



Success Stories

FROM DESIGN TO DELIVERY, KARTOX LAUNCHES ITS “FULL DIGITAL” PRODUCTION

The innovative startup, born from a branch of Font Packaging, makes Elitron’s digital cutting technology the cornerstone of its workflow.





In collaboration with
italia publishers
looking beyond digital printing

Photos by



Even if packaging producers may sometimes seem as a rather conservative community, it's true that every rule has its own exceptions non the less. Thanks to successful intergenerational passages and a genuine passion for corrugated which has been passed over since 3 generations, from 1954 Font family converts corrugated carton in the surroundings of Barcelona. An always forward looking business which has allowed the company to grow up both in dimensions – up to roughly 32.000 sm of productive plant – and in corporate culture: Font has always invested in the most advanced technologies in terms of product design, production and applies lean production frameworks. In this positive and dynamic vibe made of expertise, from the idea of a young Martina Font, to differentiate the core business, a new project was launched as an innovative business model.

The idea is pretty simple: in an increasingly fast changing world, where mass customization became paramount, the packaging needs to turn “smart”. After a previous and untimely test in 2014, Kartox was launched in 2017. The mission of the newco is to produce highly custom-made carton boxes, tailored in every detail, from the shape to the dimensions, and with the value adding proposition of a consulting and designing service. The challenge existed not only in terms of business but also in terms of technologies. However, Kartox was able to succeed thanks to a mix of owned software solutions and, more importantly, a Kombo TAV-R which enabled the mass customization with its full automation capabilities. Kombo TAV-R brought Kartox workflow to another level in terms of efficiency and became the core of its production department.



WHAT IS KARTOX?

Interview with

Martina Font Olivé

*Director at Font Packaging Group
& Kartox co-Founder*

Where does the idea of Kartox come from?

It comes from the enthusiasm of my family. We are a great team and we communicate a lot. We started off with the idea of diversifying our core business and we have been looking at new concepts and innovative business models in the corrugated industry. So, speaking with customers and partners, we understood that there was an untapped need in the market: the production of customized boxes, in small quantities, online and just-in-time, so in 2009 we founded NT Pack.

How did the project evolve?

It did not work! Back in 2009 consumers were not ready to buy boxes online. Still that didn't change our mind about the potential of the idea. Simply put, we started too early. When we shut down the project we updated its business model and in 2014 we launched Kartox which is working out fine.

Which are Kartox's unique selling points?

Kartox is the solution to have a box either in a single unit or few quantities in a matter of few days, with tailored dimensions, a dedicated design and the consultancy of an expert. It was something that hasn't existed nor in Spain or in Europe ever before. It was possible to find a standard box but not such a tailored level.

How did you manage to make Kartox co-exist with the box making facility?

Clearly we couldn't produce 5 or 10 boxes effectively with our case makers. After a thorough assessment we understood Kartox's project had to be carried on separately as it's a pure service instead of a pure production plant. From that moment on we started investigating on the most appropriate technologies.

How did you get to Elitron?

Before Kombo TAV we had another digital cutter but it was way too slow. We needed a fast machine capable of working 24/7 on several short to medium runs and, more importantly, fully automated in terms of loading and unloading. This was because, when it comes to corrugated carton, margins are low and big volumes are needed to make enough money. Automation is then the keyword. Software-wise we integrated our ERP with Elitron's so that we could come up with a fully automated workflow.

But you are not the only ones with software and digital cutting technologies...

Expertise is our strength. My grandfather started converting carton in 1951 and, to me, whoever approaches carton without expertise is going to fail.

Which are the real challenges?

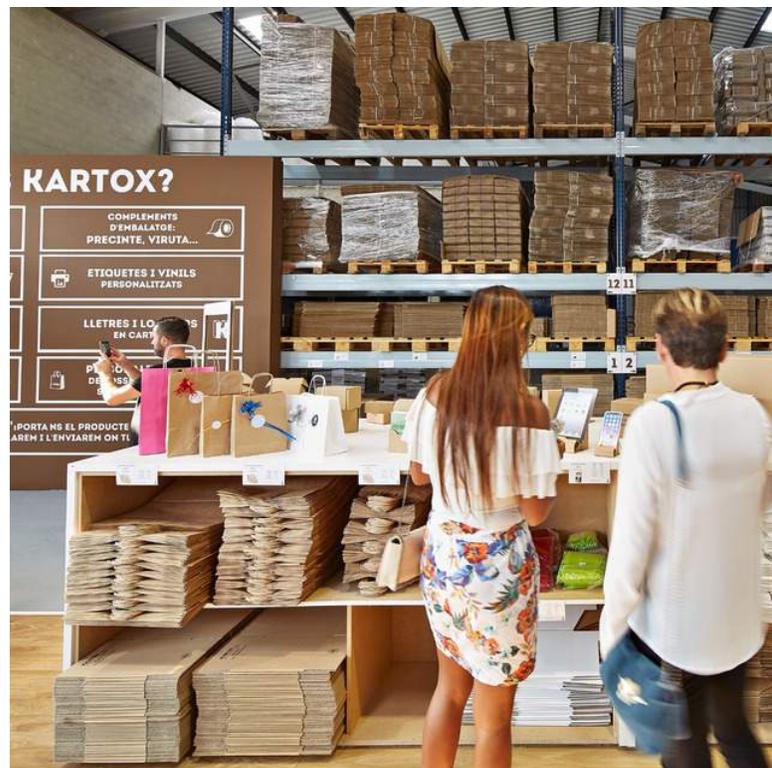
If you are a box maker, those boxes better be working. The problem in manufacturing a box is to design it, assess the quality of the carton, produce it and eventually deliver it. In doing so, many variables come into play, which include also the weight of the product to pack. Shipping pills or a lamp are two different things.

Who fills your customer base?

As of today it's 60% B2B and 40% end users. There are big brands that must deliver samples around the world and ask us for 5 boxes at a time, or small to medium companies which order around 50 to 100 units per time. Some of them are e-commerce retailers, some others buy our boxes for domestic use. Because of this diverse portfolio of customers, we had to move out from Font Packaging production plant to an external store where we can physically meet the clients, offer them our advice and consulting services.

Which are the next steps?

Today we only produce plain boxes. However we plan to implement digital printing in 2018 and we soon expect to introduce another Kombo TAV. The goal is to further expand our business nationwide and globally.





KOMBO TAV-R

Airo
panel

**INNOVATIVE
AUTOMATION
INGREDIENTS**