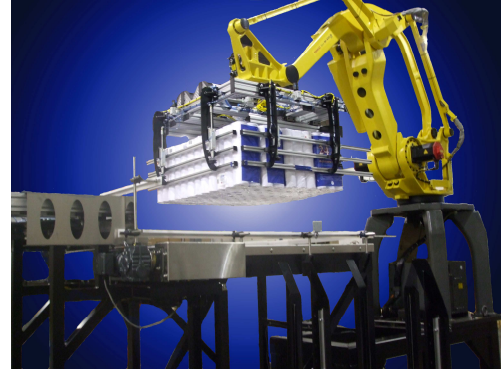


StrongPoint Automation Introduces Bulk Palletizer for Display Ready Packs

April 10, 2009 - StrongPoint Automation introduces its new Bulk Palletizer for full layer palletizing of display ready packs and POS ready products in excess of 30 ppm. The fully automated system incorporates a flexible infeed configuration to efficiently manage incoming products and create full layers ready for palletizing. At the heart of the system is a Fanuc M410iB-160 robot strategically positioned to place full layers in addition to slip and tier sheets extracted from the adjacent storage bin.



The StrongPoint End Of Arm Tool (EOAT) was fabricated entirely from extruded sections and custom designed aluminum weldments to reduce and optimize tooling weight. The EOAT is controlled by a single plug and play DeviceNet node located on the tool that manages all pneumatic and I/O requirements. An optional diagnostic tool can be used to monitor and test all functions of the EOAT node unlike other hard wired systems common in the packaging industry.

The EOAT was designed to handle a wide range of product and layer configurations to minimize tooling adjustments or changeovers. The ability to handle a wide range of products and product densities is achieved by simply adjusting pressure regulators conveniently located on the tool itself. The smooth operation of the tool is achieved through the use of linear bearings that allow the tool clamping to effortlessly glide into position and delicately grip the product layer. Hollow shaft cylinders are extended and retracted to contact the tier sheet and signal the accurate stack height. Venturi style vacuum generators located on the EOAT provide ample suction to secure tier sheets while the integrated blow-off functionality ensures accurate and timely sheet placement as well as purging the system of potentially clogging sheet fibers.

The system infeed features a dual strand product twist to orient the incoming products in an upright position for palletizing. By orienting the products immediately before layer formation it can be transported in a stable horizontal position from the stretch wrapper more than 1000 feet upstream of the palletizing cell. The robust nature of the twist allows the product to remain in the orientation sequence even during e-stop conditions by controlling and contacting the product at all times.

Layer formation is achieved by creating single row patterns and indexing them into position on the layer forming table using a pneumatic row transfer assembly. The simple pneumatic action of the row transfer is made possible by the guiding the transfer assembly on low friction linear bearings with flexible pneumatic mounts to eliminate any binding motions.

About StrongPoint Automation Inc.

StrongPoint Automation is a market leader in the design, development and manufacture of world-class robotic solutions and conveyor systems. Our strong technological leadership enables us to consistently streamline our customers operating costs through increased automation. StrongPoint Automation serves the food and beverage, pharmaceutical, packaging, coatings and consumer product sectors throughout North America. We continuously strive to exceed customer expectations by attracting people who share the company's high standards of excellence and accountability.