



Case Study

The Ice Co



Background

Owned by the J Marr Group, The Ice Co brand has become Europe's largest supplier of quality ice and water products, from 'Ice and a Slice' for cocktails to 4kg bags of party ice. With several sites across the UK the brand's Yorkshire factory is responsible for the production of the premium spring water ice cubes which are delivered to major supermarkets across the country.




Scenario

Due to a surge in demand, The Ice Co doubled its number of ice making machines over a period of 12 months. However the end of line packing operation at that point was still manually operated and, due to the increase in output, The Ice Co foresaw the bottleneck in production that this would cause. As the entire packing operation of the ice cubes takes place at temperatures of 5°C, the entire process needed to be quick and efficient to maintain optimum quality. In addition, due to the tight space the packing line took up, manual workers were required to turn 90 degrees to pick up a blank case before erecting and packing it manually - causing potential health and safety implications.

Solution

Endoline installed two packing lines. A single, fully automatic case erector feeds BOTH lines while bagged ice is fed to the packers via another conveyor. The conveyor feeding the bags of ice to the two packers, one situated on each line, is positioned at the optimum height slightly above the packing stations, in line with the top of the open box for ease of packing and minimum lift effort. A foot pedal was also integrated into the packing stations so the operators could manually control the in-feed of the empty boxes to coincide perfectly with the flow of bagged ice. Once the packers have filled the case with the desired quantity of product, depending on the individual customers' requirements, the full case is then placed by the packer onto a third conveyor, which feeds one of two fully automatic case sealers. The two Endoline case sealers are fitted at the end of each line to close the top flaps of the boxes and accurately tape the tops for a flawless finish.

Results

-  Reduced man power by 50%
-  Packing 10,000 litres of cleaning fluid per day
-  Considerably cut packing operation time

“Not only has the installation helped us double output and taken the strain off our manual workers, we have future proofed our packing facility, as we have the capacity to increase output by 50% without needing to install new systems.” **Jonny Morris Project Manager at The Ice Co**

