

Downgauging...Fact or Fiction?

Will it reduce my costs?

There is considerable emphasis today on "downgauging" stretch film. The selling proposition is that "downgauging" from a higher gauge to a lower gauge will reduce your film costs.

There is no question that if you're currently wrapping product with 80 gauge film, and you "downgauge" to 60 gauge film, you will use less film in wrapping the load, assuming you wrap the load with the same number of wrap revolutions.

We've learned that when you try to consistently wrap loads, at the same wrap force, but with lower gauge film, it significantly increases the probability of film breaks. When the film breaks are frequent enough, we've seen many operators turn the wrap force down to the point at which the film breaks are minimal or eliminated. The lower wrap force produces reduced load containment.

When this happens, many operators try to regain containment by adding more wraps to the load. This increases the amount of film and the cost of wrapping the load. At the end of the day, you're back where you started or even worse.

"Downgauging" can be successful, but film breaks can easily eat up potential savings if you're not careful.