



HOW PALERMO MAXIMIZES PRODUCTION WHILE MAINTAINING PRODUCT INTEGRITY

A White Paper by Unifiller Systems Inc.

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INTRODUCTION: THE PERSISTENCE OF THE BAKING INDUSTRY

Life under the COVID-19 pandemic may present itself in a different format than what we're used to, but it does continue on. Birthdays, anniversaries, weddings, and graduations are still celebrated across the globe (in smaller and often remote gatherings), which means there remains a popular demand for cakes and other baked goods. A [poll conducted by Bake Magazine](#) shows that people are even craving and consuming more baked goods now than prior to the pandemic.

So, despite the pandemic's initial heavy blow to small bakeries and food businesses alike, the baking industry persists and the market remains poised to grow. Some bakeries have taken the pandemic as an opportunity to evolve their businesses, even amidst the process of adapting to stricter health and safety regulations. This evolution is especially owing to the industrial bakery processing equipment industry and the technology it has made available. And, it looks like these new processes are here to stay: the [market is forecasted to grow](#) at a CAGR of 7 percent to USD 3.67 billion by 2024.

The great thing about automated processing equipment is that it's available for small as well as large bakeries, and they're the perfect tool to address the production needs of those bakeries that are seeking to expand.



BAKERY GROWTH AND EXPANSIONS: ADDRESSING NEW PRODUCTION NEEDS

Illustrating this scenario is [Palermo Bakery](#), a multi-location bakery and café operation based in New Jersey, U.S. Palermo began its success with the simple formula of passion for baking, decadent baked goods that became popular among locals, and an “all hands on deck” kind of hustle. Their products include a mouthwatering selection of traditional Italian desserts and contemporary sweet treats (think edible cookie dough and jumbo cupcakes). However, perhaps the most impressive out of their many product offerings is their artfully designed custom cakes.

Made for all special occasions from birthdays to graduations to weddings, these cakes are a delight to behold and even better to share with loved ones. The challenge for Palermo is that a beautiful cake like that requires hours to assemble, ice, and decorate, especially if it's several layers tall.

Palermo employees were icing their cakes manually but needed to increase production to a higher volume. However, they did not want to sacrifice product quality in favor of higher output. In lieu of this, their “all hands on deck” process of cake production transitioned to one that's a little more high tech.



THE SWEET SPOT BETWEEN INCREASING OUTPUT AND MAINTAINING QUALITY

Enter a machine that could do it all. Palermo purchased a [Unifiller Cake-o-Matic](#) to apply midfill between cake layers and top-ice filled cakes. The Cake-O-Matic's servo-driven turntable made the cake icing process quick and efficient, eliminating the need to hire additional cake decorators. In fact, implementing this automated machine reduced the need for labor altogether.



Palermo conducted preliminary tests that involved replacing four people with one Cake-o-Matic on the line, and the results were that they were able to maintain the same production rate. Before, it would take an employee one minute to ice a cake. Now that a Cake-o-Matic is icing cakes in 1.3 seconds, Palermo has the option of allocating their human resources to other parts of the bakery. They have ordered two more machines from Unifiller and will ultimately have a total of four operating at their bakery site.



Inayah Amin, Food Safety and Quality Assurance Manager at Palermo, says, “We expect to be able to process upwards of four times our current output. The Cake-o-Matic allowed us to reduce personnel, provide consistent weights, appearance, and rates for the lines we integrated it into. We were also able to utilize less skilled staff to complete high-quality product.”

FINAL NOTE

Palermo is just the latest business in the baking industry to have adopted the more sophisticated automation processes to improve overall business efficiency. While large baking plants are already well down the road of leveraging automated machines, smaller bakeries have yet to adopt these new technologies.

In the present baking landscape, automation is a must for bakeries that aim to cater to a large consumer base. Automation presents a host of benefits that include fortifying staff shortages, increasing product output, ensuring quality consistency, and reducing employee injury and burnout. In regard to COVID-19, it also helps staff to follow physical distancing protocols and ensure sanitation standards. These benefits will surely remain useful after the pandemic as well.



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This White Paper is written by: Peggy Liu and graphically designed by: Victoria Gunning