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Hot on the Market



In some ways Fabio Alberti, President of Alberti Woodworking, is like many custom woodworkers. He was born into the trade and is completely dedicated to his business. But ten years ago Alberti invested in an automated finishing line that gave his operation a specialized edge in the crowded woodworking marketplace. Alberti found that there was real demand for finishing services and pre-finished goods, and soon his competitors and vendors became his customers. As the company's focus shifted, Alberti looked for new ways to serve his expanding client base. "I saw such a great possibility for HotCoating that I jumped on," says Alberti. "I wanted to be the first one to offer it to my customers. We are a very flexible shop, and the new technology that Kleiberit developed saves us a lot of time. HotCoating also lets us try lots of new techniques. So we do a lot of experimenting in-house and also for our customers. We catch all the curveballs."

"The panels are ready to be used or processed right off the coating line. We can stack and ship immediately,"

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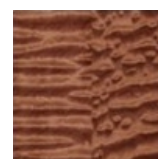
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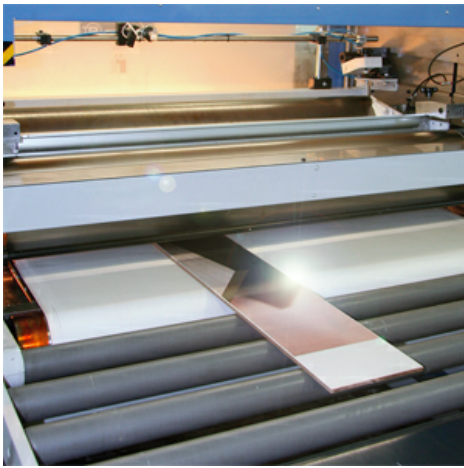
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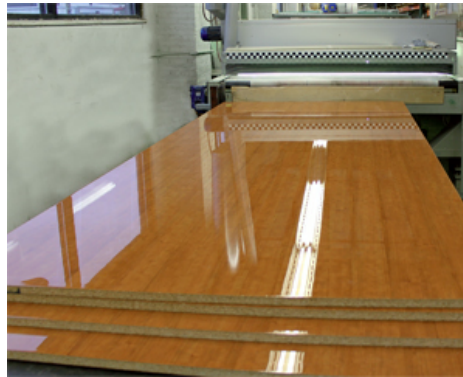
NECESSITY, THE MOTHER OF INVESTMENT

Located in northern New Jersey, Alberti Woodworking went into business fabricating pieces and then hand-spraying them. As the jobs grew larger in scope, it became cumbersome to finish in a spray booth. "We invested in equipment and it started to take off," says Alberti. "People learned we had the equipment and asked us to finish for them." Alberti's finishing experience grew, and he started investigating Kleiberit's HotCoating technology as a means of increasing productivity and offering a broader range of services. "There is a learning curve," says Alberti. "We had to redesign the line and retrain everybody, including our clients. It was a whole

new challenge, but Kleiberit has been extremely helpful in establishing the system. And it is worth it."

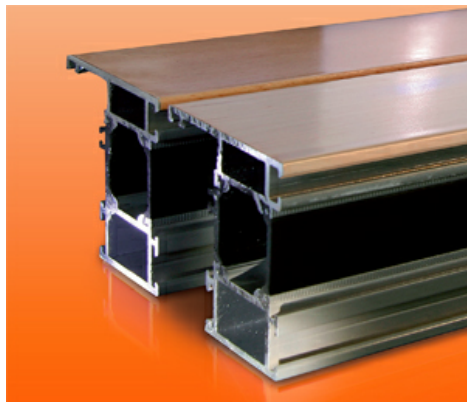
"The advantages of HotCoating are durability, shorter processing times, and being able to treat a wider variety of materials."

HotCoating is relatively new to the North American market. The material used in the process is PUR, which is solid at room temperature. The PUR can hold additives in suspension to increase certain performance characteristics, such as aluminum oxide that enhances wear resistance. And because the material is solid, there is no need to mix before application. A pre-melter melts the PUR on demand, and then it is pumped to a roll coater and applied to the board or roll material. PUR HotCoating contains no formaldehyde and emits no VOCs, making it an environmentally friendly process. Further, 100% of the material that is applied to the board stays on the board. The moisture present in the air is the catalyst that causes the PUR to cross-link and quickly cure. "The panels are ready to be used or processed right off the coating line. We can stack and ship immediately," says Alberti.



NEW ADVANCES, NEW ADVANTAGES

"The advantages of HotCoating are durability, shorter processing times, and being able to treat a wider variety of materials," says Alberti. "It saves time, and that is the idea that sold me. We don't have to sand between coats, we can seal, topcoat and done. Less steps means less equipment, less maintenance, less overhead." HotCoating PUR may be applied in different formulations to both panel and rolled goods. It offers a durable, UV-resistant finish for traditional applications, such as flooring, plywood, furniture and cabinet components.



Technical HotCoatings are used in commercial products, and textures may be imparted for visual enhancements or to create non-slip surfaces. The PUR is inherently water and fire resistant, and because it is a flexible material, it can endure direct impact and changes in temperature without cracking. In fact, PUR HotCoating is so durable and elastic that Kleiberit is currently helping customers refine the process for exterior uses. "It is a little more expensive," says Alberti, "but it is high-performance and wear-resistant. With the technology we can finish panels, but we can also HotCoat paper and create an end product that breaks 10,000 cycles on the Taber Abrasion Test. That exceeds HPL. So with little more than the cost of the paper, you have something extremely durable at a lower cost with a bigger margin."

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Alberti is also taking advantage of HotCoating technology to laminate materials in innovative new ways. "We were playing around looking for new things we could do with the system and found that HotCoating sticks to melamine," says Alberti. "The board is already sealed and filled, so we can apply the HotCoat directly to the melamine and give it a high-gloss finish that looks like glass. That's been getting a lot of attention." Some of Alberti's other developments with HotCoating include using dye sublimation to transfer images directly to HotCoated surfaces and finishing glass. "I have my hands into many different opportunities right now with the new HotCoating capability," says Alberti. "Our clients are really excited because we can use the same HotCoating system for so many applications and uses. It is a win/win all the way around."

