

PACKAGING DIGEST®

Sealing clamshell via UV protects thermostats

Faced with finding an alternate solution to radio frequency clamshell sealing for the Thermostat 3300, Honeywell opted for a new ultra-violet adhesive sealing system. Traditional radio-frequency sealing had been wreaking havoc with the thermostat's electronic components.

In October '96, Honeywell installed at its Chihuahua, Mexico, plant a *Simpl-Seal* model 30-1GM ultraviolet sealing machine from PartnerPak. Not only did this solve the electronic interference problem they had been experiencing, but it also doubled production speeds since the sealing method takes less time than the prior process Honeywell had been using. According to plant manager German Maynez, the machine is currently sealing clamshells at 120/hour "but that's because that is our line speed. The machine's capacity is really much more than that." Maynez says the equipment is also easier to use and requires little maintenance.

The operator semi-automatically applies a bead of specially formulated *Simpl-Sealant* adhesive to the border channel of an open clamshell via a hand-triggered snuffer valve with vacuum dispenser. Returning the trigger valve to its cradle, the operator then loads the thermostat into the clamshell and snaps it shut.

The product then indexes on a 30-in-W conveyor belt, at speeds from 15 to 120 ft/min, into the sealing machine, where it is cured instantly in the lighted chamber. The clear and permanent tamper-proof seal is



actually stronger than the clamshell's plastic and requires scissors to open. Finally, an operator loads sealed clamshells into a master shipper for distribution.

The Honeywell plant employs 600 people, but only four on the packaging of the thermostats. The product is sold in the U.S. and Canada through retail outlets such as Home Depot, Builders Square and Sam's Club but also to professional contractors and builders.

At the outset, the plant ordered only one UV sealing machine but has since ordered more, Maynez reports. "We are planning to expand our retail sales and will need to expand our packaging in preparation for that expansion. We will definitely use UV sealing equipment."

More information is available:

Clamshell sealing equipment— **Partner Pak, Inc.**, 5770 Research Drive, Huntington Beach, CA 92649

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5770 Research Drive~ Huntington Beach, CA 92649
Phone: 714-799-7879 Fax: 714-799-2858
www.partnerpak.com