



THINGS ARE LOOKING UP

Montreal-based packaging machinery designer and manufacturer continues its blistering pace specializing in standard and custom machines for blister packaging.



Starview Packaging Machinery president Mario Carlomusto (left) with his son and director of operations Eric Carlomusto show off one of the company's semi-automatic rotary medical package sealing machines at its 20,000-square-foot Dorval, Que.-headquarters.

BY ANDREW JOSEPH, FEATURES EDITOR
PHOTOS BY PIERRE LONGTIN

For some people, the garage is place to keep one's automobile from the impending weather; for others it's a storage locker for furniture we swear there will one day be a use for; or for those other lucky people, it's a man cave or a hobby zone.

And then there are those who think it's a great place to start a business.

While many a would-be entrepreneur has tried their hand at self-starting a business within the humble garage, for every **Apple**, **Google**, **Amazon** or **Hewlett-Packard**, thousands upon thousands found abject failure.

Despite the odds stacked against them, Mario and wife Terry Carlomusto don't consider themselves to be lucky to have achieved enough success from their initial single-car garage business, rather they are aware of the hard work and long hours it took to get to their present location—a 20,000-square-foot, non-garage facility housing 30 skilled employees.

Starview opened its garage door for business in 1991, but moved up and out from there into its first facility after three very productive years.

Nowadays located in Dorval, Que., and celebrating its 25th successful year of operation, **Starview Packaging Machinery, Inc.** continues to be led by company president Mario and controller Terry, as a well-respected designer and manufacturer of a wide array of packaging machinery.

"We manufacture a diverse range of machinery for the packaging industry," Starview director of operations Eric Carlomusto told *Canadian Packaging* magazine during a recent interview. Carlomusto is the son of the company founders. "Starview builds multiple versions of equipment for: blister and clamshell sealing; specialized medical and pharmaceutical packaging, skin packaging and die-cutting; food tray packaging, thermoforming/vacuum forming; customized packaging equipment; and systems with automation and integration," explains Carlomusto.

When Starview first opened for business, it provided maintenance service contracts for existing blister, skin and thermoform packaging machinery.



Carlomusto says his parents came up with the company name "Starview" as a hopeful charm relating to someone watching over them.

Hope and luck aside, Starview has found its winning formula for success.

"We soon moved from machine maintenance to building simple machine designs of our own, a business that has evolved to where we now have quality packaging equipment installed in companies around the globe," says Carlomusto.

He emphatically states that "Starview focuses on machine design only. Unlike our competition, we provide a full range of packaging equipment and customization of individual machines. While some companies branch out to offer packaging materials for sale as an agent, or to provide contract packaging—Starview believes in maintaining its focus, because packaging machinery is what we know the best."

Carlomusto continues: "Although we no longer work out of the garage and have an international clientele, we believe that a key part of our success is that we have maintained a family atmosphere with our customers, where we listen to their needs and provide solutions to help achieve present and future growth."

Although his parents still run the company, Carlomusto says that Starview maintains a delicate balance between the quaintness of the mom-and-pop show against the modern technological know-how required to build the right machinery for the individual company.

"We offer a full range of machinery for custom and standard solutions, including: skin packaging systems, shuttle, rotary, inline and carousel design blister sealers, sealers for food and medical applications, as well as vacuum formers and roller pressure cutters," explains Carlomusto, adding that where Starview maintains its advantage, are with its ability to provide value-added options like robotics, vision systems, printing, rejects, conveyors and "and a list of features which put us ahead of our competition that will help our customers get ahead of theirs."

Starview's machines are offered worldwide through a network of authorized distributors, such as the Dutch firm **Ecobliss Equipment BV**, who represent the company in Asia and Europe.

"Our distributors provide sales and service for our machines as well as the packaging materials used in conjunction with the machines," says Carlomusto.

Noting that the design and manufacture of packaging machinery is a very competitive industry, Carlomusto recognizes it took several years to develop a proven reputation for itself, and now has achieved brand recognition.

"Starview's success is due to the product quality and reliability and reputation we've built over the years," explains Carlomusto. "Our core strengths are the ability and flexibility to provide machines that are tailored to customer needs from machine size production requirements and various other needs all at a competitive price."

Helping Starview is **OMRON**, a preferred supplier for 25-plus years, providing quality components and support that Carlomusto acknowledges has been "a vital element cog in building our reputation in supplying reliable machinery.

"In fact," he continues, "I dare say that things have evolved past being a business relationship into more of a partnership."



Eric Carlomusto performs a test-run on the Model ERB4/PH-1418 semi-automatic rotary medical package sealing machine.



A wide array of products showcasing the packing capabilities of equipment manufactured by Starview Packaging Machinery.

For its blister pack machines, OMRON supplies a wide swathe of products, including: screens; PLCs (programmable logic controllers); AC frequency drives; temperature controllers; solid state relays; proximity sensors; door switches; rotary switches, and; safety relays.

Starview purchases its OMRON products via **Proax Technologies Ltd.**, of Laval, Que.—a local authorized OMRON distributor.

While Proax Technologies has been an Omron distributor for over 30 years, Proax sales account manager Derek Devries and Omron manager for central and eastern Canada Frank Pennimpede have both been with their respective companies for 25 years.

"Both Derek and I were there from the start, when Starview Packaging was just starting up," recalls Pennimpede.

He says that it was a real team effort between

himself and Derek to build the rapport with Starview that continues to this day.

"Right from the get-go, we provided both parties with technical support and expertise," Pennimpede notes. "Omron provides automated solutions that matched well with Starview's production needs, and because of that, Proax was able to demonstrate just how easy and user-friendly our products are to use."

He says it was always very important to show Starview just how Omron products would work on their machines, as "seeing is believing" but it was also important for to ensure the right product was being considered for Starview.

During this partnership, Carlomusto says both Omron and Proax have done well.

"Both companies have been very helpful in ensuring our success," says Carlomusto. "As a family-run business we believe in loyalty, but know we are first and foremost a business, and have opted to



An Omron MX2 inverter in a Starview packaging machine.



Omron parts include an S8VK Power Supply and MX2 Inverters.

work with Proax because we really enjoy the reliability we get from them and the Omron products."

Omron manufactured products used by Starview include its latest programmable logic controllers, HMI (human-machine interface) screens, and AC frequency drives—all products that help provide control to packaging machines.

Pennimpede says that Omron also provides temperature controllers, sensors and other safety products that help seal packages while also providing safe operation for the user.

"However, I think that what really helped solidify our relationship with both Proax and Starview was Omron always being available to provide support when equipment needed programming updates, or those rare times that a machine went down, or being available to provide real input when Starview designs a new machine," says Pennimpede.

He says new products are always being discussed for Starview, nothing that "we are currently migrating away from the CP1H series to the newer NX1P2 series, and are presenting the 1S servo as an option for certain Starview machines."

Pennimpede says, however, that the most important Omron development for Starview is the integration of the Omron *Adept Viper 850* six-axis robot onto their machines.

"We are trying to secure the standardization of Omron robotics on all Starview machines," continues Pennimpede, adding he sees a potential market with Starview of five to 10 units per year.

Produced by **Omron Adept Technologies, Inc.**—a business segment under OMRON, the *Adept Viper 850* robot family is a high-performance line of robots designed specifically for assembly applications, keying on speed and precision.

"The Adept Viper 850 provides great flexibility and accuracy with its six axes," says Pennimpede, "and can be mounted on the floor or ceiling."

For Starview, the proof is in the pudding.

"We are very happy with the results our machines have achieved from using OMRON products because our customers are very happy with the results our machines have been able to bring to their production lines," extolls Carlomusto.

"We have grown with many of our customers, providing simple solutions to many a startup company," sums up Carlomusto. "A large part of our business is repeat business from existing customers, and working with great companies like Proax and OMRON has been very beneficial to our success.

"It's a partnership I hope we continue for a long time." ♦

For More Information:

Starview Packaging Machinery, Inc.	470
OMRON Canada Inc.	471
OMRON Adept Technologies, Inc.	472
Proax Technologies Ltd.	473