

# Re-Using boxes instead of Re-Cycling them

By Rob Peeters



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Driven by the need to pick and pack goods before shipping through eCommerce, the use of tape to temporarily close boxes in distribution centres is rapidly increasing. Tape has long been considered the norm because people believe it is cheap. But is this really true?

During the 2018 Empack Show, I met the two owners of the American Company Eco Latch Systems LLC. Their enthusiasm to help the environment by re-using boxes with use of using their products triggered me. We agreed that I would support them to set up a European Sales and Distribution Channel for their Products.

Picture 1, Box Latch® Products.

In this article I will describe a case where a Distribution Centre from a leading apparel company in St. Niklaas, Belgium, is using their simple tools to temporarily keep boxes open or close them.

The goods that arrive in boxes from various locations around the world, are often individually packed in a sealed bag. Once in the DC, the volume of the air in the sealed bag often increases, pushing the box open while placed in the racks. And when a box is open, the flaps get hung up on the racking system of the warehouse. This stops the cranes from retrieving the boxes out of the racks.

Two years ago, they started to use the Box Latch®.

The number of interventions on their cranes reduced from 4-5 a day to 5-10 times a year. By abandoning the tape in the DC as much as possible, they have almost no pollution of their conveyors and cranes, no need to manually retrieve boxes in case the crane is not able to pick the box, they are saving boxes as they don't get damaged in the racks or due to tape, and there is no need to empty the bins filled with tape every shift. In this way boxes can be re-used instead of re-cycled!

Picture 2: Boxes are prepared before they move to the pick and pack location.

From the pick and pack area, the majority of the filled boxes are going to the outbound area. The remaining goods are going back to the warehouse racks, in a box closed with a Box Latch®.

Since September this year they are now testing a new Box Latch® Product, the Corner Clip.

Its purpose is to keep boxes open during the pick and pack process, replacing an elastic band that is used currently. Picture 3, Boxes are prepared with Corner Clips.

The elastic bands can break after multiple uses with a risk of causing serious injuries to operators. The Corner Clip is much safer and again less chance to damage boxes. An employee of mine, will start analysing the savings due to the use of these products, we estimate these are 4-5 digits savings annually.

Not to forget the environmental savings!



Box Latch® Products



Boxes are prepared before they move to the pick and pack location.



Boxes are prepared with Corner Clips.

## Interested?

Take a look at <https://www.boxlatch.com>

You can contact me by email; [rob@boxlatch.com](mailto:rob@boxlatch.com) in the NL or, if in the USA, COO, [jack@boxlatch.com](mailto:jack@boxlatch.com) or call; +1 920-541-3404.

We are working with distributors in the UK, Germany, Japan, South Korea and New Zealand with Australia and Belgium on the agenda for 2020