



Flexibility, Quality and Efficiency Lead to Success

High product variety, new customer requirements and a growing awareness of sustainability issues are changing the food and confectionery industry. As a result the demands on packaging and packaging machines are increasing.

Variety Demands Flexibility

According to a study by the international market research company Freedonia, the global demand for food packaging will increase by 3.8 % annually over the next three years.¹ The growth results in a greater variety of packaging styles and packaging options. This development is further strengthened by trends towards finished products, convenient individual packaging and a seasonal variation in the packaging of traditional products. Especially the consumer demand for convenient packaging, such as easy to open closures or suitability for microwave ovens, leads to new solutions. Packaging machines need to keep up with this augmenting variety. Consequently, equipment and lines are expected to require only short changeover times, be able to handle a variety of packaging styles and allow for problem-free changes of product, quantity and format. Flexibility is the key to success.

Quality Is Essential

To build up a popular and reliable brand in the food industry, product quality is essential. A brand's reputation rests on

quality checks which ensure that no faulty product reaches the consumer.² Furthermore, new stringent hygiene regulations cause unprecedented demands on packaging machines. Packaging lines with fewer edges, crevices and recesses minimize deposits of particles and ensure high hygiene levels in the entire food manufacturing process. Vision systems automatically separate faulty products or packages, while Clean-In-Place (CIP) systems simplify the cleaning of packaging machines. This is particularly important in lines used for packaging of different types of products.

Efficiency Saves Resources

With ever-increasing competition, one aspect of particular importance to food and confectionery manufacturers is: raise sales rates while simultaneously reduce costs. This can only be achieved with efficient processes. New developments in robot technology allow more automation and speed in the packaging process and ensure high flexibility at the same time. Personnel can therefore be used for other tasks, which generates savings in resources and costs. A close cooperation between packaging system suppliers and food and confectionery manufacturers can also improve efficiency. Case-specific solutions allow the optimization of entire packaging lines and customization according to individual requirements.

Another area which may influence directly product efficiency is sustainability. After this term has been degenerating into a buzz word over the last few years, in the future the demand for eco-friendly production will be driven by concrete expectations. For instance, the efficient use of packaging material not only reduces waste but also lowers costs. Furthermore, the high energy consumption of packaging machines leaves plenty of scope for more efficient methods, allowing a considerable reduction in the use of resources for the entire production chain.

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¹ Freedonia World Food Containers Report 2010

² <http://www.pmmi.org/pib/packagingtrends2010.pdf>