

PROCESSING CONVEYORS



Ensuring you have the right conveyors for the application is critical when it comes to meeting production demands and reducing loss. Experts offer guidance on making sure yours deliver.

Conveyors: Ensuring Peak Performance

BECAUSE THEIR SOLE FUNCTION is to move product from point to point, when conveyors fail, production halts. Regardless of whether it's a belt, vibratory or roller type, the conveyor is the glue that unites functions on both ends of the process, influencing the quality of the product and throughput of orders, according to Key Technology, Inc. Marketing Manager John Kadinger.

Calvin Reynolds, director of quality assurance, research and development and process engineering, Harry London and Fannie May Confections Brands, Inc., agrees: "The most critical part of any production process is ensuring the conveyor line starts and runs all day, every day, without failure."

He's not being facetious; Reynolds says it's easy for a line in continuous production to come to an abrupt halt because of motor burnout. Hence, attention to product, process, speed, maintenance and sanitation are essential considerations when evaluating conveyor systems.

Another consideration is where the conveyor fits into the process: Is it moving product to a cooling chamber or to application of a coating, or is it transporting it to wrapping and packing stations? In addition, the nature of the product being handled, weight, acceptable percentage of loss, and the formulation processes preceding and following movement on the line dictate the type, configuration and

speed, experts tell **Candy & Snack TODAY**.

Other issues, such as dust containment, energy efficiency, cross contamination, maintenance frequency and ease, and minimizing potential operator error, factor into evaluating equipment. For example, breakage, dust management and possible human contamination indicate the need for an enclosed system.

Finally, Cablevey Marketing Manager Karl Seidel suggests focusing on indicators of reliability, such as how the equipment is cleaned, whether its range of speeds meet throughput requirements, company reputation and availability of post-sale support.

PROMOTING QUALITY, TRIMMING WASTE

According to Mars Chocolate North America's Topeka plant Site Director Brett Spangler, finished product handling is a critical point in the process: "You're transferring the highest value item and there's the potential to damage something going out to the customer. We spend a lot of time designing and testing this part of the conveying system to ensure we're sending out the highest quality product possible."

"The conveyor has to handle product without changing or damaging items, regardless of its place in the line," Seidel agrees. The most critical conveyor in a majority of lines