

Robotic Automation Raises The Organic Bar



To meet growing consumer demand for its line of nutritious FOOD BARS, ORGANIC FOOD BARS, an organic foods manufacturer in Southern California teamed up with Bosch Packaging Technology to install three new packaging machines—including two Delta robots—at the company’s facility in Corona, Calif.

Healthy demands lead to higher output

With a mission to provide easily accessible, nutritious snack products for people on the go, [ORGANIC FOOD BAR](#) [1] was founded in 2001, a time when the term ‘organic’ was still relatively new to consumers. The company has come a long way since it first premiered its line of wholesome nutritious FOOD BARS on the market. In almost a decade of existence, it has grown to meet rising consumer demands for healthful food in convenient servings. ORGANIC FOOD BAR products are now carried through health food and specialty supermarkets, like Whole Foods, Safeway, Albertson, Vons, Ralphs, Henry’s and The Vitamin Shoppe.

In order to meet rising demand for its products, ORGANIC FOOD BAR needed to expand its existing packaging line, so the company turned to Bosch to provide solutions for meeting high output demands while maintaining the company’s stringent commitment to sustainability and reduction of its carbon footprint. **A**

lucky find, a healthy fit

According to Jim Neville of Nevco Ltd., the representative for Bosch in southern California, ORGANIC FOOD BAR purchased three Bosch machines which were subsequently installed at the company’s GMP certified Corona facility.

All of the ingredients in ORGANIC FOOD BARS are certified organic (USDA & EEC 2091/2092) and kosher. The company makes them fresh daily and takes great pains to avoid all known allergens like dairy, wheat, soy and peanuts. In order to avoid the

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possibility of contaminants, the Bosch machines had to meet the company's high standards for cleanliness and sanitation.

"Bosch had the key equipment we needed to expand our operation at the time," said David Winget, ORGANIC FOOD BAR, vice president-operations. "Adding the machines to our existing line proved to be the right move."

Integrated into ORGANIC FOOD BARS existing production line, the equipment purchased included a Delfi delta robot feed placer, to delicately handle ORGANIC FOOD BARS without damaging the unwrapped goods; the Doboy Wrapper from Bosch, to place and seal the FOOD BARS in their iconic banana yellow wrappers; and, finally, the Presto delta robot top loader, to place the wrapped bars into paperboard cartons to be shipped to retail stores throughout North America and the world.

Efficiency in the company's packaging operation is crucial to speeding ORGANIC FOOD BARS into their wrappers as soon as possible after making them in order to lock in optimal freshness. Bosch machines are integral to driving the high-speed process.

Freshness on the line

After ORGANIC FOOD BAR makes its line of fresh, organic food products every morning, the bars make their way down the packaging line to the Bosch Delfi delta robot feed placer, which is dexterous enough to delicately handle the unwrapped bars without damaging them. The custom-made vacuum cup end effectors are designed to handle a range of various sized, fragile products. The Delfi feed placer makes order of the seemingly endless line of bare bars that come down the conveyer in random fashion. An integral vision system on the Delfi incorporates pattern recognition to quickly locate objects with extreme accuracy so that the three armed Delfi can precisely place the objects at a rate of up to 300 per-minute into the fast moving lug chain of the Bosch wrapper without slowing the production flow. A color touch-screen HMI facilitates the entire setup and changeover with an intuitive menu.

Once placed into the wrapper infeed chain, the bars are overwrapped by the Bosch rotary head horizontal wrapper, which is designed to maximize production uptime to meet the requirements of the rapid pace of the Corona facility. The Bosch wrapper creates a complete overwrap around the FOOD BARS, using an easily interchangeable former, enabling fast changeovers to wrap many different sized products. The ends of the package are then sealed and cut apart. The bars are encased in the bright, sun-colored wrapping that graces each one of the company's individual product lines.

In keeping with ORGANIC FOOD BAR's stringent requirements for cleanliness, a solid steel plate frame and food-grade product contact parts make the machine ideal for food applications. Its proven low backlash end-seal drive ensures dependability. Special software features reduce the chance for FOOD BAR jams and speed recovery in the unlikely event that a jam does occur.

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Once individually wrapped and sealed, the bars are conveyed to the Presto delta robot top loader. Upon arrival, the wrapped bars are placed into paperboard cartons which are then shipped throughout North America and abroad. The Presto top loader achieves high efficiency and is versatile enough to use with a variety of products and pack patterns. Again, in keeping with ORGANIC FOOD BAR's standards of cleanliness, the Presto machine is easy to use and clean for food applications.

Keeping a green eye on the future

"Since making the purchase from Bosch," said Winget, "ORGANIC FOOD BAR has built a brand, spanking new facility."

Winget explains the renovation was far more than a Good Manufacturing Practice facelift. The plant is transitioning to 100 percent renewable, clean and sustainable solar energy. The new machines from Bosch are at the heart of this groundbreaking production line and are helping the company achieve outputs as high as 300 bars-per-minute.

Even inspectors from a leading GMP certifying company described the new Corona operation in a report as being "the Rolls Royce of plants." While ORGANIC FOOD BAR continues to raise the bar on healthful, organic and unprocessed food, Bosch Packaging Technology does its share to help the company contribute to a healthier lifestyle and a greener planet.

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Links:

[1] <http://www.organicfoodbar.com/>