

Uniq Prepared Foods

Uniq Prepared Foods have made another investment with factory profitability experts Marco and are already seeing significant improvements and rapid cost savings at their state of the art production facility at Moulton Park, Northampton.



Background

Uniq Prepared Foods, a division of Uniq Plc, is an award winning supplier of high quality sandwiches, wraps and deli products to Marks & Spencer and European airline businesses. Producing more than a million sandwiches and wraps every week, the business is one of the UK's largest sandwich manufacturers. Flexibility, speed and precision are key ingredients of the manufacturing process to ensure consistent quality and maintain the 'aesthetic eatability' of the finished products.

Streamlining such processes, whilst ensuring minimum wastage and giveaway, is essential, especially under the present economic climate. As part of their initial consultative process, Marco carried out a detailed on-site factory audit, designed to identify exactly how and where companies such as Uniq can improve productivity and performance. By highlighting where 'profits are hiding', Marco can then create and manufacture an individual and optimised factory floor solution.

There is no doubt that the current economic climate has created a new world and companies are under increased pressures to perform, whilst having strict controls placed on capital expenditure. With the world's leading brands relying on Marco, the company's level of confidence in increasing clients' factory profitability is such that they have established their 'Marco Standard'. Based on their successes at over 350 'profitable' installations world-wide, this uniquely underwrites that any investment a company makes with Marco will provide payback within 12 months. Marco believe that key to this bold endorsement is their unrivalled capability in supplying and supporting all elements of the systems: from software deployment down to the final nut and bolt on the factory floor, thereby ensuring truly effective integration between software applications and factory floor automation.



The Solution

Although certain long run products are manufactured on Uniq's fully automated line, given the rapidly varying customer requirements and need for quick line changes, high speed manual assembly still plays a major role in the production area.

Maintaining the correct blend of sandwich fillings, whilst minimising giveaway and wastage, requires the optimum in line control, especially as sandwich fillings become more complex and adventurous. To minimise giveaway, Marco have pioneered the development of their dynamic Automatic Optimisation (AO) software. Part of Marco's Trac-IT software suite, this unique solution continually fine tunes the system based on real time factory floor data and reduces expensive giveaway to virtually zero, without affecting product quality or line speed.

Uniq's project manager Lee Harris is delighted with the way the system is operating and as he concludes: *"The recently installed Marco Profitability System has proved itself to be a very cost effective way of controlling our ingredient weighing and has dramatically reduced our giveaway without compromising line speed or quality. The new system has greatly improved our materials usage and given us a greater understanding of our material losses. We have already seen a substantial reduction in prawn losses alone. It has improved our line efficiency through real time data logging of usage, runtime, batch count and downtime. The system is also very operator friendly, with operators producing consistent and accurate weighings within one minute of using the system. It has dramatically reduced set-up and change over times, thereby increasing efficiency and eliminating the chance of target weight errors. With our old system, line changes required each scale to be updated manually, which was not only time consuming, but also prone to data entry error. We are now looking to install Marco equipment on other production lines."*

For over 25 years Marco has delivered competitive advantage to market leaders through the installation of over 350 factory efficiency systems worldwide. From pharmaceuticals to foodstuffs Marco has made the difference between good and great performers.

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