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Finelite Wins Reusable Packaging Award ***Reusable Solutions Result in Significant Cost and Environmental Savings***



(Names listed from left to right.) RPA Chairman Robert Engle presented the Excellence in Reusable Packaging Award to Finelite's Dean Mayes, Director of Manufacturing and Ana Koo, Industrial Engineering. Herman Miller, represented by Cindy Doman, won the prestigious award in 2012.

Las Vegas, Sept. 23, 2013 – Lighting manufacturer [Finelite](#) has been named the winner of the [Reusable Packaging Association's](#) second annual Excellence in Reusable Packaging Award. The winner was announced and the award presented at PACK EXPO in Las Vegas.

Union City, CA based Finelite designs and manufactures high performance, environmentally sustainable lighting solutions and products for commercial, educational, and healthcare facilities. The company offers more than 25 product lines.

Finelite makes great use of many types of reusable transport packaging materials for storing and handling parts, and for shipping materials between its factory and its strategic partners in Livermore, CA and China. The reusable solutions include tarps, straight-wall stackable plastic crates, plastic collapsible containers, and trays. In addition, racking systems are used throughout its warehouse.

With technical support and grant funding from the [Use Reusables campaign](#), led by public agency [StopWaste](#), Finelite has carefully designed all of its reusable products to reduce waste and support lean manufacturing.

“We use reusables because they deliver cost savings in materials and labor. In our experience, we break even on our initial investment of reusable systems within 2 years, and then the savings continue to accrue long after that,” said Ana Koo, industrial engineer, Finelite, Inc. “In contrast, disposable packaging materials have a

short life span and represent an ongoing expense. We are honored to be recognized for our efforts, and we applaud the RPA for creating this award program to bring more attention to the value of reusables.”



Finelite’s first reusable initiative replaced pallets and shrink wrap with stackable racks throughout Finelite’s factory and at two strategic-partner facilities in Livermore, CA. The light fixture components are manufactured in Livermore, and packaged into the racks. The racks are then transported to the paint supplier (also in Livermore). After painting, the components

are re-packaged into the same racks, and shipped to Finelite for final assembly. The racks are transferred into Finelite’s inventory system. As inventory is used up, racks become available and they are backhauled, empty, to Livermore, ready for the next cycle.

By using reusables, Finelite has achieved the following results:

Annual cost savings:

- 53% (\$9,100) cost savings by replacing shrink-wrap with reusable tarps
- 40% (\$8,400) material cost savings and 130 hours of labor by replacing corrugated boxes with reusable/collapsible bulk containers and straight-wall crates.
- \$10,800 cost savings in LED packaging material (bubble wrap and anti-static wrap) and 350 hours of labor saved by eliminating un-wrapping the packaging material.

Annual environmental savings:

- Eliminated 436 miles/6,000 pounds of plastic shrink-wrap
- Eliminated 14,700 pounds of corrugated cartons
- Eliminated 4,200 pounds of bubble wrap

Ongoing benefits:

- Both the containers and crates are stackable, allowing vertical storage of material and freeing up valuable real estate.

- The volume of each straight wall crate is used to its entirety and enables 20% more material to be packaged when compared to the previous corrugated box packaging.
 - Crates are easily fed into the assembly lines for operators to consume. Operators can work with the material from their own crate supply.
 - Capacity for materials in the collapsible containers is 10% more than corrugated boxes.
 - Empty containers are collapsed, allowing for efficient storage.

About the RPA Excellence in Reusable Packaging Award

The RPA annual *Excellence in Reusable Packaging Award* recognizes companies that have developed, supported, or implemented measurable and innovative reusable solutions in a business-to-business supply chain. Non-members as well as members of the RPA are encouraged to enter. Submissions are reviewed by an independent committee of judges who are not members of the RPA. The call for nominations for the 2014 award will be posted on the [RPA website](#) in the second quarter of 2014. The winner will be announced at PACK EXPO Chicago 2014.