

Working with Robert McBride

McBride is an established international company, with significant manufacturing operations throughout Europe, specialising in private label and contract manufacturing of laundry, household cleaning and personal care products. Dominating a large percentage of the worldwide own label dishwasher detergent market, McBride is one of the UK's leading producers of dishwasher tablets. I Holland's Research and Development Department has recently worked with McBride on a project to overcome a very costly production problem.

Domestic detergent formulations are extremely sticky when compressing into a tablet form. Traditionally, P.T.F.E. inserts are inserted into punch tips to provide an anti-stick mechanism, however this has limited effectiveness with the formulation sticking to the inserts after only 7 days of press running time. This has severe cost implications for the manufacturer. Every 7 days, the press must be taken out of operation (for at least 12 hours), tooling removed, inserts replaced, press cleaned and re-set up in preparation for the next production run. Inserts are present on both the upper and lower tooling. With the aim of providing a more cost effective, long-term solution, I Holland has trialled a new PharmaCote anti-stick coating with McBride.

The coating is still under development at I Holland but it has already begun to show excellent anti stick results, even though it has to date only been applied to the upper punch tips. Already it has reduced the need to replace the inserts on the lower punches from every 7 days to approximately every two weeks. This has obvious financial benefits regarding the direct costs of replacing the inserts, in addition to reducing the press down time and associated costs by 50%. The tooling has now been running for several months and shows no signs of wear. The coating will next

be applied to the lower punch tips to try to eliminate the problem altogether.

Robert McBride's Engineering Projects Manager confirms that his company is happy with the results of the trial thus far and the quality of product and engineering support received from I Holland; he states: "I Holland have been very pro-active throughout this project. The initial contact with Rob Blanchard (I Holland Special Projects Development Engineer) proved invaluable, as his extensive knowledge of the sticking problems associated with our type of industry, ensured that valuable time was not wasted on inappropriate solutions. The solution proposed was quickly expedited, worked first time and continues to give the benefits associated with eliminating sticking."

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