

Maximizing Productivity

KEN'S FOODS

As one of the top salad dressing manufacturer in the United States, Ken's Foods prides itself on being able to meet the varying needs of all of their customers – from small custom dressings of 100 cases in a single order to retail dressing that is produced at over 50 gallons per minute. They have an impressive product line that includes over 250 salad dressings, barbecue sauces and mayonnaise. Between their Retail Grocery Products and Food Services Division their packaging capabilities range from .75 ounce single serve pouches to 400-gallon totes. This wide range of package sizes require that Ken's packaging facility be one of the most flexible in the industry. Ken's Foods plants are widely recognized as three of the most advanced and automated in the nation.

For over 30 years, Jaffco Packaging Machinery, Columbia's Independent Rep group in the Northeast, has been a partner that Ken's Foods relies on to evaluate and recommend conveying and palletizing solutions to all three locations in McDonough, GA, Marlborough, MA and Las Vegas, NV. Within these three plants are a total of 30 packaging lines with 9 Columbia palletizers and a 10th on order with a delivery of November 2012.

The most recent installation took place at the Las Vegas, NV plant where Ken's Foods was adding a high-speed retail packaging line and manual palletizing was not an option. Jeff Murzycki, Ken's Foods Corporate Engineer, relied on the expertise of Bruce Fournier from Jaffco Packaging Machinery to provide conveying and palletizing solutions to meet the unique needs of the plant.

There were two key challenges that needed to be addressed and solved by the palletizer. The first challenge was when Ken's Foods added a 6-pack case to meet the needs of their customers. That change cut the footprint of the 12-pack case in half creating a tall and tippy product that the palletizer needed to be able to stack. The second challenge was when a

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back up situation occurred the palletizer would need to go from a run rate of 68 cases per minute up to a surge rate of 120 cases per minute.

The solution Columbia Machine presented used standard components that were custom configured for the specifics of this application. For Ken's Foods this was a HL6000 Dual Infeed Palletizer. When looking at the standard HL6000 it was determined it could meet the daily needs of Ken's Foods, however, when the 6-pack needed to run certain conditions needed to be addressed. The critical stages of the palletizer for this product was where the turning and row pushing takes place, these are the areas where it is most likely for the product to tip over. In order to gently and reliably handle the 6-pack case, it was determined that the case infeed and row former speeds needed to be reduced. Therefore, to make the 120 case per minute rate, a dual infeed option was added to the standard HL 6000. This essentially halved the speed of the components in the critical areas while allowing the throughput to be extremely high. There are many standard components that Columbia incorporated into this system to achieve the overall flexibility that Ken's Foods requires to meet current and future packaging demands. There is a one to two slat divider that guides the cases into one of two lanes for turning and positioning prior to the row former. The row forming area uses a VFD

controlled overhead blade pusher to support the tall tippy product as it transitions from the row forming area to the plastic belting of the layer table. The plastic belting helps to provide a tight and smooth transition between these two sections of the machine. VFDs are used throughout the palletizer in order to provide gentle product handling, smooth acceleration and quick retraction to meet the overall speed requirement.

Jeff Murzycki stated, "***Columbia was able to seamlessly integrate a dual infeed system that dramatically improved case throughput and we are once again very pleased with the solution provided. The Product Manager Software that is included with all Columbia Palletizers is vital to the flexibility of the system in being able to modify pallet patterns on the fly rather than calling a programmer and having him log in remotely.***"

Columbia

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