



**CHALLENGE**

For years, Genplex sought a way to reduce its shipping costs without sacrificing the quality of its all-important shipments to customers.

**SOLUTION**

After talking with a Staples expert, Genplex made a single switch in its packing tape and saw immediate results.

**RESULT**

A significant cost savings from both lower product cost as well as more efficient shipping processes.

When you operate a manufacturing business in rural Maine, shipping is a lifeline to your customers. Duane Colford knows this well, and is always looking for ways to improve his company's shipping. But for a decade, there was one challenge he couldn't quite overcome.

Colford is the founder of Genplex Custom Plastic Extrusions, a 12-person manufacturing firm based in Skowhegan, Maine, a town of 8,600 residents. Like any business leader, Colford is always looking to make his business more efficient and shipping is always front and center. The company averages two daily shipments of products and prototypes to customers across the U.S. and in some foreign markets.

**The Challenge**

Shipping is never routine for Genplex because of the particular sizes and shapes of the products the company ships. The company's made-to-order plastic tubes (some eight feet long) and other plastic, polycarbonate and rubber pieces are produced in irregular shapes to meet customers' specifications. All of these products require specific boxes that are taped shut for secure shipping and in many cases stacked on pallets. Colford's team uses specific box sizes and processes so customers receiving a shipment can make immediate use of the products, such as displaying them on shelves.

But among all of those concerns, the tape used to secure the boxes was the longest sticking point for Colford. "We've had an ongoing issue for over 10 years with tape," Colford says. The company had been using a plastic tape from Germany that was superior in performance to others Genplex had tried, but it was costly. "Historically we'd buy the expensive, high-end tape because we knew it won't break, and it

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comes off the roll easily, so it's more consistent," he says.

And for a long time Colford felt it was the only option and continued to pay the high price. Then he met Clyde Hodgkin, an Account Representative for Staples Business Advantage®.

### The Solution

When Colford mentioned to Hodgkin the concern about the cost of tape, Hodgkin quickly determined that a small change could make a major difference. By using reinforced paper tape as an alternative to plastic tape, Genplex could cut its expense line for tape by half, saving thousands of dollars a year. And the kicker is, the switch ended up improving the shipping process, according to Colford.

But not only did Hodgkin suggest a new type of tape to improve Genplex's shipping processes, he also pointed the company to a new tape dispenser from Better Packages Inc. that would further streamline shipping. Colford researched the product, made some calculations and confirmed there were more savings Genplex could realize. While researching the new dispenser, he also noticed that it enjoyed a number of showcase customers and watched several demos online of how the dispenser works. These factors along with Hodgkin's recommendation gave Colford confidence to try the new dispenser.

And when a few employees mentioned that the adhesive from the new tape tended to stick on their hands, Hodgkin had the answer again. He demonstrated that the adhesive was water soluble and washed off easily. After that, everyone on the Genplex team agreed that using the Better Packages dispenser was more efficient. It has easy-to-use buttons, and users can operate it to get the precise lengths of tape they need for any box they're preparing to ship. The adhesive quality is also stronger than the plastic tape Genplex used for years.

"The tape looks neater, too," Colford says. "In fact, we are already looking at getting a second dispenser here so we can have one for brown tape and one for white tape on boxes."

### The Benefits

Better shipping means better customer relationships, a big benefit for a company like Genplex that values the relationships with its customers and is willing to make the

# 66%

Amount Genplex was able to reduce its packaging tape costs with a single product switch

# 25%

Amount Genplex saved by switching vendors for shipping labels

# 35M

Number of small tubes one specific Genplex customer orders each year

investments necessary to meet their needs. And today Genplex truly appreciates the relationship it has established with Staples Business Advantage. After learning about the opportunity to improve the cost effectiveness and quality of his packing and shipping process, Colford says he continues to think of other ways for his Staples Business Advantage representative to help his business.

In fact, Colford and Hodgkin collaborated to find a more cost-effective solution for shipping labels. When Colford asked for a quote, Hodgkins came back with good news: Staples Business Advantage was able to get Genplex their existing labels at a 25 percent discount.

"Having Clyde coming in here had led us to look at other items that we purchase that he can help us with," Colford says.

### Company at a Glance

## Genplex Custom Plastic Extrusions

Overview: Manufacturer of plastic, polycarbonate and rubber tube products, as well as custom plastic extrusions for a range of industries around the globe.

#### Key Facts

- Based in Skowhegan, Maine
- Founded in 1993 by Duane Colford
- 12 employees

Website: [www.genplex.com](http://www.genplex.com)