



“The CVP Impack machines have delivered significant cost and environmental benefits too, with reduced material use and volume savings on transportation.”

Ian Murfin
Customer Relationship Manager at Boots

Requirements

Cost-effectively scale packing operations to meet online order increases

Improve operational efficiency to reduce strains on manual packing labour during peak

Total packing agility to scale with growth and business disruptions

Exceed customer expectations with fast, reliable, and accurate shipping

Challenges

Boots is the largest pharmacy-led health and beauty retailer in the UK with over 2,500 stores, ranging from community pharmacies to large destination health and beauty stores. Over its 171-year history, the business has experienced phenomenal growth and supports a vast customer base across its omni-channel operations.

Faced with the dual challenge of recruiting more and more people every autumn for peak season, and a shrinking pool of available labour, in 2019 the business decided to look at the potential to boost productivity

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by increasing the level of automation used in the packing operation. A simple mechanised packaging system was in use for the majority of off-peak orders, but the system did not offer the flexibility or capacity needed for Black Friday and peak season. In addition, a large number of manual packing benches were necessary to fulfil the volume of orders received during the peak season – a major financial and administrative commitment.

“As consumers are spending more time online, we are seeing tremendous year-on-year growth on the Boots.com website, and to meet the growth of web sales and customer expectations, we had to innovate the way that our supply chain works, and the answer was automation,” said Tracey Clements, COO for Boots in UK and Ireland.

Solution

Boots chose to invest in two CVP Impacks, a high-speed automated packing machine that constructs bespoke individual cardboard boxes to the exact size of an order approximately every 7 seconds. The Impack measures, constructs, tapes, weighs, and labels each single- and multi-item order of hard or soft goods in one seamless process.

“We have the safety of our colleagues, efficiency, and sustainability at the core of what we do. Every year we pick, pack, and ship

over 43 million products to our customers,” says Adam Coventry, head of warehousing for Boots.com. “The CVP Impack has genuinely revolutionised the packaging process for Boots.com, reducing the need for extra packing stations and increasing the items packed to up to 500 items an hour per machine, helping us to meet the high demand for online orders.” He adds, “We are able to use 100% recycled Boots branded cardboard and no longer need to use any additional filler material.”

Following the installation of the two CVP Impack machines, Boots has also been able to reduce the transport journey, resulting in a significant cost saving and environmental benefit. The business is expecting to buy around 30% less cardboard for the same volume of packages produced prior to the installation of the two CVPs.

There are important customer benefits as well. By creating custom sized packaging for each order, the customer receives a compact, right-sized box that eliminates ‘consumer distress’ over wasteful packaging and delivers a positive environmental message. The fit-to-size cardboard packaging is a snug fit to the product which prevents items from moving around, providing better protection without the need for bubble-wrap or void-fill. Perhaps the most unforeseen benefit of the investment in the two CVP Impacks has been Boots’ ability to respond efficiently to the sudden business dis-

ruptions and boom in online orders following the Coronavirus lockdown.

“The core driver for this investment was increased operational efficiency – and we certainly achieved our goal,” says Murfin.

Benefits

A 30% reduction in cardboard usage

Ability to reliably auto-box 43 million products per year

100% recycled, Boots branded cardboard

Scale efficiently during peak and other business disruptions

