

CASE STUDY

Large Bakery Chain Meets Critical Deadline with Frain's Innovative Packaging Processes

THE CHALLENGE

Frain Industries is a leading, single-source provider of innovative packaging and processing solutions. Its mission is to give customers a competitive advantage with the ability to get products to market faster by leveraging Frain's unique consultative approach, unmatched service and vast inventory of quality machinery. This mission was put to the test when, in December of 2019, a representative from Frain Industries had a conversation with a packaging business consultant at an industry event that led to one of Frain's most stimulating projects. The consultant was looking for a reliable partner to conduct the development of new and innovative packaging for a popular bakery chain.

The challenge was that the chain needed the entire packaging production lines assembled, tested and operating at three different locations across the country in time for their national product roll out. Adding to the pressure was the fact that this product was specifically created for a big box retailer and the launch day was set in stone. Meeting the delivery deadline was critical.

The products in need of packaging were to be in sealed bags containing various sized baked goods, offered as four pieces in a sealed plastic pouch, with five pouches to a box. Frain's task was to produce a proof of concept for the new packaging for the types of packages, set up and integrate the equipment, test

PROJECT TIMELINE

3 Months

RESULT

46 million packages produced by the delivery date.



production speeds, break the equipment down, ship them to the facilities and assist in the startup at three different locations to ensure products were on the shelf by the target date.

Frain has 40 years of experience servicing the packaging and processing industry and is a company that enjoys a challenge. This one fit right into the business model Frain already had in place for offering the speed to market this project required.

THE SOLUTION

*"We determined a market need a number of years ago for a rental program that made it cost-effective for companies to test and produce innovative packaging, as well as to provide the quick turnaround times companies need today. We invested in the equipment necessary to support that initiative," said **John Frain**, Vice President of Engineering.*

Frain operates from a 1.2 million-square-foot facility and today inventories about 9,000 pieces of packaging and processing machinery. The company is unique in offering this rental program. Along with the flexibility and cost savings the rental program offers, it also makes it possible to produce packaging in one-third of the time it typically takes OEMs and integrators because all the equipment needed is in-house. It was from these resources that Frain employees were able to assemble a packaging production line to match the company's requirements and begin the project.



*"For the R&D and the proof of concept that we did on the front end, the materials were provided. We set up those materials and ran them through all the different machines," said **Frain**. "However, they had the texture of aluminum siding and the machines didn't like it at all. We worked with company's consultant to help develop different materials that would run more efficiently on the equipment and still give the products the shelf life required."*

In total, Frain shipped 60 pieces of equipment for each packaging line to the three different locations.

It was mid-January when the final packaging designs were approved, production speeds were tested, and the equipment was ready to be shipped. In total, Frain shipped 60 pieces of equipment for each packaging line to the three different locations spanning coast to coast. Because Frain also does integration to ensure the machines work smoothly together, Frain employees went along with the machinery to set them up, get them running and train the staff at each location on how to use them.

*“Frain scaled one system to bag 13 ounces of product, to then be transferred down to the case packer,” **Frain** said. “We supplied three of those systems to the Midwest facility. Then the same systems were shipped out to the West Coast: wrapper, checkweighers, metal detectors, case packers, stretch wrappers. We also supplied two freeze tunnels to quick-freeze the products so they wouldn’t fracture when they went into the bag or the wrapper.”*

The target date for assembling the equipment at the three facilities was mid-April so that the baked goods would be produced, packaged, and ready for shipping to meet the national roll-out deadline. Frain hit the client’s target even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, which provided some unpredicted difficulties including travel restrictions, CDC protocols, and the health of our workforce and our customers.

*“Two of the facilities were mostly start-up operations,” **Frain** said. “They’d never done this before. Most of the companies we deal with have staff on hand, operations in place and technicians who are able to train their people, but in this case, everything was new and required support. As the pandemic grew, we needed to ensure it didn’t slow us down even though we had to work with the restrictions and the health concerns. We were wearing masks and gloves, sanitizing our hands, there were just so many considerations, it was incredible,” **Frain** noted. “It was particularly challenging at the midwest location because they brought in almost 200 temporary workers. From upper management down, we worked 24 hours a day, seven days a week, in the most unexpected and unusual conditions. But we made it happen.”*

THE RESULTS

Frain's ability to bring its years of knowledge and technical expertise to the project gave the focus the project required to meet the deadline. Being able to provide the equipment needed, test it immediately, ensure it ran efficiently and get it out to the three locations was integral to the success of meeting the tight deadline and something that would not have been possible without Frain's unique business model. The culmination was producing over 46 million packages all in-time for delivery.

The culmination was producing over 46,000,000 products all in-time for national delivery roll-out.

The company elected the rental option so it didn't have to purchase all of the equipment needed, which would have amounted to not only a huge expense, but also a huge loss of time. The value in the rental program is that companies have the flexibility to test how the marketplace is responding to the products they are producing, which is what the company is doing at this time.

John Frain sums it up, "We were truly a consultative partner across the entire project, offering more than just a piece of equipment or one portion. At Frain, we offer it all, from start to finish, to make sure the efficiency and productivity is all there, and everything is operating to expectation."



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