



Müller invests in Automation

The challenge

Müller Dairy, a European success story of product innovation and brand development, is the UK's largest yogurt producer with capacity now at two billion pots per year. The pressure to increase output, reduce costs and improve production flexibility is ongoing to meet current demand and develop new opportunities.

Müller Dairy recognised that its manufacturing capability could be significantly improved through the upgrading and re-engineering of an existing re-pack line that was over-reliant upon manual intervention and underperforming. The system also lacked versatility, it was not originally designed to handle twin pots, yet these are now a major growth area of the business.

Our approach

Müller Dairy commissioned CKF as its project partner, with responsibility to design, install and commission a fully automated solution, utilising much of the current equipment and within the same floor space.

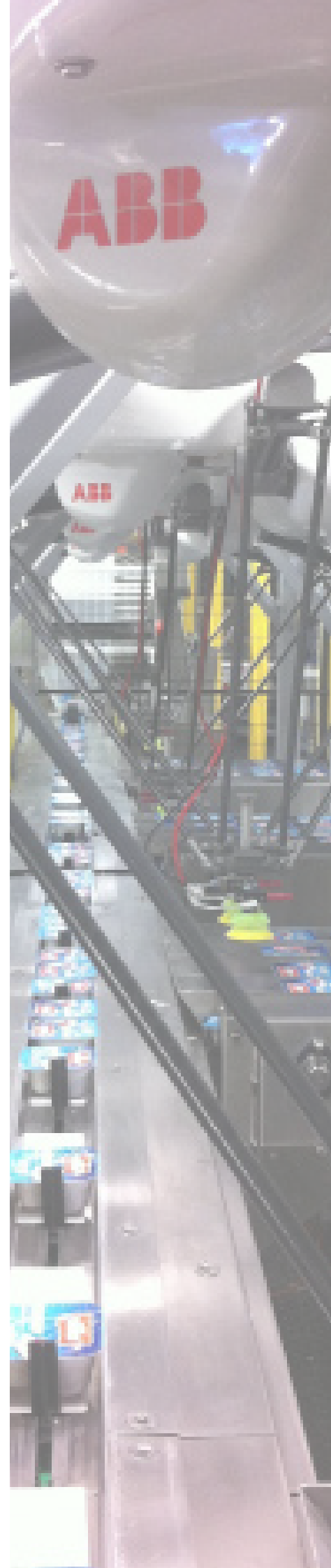
With four ABB Flexpickers at the heart of the existing system, Müller Dairy required a systems integrator capable of meeting a very complex set of challenges - not least the height constraints of the ground floor location. To maximise output, the existing configuration had to be re-engineered to eliminate bottlenecks, new motors and software installed and innovative conveyor protocols introduced to ensure accurate product alignment in readiness for high speed handling.

The functional requirement of the repack system was to take packed yogurt from a pallet, produce a multi pack, repack and palletise. Additional considerations included the performance of the vacuum grippers in a chilled area with a low constant temperature.

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The new repacking line is at least 50% more efficient and able to handle double the numbers that were being achieved manually ”

Martyn Steadman,
Müller Project Engineer



How did CKF deliver client value?

From contractual agreement to completion, the investment was undertaken in less than eight months with immediate benefits accruing to the business. All investment expectations were met in line with Müller Dairy's strategic objective to become the most competitive and successful dairy company in the UK and Ireland.

In addition, the company has realised some Health and Safety benefits and improved the well-being of its people by reducing high speed repetitive processes in confined spaces; allowing workers to be redeployed more productively. The new system is more easily cleaned, requires less maintenance and has been designed for easy use and access. The work was undertaken to the highest possible standards in line with Müller Dairy's strategic goals and within a strict pre-determined safety regime.

The project has been endorsed by the Central Technical Team in Aretsried, Germany and has set a benchmark for future investment in terms of design and delivery, innovation and performance.

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