

## When is it Time to Automate Your End-of-Line Packaging Operation?

Successful manufacturers, of any size, face growing pains when production begins to exceed their manpower and facility capabilities. This can happen during seasonal surges or gradually as a business becomes more successful. Valuable manpower is needed to keep a steady supply of erected, corrugated cases formed, taped and packed. They can be stacked from floor to ceiling and can overflow into aisles waiting to be filled. Run out of erected cases and production comes to a screaming halt. Shipping goals aren't met and revenue is affected.

When your facility begins to sound and look like this, it's time to start asking yourself if it's time to invest in end-of-line packaging machinery.



Finding the dollars to invest in capital equipment is never easy, no matter how badly your operation warrants it. Some qualifying indicators that may be present and the costs associated with these “pain points” should be considered when determining the return on investing in packaging automation:

- ☐ Insufficient Line Capacity – packaging line can't keep up with production needs
- ☐ Missed Shipping Targets
- ☐ Ergonomic Concerns and High Incidence of Workers Compensation Claims
- ☐ Manually erecting and sealing 600+ cases per day/shift
- ☐ High Operating Expenses
- ☐ Insufficient Labor / Reallocation of Labor
- ☐ Package Inconsistency
- ☐ Product Damage
- ☐ Package material waste
- ☐ Floor space constraints

Once the decision has been made to purchase end-of-line packaging machinery, choose an OEM to fit your needs and corporate culture. Some things to consider when choosing a supplier:

- ❑ If your company has multiple locations both inside the US and outside, look for an OEM which has a global network of sales and service.
- ❑ Look for modular equipment, that gives you the flexibility to run various case sizes or products on the same machine and which gives you the ability to integrate new equipment to the line as your production grows and budget allows.



- ❑ If you do not have your own plant engineering capabilities, look for an OEM that offers value-added design, engineering and integration services.
- ❑ Case erecting and sealing equipment is relatively simple machinery; when there is a problem it's usually a material problem. Understand that the quality and design of your corrugate significantly impacts how successfully it will run on a machine.
- ❑ An OEM should be able to provide references and offer customer visits or testimonials.
- ❑ Look for an OEM with a network of distributors, who can provide local service and parts support.
- ❑ Purchase technology that is equal to your own in-house capabilities – do not buy a machine with sophisticated controls if you don't have in-house technical capabilities.
- ❑ Look for an OEM with a similar company culture – do they support their employees and local community? Usually this will be mentioned on their website.
- ❑ Seek referrals from other business professionals.

To stay competitive and maximize profits, you can optimize workplace performance by incorporating semi-automatic or automatic packaging equipment into your business operation. Improvements and efficiencies in the workflow process will directly impact your bottom line.

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