

# Leading the trays business

MIP Packaging commercialises plastic trays for Digipack for now 15 years. It has already sold over one billion units in Europe and elsewhere. DOMINIQUE PHILIPPOT, its CEO, tells DVD and Beyond Editor Jean-Luc Renaud how he steers the company through market realities.

French-based MIP Packaging specialises in plastic injection since 1982. In 1998 the company started to manufacture plastic digitrays for CD, then DVD and later Blu-ray discs.

Today, MIP is one of the leading international manufacturers of digitrays for discs,

**MIP PACKAGING™**

chip cards and memory cards. Also known for its Novatray and Push & Go product ranges of double DVD and double Blu-ray disc trays, it produces over 100 million units a year.

With 25 injection moulding machines from 40 tons to 400 tons on its site, MIP also manufactures plastic parts for many sectors. However, multimedia products are the company's main activity.

**Amongst the range of services you offer, which one did grow in importance over the past 2 years and which one diminished?**

In comparison with the polystyrene jewel case, the Digipack model is more elegant, more original, which enables consumers to identify a disc title using it as a collector's item. Digipack adds an artistic value and projects a strong identity for a director or a film.

So, Digipack's market share will increase while demand for the jewel case will fall. Thanks to its international positioning, MIP Packaging expects to maintain the global volume of its trays for multimedia products.

Sales of Digipack for Blu-ray Discs ought to increase, both the one-disc and two-disc trays. Likewise, demand for double- and triple-disc trays without hub from the Novatray and Push & Go product ranges should continue to grow as well.

These products are developed in-house and protected by a series of international patents and trademarks.

MIP develops as well eco-friendly trays (Window range) as well as bio-degradable trays. The company has been a Certified Sony Green Partner since 2007. All the products from MIP Packaging scrupulously comply with the European Reach regulations.

**MIP recently acquired the Italian manufacturer Due-Ci. Which products, manufacturing processes and/or services does this acquisition bring to MIP?**

Due-Ci's activities have been transferred to MIP Packaging's French plant located near the city of Le Mans.

This acquisition enables MIP to increase its manufacturing capacity of trays for CD, DVD and Blu-ray cases. It maintains the company in pole position as the leader in the digitray production. MIP is now in a position to respond more quickly, both in quantity and product range, to clients such as replicators, disc manufacturers, packagers and distributors.

This acquisition also enables MIP to broaden the range of its existing multi-disc trays (Novatray, Push & Go, etc) with the Slider model, which is a modular tray capable of accommodating up to five discs.

**MIP is reportedly interested to enter the US market. What is your strategy there?**

We already export around 80 % of our production. In the US, MIP Packaging will concentrate on marketing the full range of over 30 special trays for discs, but also for memory card, SIM cards, SD cards, USB keys, gift cards, booklets, etc.

Also, the company will export its double-disc Blu-ray trays, which are the only model currently on the market to conform to the standard size of a Blu-ray case (height of

167mm) and which has successfully passed the Sony test.

**Does demand for trays follow a predictable annual cycle?**

Actually, it varies a lot. According to the activity in the CD, DVD and Blu-ray disc market. When a film is commercially successful, we increase production output. It remains that most of our production takes place in the autumn and winter as the industry ramps up pre-Christmas home video titles.

**What is the demand level for CD trays given the fall in CD sales?**

Demand for CD trays remains strong. Owing to digipack for CD being the industry standard, its volumes stay high the year around. Because MIP anticipates this market demand, it keeps stocks in adequate quantity to respond to its clients' needs.

In addition to the standard CD tray, MIP offers different models of digitray for CD such as the 1-disc or 2-disc Grand Format trays or A5-size trays.

**You supply plastic products to a range of industries. What is the importance of the multimedia product range in your overall activity?**

Multimedia products account for our principal activity. I should note that 100% of our tray production is "Made in France." MIP also manufactures plastic parts for the automotive, luxury and cosmetics industries. In addition, the company has its own clean room to produce food industry packaging or technical parts for the medical sector.

**The market for physical media is contracting. How long do you think discs will be around?**

I reckon discs will stay in the market, especially for collectors' titles. They will be around for the next 10 years at least.

Dominique Philippot

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