

Lucky Cookie made a lucky find at Pack Expo

Lucky Cookie's founder will definitely attend Pack Expo International 2012 this October. His last trip to the show resulted in a purchase that has boosted his young company's growth significantly.

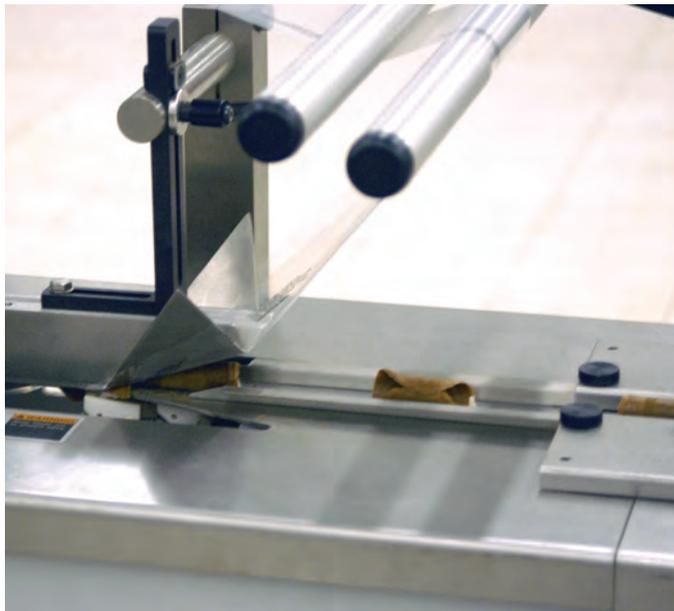


When Tim Mcquiston launched Lucky Cookie Co. of Hustisford, WI, in late 2011, he did so with considerable help from a Dobby Stratus™ horizontal flow wrapper from **Bosch** (www.boschpackaging.com). The machine enabled him to reach the speeds required to deliver a cost-effective, high-quality product at the volume necessary to jump-start his business.

Based on that success, the Lucky Cookie Co. will be at Pack Expo International 2012 to find additional processing equipment and new packaging formats that will help the business grow in new directions.

With a background in automotive manufacturing, Mcquiston built a baked goods production line and took his cookies to market in late 2011. The company currently manufactures three types of cookies, and each variety is available with a humorous fortune inside:

- The Lucky Taco fortune cookie, with flavors including several margarita-themed varieties, such as strawberry, lemon, lime, and mango



FORMING SHOES. Custom-designed forming shoes are handy when it comes to guiding the fit of the packaging material around the cookies.



- The Lucky Cookie, a variation of the original cookie, featuring kids' trivia
- The Lucky Cannoli, available in amaretto, mocha, Irish cream, and chocolate mint flavors, with or without fortunes, and plain or dark chocolate-dipped

The cookies are offered as a free after-dinner treat at restaurants and are sold at coffee shops and other retailers all around the U.S. and Canada, including Pink Taco, Ponderosa, Roundtable Pizza, Arizona Specialty Foods, Century Foods, and Sendik's Foods. Even fast food chain Jack 'n the Box has offered the Lucky Taco cookie; in that case, as part of a limited-time promotion.

➔ GETTING STARTED

Assembling a manufacturing line is rarely a fast-moving process. Mcquiston spent more than two years working with a supplier to fine-tune his custom solution for processing and baking the different types of cookies.

When searching for packaging equipment, a former supplier advised him to attend Pack Expo, the largest and most comprehensive resource for processing and packaging equipment in North America. Mcquiston attended the show and combed the aisles for different options. It was there he found the Bosch horizontal flow wrapper that he now uses to package each treat in 1-mm film wrapper with standard or custom print labeling.

"Pack Expo made finding and obtaining the machine the easiest part of the process," Mcquiston said. "I was able to see what was offered from different suppliers and find a piece of equipment that was right for what I needed."

After spending nearly four years working with a supplier based in

➔➔➔ p. 56

another part of the country, using trial and error to refine the processing line, Mcquiston knew he wanted to use a local supplier for his packaging operation. With a facility in nearby New Richmond, WI, Bosch Packaging Technology offered an extensive network of resources right in his own backyard.

The two companies worked closely to tailor the system to the different-shaped products. Custom-designed forming shoes were the solution for guiding the fit of the packaging material around the cookies in each line. To switch out the flow wrapper from one style of cookie to another, a worker can simply pop in the designated forming shoe to ensure each product gets wrapped properly.

"When we had the cannoli cookie ready, we just sent Bosch the samples and the company's team designed the forming shoe," Mcquiston says. "They spec it out and design the shoe so that it just pops in place easily with very little downtime due to changeover."

Overall, it took just 12 weeks from the time Lucky Cookie placed the order until the installation was complete and ready to run. Following the installation, Mcquiston and his team were able to easily reach Bosch's equipment specialists through the supplier's toll-free number when they had questions.

➔ ACHIEVING PROFITABILITY THROUGH EFFICIENCY

Though Mcquiston originally envisioned Lucky Cookie as a small, temporary business venture, growing interest from retail and restaurant customers and consumers prompted him to make a long-term growth strategy a priority. This meant ensuring the manufacturing line was efficient and profitable.

To maintain a cost-effective operation, Lucky Cookie had to manufacture at least 5,000 cookies/hr, and because it's able to package up to 9,000 cookies/hr, Bosch's Dobby Stratus horizontal flow wrapper easily met desired goals for production speed and output. The flow wrapper facilitates quick changeover and ensures consistency with the same PC and servo motor technology used in Bosch's higher-end equipment. It also comes equipped with snap-in infeed pushers and pre-programmable product set-ups to speed product changeovers. The optional electronic two-way eye correction enables the machine to



FOODSERVICE AND RETAIL. The cookies are offered as a free after-dinner treat at restaurants and are sold at coffee shops and other retailers.

automatically register printed films to reduce packaging waste.

"The machine worked flawlessly and fabulously between the two styles of cookies," Mcquiston says. "If all my other equipment worked as well as this packaging machine, I wouldn't have any worries."

The intuitive controls on the flow wrapper also made it easy for workers to understand and operate. The highly automated and simple design only requires manual change-out of the film roll, keeping labor-related costs down.

As Lucky Cookie works to drive brand awareness, its customer base of retailers, restaurants, and direct consumers continues to grow exponentially. To keep up with demand, the company recently installed a production line for Lucky Cannolis that will enable production speeds of up to 20,000 cookies per hour. But that's only the beginning.

Plans for a chocolate dipping line are in progress. As the cookies move into new retail spaces, Lucky Cookie is also looking to change packaging to a vertical-hang format perfect for display near check-out. To complete both installations, Mcquiston will return to Pack Expo International 2012 this fall in search of the necessary equipment.

"We're growing by huge leaps and bounds each month and expect to have Lucky Cookie products available at thousands of restaurants, caterers, and retail outlets throughout the country," says Mcquiston. "To keep up with this growth, we'll need to be able to produce 400,000 cookies each day."

The machines and services he finds at Pack Expo 2012 are likely to help him considerably. —Pat Reynolds

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