

Benefits

- Remotely troubleshoot most issues
- Reduce on site setup staffing by 50%
- Decrease machine downtime
- Eliminate costly travel
- Hassle-free IT security for the end user
- Increase engineer productivity

Customer: AFA Systems
Country: Canada, Ontario
Sector: Packaging

AFA Systems – Reduce on site staffing by 50% during machine commissioning with eWON

AFA Systems, located in Brampton Ontario, is a leading provider of Custom Designed Automation Solutions for a variety of applications including casing, packaging, palletizing and high-speed assembly.

Through the innovative use of servo drives and automation, AFA creates an environment where machine parameters become part of the packaging recipe. Each time a different product comes to the machine, the packaging patterns and mechanical stops are changed via touchscreen and the PLC program. AFA finds it makes good financial sense to employ the eWON COSY (Communication made eaSY) system in their machine design.

Automation tuning from the office

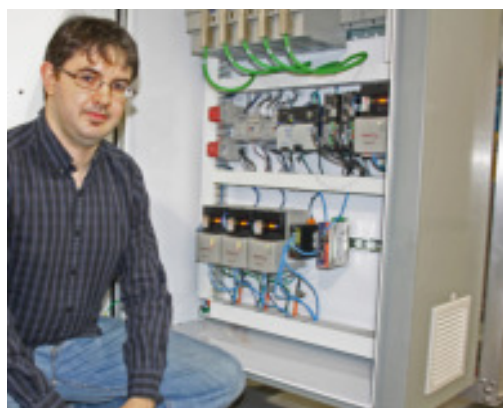
According to David Langen, AFA's Electrical Engineer, "In the past, the complexity and importance of each machine required commissioning at the customer facility. New systems required two engineering technicians; one who specialized in the mechanics of the machine and another with background in the automation application. Invariably, the automation specialist spent much of their time waiting for and reacting to mechanical changes."

The eWON device allowed AFA Systems to send just a single mechanically focused person out from the startup. "It takes 1-3 weeks to commission a new machine. With travel costs running in the thousands of dollars per trip, it just made sense for us to apply the COSY system to our machines and do the final automation tuning from our location here in Toronto." says Langen.

“Our experience with eWON has been so positive that we regularly offer the product to customers requesting field visits



The TR-QCP Transrector Robotic Case Packer features a case transporting system never before seen in the case packing industry.



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But new machine applications aren't the only use of eWON at AFA.

According to Mr. Langen, "Our experience with eWON has been so positive that we regularly offer the product to customers requesting field visits. When a customer calls, I will give them a quick estimate of the cost of a trip to their area (which includes airfare, rental car, hotel and living expenses.) I then provide the option of sending a COSY system along with wiring and installation instructions. The installation is simple and the eWON alternative is always a better value for the customer. We can almost always make the needed adjustment from here."

The COSY system allows the AFA engineering team to offer better service to the customer. Again per David, "Typically, our work onsite is distracting to the user. When our guys are on site there is a subtle pressure to accommodate them by shutting down the line so they can complete their work. Often the line just can't be easily shut down, so the engineer just waits for the end of shift or a planned work stoppage. With the eWON system, the engineer can simply wait for the best time for the customer; all the while performing other productive work."

Easy to use and secure for the end-user

With three years and over 40 eWON systems of experience, AFA Systems has noted a number of advantages to using the devices. "For starters, the eWON system has a unique methodology for communicating over the internet. We can easily access our customer's system within a matter of minutes. Customer networks remain secure and the costly involvement of the customer IT department is minimized. For smaller plants with very little infrastructure, eWON allows the customer to avoid calling in experts to make things work."

But David pointed out another important driver for the automation systems providers. "The cost of supporting programming software has grown to the point that many smaller users can't keep up. Using the eWON system solves that problem because we are able to update the users program with our own software. They avoid the hassles and ongoing costs of maintaining the most up to date software. Our engineer simply accesses their system, makes the needed changes and puts them back online in a matter of minutes. The whole thing is a win for everyone."

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