

# ACCUPAK PAVES THE WAY FOR THE PEANUT VAN TO BOOST PRODUCTION

## Case study

The Peanut Van is an Australian icon. Established in 1969, it has serviced hundreds of thousands of customers from all over Australia and the world, won numerous tourism awards and been recognised nationally (and even internationally) as one of Kingaroy's best-known tourist attractions.

Every year, the company retails tonnes of what are probably the world's freshest, crunchiest and tastiest jumbo-peanuts from its vans and retailers. The company also provides a mail-order service to thousands of loyal customers all over Australia and the world. In late 2016, production was set to soar after the company secured a new national distribution agreement with IGA Foodland.

### THE CHALLENGE

However, the packaging line machinery that the company was using was causing its owners and operators "real heartache."

Managing Director Rob Patch said that the equipment was "really temperamental." It would breakdown when they most depended on it, such as when they had big orders to process. On any day, it could process a tonne of peanuts: the next day we could only process 15kg."

"Our reputation as being a reliable supplier to our customers was at risk."

"We had no control. We'd walk onto the shop floor in the morning with a plan to process a certain amount of product, yet be unsure that we'd be able to achieve that. We were all wondering how much production time we'd burn that day."

"No-one could tell us how they could resolve the issues that we were experiencing. It was a living hell," Rob said. "We had lost confidence in our production capabilities."

Working under these conditions was causing the team great stress and anxiety. "We lived on tenterhooks."

These issues were compounded by the fact that the machinery was a nightmare to wash down.

The Peanut Van was processing twenty two flavours on the same line. To prevent cross-contamination of allergens contained within the ingredients, the machinery had to be washed down on a relatively frequent basis. However, "we had real wash-down issues.

It was taking three people twelve hours to disassemble the machinery and wash it down."

"We had to resolve the problems or get out of business," Rob said. In response to these challenges, The Peanut Van decided to seek out a solution in the marketplace. That search led them to the team at AccuPak.

### THE SOLUTION

To kick off this project, an AccuPak business analyst and engineer reviewed The Peanut Van's production facilities, processes and packaging line requirement.

This review enabled them to design a robust, reliable and thoroughly flexible turnkey solution that would enable The Peanut Van to acquire new operational capabilities and set new benchmarks.

The solution comprised an integrated vibratory product feeding station, a compact multi-head weigher and vertical form, fill and seal (VFFS) combo machine, a take-away conveyor and a pallet loading station.

The semi-automatic line was designed to manage product feeding, dosing (weighing) and bagging functions.

"The line was an ideal set-up for our facilities. The high speed multi-head weigher and VFFS combo machine had a small footprint, yet could still provide an extraordinarily efficient throughput on a variety of sized bags of up to ten complete bags per second," Rob said.



PACKAGING  
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The multi-head weigher accurately weighs a consistent flow and specified weight of product at high speeds. After weighing, the peanuts are then automatically discharged into the VFFS machine for packaging using sophisticated flow wrapping technology.

The VFFS machine uses flexible plastic packaging material from a flat roll to form bags that are then filled with product. The formed bag is then cut loose from the film roll and passed downstream to the final stage where it's sealed, metal detected, check weighed and packaged into cartons for distribution.

## BENEFITS

Installation of the new packaging line has yielded myriad benefits. Since installing the packaging line, The Peanut Van has significantly increased productivity and manufacturing cycle times, reduced costs by reducing wastage and has eliminated many inefficiencies.

Because both machines are controlled from a single 10.4" colour touch-screen HMI, production set-up is simpler and machines can be managed in a holistic manner, with managers gaining a centralised view of how the entire line is performing.

The change to VFFS technology, moving to a high-contrast, full-colour uniform bag for all products together with the use of on-demand printing was "absolutely brilliant". Previously, the company would have ordered six months of packaging consumables in advance and held up to 100,000 bags and labels in inventory. Now, the Peanut Van could dispense with this 'dead stock', improving cash-flow and allowing just-in-time ordering of consumables inventory.

Furthermore, the equipment's user-friendly design means maintenance and cleaning is a breeze. It now only takes two man hours to disassemble and wash-down the equipment when changing SKUs.

Such are the efficiencies that the Peanut Van has attained with this new production machine, that the company now employs three men less in the packaging process area than before. These staff continue to be employed by the company, but no longer work on the packaging line.

Rob says that a key standout is the AccuPak team's expertise and responsive service.

"They are on it! Out of everything they supply, their industry and product knowledge is most important. They really know what they're doing."

"Having a supplier with offices in the State is more than reassuring. They are really responsive, always ready with advice and rapidly source/change parts if required."



## ABOUT THE PEANUT VAN

Since 1969, The Peanut Van has serviced hundreds of thousands of customers from all over Australia and the world, won lots of tourism awards and been recognised nationally and internationally as one of Kingaroy's best-known tourist attractions.

The company has a keen commitment to quality. It sources what are reputed to be the world's best, fresh jumbo-sized peanuts from the Peanut Company of Australia (PCA), the central processor for Kingaroy's peanut farmers. These are then hand-cooked and flavoured in weekly batches before packing them into air-tight bags. This ensures the peanuts they supply are as fresh as they possibly can be by the time they reach customers.

The company was one of the first companies in Australia to pioneer flavouring peanuts, with unique recipes for Kurry, Savoury Tomato, Hickory, Smoked and BBQ flavoured nuts have never been successfully duplicated - though many have tried. For further information, telephone 1300 818 283 or email [info@peanutvan.com.au](mailto:info@peanutvan.com.au)

## ABOUT ACCUPAK

AccuPak is a systems integrator of dosing/weighing, packaging, palletising equipment and product inspection systems.

The company provides manufacturers access to complete end-of-line packaging line integration and expertise, and equipment sourced from several of the world's leading manufacturers, within the one company.

From manually operated, single head bagging machines to fully automated, sophisticated filling and bulk packaging lines that can package hundreds of items per minute, AccuPak possesses the capabilities and industry-specific knowledge to provide its customers the requisite consultative advice and solutions to their needs. For further information, telephone 1300 793 476 or email [info@accupak.com.au](mailto:info@accupak.com.au)



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