

SWEET DEAL

By Dean Helmling

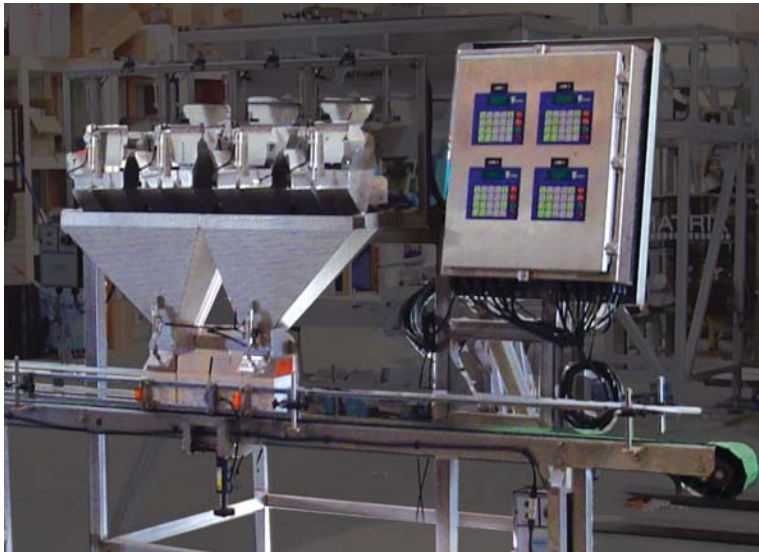
A major supplier of confections was not able to meet the explosive sales of a new product they had recently introduced.

Consumers really went crazy for the fragile chocolate-coated honeycomb treats this well-known American candy maker had taken to market.

These candies are sealed singly in wrappers and offered in prepackaged cartons for sale in retail shops throughout the country.

Some of the difficulties this confectioner faced with meeting the special needs of this merchandise was the lack of space to hand pack the candy cartons and the high cost of labor associated with the production demands of this delicate candy. They were already pressed with a large backlog of orders and the holiday season, an important market for the candy industry, was fast approaching.


This confectioner decided in order to meet demands they would require a minimum of 30 cartons of finished product per minute. They needed this done with the



accuracy of zero underweights and not more than one piece over the package weight per carton.

Taking into consideration each of the specific issues presented **ActionPac** engineered and custom built an **ME109CSLX4**. It is a four-lane scale providing a cycle rate of over 40 cartons per minute within the specified accuracy parameters.

This particular application requires a controlled and gentle product supply from the bulk hopper to the elevator. To address this concern, this system includes a bulk hopper and an E-Z Flow feeding of the elevator. Paying careful attention to the design and fabrication of the systems spreader feeders and lane gates assures product integrity as it makes its way from the bulk hopper into the carton.

Well pleased with the results obtained by making the decision to give the equipment contract to **ActionPac**, this customer is handily meeting the continued growing demand for this product and is developing additional versions of these  sweet treats.

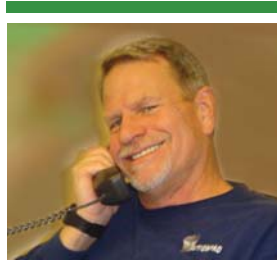


Metal Detection Conveyor System Now On-line

Frustrated by the lack of resources for supplying our customers with a reasonable solution to their metal detection needs we recently made the decision to engineer and manufacture these systems in-house. We had come to the conclusion that it was not economically feasible to continue to resort to purchasing and modifying other manufacturers metal detection conveyor systems. **ActionPac's** 20 years experience with doing one-offs like this by special request made it easy for us to develop a

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CEO Weighs In



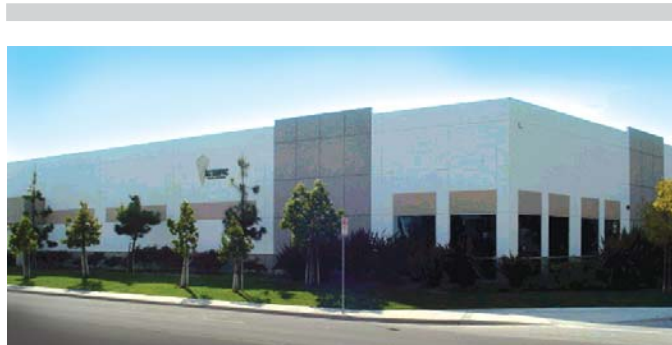
A lot of factors that I would consider when making a decision would not be taken in to account by other business models that are looking for the maximum short-term gain. When I make decisions I am less concerned by the immediate bottom line than I am by the long-term effects.

It's like chaos theory: I have to consider even seemingly insignificant changes in policy that may portend long-term macro effects. These are made more difficult in a custom engineering environment such as **ActionPac's**.

Since our workload is indeterminate in the long term, we may have a backlog of ½ million dollars in orders at any given time and theoretically once these are completed we may have no new orders.

Therefore, when making workforce decisions I have to balance our payroll expenses against that indetermination. I've found it's prudent to try to maintain an effective staff even in times of economic downturn since the unusual aspect of our business requires levels of expertise that are not readily available in our local general labor pool. It also requires that I rely to a certain extent on sub-contractors to relieve some of our normally in-house burden rather than hire short-term employees.


John Dishion 



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Metal Detection Conveyor


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product using the detector of choice and still adhere to the high standards and fair pricing our customers are accustomed to.

Geared toward the food products industries, model **AP-MDT** is a tunnel style conveyor system metal detector that we will build to meet to the custom specifications required by individual product packaging needs. To give our customers the most sensitivity with the smallest possible aperture obtainable for their product we have pioneered this machine to obtain exceptional results not available in other manufacturer's systems. Like our line of weigh/fillers, we manufacture this with variable programming features. The machine can be fitted with audio and/or visual alarms, belt stopping features and one of two reject mechanism styles.

The alarm and belt stopping features will work in a manual operating situation so that the operator can take away or pick out the offending particles. When a more automated system is required a sweep or shunt style reject mechanism will move the contaminated product off to another conveyor line for additional processing.

After riding through the metal detector the product can be funneled directly into a package such as a case (box), bag, jar, bottle, or other container. Some customers may require that a filled and sealed package be sent thru a metal detector and others may need this equipment for case goods not pre-packaged such as bread loaves or meats.

Available in a 100% washdown fabrication and with easy access to both sides of the belt it is made portable on casters and will be tuned for a minimum of vibration interference. It exceeds the standard metal free zone for most metal detectors by a minimum of 25% and conforms to all meat and dairy  USDA & FDA requirements.

THEME OF THE MONTH

DECISION MAKING

Decision (di sizz'h'en) making: arriving at a determination; the act of cutting off; making up one's mind; passing a judgment

Projects on the Board

Despite the cool temperatures as we move through the month of February the **ActionPac** project board is running hotter than ever. Some of the orders we are currently working on include:

- ME109CSLDIX2** for weighing fresh grapes into plastic trays
- ME109CX2** for weighing grated parmesan cheese into 12 and 16 oz plastic tubs
- MICRO109CAB** a sample and flux weighing system for assaying labs in the mining industry
- ME1095CS** to count and insert diamond shaped tea bags into stand up pouches and cans and loose tea into square tins
- ME1095CS** for weighing corn tortilla chips into bags
- MAX109CLKX2** for the bulk filling of shelled almonds into large cases
- MAX109C** a pail filling system for the batching of a granular recipe for a vitamin company
- MINI109CB** to fill high cost beads into glass tubes for a jewelry operation
- ME109** powder loading system for the blending of baking ingredients
- ME109** for the bulk weighing of whole green coffee beans into large bags
- MAX109CLPX2** retrofit to our exclusive gravity metal detection system for an almond processing company

EQUIPMENT MODEL NUMBER CODES:

C	SOMETHING "EXTRA" OR CUSTOM
S	SPREADER FEEDER
L	LANE GATE
B	BOWL COUNTER - WEIGHT
E	BOWL COUNTER EYE
V	INTEGRATED CLEAT "EL" HOPPER
EP	ESCAPEMENT COUNTER
D	DIMPLED STAINLESS STEEL
I	INDEXER
EL	ELEVATOR
M	MILLIGRAM RESOLUTION
EZ	EX FLOW HOPPER TO ELEVATOR

Example:

MAX109CSL/EZ/EL/I = standard max single lane with spreader feeder, lane gate, EZ flow hopper, elevator and indexer



YOUR CONTACTS AT ACTIONPAC SINCE

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Fabrication Technician, Jony Guzman 2005
Shop Assistant, Robert Alvarez III 2006

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ActionPac Staff Member Balances The Scales

ActionPac Production Engineer, **Rey Ortiz**, spends his days making tough decisions on both equip-

ment specifications and production management issues. He enjoys the problem solving of design issues presented by our customers wide ranging needs. His favorite projects are those unusual applications that are custom to the point where no one else has ever done it before.

One of Rey's major functions is to produce the AutoCAD drawings for custom components. He also supervises the in-house fabrication staff of five as well as management of all outsourced fabrication related work.


He believes in making informed decisions and he balances between two separate philosophies for the managerial and design decisions that must be made. In his managerial capacity he believes there are never any wrong decisions except the decision that doesn't get made at all.

When faced with equipment design decisions he

must balance the ease of manufacturing against the costs incurred and the performance obtainable. Something that may perform better may be too costly to make it feasible or it may be rendered too complex to manufacture.

An application Rey particularly enjoyed working on was a **MICRO109** linear netweigh filling diamond dust into glass vials. The customer's existing vial trays that needed to be accommodated created one set of challenges. This challenge was compounded by the fact that there were two style trays each holding a different number of vials. Both would have to be weighed by this same piece of equipment. Adding to the project's complexity was the need to fabricate a custom stand to be integrated for use with a CNC table with an X-Y axis variable positioning system.

To solve the problem created by the trays, Rey engineered a specialized receiver for the trays and mounted it to a quick disconnect plate. The plate held a different size tray on each side and it is easily flipped over by the machine operator when the vial sizes needed to be changed.

Rey has 20 years experience with **ActionPac** and is optimistic about the future of the weigh/fill industry. He doesn't think the basic mechanics of the equipment will change much in the immediate future but what will change is the higher technology being implemented such as menu-driven controllers. 

Team ActionPac

by Caroline Dishion

With the holidays behind us and our CEO back from his fifth trip to Australia on the iron mine assaying project, we have our work cut out for us with an unprecedented quantity of projects on the board.

Decision-making is **ActionPac's** theme for the month of February. As Team **ActionPac** grows with expertise and experience our projects are getting larger in scope and complexity. This has necessitated some serious and often fraught with difficulty decision-making.

A major decision was to increase the staff with additional personnel toward the end of 2005. The holiday season had traditionally been a slow time of year for us but we found ourselves recruiting instead.

New additions to our human resources include two new Fabrication Specialists, Alberto Collazo-Alvarez and Jony Guzman. Jaimie Herrera has taken up the Assembly Technician position and Claudia Arceo has filled

the Inventory Coordinator position. Most recently Robert Alvarez III hired on as shop assistant. Team **ActionPac** has grown not just in the number of hands but in the number of strong thinkers. All with varied experiences, capabilities, potential and most welcome of all, new fresh ideas.

In an effort to enhance efficiency and meet deadlines less awkwardly a decision was made to introduce a new production program. The production development team consists of the persons whom have the hands on responsibility for actually producing the project. This will require Team **ActionPac** to work in a more formalized manner and will provide additional structure to our production schedules.

It's a pleasure to see the pace of activity increasing and I'm excited by my own decision to become involved on a part-time basis to assist with general communications tasks, human resources development and facility maintenance. Team **ActionPac** is energized by the exceptional projects we've recently taken on and confidently looking forward to new challenges ahead. 