

Book Manufacturer Speeds Up Its Wire Binding Tenfold



J.L. Darling has manufactured Rite in the Rain notepads since 1916 in The Great Northwest. The founder, Jerry Darling created a market for notepads that could withstand rain and other poor weather conditions. Even if the notepads get wet, the ink does not run. The company invented a proprietary, patented, archival quality substrate that will last a lifetime under normal use.

Prior to the mid-nineties, the company bound its Wire-o books on table top equipment. It then purchased, from Spiel Associates, a used Lhermite automatic paper punch and a used Sickinger wire binding machine. It added a semi-automatic Rilecart wire binder a few years later to keep up with its capacity, and then purchased a Sterling Punchmaster automatic paper punch from Spiel Associates to replace the Lhermite.

However, punching its paper is no easy feat. Due to the durability of the paper, it cannot be punched as big a lift of sheets as they could with ordinary paper. The dies also must be sharpened more frequently than other paper punching machine users.

While it produces different size books, the most popular size is 3x5", perfect for an electrical linesman or an EMT to tuck in their breast pocket. Also, it has a "header" which has a sombrero hole acting as a peg hanger. The header size was 3x2". With the company's Rilecart wire binder, it bound, flipped covers and boxed an average of 250 books per hour with two operators.

Throughout the years, demand for its product grew. Its capacity did not and it was forced to run multiple shifts to bind the books that it needed to ship. During that time Spiel Associates tried to help the company automate its wire binding. Aside from the cost of over \$200,000 for an automatic machine, there was the problem of book size. While The Rilecart B-599 wire binder could be modified to handle the book size, there was no way it could handle the header size of 2x3". In 2014 Spiel introduced the Sterling Wiremaster Pro. The selling price was half of what The Rilecart B599 was. This piqued J.L. Darling's interest. Furthermore, the machine needed no modification to handle the company's book size, but it still had a pesky 2x3" header to contend with.

The company's R & D Director, John Mattingly and David Spiel from Spiel Associates, kicked around some ideas and came up with the following: Make the header 3x3.75" and put a score in the middle. After the books were bound, the header was folded in half for easy hanging.

After purchasing the Sterling Wiremaster Pro, the fun began. At first the company was binding, cover flipping and boxing 2,700 books per hour. After riding the learning curve, it increased its production to 3,000 books per hour, which is the maximum cycling speed of the machine. They use three operators.

J.L. Darling books can be written upon in the rain, and their production is now right as rain.

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