

Sweet Upgrade for Premium Chocolate Maker

Gertrude Hawk Automates Production for Sugar Free Demand

Since the company was founded in 1936, the Dunmore, Pennsylvania-based Gertrude Hawk has been well-known throughout the candy industry as a manufacturer of high-quality, premium chocolates. The company's products are created with great care in an efficient manner.

In addition to molding its own delicious brand of chocolate products, the company also provides contract packaging services for a variety of customers. Recently, a valued customer experienced a surge in demand for one of its sugar-free chocolate lines, and Gertrude Hawk needed to increase production speeds. The chocolate maker needed to produce 240 pieces of chocolate per minute, a task that proved to be difficult for Gertrude Hawk's previous packaging capabilities. As a result, the company turned to Bosch Packaging Technology to update its factory infrastructure with one new machine integrated with existing equipment.

Loading by Hand

Prior to automating with Bosch's equipment in-house, Gertrude Hawk originally

had a long conveyor belt with assemblers loading product into the flow wrapper by hand. However, because of the low speed, the company found it challenging to meet scheduled delivery dates for its customers. In the fall of 2008, Gertrude Hawk worked with Bosch to retrofit a two-arm Delfi feed placer to the company's existing Linium 301 horizontal flow wrapper from Bosch. When consumer demand for the sugar-free chocolate rose, Bosch answered the call and got the machines connected to one another within two months.

The combination of the new feed placer with the existing horizontal flow wrapper allowed Gertrude Hawk's shift manager to increase the productivity per shift by 25 to 30 %, and reduce labor by 50 to 60 %. Gertrude Hawk is now able to

produce the necessary 240 pieces of chocolate per minute to meet its customers' delivery dates.

No More Nicks

Another benefit the robotic equipment brings to Gertrude Hawk is improved quality for each individual chocolate. With hand-wrapped methods of packaging, center-filled candy, which may have a shell that is no more than an eighth of an inch thick, is extremely susceptible to impressions, nicks, and damage. The robotic system, and its ability to handle delicate products via suction cups, leaves no marks or impressions on the chocolate. The packaging line has a vision software system that distinguishes a product's parameters and orientation to ensure the suction cups gently handle the product.



“Before the implementation of the feed placer we had fluctuations in terms of the quality of the packaging,” says Al Hollister, director of engineering at Gertrude Hawk. “A center-filled candy with a shell only an eighth of an inch thick requires very gentle handling to avoid breakage and damage. The robot from Bosch does a great job.”

A Sweet Future

Gertrude Hawk is contemplating using the integrated system for two or three more product lines in addition to the sugar-free line because of its consistency of production flow. With the system’s ability to produce 240 pieces of chocolate per minute and lower vulnerability of breakage or damage, Gertrude Hawk

increased the overall equipment effectiveness (OEE) and productivity significantly.

For more information please contact:

Rich Young

Phone +1 610 644-6888

rich.young@bosch.com

► More information is available on www.boschpackaging.com/packazine

The Delfi Feed Placer is a vision-guided high-speed Delta Robot. It accepts aligned or randomly oriented incoming product flow on a wide belt conveyor and places the products directly into the moving flights of a wrapper, cartoner or thermoformer with smooth efficiency.

