you attend etc.?**

I grew up in Southington CT attending the Southington public school system. I began working at age 16 at any job I could get.

**What has your job been?** Human Resources Manager

**What have you enjoyed most about your time at WITTMANN?**

Oh my gosh! WITTMANN is a caring, giving company. As a whole, the people, the running of the company is the best I've had the pleasure of experiencing in my entire career.

**What are your plans for retirement?**

Enjoying my new adventure. I'm blessed to still have both my parents. Being able to spend more time with them and the rest of my family throughout New England as well as other parts of the US makes me happy. And there's certainly plenty to do around the house. I also live in an awesome area, so there will be plenty of fun all way around.

I would like to add how fortunate WITTMANN is to have found my replacement, Cian O'Dowd. We have been able to work side by side prior to my leaving. It is clear he will be an asset to the company.



### ***Cian O'Dowd - Human Resources Manager***

**When did you start with WITTMANN?**

I started at WITTMANN March 6, 2023

**Where did you work before joining WITTMANN?**

I was in the United States Army for almost 10 years before I was medically retired due to combat injuries. I moved on to back and forth work between Department of Energy HR/FOIA Manger, Private High Security/Law Enforcement, Teaching Human Resources at University, and Human Resources Director positions.

WITTMANN is where I want to work and eventually retire because of the culture and morals. In the short time I've been here I can say that WITTMANN is one of the most cohesive, future-oriented companies I have seen, let alone a pleasure to be a part of.

**Where are you from, and what schools did you attend?**

I was born in Dublin, Ireland, though my family is from County Mayo. I came to the United States when I was 2 and moved around and lived in many different locations. I have a BS in Business Marketing from Post University and a BS in English/Biology from WVU.

The real joy these past 3 months has been being able to build my knowledge of WITTMANN USA and its practices through Lisa. She has been the real thread to this organization.

## WITTMANN BATTENFELD Inc. Personnel News

### *Promotions / New Department!*

**Penelope Byrne,**  
Manager of the Production Scheduling  
– Robot and Automation



**Sara Van Deusen,**  
Production Scheduler



WITTMANN USA continues to grow, one way we see that is the creation of a new department within the Robot and Automation Division. This new Production Scheduling Department is being led by Penny Byrne. She has been with WITTMANN USA for 2.5 years. During this time, she has proven to be a valued member and a real asset to our company and has been promoted to Manager of the Production Scheduling. Joining Penny, is Sara Van Deusen, whom also has proven to be a real asset, and has been promoted from our Stockroom to work in this new department as a Production Scheduler.

### *New to Wittmann USA*

**Rosanna Colon,**  
Accounts Receivable Specialist



Rosanna recently joined our USA headquarters in Torrington, CT as Accounts Receivable Specialist, coming from the oil industry and bringing 8 years of manufacturing experience and 5 years in the apparel industry. Rosanna has her BS in Accounting and more than 15 years of experience in accounts receivable/accounting.

**Arturo Lojero**  
Director of Services



Arturo has recently joined our USA headquarters in Torrington, CT as Director of Services. He comes to WITTMANN USA with 15 years of plastics industry experience, starting as a field service engineer and working his way up to Regional Service Manager and to his current position with WITTMANN.

**Greg Wright,**  
Systems Sales Engineer  
Material Handling & Auxiliaries



Greg recently joined WITTMANN USA as Systems Sales Engineer for our Material Handling & Auxiliaries Division, and will be based out of our West Coast Technology Center in Placentia, CA. He has 15 years in the pad/screen printing industry selling various types of printing equipment and supplies for decorating molded plastic parts.

**Gabriel LoMugno**  
Application Sales Engineer  
Robots & Automation



Gabriel joined our USA Headquarters in April as Application Sales Engineer for our Robots & Automation Division. He brings to us 20 years of 3D design experience, and 15 years of manufacturing experience including military, aerospace, semiconductor, and automation. Gabriel was also a global expert in robotic sheet metal bend and EOAT design.

**Austin Stuckemeyer**  
Field Service Technician - Material Handling & Auxiliaries

Austin has recently joined WITTMANN USA as Field Service Technician for the Material Handling & Auxiliaries Division and is based in Illinois.

**Christofer Fox**  
Parts Coordinator - Material Handling & Auxiliaries

Christofer has recently joined our USA Headquarters in Torrington, CT as Parts Coordinator for our Material Handling & Auxiliaries Division.

**Jaclyn Foeller,**  
Parts Coordinator  
Robots & Automation



In January 2023, Jaclyn started as the Parts Coordinator in the Robot & Automation Division in our USA Headquarters in Torrington, CT. She brings many years of customer service experience, among other attributes and will be a valued addition to the company.

## WITTMANN USA Holds Spring Sales Meeting

WITTMANN USA held its 2023 sales meeting from April 24 – April 27th at the company's headquarters in Torrington, CT. All USA Regional Sales Managers and Sales Representatives attended.

'This was the first time we have had our entire USA sales team together since before the pandemic,' said Sonny Morneault, WITTMANN USA VP of Sales. 'We had a lot to discuss, and to celebrate – it was a great meeting.'

There have been a lot of updates within each of the three WITTMANN USA divisions since the last meeting



was held in 2019. With so many new products and new sales personnel, a 4-day meeting was held to cover it all. New technology developments were an important part of the meeting agenda, especially with NPE2024 only one year away.

'We also have been adding people to our sales team, so this was a great opportunity for everyone to meet in person,' said Morneault.

Morneault also said there was plenty of time during the meeting to celebrate WITTMANN USA's recent sales accomplishments. 'We entered 2023 with a record backlog,' he said, 'and we have been able to reduce that backlog and get a lot of shipments out this year. Our revenues are up 43% from 2022, with the IMM Division leading the way with a 105% increase in sales vs. last year.'



## Don't Miss our presentation at LSR 2023!

Micro precision parts made of LSR – from prototype phase to serial production

Presented by:

Wolfgang Roth, Head of Application Engineering, WITTMANN BATTENFELD, Ryan Hall, R&D, and Scott Baird, VP Marketing, Starlim

Wednesday, September 13, 2023 at 4 pm  
Charlotte, NC


 [Register Now!](#)





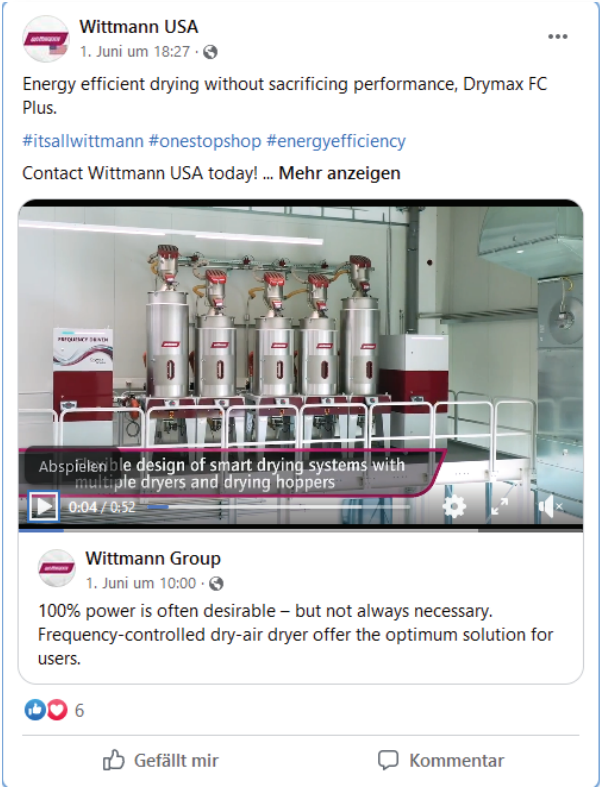
WITTMANN USA Training

Visit Our Website for Schedule and Details, including for Our **New R9 Training Classes!**

➔  Check out our Training/Tutorial Videos on our YouTube Page

Connect With Us on Social Media!

Make sure to connect with WITTMANN USA on our social media channels! Here is some of our recent activity:



Contact Us Today!

    @WittmannUSA