# Thinking outside the box at Kraft Foods

> **This was a tough demand given the size and complexity of the project; CKF achieved it without any disruption to our scheduled output.**
>
> *David Moreton,*
> *BD&E Project Manager,*
> *Kraft Foods UK*

## The challenge

Kraft recognised that a significant increase in efficiencies could be achieved through the introduction of an automated robot distribution system for its Roses and Heroes products. The investment would also benefit the company's ongoing commitment to the Kraft Foods Sustainability Programme; substantially reducing material usage by replacing cardboard boxes with reusable plastic tote bins and cutting daily vehicle movements through the accurate management of fixed cycling schedules.

The project demanded a bespoke solution with major design, mechanical, control and engineering complexities to contend with. The new automated system had to be installed and commissioned alongside that of the existing operation and without any loss to production schedules. In addition, operating the new equipment had to be relatively easy and uncomplicated.

## Our approach

Kraft commissioned CKF Systems of Gloucester as its project partner to design an automated re-circulating distribution system that met their production requirements, removed cardboard waste and provided safeguards to the assortment integrity.

Responsible for the complete turnkey project, CKF designed, installed and commissioned the system, located in three production areas and over two floors. It comprises an automated robotic system with high level delivery and return and (alongside) vision-controlled distribution that automatically feeds the two packing plants. The wrapped units are handled in open plastic tote bins allowing the high definition vision systems to identify product type using the latest recognition technology.

## How did CKF deliver client value?

Significant benefits were realised including improved operational efficiency and a reduction in material movements, vehicle activity and cardboard usage. The automation has enhanced Kraft Foods environmental programme and decreased the plant's carbon footprint.

Kraft considers investment in robotic and automation applications essential to remain competitive, protect the future of its business and reduce environmental impact. It also allows better use of labour resources and improved quality control.

CKF's expertise in this type of system provided the solution that in turn was installed and commissioned to a plan which ran smoothly and safely alongside ongoing production. The results are very promising; the new system is faster, more robust, requires minimal maintenance and meets all of Kraft's business investment expectations.

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