



Photo courtesy of Bosch Packaging

Ellis Coffee Increases Production with Bosch Packaging

Family-owned Ellis Coffee nearly doubled production and reduced downtime between changeovers with the implementation of a new Bosch vertical bagger. **By Paul Garms**

Founded in 1854, Ellis Coffee is one of the oldest family-owned and operated coffee roasters in the United States. The third and fourth generations of the Strauss family today run a company that roasts more than six million pounds of coffee per year that it distributes nationwide to businesses of all sizes. Headquartered in Philadelphia, Pa., the company's dedication to quality and customer service has given it an especially strong presence along the Eastern seaboard from New York to Maryland. "Our dedication to customer service is a key ingredient to our success," said Adam Kestenbaum, president of Ellis Coffee. "Our customers can call and talk directly to me or my dad [Eugene Kestenbaum, CEO]. That level of customer service has been our trademark since the beginning."

Brewing Higher Quality and Value

The combination of high quality coffee

and excellent customer service is supported by a highly efficient roasting and packaging operation. "We aim to eliminate unnecessary costs from our business to pass more value on to our customers," said Kestenbaum. That initiative manifested in a USD \$1 million investment in a new green bean blending system, the upgrade of five augers to new servo models, and most recently, the purchase of a new vertical form, fill and seal (VFFS) bagger from Bosch Packaging Technology.

"We needed a VFFS bagger that could run faster to meet our growing demand for 1- to 3-ounce bags that was also easy to use," said Craig Chauncey, plant manager at Ellis Coffee. Ease of use was essential because in addition to packaging coffee in a wide range of sizes under the Ellis brand, almost half of the company's business is also private label as a co-packer. Chauncey noted that the complexity of co-packing is increasing, with rising demand for special-

ty packaging formats, more complex films, and a wider range of seasonal and specialty coffee blends. This has translated into as many as six to seven changeovers per eight-hour shift. To create the efficiencies the business needed, downtime between changeovers had to be minimized and packaging speeds maintained.

"We have a few different VFFS bagger brands currently running in the plant," says Chauncey, "but with all of them, there have been problems ranging from part availability to ease of use. As a result, I asked around and other manufacturers raved about Bosch baggers." Chauncey visited another manufacturer that used Bosch baggers and was impressed with the machines. Based on his observations and feedback from his peers, he purchased a Bosch SVE 2520 continuous motion bagger. "Bosch has a simple, clean design," noted Chauncey. "It is the right size from a lean process standpoint and does what we want it to do. The base machine includes 95 percent of what we want without added complexity and Bosch offers the other options that we need."

"We collaborated with Ellis Coffee to find the solution that would increase efficiency and help the company reach its production goals," said John Groel, sales manager at Bosch Packaging Technology. "We

were delighted that the SVE 2520's reputation preceded itself."

Simple to Install, Easy to Operate

Chauncey noted he was able to install the Bosch SVE 2520 bagger by himself thanks to the simple and intuitive setup. Incorporating the new bagger increased speeds to 130 bags per minute, nearly double the 70 bags per minute with the company's original machines. The SVE 2520 also minimized downtime between

changeovers, producing quality bags almost immediately. This was a significant advancement from the previous machine where printed and registered film took a significant amount of time to optimize during changeover and product was wasted. The Bosch machine simplified setup with repeatable changeovers. "The registration is spot on, it's easy to clean with open access through the guard doors, and best of all, it's easy to use," said Chauncey.

The operator using the Bosch bagger



is a long-time Ellis employee nearing retirement, so Chauncey was a little worried about how she would accept the new machine. "She loves it," noted Chauncey. "She picked up the machine operation very quickly. With the intuitive touch-screen menu, she can simply select a new recipe and most of the changes are done automatically."

Ellis Coffee plans additional upgrades and modernizations to continue the path of providing high value to its customers, first set back in the 1800's. Customers can also count on the high service levels that built the company into what it is today. This service excellence for customers ultimately means more consumers will enjoy top-quality coffee. ☕

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