

# Aggressively Improving Material Processing Operations Key to Success

By John Lombard / President & CEO / Bowe Systec North America

**I**n spite of numerous cost reduction initiatives taken over the past several years, the search continues to find innovative ways to gain further improvements in material processing operations. The initiatives are needed to offset increases in postage costs, postal regulations and labor rates as some states implement minimum wage requirements. Companies are discovering that many Automation Solutions are yet to be implemented and are recognizing the many benefits of aggressively pursuing these cost saving strategies.

An area of increasing interest is Material Handling for tasks such as processing, loading and unloading, machine feeding and material movement across production facilities.

The creation of a mailpiece or package needs to be done efficiently and accurately, utilizing equipment with the broadest application range. In addition, production facilities manage enormous quantities of finished material requiring staff to each lift, carry and transport thousands of pounds of material in a single day. Herein lies significant opportunity for efficiency gains.

Process Flow evaluation often reveals inefficiencies in material flow, machine operator working habits, inventory management and shipping preparation. Flow improvement itself can increase efficiencies but when combined with automation it results in a win-win situation.

## **Automation Solutions Opportunities: Single Machine Type Strategy (SMTS)**

More output can be produced with fewer systems when adopting one flexible, state of the art platform to

process all applications combined with fully automated machine changeover. Companies have demonstrated that a single multifunction system can replace a minimum of two legacy systems, resulting in significant cost reductions, better space utilization, and greater capability.

### **Small Batch Software**

Small Batch software enables multiple jobs to be processed successively on High Speed Inserting Platforms allowing companies to eliminate the processing inefficiencies of smaller jobs.

Operations utilize the software to consolidate jobs, minimizing the downtime that is typical of job changeovers.

### **Optimizing Blank Paper Processing**

The adoption of high-speed full color printing often results in large quantities of blank waste paper between jobs. The most progressive production mail facilities have embraced newly available reading software to detect, minimize, and divert excess blank pages, thus increasing efficiencies while reducing costs and environmental impact.

### **Envelope Printing on Demand – EPOD**

The ability to dynamically print envelopes with full color addresses, messages and logos during the production mail process allows companies to extend the white paper factory concept to mailing envelopes. This not only reduces cost, but also maximizes the possibilities of using the outside finished envelope as a low cost, customizable marketing vehicle.

### **Increasing the Value of Direct Mail**

Direct Mail volumes have remained steady for years as marketers recognize the continued effectiveness of this medium. The USPS has introduced incentives to encourage the use of Direct Mail, resulting in innovative styles, shapes and printing. Modern mailing equipment is not only designed to handle the variety of mail pieces, but also to minimize labor while achieving higher levels of output.

### **Bulk Envelope Feeding, Automatic Traying & Tagging and Enhanced Enclosure Loading**

Production facilities manage enormous quantities of material that require operators to move thousands of pounds of material daily.

This physical handling can be eliminated or reduced with automation solutions such as Mailing Envelopes on a roll, Bulk Enclosure Feeding, Automatic Envelope Traying and conveying.

### **Robotics and AGVs**

Material handling robots can automate many repetitive tasks in any production process. Robots can automate many of these tasks and can enhance the efficiency of production processes with automated loading and unloading, palletizing and the use of Automatic Guided Vehicles (AGVs) for the moving of material.



### **Package and Parcel Handling**

The parcel and logistics sector requires advanced material handling automation for the weighing, scanning, dimensioning, print/application of labeling and sorting solutions for a variety of industries.

This technology is used by Warehousing and Distribution, Postal and Parcel, e-Commerce, Retail and Inbound/Outbound logistics organizations to reduce their costs and translate into an immediate return on investment by saving labor, saving time and increasing accuracy.

Now parcel distribution centers can induct packages into Sorting Solutions that automatically prepare packages for shipping and sorting into any number of Distribution Point destinations. This

eliminates numerous manual processes, dramatically decreases handling time, reduces manpower and justifies the investment in well under a two-year period. These solutions can be sized to any number of requirements and are applied to any manual fulfillment application, including e-Commerce, Retail and Inbound/Outbound logistics

### **Financial Plastic and ID Cards**

High security plastic card production, including Credit/Debit, Healthcare and Government Identification cards present unique challenges that hinder automation by requiring Dual Control oversight and stringent manual processes. The ability to automate the exchange of flawed or damaged plastics during the personalization and inserting process is

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one way that technology can streamline production.

Dramatic efficiencies are gained by eliminating the need for vault personnel's involvement by utilizing a secure automatic Kiosk to exchange individual cards and streamline small batch processing.

In summary the ongoing development of faster, flexible, and accurate processing equipment is helping to increase operational efficiencies. While trends may be shifting, for example from physical to digital and from bricks and mortar to e-commerce, the need for such equipment continues.

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*BÖWE SYSTEC has grown to become a global supplier of comprehensive mailroom and logistics solutions. With 20 subsidiaries in Germany, throughout Europe, Japan and North America, plus general agencies in over 50 additional countries, BÖWE SYSTEC meets market requirements on a global and yet, highly personalized local basis.*

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