

Contract soap packer enhances capacity, efficiency

Stahl Soap installs new U.S.-sourced horizontal flow-wrapper and servo-feed conveyor to meet special customer requirements.

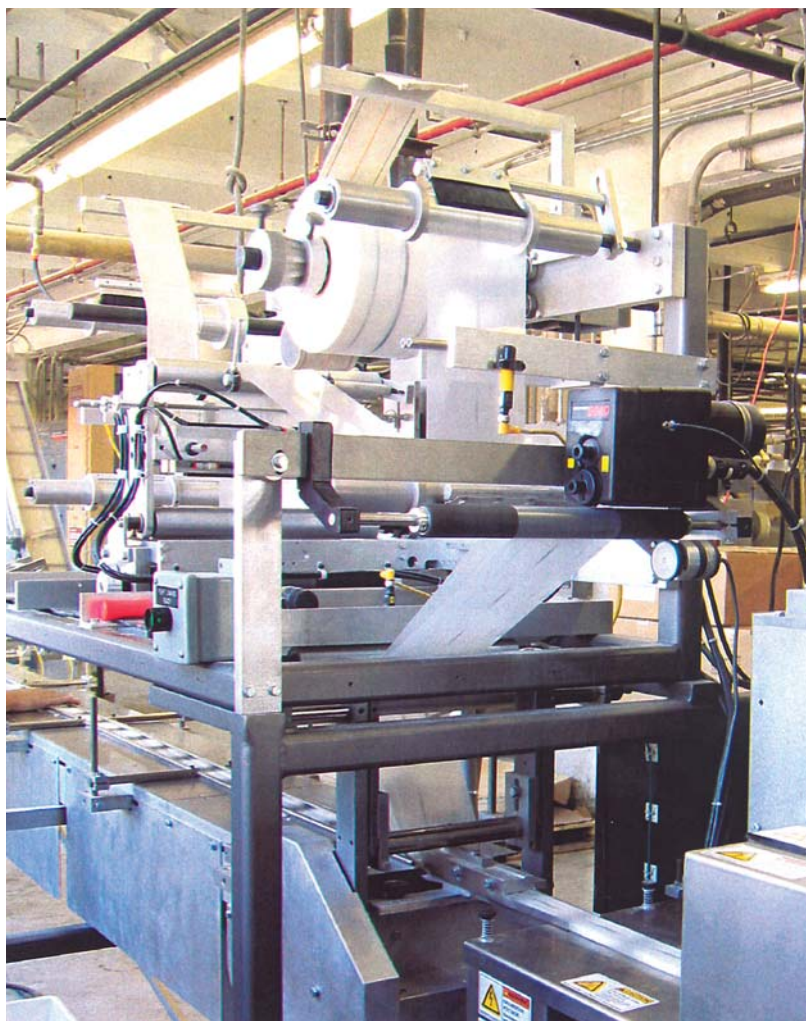
Judy Rice, Contributing Editor

Stahl Soap Corp., East Rutherford, NJ, is a contract manufacturer and packager of bar soaps. Key customers include suppliers to hotel chains throughout the U.S. Typically, Stahl wraps and seals hand soaps in die-fold, printed film packaging at speeds from 180 to 280/minute, depending on bar shape and size. While its Italy-originated packaging machinery works well, parts and service support has been difficult at times.

Recently, a hotel supplier client requested a new look and style of bar soap packaging with upscale graphics and a proprietary frosted film effect. The client (whose identity is confidential) also wanted Stahl to produce and package these soap bars in a wide range of shapes at high speeds. The bars were to be stamped with the soap trade name. The packaging graphics would then overlay and mimic that trade name. In addition, the client wanted all this without incurring additional contract packaging costs.

Making it happen

In January 2005, after careful consideration of the available options to address this packaging challenge, Stahl installed a Model



SOM-ION horizontal flow-wrapper and a servo-feed conveyor from George Gordon Associates (GGA) to augment production capacity and efficiency. The new wrapper/heat sealer accommodates the full speed of the soap press, which makes three bars at a time, and delivers wrapping speeds up to 270/minute, with reliably accurate positioning of product and package printing registration.

The compact horizontal flow-wrapper and servo-feed conveyor fit easily into the existing plant layout.

Stahl Soap

The GGA packaging machinery includes an Allen-Bradley ControlLogix multi-axis servo control, A-B panel-view touchscreen and diagnostics with 100+ product memory capacity, eye-mark registration, auto-splice mechanism, and a RightMove™ synchronized positioning conveyor that repositions randomly spaced product and delivers it to the wrapper at high speeds with friction-free, no-scuff handling.

The selected system also is more compact than many other available systems. That was an important consideration for Stahl because the plant has limited floor space to incorporate new equipment. The GGA SOM-ION and the RightMove synchronized positioning conveyor moved easily into the existing plant layout.

Satisfying results

June Stahl, president of Stahl Soap, reports several benefits have accrued from the installation of the new wrapping line—including faster packaging speeds, cost and labor savings, decreased line downtime, and improved brand identity for its hotel client. “We achieved the improved visual requirements for the packaging, while also improving speed and efficiency in basically the same operating floor space. And the Allen-Bradley system gives us secure online trouble-shooting,” she notes

She adds, “The team at George Gordon provided all the necessary assistance from early discussions through on-time delivery and successful start-up. The machine arrived as promised, and the start-up with on-site help from GGA engineers went smoothly. The machine was running properly within days of its arrival.”

George Gordon Associates, Inc.,

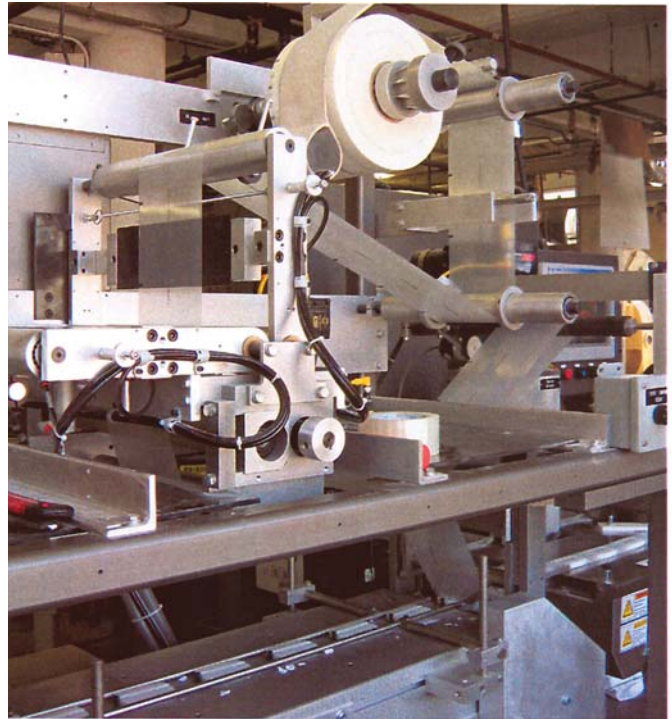
Phone: 603/424-5204

www.ggapack.com

Allen-Bradley/Rockwell Automation

Phone: 440/646-3276

www.ab.com



**Wrapping speeds are approximately
270 bars per minute.**