

When The Little Things Matter A Lot



Pharma Tech Industries (PTI), a contract manufacturer and packer of pharmaceuticals, medical devices and personal care products, is focused on exceeding customers' expectations. To consistently achieve their high quality standards, they rely on x-ray and metal detection systems from Mettler-Toledo Safeline and checkweighers from Mettler-Toledo Hi-Speed.

"Last summer, when we were looking for an x-ray inspection system for a new production line, we considered several suppliers," said Bill Leonard, Engineering Manager at PTI's Royston, Georgia facility. "We chose the SmartChek x-ray system based on the quality of the equipment, the reputation of the supplier, and the responsiveness of the supplier's service team."

The x-ray system at PTI inspects OTC and prescription pharmaceuticals — powdered products packed in pouches made of metalized film. The ability to detect metal contamination through the metalized film led to PTI's decision to install this x-ray system, though it detects glass, stone, bone, rubber and other contaminants too.

"We have not had any problems with contamination and we don't expect to have any problems. The x-ray system protects our products in the unlikely event of raw material contamination or catastrophic machine breakdown," noted Leonard. "The system is more sensitive to detecting minute metal than Mettler-Toledo Safeline promises. It's been a very pleasant surprise to find out what this system can achieve. Despite this high level of sensitivity, we've had zero false rejects other than those that result from incorrect spacing of pouches caused by upstream equipment — overlapping pouches trigger the x-ray to reject the packages."

"The Safeline x-ray system is extremely easy to operate. The user interface is really straightforward. The operator can see what they are supposed to do without much

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Published on Industrial Maintenance & Plant Operation (<http://www.impomag.com>)

training,” said Leonard.

“The reliability of the system is also impressive. We test the sensitivity once every shift. It’s never failed to my knowledge,” added Leonard. “And we’ve not had any downtime. It’s a big plus that our operators don’t need to baby-sit this equipment. Even routine maintenance is easy. Once a month, we check the safety functions and clean it out with compressed air. That’s it.”



In addition to the SmartChek x-ray system, PTI also installed a XS1 checkweigher from Mettler-Toledo Hi-Speed in July 2009. This was PTI’s second XS1 checkweigher at the Royston facility – the first was installed two years earlier.

“We chose the XS1 because of its high accuracy with small, lightweight packages,” noted Leonard. “That line handles powdered pharmaceutical products that are packed in pouches weighing from 5 to 17 grams. The XS1 is rated to consistently maintain a one standard deviation accuracy of plus or minus 20 mg but we’ve seen it achieve accuracies as low as 15 mg. This accuracy is critical for ensuring that our customers receive the correct dosage in their products.”

“The productivity of the checkweigher is also important. Because the checkweigher tells us if we’re over-filling or under-filling, it contributes to the line’s overall efficiency. This machine helps improve our bottom line because if we’re giving product away by over-filling, there is a financial impact,” noted Leonard. “That said, assuring the quality of our product is our number one goal and the reason we chose the XS1 checkweigher.”

PTI’s dedication to producing the highest quality product has earned them significant customer loyalty. The Franchise Director at Johnson & Johnson Group of Consumer Companies recently said, “Pharma Tech, as a strategic partner, has

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consistently demonstrated the ability to perform at a high level on a daily basis and to meet the challenge of large project tasks, often going above and beyond the call of duty. We have recognized their strengths with 'Best in Class' awards for 'On-Time Delivery' and 'Case Fill Rate' and for 'Flawless Execution' of technology transfers."

Beyond the Safeline x-ray system and Hi-Speed checkweighers, PTI also relies on Safeline metal detectors at the Royston plant. Certus metal detectors are installed on two tablet lines, inspecting bulk tablets immediately prior to being packaged into metalized film pouches. The metal detectors can detect all metal contaminants including ferrous, non-ferrous and the normally difficult to find non-magnetic stainless steels.

"We've been running these two Certus metal detectors for two years now and have not had any problems with them," noted Leonard. "We test the systems' sensitivity during every shift and neither one has ever failed. We've had minimal false rejects and no maintenance problems whatsoever. But most importantly, we have never had contaminated product reach a customer."

"The product inspection systems from Mettler-Toledo Safeline and Mettler-Toledo Hi-Speed are accurate and reliable, which helps us achieve our high quality standards," concluded Leonard. "Additionally, these sister companies, as well as our sales rep, Mike Smith at Southeastern Packaging Equipment Sales, have given us tremendous customer service. We had a very tight timeline for our recent project and everybody stayed on top of it and got it done on time. The after-sales customer service we've received has been excellent too."

Source URL (retrieved on 03/28/2015 - 7:06pm):

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