

Book Manufacturer Speeds Up Their Wire Binding Tenfold



J.L. Darling has manufactured Rite in the Rain® notepads since 1916 in The Great Northwest. The founder, Jerry Darling created a market for notepads that could withstand rain and other poor weather conditions. Even if their notepads get wet, the ink does not run. They invented a proprietary, patented, archival quality substrate that will last a lifetime under normal use.

Prior to the mid-nineties, they bound their Wire-o books on table top equipment. They then purchased, from Spiel Associates, a used Lhermite® automatic paper punch and a used Sickinger wire binding machine. They added a semi-automatic Rilecart® wire binder a few years later to keep up with their capacity, and then purchased a Sterling Punchmaster® automatic paper punch to replace their Lhermite.

Punching their paper is no easy feat. Due to the durability of the paper, they cannot punch as big a lift of sheets as they could with ordinary paper. They also sharpen their dies more frequently than other paper punching machine users.

While they produce different size books, their most popular size is 3" X 5", perfect for an electrical linesman or an EMT to tuck in their breast pocket. Also, they have a "header" which has a sombrero hole acting as a peg hanger. The header size was 3" x 2".

With their Rilecart wire binder, they bound, flipped covers, and boxed an average of 250 books per hour with two operators.

Throughout the years, demand for their product grew. Their capacity did not and they were forced to run multiple shifts to bind the books that they needed to ship. During that time I had tried to help them automate their wire binding. Aside from the cost of over \$200,000 for an automatic machine, we had the problem of book size. While The Rilecart B-599 wire binder could be modified to handle the book size, there was no way it could handle the header size of 2" X 3".

In 2014 Spiel introduced The Sterling® Wiremaster Pro. The selling price was half of what The Rilecart B599 was. This piqued their interest. . Furthermore, the machine needed no modification to handle their book size, but we still had a pesky 2" X 3" header to contend with.

Their R & D Director, John Mattingly and I kicked around some ideas and we came up with the following: Make the header 3" X 3.75" and put a score in the middle. After the books were bound, the header was folded in half for easy hanging. We shot a demo video for them, which you could see [here](#).

After purchasing the Sterling Wiremaster Pro, the fun began. At first they were binding, cover flipping, and boxing 2,700 books per hour. After riding the learning curve, they increased their production to 3,000 books per hour, which is the maximum cycling speed of the machine. They use three operators.

J.L. Darling books can be written upon in the rain, and their production now is right as rain.

David Spiel

Spiel Associates