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How packaging machines are becoming more sustainable and efficient

Electrical automation from Festo supports blister packaging machine from IWK

With the blister packaging machine from IWK, sustainability is not just lip service: with recyclable packaging material, low energy consumption, high speed and ergonomics, the CABLIblue 870 card-to-card blister system is proving to be a real trendsetter. The use of electrical automation technology from Festo increases sustainability and efficiency immensely in this application.

IWK Verpackungstechnik GmbH, based in Stutensee near Karlsruhe, a member of the ATS Group with over 7,500 employees at 65 international production sites, is one of the world's leading manufacturers of packaging machines, specialising in tube fillers and cartoning systems. With the CABLIblue 870, the company supports its customers in achieving their circular economy goals. It processes robust packaging with high pack volumes for medical technology, pharmaceuticals, cosmetics, DIY articles and non-food - made from recyclable cardboard, completely without plastic.

Faster with stepper motors

When it comes to efficiency, no competitor can beat the CABLIblue 870: With a packaging output of 22 cycles per minute, it is 10% faster than the industry average. The machine also achieves this through the consistent use of Festo EMMS-ST stepper motors, which enable superimposed movements. The stepper motors also reduce the noise level to below 72 dbA and the energy consumption of the entire machine. They therefore ensure greater energy efficiency and reduce the carbon footprint.

The OVEM vacuum generators from Festo also contribute to greater efficiency: They integrate an air-saving and monitoring function for the entire vacuum system to reduce downtimes (condition monitoring). The vacuum grippers for ejecting the finished blister packs are part of a handling system equipped with Festo's EGC and ELCC electric axes. The magazines for the packaging materials are easily accessible and can be refilled quickly during operation, and the EMMS-ST stepper motors from Festo also provide support here to move the magazine in the gripping and loading area towards the machine operator for filling. This improves ergonomics and relieves the strain on the machine operator.

International co-operation in Thailand

"A large part of the development and assembly of the CABLIblue 870 took place at our plant in Thailand. What was impressive about the collaboration with Festo was the uncomplicated procurement of the necessary installation parts," explains Wolfgang Konrad, Vice President Marketing & Communication at IWK.

"Festo's digital engineering tools were just as easy to use for our developers in Thailand as they were in Germany, and contact with the Festo project engineers in Thailand went smoothly," says Konrad. Even if a Festo component was not immediately available in Thailand, all it took was a phone call and after a short

time the component was also available in Thailand. Konrad compares the cooperation with Festo with the relationship with IWK customers, the major brand manufacturers: "Brand manufacturers involve us early on in the development of packaging ideas in order to jointly design machine-compatible packaging. This level of trust also characterises our relationship with our development partner Festo."

Festo at the Interpack: Hall 6 Stand A10

IWK at the Interpack: Hall 15 Stand C20

Press Images



EMMS-ST stepper motors at IWK

Stepper motors on the cover card magazine shortly before sealing



Handling at IWK

Handling with electric EGC and ELCC axes ensures reliable removal of the finished blister packs.



Wolfgang Konrad, IWK

"Festo stepper motors reduce the energy consumption of the entire machine." Wolfgang Konrad, Vice President Marketing & Communication, IWK
About Festo

Festo is a global player and an independent family-owned company with headquarters in Esslingen am Neckar, Germany. Festo has set standards in industrial automation technology and technical education ever since its establishment, thereby making a contribution to sustainable development of the environment, the economy and society. The company supplies pneumatic and electrical automation technology to 300,000 customers of factory and process automation in over 35 industries. Digitalization, AI and the LifeTech sector with medical technology and laboratory automation are becoming increasingly important. The products and services are available in 176 countries. With about 20,600 employees in over 250 branch offices in around 60 countries worldwide, Festo achieved a turnover of around €3.33 billion in 2025. More than 8% of this turnover is invested in research and development. In this learning company, 1.5 % of turnover is invested in basic and further training. Festo Didactic SE is a leading provider of technical education and training and offers its customers worldwide comprehensive digital and physical learning solutions in the industrial environment.