

# Solutions in Action

Ropak Manufacturing Co.



Ropak Stik Pak Form-fill-and-seal Packaging System



Allen-Bradley® ControlLogix®  
Programmable Automation Controller



Allen-Bradley Kinetix® 6000  
Servo Drive

## PACK EXPO 2009

Booth S-5019

A variety of consumer products – from salad dressing to drink mixes to candies – are now available in single-use packages. **Ropak Manufacturing Co.**, an Alabama-based OEM, has been at the forefront of this consumer demand, designing and building custom machines for makers of dry- and liquid-product pouches worldwide.

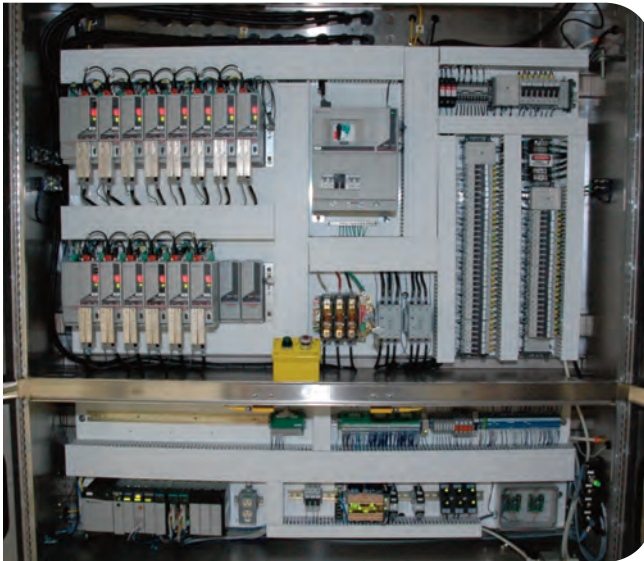
Accuracy, speed and flexibility are key attributes when it comes to producing small but sturdy packages. Ropak, a leader in the flexible packaging industry for more than two decades, invests in the most advanced technology to continuously improve the performance of its existing machine lines and develop new packaging solutions for both Fortune 500 and startup companies.

Two of Ropak's machines are on display at Pack Expo 2009. The **Ropak Stik Pak** is an innovative **form-fill-and-seal packaging system** that creates a vertical "stick," and fills it with liquid or viscous products. Compared to similar flat pouches, a stick can require up to 30 percent less film material, resulting in substantial cost savings for customers.

The Stik Pak is a multilane, continuous-motion machine, with variable speeds that produce 200 to 1,000 stick packs per minute, depending on product-flow characteristics, packaging materials and fill temperatures.

The machine incorporates an integrated suite of technologies from Rockwell Automation, including the Allen-Bradley ControlLogix Programmable Automation Controller (PAC) which is based on the Rockwell Automation Logix Control Platform. This platform has built-in Allen-Bradley Kinetix motion control, which eliminates the need for a separate motion controller, thus significantly reducing programming time and improving synchronization.

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SOLVE.™



Ropak Stik Pak incorporates Allen-Bradley ControlLogix PAC and Kinetix integrated motion

An Allen-Bradley PanelView Plus™ 1500 human-machine interface (HMI) reduces downtime by enabling the machine operator to adjust almost anything – the length of the stick, the amount of product, and the temperature of sealers – without stopping production.

Overall, the machine uses a total of 14 Allen-Bradley Kinetix 6000 servo drives, 10 to control product filling, two to control film-handling, one to control pouch-sealing, and the last to cut off individual sticks. The machine also employs an Allen-Bradley PowerFlex® 40 AC drive to control the tension of the film as it comes off the main roll.

Also on display at Pack Expo 2009 is Ropak's **high-speed dry packing machine** for producing small packets for the food-and-beverage industry, such as individual servings of sugar, artificial sweeteners, salt, powdered coffee creamer and other dry condiments.

The machine's basic design isn't new – it's offered 30 years of proven success – but today's updated version offers customers unprecedented speed and accuracy. It produces more than 4,000 packs per minute, versus 3,000 packs per minute on the previous model.

The process starts with a roll of paper, which the continuous-motion machine trims to a prescribed size and then folds in half to form a pouch. A volumetric-based system and gravity fill the packs as they wrap around a rotating drum. The top of each pouch is then sealed and the pouches are cut and then inspected and accurately counted into batches.

Controlling this automated process is the CompactLogix™ PAC, along with the PanelView Plus 1500 HMI which allows the machine operator to quickly and easily adjust product variables, such as film length and production rates. The machine also uses Allen-Bradley PowerFlex 40 AC drives to deliver powerful motor speed control in a compact, space-saving design.

Ropak relies on Rockwell Automation technology for a variety of reasons. "The Rockwell Automation Logix Control Platform seamlessly connects the components and allows them to communicate with one another, smoothing the production process for our customers," said Chuck Garrett, business development manager for Ropak.

"Seventy-five to 80 percent of our customers have standardized on Rockwell Automation, as they are happy with the solutions and exceptional support they receive."

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