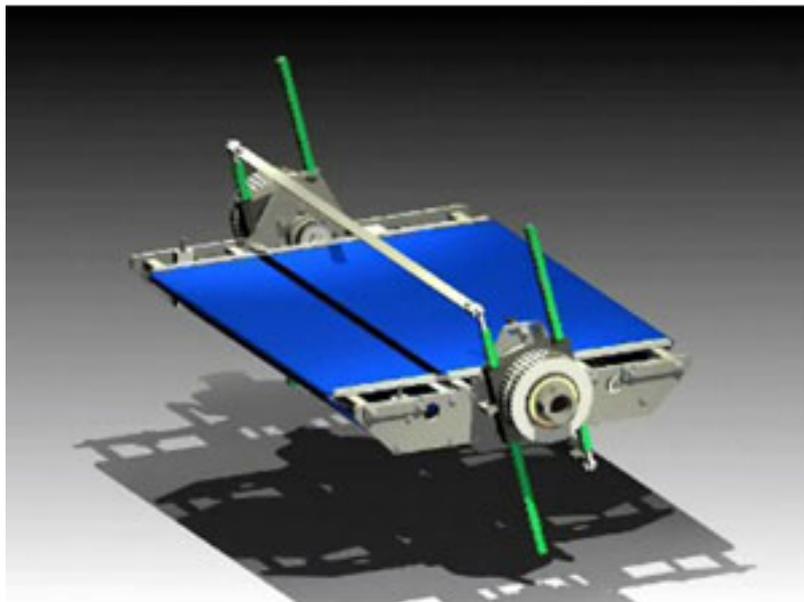


Reduce Waste & Improve Flexibility



As companies adapt to packaging sustainability issues, they are seeking ways to reduce material used in packaging, and reduce waste when the pallet gets to the retail floor and onto the shelf. At the same time, the proliferation of contract packers (co-packers) has resulted in a need for versatile equipment that can be quickly changed over for a variety of products and pack patterns. Holding down labor costs associated with changing over product lines and maintaining equipment tops the list of must-haves for packagers today.

Newly introduced equipment, including Standard-Knapp's Tritium™ multipacker with the innovative RoboWrap™ system and Robo-Wand™ multi-axis programmable path wrapping section, meets packagers need for versatility, ease of changeover and finished product quality.

Environmental Sustainability Driving Packaging Reductions

Reducing packaging has been a long-term goal for many years, but the ante was upped considerably in 2006, when Wal-Mart introduced its packaging scorecard, a measurement tool that allows suppliers to evaluate themselves relative to other suppliers, based on specific metrics, known as the “7 Rs of Packaging” — remove, reduce, reuse, recycle, renew, revenue and read.

The scorecard was designed to help Wal-Mart meet its commitment of reducing packaging across its global supply chain by 5 percent by 2013. Wal-Mart's commitment has flowed down across the vendor supply chain, making packaging

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firms sit up and take notice of ways to reduce packaging and packaging waste.

Co-Packers Need Flexible Options

Another factor affecting the marketplace is the increased prevalence of contract packers (co-packers). Co-packers manufacture and package foods for other companies to sell, ranging from nationally known brands to private labels. With a wide range of clients and product types, co-packers need a versatile packaging machine above all else. One day they may need to wrap two dozen of an item in clear wrap for BJ's or Wal-Mart, and the next day they may be packaging items for a small operation, which sells the items individually.

Traditional shrink-wrapping machines operate on a fixed path with a fixed cam for each task. They require changeover time, parts and machine adjustments any time a new pack pattern is needed, or a change made from one product range to another. Operators can either conduct frequent changeovers to respond to different pack patterns, or choose one pattern that works only marginally well for all their products.

Due to the complexity of this changeover, customers often run multiple lines, so they do not have to change over the lines, but can dedicate a machine to a specific product range. This doesn't fit the bill for co-packers, because they change formats quite often. They may choose from a variety of methods for changing over, none of which is satisfactory. One design uses a changeable chain track to make the change. Another has screws built into the chain track that allow it to be raised and lowered. In each of these cases, the machine is generally set up for a wrapping profile, which is not optimum and can result in loose wrapping.

Other elaborate designs resemble a Rube Goldberg machine, complete with long arms and multiple servo axes. Complicated, difficult to adjust and somewhat unreliable, these designs are hard to run and have not made it into the mainstream.

The gold standard co-packers seek is a multi-packer that wraps a wide range of pack patterns and produces a pristine package on the shelf. Top on the wish list is a machine that can handle minimal packaging, does not need a great deal of costly changeover time, produces clean bull's eyes, minimizes wrinkling and offers sophisticated use of printed packaging graphics to show off the product's advertising message.

Enter Tritium Multipacker with RoboWrap

To respond to the driving need to reduce packaging waste and supply flexibility to co-packers, Standard-Knapp introduced its continuous-motion Tritium multipacker, which features RoboWrap, a new multi-axis wrapping technology.

RoboWrap includes the patented Robo-Wand wrapping wand, which can be positioned at any point in space above the conveyor and moved to exactly the right place to package a particular desired pack pattern. The wrapping wand does not follow a set path, and is programmable to new shapes and sizes, with or without

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trays.

With an infinite number of paths, the new wrapping wand can be programmed to deal with packages of any size, meaning shorter changeover times and no changeover of parts. It works at varying speeds, and provides wrapping that is tighter and more exact than earlier models. It cuts packaging material consumption by eliminating the need for trays and pads.

The Tritium multipacker also has a lower carbon footprint than competing systems thanks to its energy-efficient heat tunnel. After products are wrapped, they are sent through the tunnel, which shrinks the film around each multi-pack — ensuring a consistent, wrinkle-free bull's eye and bottom seal. The machine can run fully registered advertising onto the outside printed plastic label.

Standard-Knapp programs RoboWrap's wrapping wand for the optimal pack pattern for each product being packaged. It is easy to align and initial setup is relatively simple. After setup, no mechanical adjustment is necessary — the program takes care of everything. If new products are added, a simple programming adjustment can be made. Nothing needs to be removed as a change part to move from one size to another. For example, with other machines, if a customer had a run of short bottles followed by taller ones, they would have to call the manufacturer and order a change part, and take time to adjust the machine. The operator would simply use a touch screen to change the program to the profile for the taller bottle.

Changeover can be accomplished simply by hitting one button, reducing the need for as many people on the floor adjusting the machines. There are still mechanical changeover points, although they have been significantly reduced.

Due to the location of the wrapping wand above the conveyor, products can be wrapped more quickly, efficiently and precisely. No cardboard, tray or pad is required, a real boon to those seeking to reduce packaging waste.

Packaging to Increase Sales Volume

Warehouse and discount stores frequently use multi-item promotions to increase sales volumes, and packagers need to be able to respond easily to pack pattern changes. For example, if a customer decides to offer a special discount on a three-pack of soup, the equipment has to be able to wrap the new pack pattern and get it to the selling floor quickly. If the next promotion is on cans a few inches taller, they must be able to quickly and easily switch over to the new pattern.

With RoboWrap, this type of quick changeover is a breeze. Printed or registered film can be used to wrap each multi-pack to promote the cost-saving multi-pack purchase. The translucent film provides a larger area for product information, and allows retailers to stock their shelves faster and with less waste.

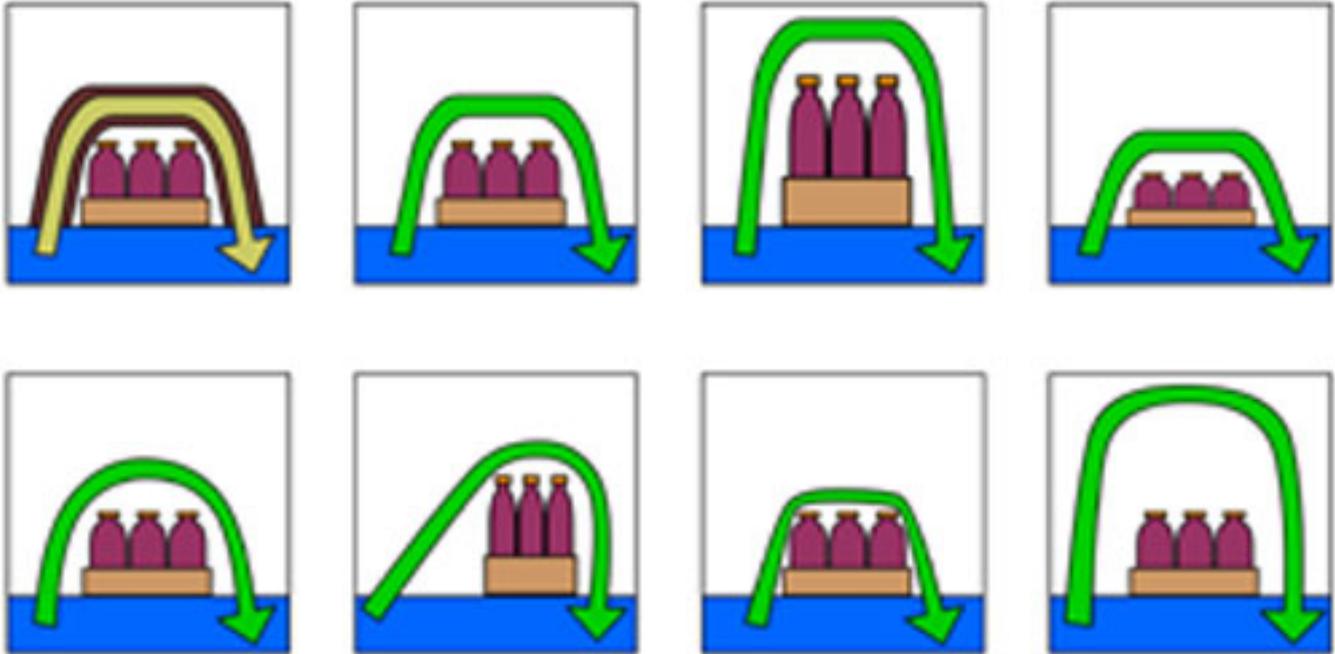
Gentler Force Means Faster Operations & Quality Output

Another benefit of a programmable wand is its ability to wrap precisely, thereby

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reducing the forces that tend to distort a product. If the product can be placed on the conveyor and wrapped with a controlled and gentle movement, even if the conveyor is run faster, the product will not be subject to forces that can cause distortions. If the product is moving forward at constant speed, the Robo-Wand perfect profile puts no extra forces on the product, no matter how fast it is run.



While this may not be a big factor in wrapping squat and stable aluminum soup cans, it definitely comes into play if wrapping tall, slender plastic water bottles. When combined with Standard-Knapp's Zero Gap II technology, which maintains constant low line pressure, the product is disturbed even less.

Reducing Changeover Costs & Labor Time

The need to drive down labor costs is fueling the quest for easy-to-maintain equipment that reduces changeover times. One large California juice company has stated that its goal is to reduce its changeover from one flavor to the next in 7 minutes, a far cry from the 8 hours it used to take just a few years ago. Changing from packaging one product to another is a headache and time-waster experienced by many packers, but is especially acute for co-packers, who may find themselves changing runs as frequently as every half-hour with different products.

Traditional packing systems require an operator associated with each machine used to pack, label and then palletize products. During changeover, each one of these machines would stop, resulting in time and manpower costs. For example, if a machine running 240 six-packs of soup is down for even 5 minutes for a changeover, that's 1,200 six-packs that did not get packaged, with a resulting need to increase the labor shift to produce the desired quantity.

Companies today do not want to hire operators that only know how to run a single machine, nor can they absorb labor costs associated with changeover downtime. Rather, they typically look for a system that can be run, maintained and fixed by a

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single worker, and one in which changeover can be accomplished quickly and easily.

The modularly constructed, stainless steel Tritium multipacker comes equipped with easy-access “gull wing” guard doors. These transparent, safety-interlock guard doors provide a clear view of all moving belts and chains, enabling “walk-by maintenance” by maintenance personnel. To facilitate machine maintenance, many steel chains have been replaced with timing belts, which require no lubrication and create a quieter machine.

Changeover can be accomplished simply by hitting one button, reducing the need for as many people on the floor adjusting the machines. The Tritium™ multipacker’s operator interface uses simple color touch-screen technology. Through computer-aided fault recovery, the operator interface reduces mean time to recover (MTR) and increases efficiency.

Once programmed for a particular product and pack pattern, the Robo-Wand electronically sets itself, beginning the wrap pattern. Customers can go from a four-pack to an eight-pack in a matter of minutes rather than hours.

Hitting the Bull’s Eye

Packagers need equipment that help them respond to the challenges of reducing package waste, responding flexibly to packaging challenges and holding down labor costs. The Tritium™ multipacker with its innovative Robo-Wand wrapping feature is right on the money.

For more information, please visit www.standard-knapp.com [1].

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