

CUSTOMER SUCCESS STORY

CP Foods UK automates poultry packing with OMRON & Gripper Automation

CP Foods

Newmarket,
United Kingdom



Greater efficiency
at scale, 85% OEE



Future-proof
flexibility



Empowered
workforce



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Key Benefits

1

Handling 120 sealed trays per minute with 85% OEE and <1% rejects

2

Servo-driven automation ensures smooth, quiet, and reliable operation

3

OMRON's Sysmac platform integration simplifies control of robots, vision, safety, and motion in one system

4

Boosting workforce engagement, with engineers and operators gaining valuable new skills

5

A scalable, flexible automation platform meets changing retailer demands and future projects

At a glance

CP Foods UK teamed up with Gripper Automation and OMRON to implement a fully automated high-speed poultry packing line. The new system, powered by OMRON's Sysmac platform, integrates robotics, vision, safety, and motion control into one seamless environment. Gripper Automation's custom-designed multi-stack gripper enables 120 packs per minute, meeting the throughput and quality targets while reducing rejects.

Beyond performance, the project has boosted workforce engagement, with engineers and operators embracing the new technology. The solution delivers speed, reliability, and flexibility today, while providing a scalable foundation for CP Foods UK's future automation projects.

CP Foods UK automates poultry packing with OMRON & Gripple Automation

High-speed, high-quality packaging line helps meet retail demands

CP Foods UK is a major poultry producer supplying leading retailers, manufacturers, and foodservice operators across the United Kingdom. With operations rooted in food safety, quality, and adaptability, the company constantly seeks ways to respond to shifting retailer and consumer demands. In its UK facilities, CP Foods UK prepares and packages chicken products for a dynamic and highly competitive market.

To modernize one of its key packing lines, CP Foods UK worked together with Gripple Automation, the Sheffield-based engineering company known for its innovative approach to automation projects, and OMRON, a global leader in industrial automation. Together, they developed and installed a robotic solution that has improved efficiency and reliability, whilst re-energising the workforce.

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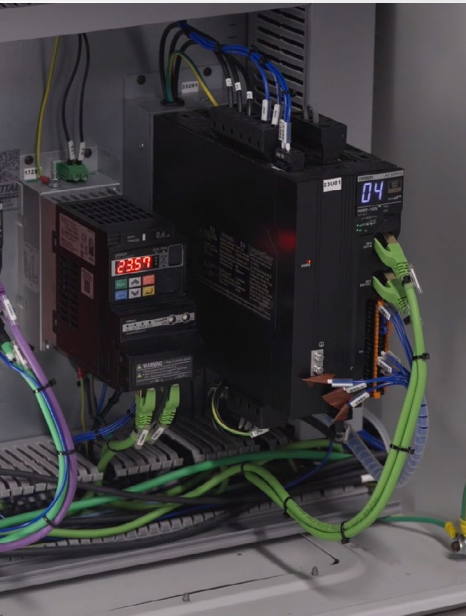
The Challenge: Meeting changing retail demands with agility

The challenge was ambitious from the start. As Craig Bagnall, Operations Manager at Gripple Automation, explains: *"CP Foods challenged us to deliver them a machine that picked and placed chicken in sealed trays at 120 packs per minute, at an 85% OEE, with a 1% reject."* For CP Foods UK, automation means building resilience into the business and maintaining flexibility in the face of rapidly changing customer requirements. Adele Davies, Factory General Manager at CP Foods, describes the situation: *"The things that we're having to think about at the moment are, how do we cope with ever-changing requirements from retailers and customers, and how do we remain flexible as well as having automation? We*

previously had a line that would require you to put trays on a line as well as people manually packing, so we did a full automation project."

The existing infrastructure was no longer fit for purpose. Andy White, Engineering Manager at CP Foods UK, explained that the equipment in the low-care area had reached the end of its life. The line had been *"patched together"* over time and required constant maintenance. Rather than continue to sustain ageing systems, the company saw an opportunity to embrace new technology. *"We wanted a solution that not only improved performance, but also made the job more rewarding for our engineers and for the people working on the line,"* White said.





Working closely together, Gripple Automation and OMRON engineers designed a bespoke robotic packaging machine tailored to CP Foods UK's exact needs.

The Solution: Servo-driven robotics with integrated control

Working closely together, Gripple Automation and OMRON engineers designed a bespoke robotic packaging machine tailored to CP Foods UK's exact needs. At the time, there was nothing on the market that could deliver the combination of speed, reliability, accuracy, and compact footprint required. The collaboration between the two engineering teams was crucial in identifying the best way forward, resulting in a servo-driven machine that operates more quietly and smoothly while offering clear improvements for the end user.

One of the key breakthroughs was the development of a new gripper system. Dan Matthews, Mechanical Design Engineer at Gripple Automation, noted: *"Most important probably is understanding the end customer's needs. Understanding their production environment, understanding the rest of the line, and making sure that our equipment seamlessly integrates with all that. Because the machine operates at 120 parts a minute, we had to develop something that could stack multiple packs at once. We developed a multi-stack gripper that could do five picks and then place, and we collaborated with the OMRON robotics engineers to develop the software alongside our own."*

Behind the mechanical innovation sits OMRON's Sysmac automation platform, which provides the backbone of the solution. Sysmac integrates all aspects of the machine into one environment, covering PLC control, vision systems, cameras, sensor data, robotics, safety, and servo drives. By managing everything through a single piece of software, the platform simplifies operation, whilst delivering the performance and flexibility needed for high-speed food production.



The Benefits: Meeting throughput goals and inspiring people

The new system has been a success on several fronts. From an operational perspective, the line now meets the high-speed throughput targets while ensuring consistency and reliability in a compact footprint. For engineers and operators, the project has brought new energy and excitement. *"There's been a really strong level of engagement from our engineers,"* said Andy White, Engineering Manager at CP Foods UK. *"They've embraced the new technology, enjoyed gaining hands-on experience with the packaging machine, and worked closely with the installation team. It's definitely the way forward. This next generation of robotics is going to play a huge part in the future of all businesses."*

"The key is engaging people properly with an automation project," Adele Davies adds. *"When you do that, they see the excitement in it and recognise how it can enhance their jobs. People say, 'We've got robots now,' and they genuinely enjoy it. This project is just the beginning, the first of many more to come in the future."*

Craig Bagnall concludes: *"It's a very flexible machine that we can tailor to almost any end user's requirements. As OMRON's technology continues to evolve, we need to evolve with it so that we can keep delivering more solutions for our customers."*



About CP Foods

For more information, please visit <https://www.cpfoods.co.uk>.



About Gripple Automation

For more information, please visit <https://www.grippleautomation.com>.



About OMRON Corporation

OMRON Corporation is a leading automation company with its core competencies in Sensing & Control + Think technology. OMRON is engaged in a wide range of businesses including industrial automation, healthcare, social systems, device & module solutions. Established in 1933, OMRON has about 28,000 employees worldwide, working to provide products and services in more than 130 countries, contributing to the creation of a better society. For more information, please visit <http://industrial.omron.eu>