

MARCO Software Module transforms assembly lines at Greencore

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We've always prided ourselves in our production quality and we now feel we have moved up a gear, which is further good news for our customers and consumers. ”

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The MARCO Trac-IT® Yield Control Module, which forms an integral part of MARCO's award winning Trac-IT factory floor efficiency system, is achieving rapid and radical productivity improvements for leading international manufacturer of convenience foods, Greencore Group Plc at their Manton Wood and Park Royal sites.

Located near Worksop in Nottinghamshire, Manton Wood is believed to be the world's largest and most sophisticated sandwich manufacturing facility, producing a quarter of a billion sandwiches a year.

With high levels of automation at both sites, critical parts of the 'build' process rely on the manual dexterity of the line operators. Just one gram of overfill per sandwich of a high cost protein component can amass to over 4 tonnes a week or 200 tonnes a year for that component, translating directly through to significant cost implications.

The fully wireless MARCO Trac-IT Yield Control Module installation comprises of a series of MARCO LineMaster® portion control workstations complimented by hand-held Portable Data Acquisition terminals (PDAs) to gain more data and traceability for the product being packed.

Each supervisor uses a PDA, giving them control and flexibility over an important line parameter, wherever they are in the factory.

When requirements change, the data is sent instantly from the central server, located at another Greencore site, directly to the LineMaster® workstations and the PDAs. This ensures that all production is driven directly from Greencore's higher level business systems.



The Takeaway LineMaster® workstations employed across Greencore's sites are ideal for fast, accurate portioning of food items. As with all MARCO's scales, the LineMaster® includes a traffic light weighing system, proven to increase packing speed and accuracy.

The scales provide managers with individual user data for each station, providing instant feedback on worker performance via a central PC. As weight settings for each Greencore product are stored on the PC, Greencore managers can instantly perform product changeovers, resulting in less downtime and no human error.

"Prior to the MARCO system, our sandwich assembly lines operated virtually in isolation from the rest of the plant and we had no real time visibility. We used standalone takeaway scales that required a high degree of manual input to set up for a specific order or when parameters changed. Line changes were time consuming and by the time we had analysed line production data, the 'moment' had come and gone.

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During the installation their engineers worked around the clock so that there was minimum disruption to our normal production. With only the need for minimal training, our operators have found the new system extremely easy to use and we are now seeing significant benefits in terms of reduced giveaway. We now have a comprehensive overview of the sandwich assembly processes at both plants and supervisors can react immediately to changes via their PDAs. We've always prided ourselves in our production quality and we now feel we have moved up a gear, which is further good news for our customers and consumers."



Infrastructure Technician, Greencore