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**CYBERCRIMINALS ARE PHISHING FOR YOUR INFORMATION.  
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**Emerging Leaders PG 06**  
How Gen Z will change the  
world of work

**Business PG 10**  
The power of artificial  
intelligence in marketing

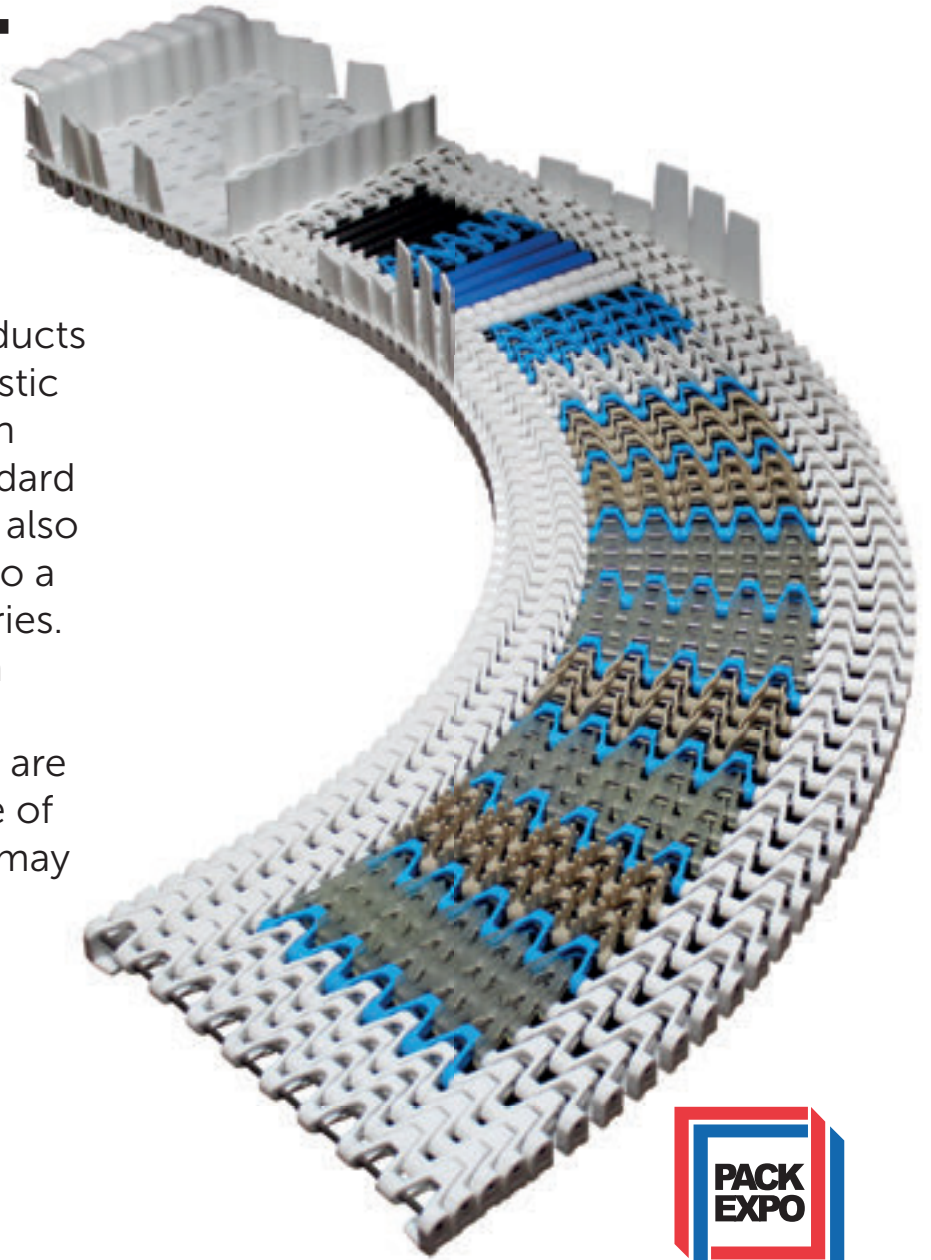
**OEM Profile PG 16**  
Engineering the perfect fit at  
mk North America

**Technology PG 32**  
Understanding the updated  
ANSI/PMMI B155.1 safety  
standard

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## PMMI's Many Summer Projects

The lazy days of summer do not apply here at PMMI where there are so many things happening—and we're giving you just a glimpse here in the pages of OEM magazine.

First, every packaging OEM will need to become familiar with the updated ANSI/PMMI B155.1 Safety Requirements for Packaging and Processing Machinery standard. The revised version of the standard adds new requirements for co-packers and co-manufacturers, as well as new requirements for machine builders as it relates to remote operations and cybersecurity. Flip to page 32 to learn more.

In other news, the **Organization for Machine Automation and Control (OMAC)** established a Cyber Resilience Act (CRA) Task Force which launches in June. The group aims to deliver information for technical and managerial roles as it relates to compliance with the European Union CRA which addresses the surge in cyber attacks on hardware and software. Read more on page 8.

To that end, PMMI IT and OT experts contributed to our cover story "How Close Is Your Next Cyber At-

tack?" offering cybersecurity best practices. Turn to page 28 to find out how to combat the biggest threat to your organization.

Summertime also means PACK EXPO Las Vegas is right around the corner. OEM contributor Matt Neuberger offers advice on how to bring your unique sales experience to the show. These tips are pulled directly from the new PMMI Certified Technical Sales Professional program which you can learn more about on page 14.

Finally, we've hit a major milestone as PMMI celebrates its 90th anniversary. Jim Pittas reflects on the history of the association since it began in July of 1933 in his Final Thoughts column.

So, while we here at PMMI are not slowing down this summer, I certainly hope you are reading these articles while relaxing by the pool!

---

*Stephanie Neil is the Editor-in-Chief of OEM Magazine. She may be reached at [sneil@oemmagazine.org](mailto:sneil@oemmagazine.org) or at [linkedin.com/in/stephaniesneil](https://www.linkedin.com/in/stephaniesneil).*

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# Future of a CIRCULAR PACKAGING SYSTEM

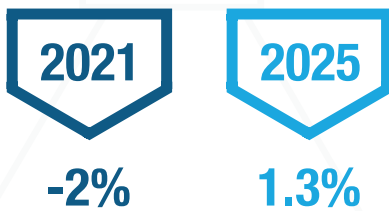


PMMI, The Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies, and AMERIPEN evaluate trends in U.S. packaging design and future implications of a circular packaging system.

## U.S. PACKAGING MATERIAL TRENDS

### CAGR GROWTH

PERCENTAGE



### TOP THREE MATERIAL TYPES



**1.9%**  
PET Bottles



**1.7%** Metal Beverage Cans



**1.7%** Flexible Plastic Pouches

### USAGE FORECAST

MATERIALS ANTICIPATED TO INCREASE

INDEXED DATA ON MATERIALS USAGE OVER THE NEXT DECADE



MATERIALS ANTICIPATED TO BE USED LESS



*Based on directional survey with over 395 CPG brands and retailers.*

### TOP THREE KEY MATERIALS

EXPECTED TO GROW



Compostables



Flexible Plastic Films



Recycled Content

*Two of the top three materials lack the necessary infrastructure in the US to support recovery needs. The third, recycled content, will also require additional stimulation to meet US demand.*



# INFRASTRUCTURE NEEDS

**4-6% CAGR ANNUALLY**

## FLEXIBLE PLASTIC FILMS



Adopting **artificial Intelligence (AI) technology**, or developing alternative collection and sortation pathways for flexibles films may help **prevent damage** to existing sortation equipment and **improve quality** of baled materials.

**Chemical recycling** may help **increase resin quality** for reuse, permitting increased collection and reduced sortation requirements.

**15-16% CAGR OVER TEN YEARS**

## COMPOSTABLE PACKAGING



Only **11%** of U.S. population has the ability to compost packaging.

Consider **closed systems** for immediate impact: stadiums, food service, etc.

GOAL OF **25-30% INCREASE BY 2025**

## RECYCLED CONTENT IN PACKAGING



**Current demand** far exceeds available supply and US reprocessing capacity.

**Quality of materials** is one of biggest challenges for packaging grade PCR content.

# PACKAGING AND WASTE POLICY CONSIDERATIONS



## EXTENDED PRODUCER RESPONSIBILITY (EPR)

Shifting **financial and operational responsibility** of end-of-life management for products to **producers**, instead of taxpayers and government.



## UNIVERSAL ACCESS

Providing all households with **convenient and consistent access** to recycling and composting services.



## MATERIAL BANS

Moving away from **material bans to dialogues** on best way to collect, sort, and reprocess materials to reduce environmental impact.



## STANDARDIZED DEFINITIONS

Clear recycling, composting, and other recovery definitions to **reduce consumer confusion**.



## RECOVERY INNOVATION

Federal investments into **programs uncovering emerging science and data** to drive efficiencies across packaging design and waste management.



## DATA COLLECTION

Consistent data collection to **measure and benchmark** performance of a circular packaging economy.

*Based on materials projections, we believe these policy considerations may be of value to ensure packaging circularity.*



SIC - AMERIPEN is a material neutral trade association lobbying for effective and data driven policy for sustainable packaging. Learn more at [www.ameripen.org](http://www.ameripen.org).



The Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies

PMMI connects consumer goods companies with manufacturing solutions through the world-class PACK EXPO portfolio of trade shows, PMMI Media Group and PMMI Business Drivers. Learn more at [pmmi.org](http://pmmi.org) and [packexpo.com](http://packexpo.com) and [pmmimediagroup.com](http://pmmimediagroup.com).

Access the full report at [www.pmmi.org/report/2023-packaging-compass](http://www.pmmi.org/report/2023-packaging-compass).

## EMERGING LEADERS



# The Emerging Generation

*Gen Z will change the working world. Are you ready?*

**Stephanie Neil**, Editor-in-Chief

**W**e are all aware of the perceived generational differences between the Baby Boomers, Gen X, Millennials, and Gen Z. The typical stereotypes come to mind—such as “Millennials don’t want to work.” Which is, of course, a false statement because, “right now, there are more Millennials in manufacturing than any other generation,” said generational researcher Jason Dorsey who returned as a speaker at PMMI’s Executive Leadership Conference in April.

Dorsey is the co-author of “Zconomy: How Gen Z Will Change the Future of Business—and What to Do About it,” an authoritative guide to help employers recruit, market to, and leverage generational strengths of Gen Z. The insights in the book are based on extensive research from Dorsey’s company, **The Center for Generational Kinetics**, and provide the context for this critical time in business as Gen Z is already reshaping the world of work.

During his presentation, Dorsey outlined for the audience the trends that shape different generations, the things an employer needs in place to attract job applicants, and the nuances and importance of the emerging generation, Gen Z, which is the fastest growing generation in the workforce today.

Some things to note about this generation, according to Dorsey: It is the most diverse generation the world has ever had. They have the most trust in social media (because it’s all they’ve ever known). They care deeply about social causes. They are “savers” and worry about retirement matching because they don’t think they’ll have social security, and, as a result, they believe they will have to work a really long time. “And how does that change your approach to work? Would you show up early and stay late and work on weekends? No.”

Understanding these factors can help employers understand how to work with Gen Z. So what resonates most with Gen Z? Stability. “They need to know your company is stable,” Dorsey said.

Put all of this together and on paper, Gen Z behaviorally is a “throwback” generation—it resembles the Baby Boomers. And, as a result, manufacturers are seeing higher average tenure from Gen Z than when compared to newly hired Millennials. This is good news! But, first, you have to get them in the door.



## A new kind of job applicant

The first thing companies need to understand is that they can’t fill a job if no one applies. Dorsey has pinpointed several things that a manufacturer can do to get a young adult to apply for a job—and, more importantly—complete a job application.

Here are things Gen Z will need to know to actually apply for a job:

**Salary range.** Younger generations want to know what is the starting range as well as the expectations for the high earners on the top of that range.

**Scheduling flexibility.** What’s important to young adults is not the time off, but the actual time they can start. If they can start an hour later, they can take a child to school, for example.

**Benefits.** The number one benefit Gen Z wants is free mental health services. This generation was deeply impacted by the pandemic, and it is the easiest, highest impact benefit to offer.

**Text.** Emerging generations want to start an application via text. Of course, just because they start it doesn’t mean they’ll complete it. So, two days after they start, send a text message back saying, “Hi, Joe, we saw you started your application. We think you could be a great fit. Click here to finish where you left off.” Most job appli-

cations are started while the person is already at another job, so you have to give them an easy way to finish it. In addition, employers need to follow-up with a text after an individual accepts a job. "If you want them to show up, you have to text them three times between the time they are hired and the day they are supposed to show up. If you do that, they feel a sense of connection," said Dorsey.

**Video.** Emerging generations are entirely visual learners. In order to reduce stress, increase safety, and hold people accountable, provide a video with the top five things they need to know, and give specific examples.

**Daily wages.** Dorsey's research shows that 61% of Gen Z would like their employer to offer the option of daily payment of their wages. The earned wage access trend is not going away, and employers that don't offer this option will likely be at a disadvantage.

**Remote work.** Gen Z has demonstrated that remote work does not mean disconnected work, as 65% of Gen Z who worked remotely in the last year felt more connected to their co-workers and even more productive.

Once a Gen Z employee is onboard and ready to work, make sure you cater to their sense of compassion. "They care that you have a mission more than money," Dorsey explained. Make sure you are telling the story of how your company is making a positive impact on the world—

be it volunteering, protecting the environment through sustainability programs, or supporting diversity, equity, and inclusion activities.

Lastly, Dorsey's research shows that what motivates Gen Z to continue working at a job after they've tried it for the first week includes, having a flexible schedule, liking their boss, and feeling like they can bring their authentic self to work.

And what motivates Gen Z to do their best work is a feeling that they are respected and that their work is appreciated. They feel like they are doing something wrong if the boss is not talking to them, so make an effort to reach out consistently with positive feedback.

"Gen Z is going to change the world, and we are so excited," said Dorsey.

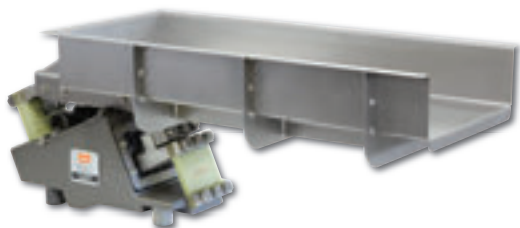
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Listen in on a conversation with Jason Dorsey and PMMI Media Group's Sean Riley as they discuss how different generations can operate effectively together in one big happy workplace: [oemgo.to/jasondorsey1](https://oemgo.to/jasondorsey1)

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## INDUSTRY NEWS



# OMAC Tackles Digitalization Data Governance and Security

*The group launches a cyber resilience task force on the heels of releasing a best practices guide for sharing digital data.*

**Stephanie Neil**, Editor-in-Chief

In February, the **Organization for Machine Automation and Control** (OMAC)'s digital transformation workgroup released a best-practices guide for data governance. The report is a summary of the things that manufacturers, OEMs, systems integrators, and technology providers need to consider when they are setting up an Industrial Internet of Things (IIoT) solution in a manufacturing environment.

The document covers topics related to the structure of data, the forms of data, and the sharing of data in terms of how it should be curated and managed. "These are things that are new to a lot of people who have been learning about the value proposition, but are now taking the first steps to putting solutions together," said Spencer Cramer, founder and CEO of ei3 and chairman of OMAC, during an interview at the ARC Industry Leadership Forum in Orlando. "And with these first steps they are going into the unknown because they haven't done it before, it's all brand new. OMAC is attempting to provide guidelines that can be used by people to get started and benefit from the experience of others who have already done it."

As a company, ei3 is a member of OMAC and involved with the digital transformation workgroup because it has been focused on the IIoT aspect of digitalization in its own technology stack since it was founded in 1999. Now, the company wants to give back to the industry by sharing experiences.

This is the time to help manufacturers because the term "digital transformation" has reached the board room, and now IT and OT groups are tasked with making it happen—whatever that may mean to the organization.

In general terms, digital transformation "is taking existing processes, products, and practices and adding digitalization to them in ways that give them new processes, products, and practices, which then are there to meet the rapidly changing market conditions," Cramer said.

But the first step in any digital transformation journey is connecting machines.



ei3 has more than 100,000 machines and devices connected in factories around the world and has made it easy for machine builders to connect equipment for remote service, or manufacturers who own machines can connect them themselves.

"We've streamlined the process of deployment to the level that it is something that can be done by the companies that own or build the equipment, reducing the need for technical specialists," Cramer explained. "And by doing that, we make the solution more secure because if you go with an open ended box of solutions and people who don't necessarily understand the nuance and potential pitfalls of creating a global industrial network, they could configure it wrong. By combining a managed network with purpose-built edge devices, which we have, those devices keep people from going off the road and keep them focused on building a safe and secure solution of connectivity."

Once everything is connected you can start to flow data and convert the data into information—which is where the data governance comes in.

The notion of sharing data drives the need for an independent and trusted provider of IoT services which can also enforce rules through a good data governance policy. One of the areas that ei3 is good at is enforcing permission layers so that only the data of relevance is shared with the appropriate parties. It's called the "principle of least privilege" and it's a core element of cybersecurity that is built into the foundation of the ei3 platform.

### Secure digital transformation

The sharing of data comes with its own share of security risk, which is why ei3 is also leading OMAC's newly formed Cyber Resilience Act Task Force.

The Cyber Resilience Act (CRA) was passed by the European Union to address the alarming surge of cyber attacks on hardware and software products by creating technical requirements that businesses must comply with. This initiative is crucial for companies that aim to maintain a robust cybersecurity posture while continuing to sell their products in the EU.

The OMAC CRA task force, launching in June 2023, aims to deliver a concise document for both a technical and managerial audience to gain understanding of the requirements needed to achieve compliance. New participants are welcome to join and share their perspectives towards a comprehensive understanding of the CRA's scope and compliance requirements for each product it affects, as well as insights into efficiently achieving compliance. The task force hopes to publish its initial guidance document by September 2023.

"As cyber threats continue to escalate, it is imperative that manufacturing organizations prioritize cybersecurity and plan to comply with regulations that will safeguard their products and customers. I am confident that this task force will provide invaluable guidance and I encourage businesses to join us in this critical initiative," Cramer said.

Industry professionals interested in joining the CRA Task Force to help create guidance and best practices for security products can find more information here: [oemgo.to/crataskforce2023](https://oemgo.to/crataskforce2023)

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## MARKETING INSIGHTS



# The Power of AI for Marketers

Seven strategies to implement now that will optimize your productivity and content.

Sharon Taylor, Director of Marketing, PMMI Media Group



**A**rtificial Intelligence (AI) is changing the way we do business by providing marketers with the tools to generate new ideas, speed up content creation, and automate repetitive tasks freeing up valuable time.

In a 2021 PMMI survey, nearly 75% of responding companies had marketing teams of five

or fewer employees, making gains in efficiency highly valuable. PMMI member Stacy Johnson, vice president of business development at **Hoosier Feeder Company**, shares, “I use ChatGPT every single day. As a very small marketing team, I use it as an additional member who can proofread, recommend improvements, help with research, and provide ideas.”

As generative AI tools continue to evolve, many marketers are eager to integrate AI into their daily operations but may struggle to identify the right use cases and prompts to get started. My advice is to start small and begin experimenting now, as AI will take time to learn and master.

Allison Wagner, business strategy manager at **Morrison Container Handling Solutions**, agrees. “Its power is only going to grow, so start using it now to get it into your day-to-day routine,” she says. However, she also cautions, “it’s important to know that there are still some limits to the knowledge of AI, especially in the niche packaging industry.”

To help you get started with incorporating AI into your marketing operations, below are seven strategies complete with use cases and example prompts.

## Brainstorm

Gone are the days when brainstorming relied solely on a room full of creative minds. AI-powered tools can now help marketers generate an extensive list of topics, supporting points, or unique angles to approach a subject. By simply providing a few keywords or phrases, AI can generate numerous suggestions, saving time and

effort while maintaining a constant flow of fresh ideas.

The beauty of AI is its ability to deliver personalized results based on the input provided. If you’re looking for general ideas, keep your input minimal. However, to receive more detailed and targeted suggestions, be sure to include background information, context, or specific problem areas you’d like to address. This will enable AI to analyze and understand your requirements better, leading to more relevant and actionable ideas.

Whether you’re working on blog articles, videos, or social media posts, AI-generated ideas can serve as a solid foundation for your content strategy. By embracing AI as a brainstorm buddy, marketers can ensure that they have a constant supply of engaging and diverse content ideas, helping them stay ahead of the competition.

*Try this AI prompt: Brainstorm 10 content ideas related to [topic] that [your audience] would find interesting and beneficial.*

## Outline

Brainstorming can be a great help when you’re starting at a blank page, but if instead you have a page full of notes, another use of AI is to help organize content into a logical, structured format. It can also fill in the gaps where additional context would be helpful to round out the final piece.

Leveraging AI for creating outlines can save marketers time by analyzing the provided information and identifying the most relevant points to be included in the content. AI-powered tools can intelligently group similar ideas together, ensuring a coherent flow throughout the piece and eliminating the need for manual sorting and categorization. This process not only saves time but also helps to maintain consistency and avoid redundancy in the content.

To get started, feed the AI tool your key points making sure to highlight what is most important along with any other parameters such as number of subtopics to include, audience background, and tone of voice. From the results, you can further utilize AI to expand on each subtopic. Additionally, AI tools can also suggest relevant research or data points to support your arguments and

# We bring color into view!

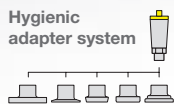
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enhance the credibility of your content. This ensures that your outline is not only well-structured but also comprehensive and informative.

Beyond content such as blog posts and articles, the outline format can also be used to help create presentation slides for an internal or external audience. By automating the outline creation process, marketers can focus more on the strategic aspects of their content and presentations, leading to greater impact and better results.

*Try this AI prompt: Create a blog post outline about [topic] with five-to-seven subtopics including [key points].*

## Summarize and transcribe

An effective way to leverage AI in marketing is by utilizing it to summarize and transcribe content from various sources, allowing you to expand your knowledge and extract key points efficiently. Many AI tools enable you to input a URL containing the source content and receive a summarized version. To obtain a tailored summary, provide context about yourself or how you plan to use the information.

For audio or video content, first transcribe it using tools like Descript or Otter. Afterward, create a summary of the transcribed content or extract notable quotes to share on written platforms, such as blogs or social media.

AI can also be used to summarize internal content, ranging from lengthy emails to presentation slides. However, be cautious when sharing proprietary or confidential company information. Opt for a paid subscription with robust data protection controls, and consult with your IT department when unsure about using a particular AI tool.

*Try this AI prompt: Summarize the article [URL] in 500 words or less from the perspective of [role].*

## Rewrite

Rewriting existing content is a great way to enhance clarity and form concise messages using AI. Whether it's short headlines or long-form content, AI can help rewrite content to make it more compelling and engaging. By outlining clear instructions on the desired tone of voice, SEO keywords, or content length, AI can generate high-quality content that resonates with the target audience.

One effective approach is to provide AI with the original piece of content and clear instructions on the desired changes. For instance, if the content is too lengthy or has bloated sentences, AI can suggest ways to compress the message, making it more crisp and impactful. Alternatively, if the content is too dry or lacks the desired tone of voice, AI can suggest ways to add color and flair to the copy. AI-generated content is also useful for reviewing before and after results to help learn to write more effectively from the get-go.

*Try this AI prompt: [Paste your content] Rewrite the content above to be more concise and engaging.*

## Expand

Using AI to expand content can be a convenient solution when you have an initial idea but lack the time, knowledge, or even motivation to fully develop it. This approach can be especially helpful for busy marketers who are juggling multiple tasks and need to create quality content quickly.

By inputting a few sentences into an AI tool, marketers can receive a substantial amount of new material that can be used to flesh out their content. This can range from lengthening blog posts to creating more detailed product descriptions and, in turn, elevating the overall content quality.

Leveraging AI-powered tools to develop content can not only save time and resources but also stimulate creativity by generating new ideas and perspectives that you might not have considered. This can lead to more diverse and dynamic content that captures the attention of your audience and keeps them engaged.

Additionally, AI-generated content can be used as a foundation for further research and development. For instance, if you have a basic concept for a blog post or article, AI can help you expand on that idea, providing you with a more comprehensive outline or draft that you can then refine and polish.

*Try this AI prompt: [Your starting thought] this is important because*

## Reformat

Using AI, marketing teams can optimize their content development and distribution strategies by reformatting finalized content for different channels and platforms. For instance, marketers can input a completed blog post URL into the AI system and prompt it to create supporting copy for email newsletters and social media posts. This allows marketers to create related content for different channels quickly, enabling them to focus on the strategic inputs to create the source content and promote it effectively across channels.

One benefit of using AI to reformat content is that it helps optimize productivity and saves time that would otherwise be spent on manual formatting tasks. AI can also analyze the differences in formatting requirements among various channels and adapt the content accordingly, ensuring that the content is optimized for each platform and reaches a larger audience.

*Try this AI prompt: Act as a social media manager. Create five LinkedIn post headlines and descriptions for the blog post [URL].*

## Translate

In the current stage of generative AI development,



it is crucial for AI-created content to be validated by humans, especially when it comes to language translations. Using AI as a starting point can help save time in the content creation process. If marketers have knowledgeable translators on their team, they can start with an AI-created draft, which can then be reviewed and validated by humans in less time compared to translating content from scratch. This can lead to an increase in the volume of content that gets translated, ultimately reaching a larger global audience.

One example of how AI can be beneficial for translations is in email marketing. AI-generated translations can help communicate with customers and prospects in their native language, leading to an increase in attention and engagement. Such personalized communication fosters trust, builds relationships, and potentially increases conversion rates.

However, it's important to note that AI translation is not perfect, and mistakes can sometimes occur. Therefore, it's essential to have knowledgeable human resources review the content generated by AI to ensure accuracy and coherence. Additionally, it's important to ensure that the translations are culturally appropriate, as certain language nuances can have different meanings in different cultures.

*Try this AI prompt: Provide a clear and accurate translation of the [article, email, or product description] from English to Spanish, while maintaining the tone and intent of the original article.*

## Conclusion

AI technology presents opportunities for marketers to increase productivity and optimize their content. The seven AI strategies outlined in this article provide a solid starting point for marketers to begin experimenting with and incorporating generative AI into their daily operations.

As AI technology continues to advance, the role of the marketer will evolve to focus more on strategic planning and creative thinking while AI takes care of the more repetitive and time-consuming tasks. Embracing generative AI now will put marketers ahead of the curve, allowing them to adapt to this new landscape and maintain a competitive edge in the constantly evolving world of marketing.

And yes, I utilized AI in the writing of this article to brainstorm, outline, rewrite, and expand content.

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## SALES FOCUS



## Revolutionize Your Trade Show Strategy

*Mastering the unique sales experience mindset for skyrocketing sales results.*

**Matthew Neuberger**, founder of Neuberger & Company



**H**ey there, my fellow marketers and salespeople in the OEM PMMI packaging machinery industry! Let's talk about the PACK EXPO show and how you can make this the best year yet.

Trade shows, to me, illustrate the importance of leadership, preparation, and decision-making in achieving success. They also highlight the consequences of poor planning and decision-making. When done correctly, planning simplifies your route to success. When done incorrectly, the message to your

ideal clients becomes complicated, and they seek out other options.

Regarding trade show success, it's no surprise that we must set clear goals and develop a plan for achieving them. This means identifying our target audience, researching their pain points and needs, and developing a strategy for how we will approach them. While these methods are tried and true, it's time to revolutionize the approach.

Let's start with your unique sales experience (USX). Many might think that's their elevator pitch. Nope! A USX is a mindset about the unique sales experience you want to provide. You only have a short amount of time to create an experience, whether it's a call to a prospect

prior to the show to set an appointment or interacting with a prospect at the show. A powerful USX is designed to do just that. Think about the value you create, the technology you'll use, the questions you'll ask, and each touchpoint—pre, during, and post-show—then craft your approach for each. Some salespeople fail to plan and find themselves unprepared and inadvertently complicate the sales process. You want to be a sales simplifier at every interaction that stands out.

Your USX = Value Creation + Tech Amplification + PMMI Selling Tools

Examples:

**Value Creation:** Put the way you simplify the packaging process into a graphic and become a thought leader.

**Tech Amplification:** Send a LinkedIn video to a buyer inviting them to meet with you at the show while in front of your exhibit. Include a Calendly link to easily set a time with them.

**PMMI Selling Tools:** Use the Pain Indicator (PI) Questions Process to create powerful questions. PI questions are specifically designed to reveal your ideal client's need for your solution. Ex: If your solution requires less training and can be managed with an entry-level employee, your question might sound like, "What are you currently doing to lower hourly costs?" Or, "What level of turnover are you seeing?"

Remember, trade show attendees want to work with simplifiers that are prepared to guide and coach them to greater results, not product pitchers.

But don't stop there. Once you have their attention, it's time to engage them in conversation. Ask questions that get them thinking and talking about their needs. For example, start with getting to know them and where they're from, then transition into questions about the top three initiatives they have for their plant and how they intend to get there. This will not only give you valuable information about their needs, but it will also show them that you are genuinely interested in helping them achieve their goals.

A mistake exhibitors often make is not following up with leads after the trade show. This is where your prospecting plan comes in. Develop a plan for how you will follow up with leads and continue the conversation using your USX yet again. This could include sending a personalized video email with Vidyard so you can see when they watched it. The key is to stay top of mind and continue to show them your interest and thought leadership in a way that they will talk about with their co-workers.

In summary, trade shows can be a powerful tool for increasing sales, but only if we approach them with a plan and a strategy. Develop clear goals, craft a powerful USX, ask engaging questions, and follow up with leads after the show. By doing these things, you will skyrocket your trade show sales results and leave the event with a pocket full of qualified leads.

Finally, keep this quote from Maya Angelou in mind. "People will forget what you said, people will forget what you did, but people will never forget how you made them feel."

Let's go out there, use your USX, and make it happen!

*Matthew Neuberger, founder of Neuberger & Company, is a renowned speaker, Sandler Trainer, and thought leader. With offices in Maryland and Arizona, he integrates emerging technology and AI with sales, leadership, and negotiations to simplify and amplify growth for his clients. He is also the architect of the Packaging & Processing Equipment Selling in Today's Market course which is part of PMMI's Certified Technical Sales Professional Program, a recognized standard for technical sales training in the packaging industry.*

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## For Engineers Who Love to Engineer

*Conveyor maker mk North America has built a reputation for excellence in engineering and empowering employees.*

**Sean Riley**, Senior News Director

It wouldn't be wrong for **mk North America** to consider itself the Lego builder of the conveyor industry due to its invention and familiarity with aluminum framing and all the Lego-like components it entails.

"It's truly like a Lego set," mk North America president Andreas Haussmann says of the company's conveying systems. "There are about 200 different shapes of aluminum extrusion and about 3,000 components and accessories, including connectors, handles, castors, etc."

Sometimes finding a suitable company, whether as a customer, partner, or potential employee, is as simple as finding that missing Lego needed to complete a set and making it fit—in more ways than one. For mk North America, Inc., finding the right pieces began as early as its founding, extends through its product line, and remains a staple of its hiring practice and family-like work environment.

From challenging and empowering employees to innovating customer ideas, mk North America has built a reputation for its excellence in engineering and unique product line that makes the complex, simple.

"While we have certainly introduced new products over the years, our real strength lies in applying proven solutions across industries," says Kai Tietje, director of engineering and co-owner. "We continuously try to improve our products but are also often challenged to think outside of the box."

### Early building blocks

The parent company of mk North America, **mk Technology Group**, was founded in Troisdorf, Germany, just outside Cologne, in 1966. Initially,





The most recent mk North America expansion increased overall capacity by over 30% and doubled the production facility.

## *mk North America*

**Location:** Bloomfield, Connecticut

**Established:** 1989

**Leadership:** Andreas Haussmann, president; Kai Tietje, director of engineering/owner

**Revenue:** \$20 to \$50 Million

**Employees:** 110

**Field service personnel:** 8

**Facility:** 100,000 sq feet

**Markets served:** All of North America

**Industries served:** Packaging, food, pharmaceuticals and automotive

**Product range:** Conveyors – everything from single piece handling units to entirely mechanically integrated multiple-conveyor system. T-slot aluminum extrusion and components, sold as raw stock, cut to size or assembled products including guards, workbenches, cleanroom enclosures, carts, machine bases and more

**Company website:** [www.mknorthamerica.com](http://www.mknorthamerica.com)



mk North America's original building is now home to its modular aluminum framework with production moved to the larger, more recent, additions.

the company designed and built conveyor systems out of steel, but in the early 1980s, the founder invented the aluminum framing system. This system provided flexibility in mounting components and accessories, making it easier to build than traditional steel construction. Successfully designed to replace steel, the aluminum framing enhanced mk North America's wide variety of conveyors, including flat belt conveyors, roller conveyors, timing belt conveyors, and metal or plastic modular belt conveyors.

How mk came to North America is as simple as finding the right piece and attempting to make it click in place. In 1988, Kai's father, Andreas Tietje, discovered mk Technology Group's work at the Hannover Messe trade show, and he saw it as the perfect time to leave his current situation and start a new enterprise.

"Tietje went out to dinner with representatives from mk Technology Group after seeing the product at the Hannover Messe event," Haussmann explained. "If mk Technology would send the product, what is now mk North America, would sell the product. They shook hands and agreed to a simple 50/50 split of the profits, and mk North America was born."

Andreas Tietje left his engineering job and began independently operating mk Automation Engineering, Inc., out of a garage as the North American headquarters of the mk Technology Group.

According to Kai Tietje, the operations remained small for the first decade before moving into its current headquarters in 1999. Since that initial move, the headquarters has expanded three additional times, with the most recent expansion completed in 2022, increasing overall capacity by over 30% and doubling the production facility. The company has always experienced sustained steady growth. However, the need



mk North America's original building is now home to its modular aluminum framework with production moved to the larger, more recent, additions.



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for expansion ramped up recently during the height of the pandemic as mk North America's reliance on North American suppliers left it in a prime position when competitors ran into material shortages due to supply chain issues.

After finishing office renovations this past spring, mk North America is busy adding new machines in the production area, expanding all departments and their capabilities, and planning further expansion of its machining and fabrication capabilities.

### Fitting in the right employees

Bloomfield, Connecticut, is not exactly a hub for manufacturing among the many larger cities and states in the densely populated industrial Northeast corridor. Couple that with mk North America, Inc.'s relatively small size, despite accounting for over \$50 million annually, and the competition for talent can be difficult. While this may make it challenging for a company that designs and builds conveyor systems out of steel and aluminum framing to contend with more giant multinationals for skilled workers like nearby **Arrow and Pratt & Whitney**, **Deanna Ridgway**, accounting and HR manager, believes it allows mk North America the ability to have a unique hiring practice, targeting employees just starting their careers.

"We are upfront about the fast-paced work environment when interviewing prospective engineers," Ridgway says. "As a result, the hiring process is geared towards attracting younger engineers and recent college graduates interested in learning and applying their knowledge to non-traditional, outside-the-box projects in the real world."

While the company offers competitive pay and benefits, they are aware that they cannot compete with the larger companies in that regard. Despite this challenge, the



Modular belt conveyors ready for electric car battery line.





A conveying system for electric automobile batteries, earmarked for one of the largest electric car manufacturers in the world.



company finds that young engineers are attracted to its culture, emphasizing personal relationships and valuing the individual over anonymity, the opportunity to learn, and the chance to work with people their own age. For mk North America, this practice allows them to teach their techniques to new employees and experienced engineers alike.

Kate Nadeau was one of those recent college graduates when she started with mk North America out of Hofstra University over 20 years ago. Now, she has found her way to leading the marketing team as marketing manager and finds employees in all departments relish the small teams, personal attention, and the opportunity to learn from other engineers on the staff.

“For the engineers, it’s the variety. No days are truly ever the same,” Kai Tietje says. “Monday, belt conveyors; Tuesday, pallet system; Wednesday, linear motion. Thursday conference call with sales for new applications, and so on. The list is nearly endless, be it motor sizing, pneumatics, grippers, or powered rollers. At any given time, every engineer is the ‘project manager’ of

five to ten orders at various stages of their lead times, and they see it being manufactured, assembled, and run.”

Autonomy is also a significant facet of working at mk North America, with employees given a chance to make decisions. This ranges from material selection to vendors to design choices.

“My job has a new challenge every day because the products that we make are always changing to fit our customers’ expectations,” says Tom Ziemba, assembler. “I like the sense of accomplishment at the end of each project, and I get a sense of dignity to have a job to come to that rewards me with a feeling of worth.”

According to Haussmann, machinists and floor operators are also hired and mentored in a particular way. The company initiated a program that repositions long-time employees as mentors to teach new unskilled operators and even machinists the mk North America approach to manufacturing.

“The opportunity that mk North America offers is unmatched,” says Douglas Crispin, a company supervisor. “If you work hard and you are responsible with the task of the job that you are assigned, they will always try to give you opportunities to move forward in the company.”

In recent years, mk North America has also started working directly with trade schools, tech schools, and colleges as part of a program sponsored by the state of Connecticut to identify potential employees and shine a light on what the company can offer.

### Lego-like product line

mk North America stands out as an OEM in that it carries a full line of conveyors and aluminum extrusion, allowing it to present a mechanically complete solution, supplying the workstation to go alongside the conveyor and vice versa. This compatibility ensures the customer seamless integration between the various components in the system.

Because of its large customer base in various industries (automotive, packaging, food, pharmaceuticals, etc.), it has developed many standard products that began as a solution for one client. Many of these products were subsequently refined and used in other applications. Throughout its history, mk North America has evolved and can combine conveying, linear motion, and framing into solutions that, while considered custom, now serve as off-the-shelf products.

One example would be a classic over/under pallet handling system with elevators at both ends. The dual-lane conveyors have been a standard product for many years, but the elevators were typically custom-designed for each application. Over time, introducing standard stops, lifts, locates, and pallets became more efficient. The elevators have also been refined to use many common elements and features.

Fast-forward and now one of mk America’s flagship products, the SPU-2040, is an accumulating pallet recirculating system that offers feeding, buffering, positioning, and separating of workpieces in the smallest possible space without the need for elevators while still providing an asynchronous pallet system with stop and locate features.

“We generally do not create a product in a vacuum. Rather, we listen to our customers and representatives,” says Kai Tietje.

Tietje highlights basic twin-lane conveyors as an example of the standalone product vs. custom application evolution. Initially, the product was marketed to integrators for use in pallet-handling applications. Over time these integrators became less inclined to custom design and manufacture the hardware portion of these lines, focusing on providing a turnkey system to their customers. Their emphasis became more on electronics, controls, and automation.

Seeing this, mk North America began marketing its conveyors as mechanically ready.

“We integrated the conveyors, the functional elements such as pneumatics, lifts, stops, rotates, etc., added workstations, guarding, and so on,” says Tietje. “Each individual element supplied worked in a stand-alone fashion, and our customers would then ‘breathe life’ into it by adding the electrical and controls logic.”

Another factor that drives mk North America to broaden its product line has been solving other manufacturing companies’ problems or pain points. If a customer needs a conveyor that doesn’t exist, mk North America invents or develops one. Often this becomes the backbone of a future standard product offering.

### What’s next

Tietje and Haussmann are each very optimistic about the future of mk North America as it was one of the few companies that wasn’t grossly affected by supply chain issues since most of its component suppliers were in North America. Many of its customers may not have been as prepared and are committing to domestic manufacturing with a strong element of automation.

“A significant part of our growth recently has been fueled by re-shoring,” Tietje says. “This is right in our wheelhouse, and we’re poised to serve those customers well.”

Nadeau also thinks the recent passage of the CHIPS and Science Act, a semiconductor and infrastructure bill, will bring new opportunities for mk North America as the products the company offers are ideally situated to aid in increased U.S. production.

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Ska Fabricating announced the BAM Bulk Palletizer in May 2023. The machine can palletize at speeds up to 1,000 cans per minute.

## Ska Fabricating Set a Foundation for Growth and Innovation

*Recent acquisitions and new product developments position the OEM to cater to the expanding direct-to-container digital printing industry as well as emerging beverages and container types beyond beer.*

**Stephanie Neil**, Editor-in-Chief

**S**ka Fabricating started in 2012 as a homegrown answer to the gap in container handling equipment available to small and mid-sized craft brewers. Since then, the product portfolio has expanded beyond palletizing and depalletizing for small startups in the aluminum can beverage industry to accommodate a variety of industry segments, including high-volume palletizing—as demonstrated in its most recent announcement, the BAM Bulk Palletizer which can handle speeds up to 1,000 cans per minute (CPM). Another sweet spot for this OEM is its support for the direct-to-container digital printing industry, as well as providing a culture of problem-solving. And leading the effort is the company's new CEO, Steve Sherman, who joined Ska Fab earlier this year. OEM magazine

recently sat down with Steve to talk about what makes the company unique, why Ska Fab joined PMMI, and what's next for the machine builder.

**OEM:** Steve, you started your career as an automation engineer and have worked for big companies like IBM, AT&T, and Nokia. Why did you decide to join Ska Fabricating as CEO?

**Sherman:** First, I loved the size. I've worked in larger organizations that can have heavy bureaucracy and can lose touch with the customer. Ska Fabricating has a global reach, we're not a startup, but we have the ability to touch customers around the world intimately. I can personally call them. And I give my cell phone number to every customer to call me if they have an

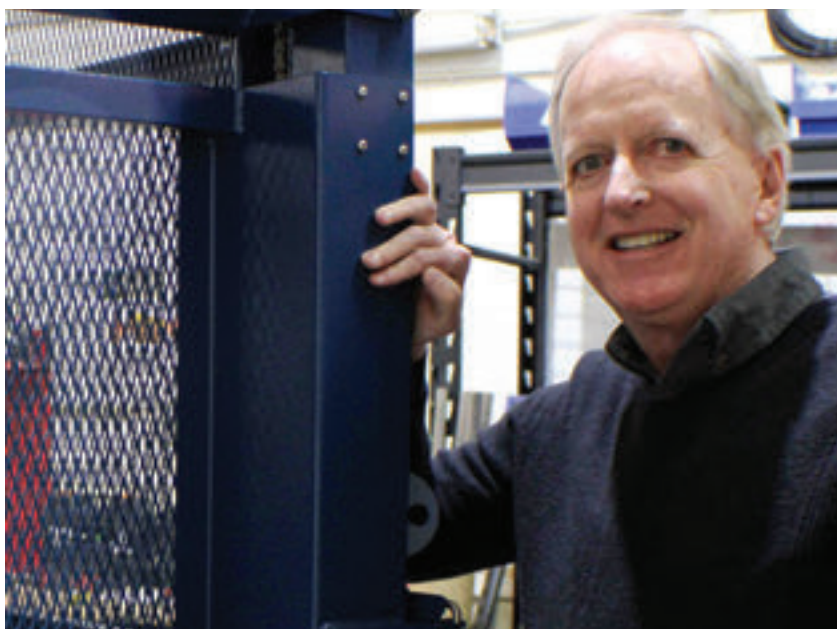
issue. Second, the quality and character and culture is off the charts for me. I get to work with good people who want to be here and show up to make something happen, and every person at Ska Fabricating is like this.

**OEM:** The company has an interesting history. It started as an equipment provider specifically for craft brewers, but then it was acquired in 2021 by two private equity firms. That seems like a very different path for an OEM.

**Sherman:** I think so. And I think it's helped build a strong company. The founders [of Ska Fab] are people who set up the development of the platforms, the equipment, and the services we sell. They are operators, they are practitioners, they are not theoretical, they are applied. They are making sure the things that we do are relevant. I believe private equity can help further cement and build on the foundation of the company. The founders had a self-awareness that, for us to take this to the next level, we could use some help, which is what led to the private equity investment. But all of the founders are still on the management board. They want to see it grow. Then, shortly after that we further expanded with the GR-X [Manufacturing] acquisition.

**OEM:** Was the GR-X Manufacturing acquisition made in 2022 in order to accelerate growth?

**Sherman:** The strategy was simple, we wanted to find someone who was super compatible [in terms of] how we think about culture and how we develop new products. GR-X had a compatible culture and they even started out on their innovation journey in a similar manner of depalletizing and re-palletizing products. But the most exciting part for me in the chess board of strategy was that Ska Fabricating has a deep vertical intimacy with the aluminum can beverage industry. We're really good at that. GR-X has a different go-to-market strategy. They went horizontal. They play in steel cans, plastic, glass,



Steve Sherman joined Ska Fabricating as CEO in February 2023.



Ska Fab's Magic Bus Depalletizer is a full height automatic depalletizer for aluminum cans or metal containers on lines up to 1,000 CPM.

and aluminum cans. With this merger we had compatible cultures. And now we have the depth and breadth in this huge global packaging industry.

**OEM:** Tell me about the recent announcement of the BAM Bulk Palletizer.

**Sherman:** One of the highest growth areas and transformation going on in our industry is direct-to-container printing. It's a technology that wasn't

available five years ago and now it's moving from early adopters to full-scale adoption. This could change the game for how containers are decorated. The smaller volumes you can do, the more personalization you can do, both for the retail shelf but also at home. You have containers at home that are long-standing marketing for the products, and if it touches you the consumer, it reinforces that brand. This could be a game-changer. So, these are high-speed printers. And we are providing high-speed presentation of empty cans into that digital printer, it prints those cans and then they repalletize so those decorated cans can go off to breweries or any other manufacturer. So [BAM] is the end point of our solution. High volume, but also high mix.

**OEM:** Is the direct-to-container digital printing application a differentiator for Ska Fab?

**Sherman:** Yes, I think it's because of our competency and know-how. I believe we are the market leader in developing end-to-end solutions for this digital printing space. The market has spoken and said we have something special. But it is much more than the speed, but the whole package. The simplicity of our equipment, the cost effectiveness of our equipment, and the kind of people we are to work with, both on the front end and on the service side.

**OEM:** So, you are listening to your customers and then you develop a solution to solve the problem. Is that the way you approach things?

**Sherman:** I always work backwards from the customer. We are totally customer-driven. We do design platforms based on market analysis. You need a platform to have market competitive lead times and market competitive pricing. The competitive secret sauce that differentiates us is that almost every customer has a unique challenge. They want a special configuration. The culture I'm happy to be a part of has an instinct to nod their head and say, "yes, we can solve that." It's priceless and you can see it in every Ska Fab employee around the world.

**OEM:** Why did Ska Fabricating join PMMI?

**Sherman:** Part of it is obvious thanks to PMMI's reputation and what they do. But we believe we are a successful market leader in a few segments of this big automated packaging equipment landscape. And with that GR-X acquisition and this expanded team, we want more. We want to be in front of more of that landscape and participate in that landscape more effectively. And for us, PMMI is a natural facilitator of that community and builder of that community. And it's not just the PACK EXPO portfolio—which is a tremendous draw for us—but it's also on the information side. It's the media group, the analysis, and the

business intelligence. You can run into a trap when you are so customer focused because you tend to put your head down and just focus on what they need. PMMI provides us an opportunity to look up a bit and say what is the industry perspective, and what can we glean from that, look for weak spots and opportunities and validate our strategic direction for further expansion.

**OEM:** I keep hearing you say "growth." What does that mean for the future of Ska Fab?

**Sherman:** I think we will leverage what we integrated to grow organically over the next few years. We talked about the direct-to-container printing space. The amount of capital investment that is going into that technology begs for a partner who gets containers in and out of those printers quickly and reliably. And we're good at it, we're a market leader, and we are at the early stages, so that's going to be great.

Second, we grew up at the beginning of the craft beer industry, and now it's a relatively mature space, it's got a quarter of the beer market. That's happening again in this "beyond beer" space. In the aluminum can space you see health and wellness drinks, hard seltzers, non-alcoholic, kombucha, coffee, wine...it feels just like the early days of craft brewing. This is a huge area for us where the scalability of our product offerings can help some of those new entrants who are purely beverage innovators and doing 30 cans per minute with a lot of hand production work. We can help them automate. And the breadth of the industry provides even more growth for us. It's exciting to me, if I look at my last month's sales, I sold to a glass candle maker, to an aerosol cleaner company, to a motor oil company, to a food spice company, and more. As businesses need to automate, we are there in relative spaces.

Finally, our fastest growing segment of our business is actually services. We can talk about the incredible story of this hardware and software that makes up our product, but from client feedback, the first thing they tend to respond to positively is the experience they had with our services talent. We've got some of the best field service engineers in the world who help innovate. It's a culture of service and we will continue to expand our service offerings.

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Watch this quick video to learn more about Ska Fab's BAM Bulk Palletizer:  
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# How Close Is Your Next Cyber Attack?

*Tips and best practices to stop your biggest threat: People.*

**Elisabeth Cuneo**, Contributing Writer

**C**ybersecurity is more than a buzzword, and it's likely something you've been hearing a lot about lately.

Cybersecurity is the art of protecting networks, devices, and data from unauthorized access or criminal use. Since computers were first created, there have been hackers trying to access your private information. And today, these threats are only increasing as most of our daily lives rely on the internet—from our communication to transportation, medical records, shopping, and work—the internet plays a large role in each of our daily lives. As such, a robust cybersecurity prevention plan for your company is a must. But knowing which threats exist and how to get started can be daunting.

Today's attacks are highly sophisticated and targeted to do massive destruction to companies across all industries. But manufacturing is one industry that seems to have a big target on its back.

"The manufacturing industry has become a more attractive target for cyber threats in recent years due to several factors, including increased connectivity of equipment via the Internet of Things (IoT), vulnerabilities in operational technology (OT) devices, the increasing amount of data being made available from equipment, and a general lack of cybersecurity culture and awareness across the manufacturing supply chain," says Andy Lomasky, IT director at **PMMI, the Association for Packaging and Processing Technologies**.

The danger is real, but before you can develop a plan to protect your company from a cyberattack, it's helpful to know your biggest threat, and it may be simpler than you think.

## Your biggest threat

While sophisticated attacks may be on the rise, the most successful and historical cyberattack is the most simple: Phishing. PMMI reports that almost 90% of

cyberattacks are related to email phishing, which can also lead to ransomware. Consider that phishing has risen over 200% over the past three years, and incidences of attacks like these are only growing.

"The biggest cybersecurity threat is phishing... everyone is going after end users," says Andy Sitnik, IT manager at **Schneider Packaging Equipment**.

The problem is that phishing attacks start out from a small and seemingly innocent act (an employee opening and clicking on a link they shouldn't have). With phishing, hackers will send a fake email with just enough believable information to get someone to open it. For example, they may ask for a quote to build out a machine knowing that sales staff will likely respond.

"They'll send an email with a legit link to a big company that everyone knows... the link is valid, and then it goes to another page, and that's where the phishing is," says Sitnik.

The goal of a phishing email is to gain information about you, steal money, or install malware on your device. The takeaway? Be suspicious of all unexpected emails. And up your training game as one of the biggest tools to protect and defend against cyberattacks is proper employee training.

"Training is big... all these problems are coming from the end user. We do cyber security training at the yearly training through our HR system; everyone must complete it," says Sitnik.

In addition to yearly training, one company (that wishes to be anonymous) is even contemplating a phishing simulator as part of its training plan to hone in on who within the company falls for the scam. Then, IT can determine further training sessions (and maybe different methods) to make sure these people don't fall for the real thing.

If you find yourself in a position where you don't have any cybersecurity training in place, it's a good idea to get started. The first step is to go to your IT department, operations, or finance—whoever oversees

the basic information technology part of the company—and start to create a plan. Next, find a platform to help you train employees on the topic of cybersecurity (there are a lot of options out there at different price points). Set up a training schedule (ideally more than once per year so it's fresh in employees' minds), and include a variety of tools like videos, short presentations, best practices, and even checklists to keep your employees interested and engaged. Aside from training, be sure you have the tools in place to prevent cyberattacks as well as a plan of action in the case of a real-life threat.

“Use a good antivirus program; they're not all the same,” Sitnik explains, “and look for advanced features like encryption guard, device isolation, etc.”

Another best practice: Don't be in a rush, work slower, and take a step back. Ask yourself if this email is real. Were you expecting the company to reach out? Does everything look legitimate? And then there's another best practice: multi-factor authentication. A common word of advice to boost your personal or company cybersecurity is to turn on multi-factor authentication. Multi-factor authentication is also known as MFA, 2FA, two-factor authentication, and two-step factor authentication. It refers to utilizing an extra step when logging into websites and applications to confirm your identity. This is key because attackers commonly exploit weak authentication processes. With MFA, two forms of identification will be required, like a pin number and a fingerprint.

Sitnik recommends using multi-factor authentication anywhere you can. Because if someone does end up releasing their username and password, at least the fallback is having multi-authentication as another level of security.

But remember that MFA only works if you opt to use it, so opt-in for everything at work (and at home for your own safety) for better security against cyberattacks.

## Five ways to protect our industry

Manufacturing is at a unique time in history due to the massive increase of sophisticated technology used in many facilities and all along the supply chain.



It's this increase in technology that poses the biggest threat.

“Now more than ever, it is critical for manufacturers to prioritize cybersecurity and to take proactive steps to protect their systems and data,” says Lomasky.

According to Lomasky there are five things to do today to protect yourself from cyberattacks and protect our industry:

1. Ensure that all your devices, operating systems, firmware, and software are patched and up to date, and all have an anti-virus or anti-malware tool that can detect sophisticated threats like ransomware deployed across your organization.
2. Implement access protections like multi-factor authentication on as many of your logins and accounts as possible. Make sure your passwords are long and complex to prevent them from being easily cracked. And remember to follow the rule of least privilege—only providing access to what employees need to get their jobs done.

3. Scan your network. Know what is on it and make sure you know how to configure it and protect it, especially those hidden devices on the manufacturing floor, like Wi-Fi modems.
4. Back up everything that is important to your company operations and have a good IT disaster recovery and business continuity plan. Know where your backups are stored and test getting your data back before there's an incident.
5. Train all your employees on what cybersecurity threats look like.

In the event of a cyberattack, call your IT leader or service provider right away. Don't be afraid to get outside help if needed. Figure out how it happened so it won't happen again. And if necessary, alert the FBI or law enforcement so they can track the attacker and stop them from their next attack.

## Don't be afraid to ask for help

It's important to note that you're never without help in the area of cybersecurity. There are plenty of third-party service providers, best practice guides, reporting, and even government aid to help you get started. Take, for instance, the **Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA)**, the newest agency in the federal government, established in 2018. As America's cyber defense agency and the national coordinator for critical infrastructure resiliency and security, CISA leads the national effort to understand, manage, and reduce risk to the cyber and physical infrastructure that Americans rely on each day.

"As the majority of our nation's critical infrastructure is owned and operated by the private sector, operational collaboration is foundational to our efforts," says Antonio Enriquez, CISA Region 5 Chief of Cybersecurity. "CISA works to connect partners to the resources, tools, and information that will help them fortify their security and resilience against current and emerging threats. CISA has both cyber and protective security advisors across the country that can assist the critical manufacturing sector navigate available CISA resources."

To better assist the critical manufacturing sector in improving its overall cybersecurity positions, CISA published a critical manufacturing sector security guide, which includes information on threats and cybersecurity best practices.

Access the full CISA guide here: <https://oemgo.to/cisasecurity>

In the meantime, remember that prevention is the best "medicine" to thwart a cyberattack, and your

employees are your best defense. With proper training and protocols in place, and the knowledge of what to look out for, preventing your next attack may not be as complex as you once thought. But wherever you are, be sure to continue to educate yourself and your staff to stay up to date on the latest threats and the best prevention methods.

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<https://oemgo.to/cybersecuritytips>



## Advice from CISA

The Cybersecurity and Infrastructure Security Agency (CISA) shares some best practices for OEMs to consider as they up their cybersecurity prevention game, and the biggest reasons why it's so important.

"In today's ever increasingly digitized world, we face dynamic and evolving threats to critical infrastructure, including manufacturing, that underpins much of our daily lives," says Antonio Enriquez, CISA Region 5 Chief of Cybersecurity. "Some of the top threats facing organizations include malware with the intent to disrupt, deny, or degrade the industrial control systems orchestrating the critical manufacturing sector; ransomware; phishing; improperly configured remote access; Industrial Internet of Things threats; advanced persistent threat attacks; intellectual property theft; and distributed denial of service attacks."

Here are some best practices and action steps for organizations and individuals to consider:

- Recognize and report phishing: If a link looks a little off, think before you click. It could be an attempt to get sensitive information or install malware.
- Update your software: If you see a software update notification, act promptly. Better yet, turn on automatic updates.
- Use strong passwords: Use passwords that are long, unique, and randomly generated. Password managers can help generate and remember different, complex passwords for each of your accounts. A password manager can encrypt passwords securing them for you.

Enable multi-factor authentication: You need more than a password to protect your online accounts, and enabling MFA makes you significantly less likely to get hacked.

# PMMI Readies Updated ANSI/ PMMI B155.1 Standard

*The new version broadens the scope to include co-packers and co-manufacturers while addressing cybersecurity, remote access, and more.*

**Stephanie Neil**, Editor-in-Chief

**T**he American National Standards Institute (ANSI) requires that standards be revised and updated every five years. As a result, for the last two years, a committee at PMMI (an ANSI-accredited standards developing organization) has been working on revising the technical requirements of the ANSI/PMMI B155.1-2016 Safety Requirements for Packaging and Processing Machinery standard. The work is coming to completion, and a new ANSI-approved version of the standard is expected to be published this summer.

The objective of the B155.1 standard is to eliminate injuries to personnel working with or around packaging and processing systems by establishing requirements for the design, construction, reconstruction, modification, installation, set-up, operation, and maintenance of packaging and processing machinery systems. Responsibilities have been assigned to the supplier, the user, and the user personnel to implement this standard.

This standard guides packaging and processing machinery suppliers and users through a risk assessment process designed to ensure that reasonably foreseeable hazards are identified and corresponding risks are reduced to an acceptable level. In this standard, the terms “acceptable” and “tolerable” are used as synonyms. Although engineers have long applied an informal risk assessment framework, this standard introduces a formal method to conduct and document the risk assessment process.

B155.1 identifies some preparations that need to be made before a risk assessment begins, and presents the basic risk assessment process in a step-by-step approach to assist in achieving this goal.

The outcome of completing the risk assessment process should be:

- Packaging and processing machinery ready to ship, install, or use with risks reduced to an acceptable level;
- Information for use and awareness provided to address residual risk; and



This new white paper discusses why standards are important to machinery builders. Access it now: [oemgo.to/standards2023](https://oemgo.to/standards2023)

- Documenting the results of the risk assessment process.

The standard applies risk assessment but does not replace good judgment and personal responsibility, as personnel skill, attitude, training, and experience are safety factors that should also be considered.

According to Bruce Main, president of design safety engineering, inc., and vice chair of the PMMI B155.1 Standard Committee, as well as a technical advisor to PMMI, the updated version adds some requirements for contract packagers (co-packers) and co-manufacturers to address current practices and responsibilities. In addition, “we’ve updated some of the definitions, and we’ve added some requirements for

processing, remote operations, and cybersecurity.”

The development committee for B155.1 includes new contributors to provide deeper insights from machine builders, consumer packaged goods (CPG) manufacturers, and technology suppliers. And the document outlines the responsibilities of each role. For machine builders, specifically, the updated standard clarifies the responsibility of the OEM and the end user.

It also addresses machinery as a service (MaaS), including equipment loaned or provided by a third party and located in a user facility, as well as mobile platforms, robots used for logistics, cleaning, and more. The document states that “Machinery as a service involves machinery or equipment that is in use in the user’s facility but not owned by the user. In some instances, the user may be prohibited from operating, maintaining, or modifying the machinery.” That puts a lot of responsibility onto the machine builder, especially as it relates to cybersecurity and remote control functions.

To that end, cybersecurity is addressed in the standard, noting it should be considered as part of the overall machine risk assessment. And the document outlines a list of requirements if a machine can be remotely controlled.

## OEMs play an important role in safety

Within the standard, it lists responsibilities for components suppliers, machine builders, and machine users, so if someone were to get hurt or there is a liability claim, the standard is used to determine if the machine itself is safe.

“There are new requirements that apply to OEMs, and they need to know what those requirements are as they go about building machines,” Main explained. “OEMs also need to inform their customers as to what the customer responsibilities are. For an OEM, if you are not staying up to date with these requirements and someone gets hurt, that will be part of the discussion in a legal case.”

The latest version of B155.1 is expected to be approved in July. The first version of the standard was approved by PMMI membership on Sept. 17, 1972, and approved as an ANSI standard on Aug. 6, 1973, and was revised in 1979, 1986, 1994, 2000, 2006, 2011, and 2016.

Listen to an UnPACKed podcast with Bruce Main discussing risk assessment analysis: [oemgo.to/safetyfirst](https://oemgo.to/safetyfirst)

The B155.1 standard can be associated with the ISO “A-B-C level” structure.

**Type-A standards** (basis standards) give basic con-

cepts, principles for design, and general aspects that can be applied to machinery.

**Type-B standards** (generic safety standards) deal with one or more safety aspects or one or more types of safeguards that can be used across a wide range of machinery.

**Type-C standards** (machinery safety standards) deal with detailed safety requirements for a particular machine or group of machines.

This B155.1 standard on general safety requirements common to packaging and processing machines is primarily an “A-level” standard in that it applies to a broad array of packaging and processing machines and contains very general requirements. However, in many areas, it also contains very specific requirements typical of a type-C standard.

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[oemgo.to/b1551](https://oemgo.to/b1551)



## What's New

*The 2023 edition of this American National Standard on the Safety of Packaging and Processing Machinery (ANSI/PMMI B155.1) includes updates in the following areas:*

- Reorganization of clauses 4 and 5
- Additional and updated definitions
- Clarifications to the scope
- Updated/improved annexes
- Clarified text related to responsibilities of machinery suppliers, users, modifiers, purchasers of used machinery, and others
- Introduced concepts of co-packer / co-manufacturer and associated responsibilities
- Updated and clarified responsibilities for existing (legacy) machinery
- Included requirements for when whole body access applies
- Improved information about validation
- Improved information related to remote / tele-operations of machinery
- Expanded requirements for radiation hazards and associated risk reduction measures
- New requirements for heated systems and related equipment for processing of materials
- Updated requirements for information for use and manuals
- Clarified content of Table D1 on estimating severity of harm
- New annex on layout analysis
- New annexes to assist reader in applying the contents of the standard

# Get Ready: The SEC Wants Your ESG Data Reports

*With regulatory protocols for reporting greenhouse gas emissions expected in the U.S. soon, OEMs will need to track complex data. But it could pay off for them and their CPG customers.*

**Joseph Derr**, Contributing Editor, **PMMI Media Group**

If environmental, social, and governance (ESG) reporting is not already on your radar, it soon will be. ESG data reporting, which allows stakeholders to assess a company's performance in key areas such as sustainability and responsibility, can drive investment decisions, inform risk management, and impact reputation management—all critical factors that impact the bottom line.

“The Securities and Exchange Commission, the European Union, and the rest of the international communities are, within a year, looking at regulations that would impact every public company around the world,” said John Vickers, managing director of energy & resources at **Deloitte and Touche LLP**, during a presentation at the PMMI Executive Leadership Conference in San Antonio this past April.

Vickers told the OEM executives that as ESG data reporting emerges as the new normal, manufacturers will need to pay closer attention to all upstream and downstream impacts on the environment and society, not only for themselves but also for their CPG customers.

## The E in ESG

Many manufacturers are already laser-focused on the “E” in ESG: the environment. At a time when sustainability is the talk of the industry, many investors and stakeholders are also pushing for greater disclosure from public companies on their environmental data.

On top of that, the Security and Exchange Commission (SEC) is expected to release its ESG guidelines for measuring and reporting greenhouse gas emissions later this year. While the SEC has not yet endorsed specific reporting protocols, it encourages U.S. companies to increase transparency and consistency in voluntary reporting, using the Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol, widely recognized as the standard for tracing greenhouse gas emissions, as the benchmark.

In the European Union (EU), it's a different story. Beginning this year, all manufacturing companies with more than 500 employees are required to report

their ESG data as part of a directive to standardize ESG data reporting across the EU. That mandated regulation is already impacting CPGs in Europe who use



## GHG Protocol for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Data Reporting

### Scope 1: Onsite Generation

Direct, in-plant GHG emissions from:

- Company facilities
- Company vehicles

### Scope 2: Purchased Power

Indirect, in-plant GHG emissions from:

- Electricity
- Steam
- Heating and cooling

### Scope 3: Value Chain

Indirect GHG emissions from all upstream and downstream sources not mentioned above, such as:

- Capital goods
- Transportation and distribution
- End-of-life treatment of solid products
- Business travel

*Source: Deloitte Development LLC*

equipment made in the U.S. as part of their compliance for reporting on Scope 3 of the GHG Protocol (see sidebar).

“Your European customers or operations are dealing with this right now, trying to figure this out,” said Vickers.

## The data challenge

As ESG reporting becomes more widespread globally, manufacturers will face challenges in collecting and managing complex internal and external data. “It comes down to the traceability,” Vickers said. “Understanding the traceability and locking down that data to get to that single source of truth.”

Reporting on Scope 3 emissions poses a particular challenge for manufacturers, as it includes emissions from various company activities, including business travel, employee commuting, purchased goods and services, transportation and distribution, capital goods, investments, and franchises.

The clock is now ticking for public companies in the U.S. to enhance and standardize their climate-related disclosures. The SEC has proposed new rules requiring “large emitters” to disclose all GHG data except Scope 3 emissions by FY 2024 and to disclose Scope 3 emissions by FY 2027.

Vickers said that as capital goods suppliers, OEMs play a key role as drivers of Scope 3 for their CPG customers. OEMs and their customers will need to more closely connect data streams and feeds for the whole reporting cycle. New data management and reporting strategies will be required to enrich data that tells a better ESG story for all parties.

## Gaining a competitive edge

The closer the collaboration between OEMs and their customers on data reporting, the more OEMs will be able to gain a competitive edge, Vickers said.

OEMs, who constantly think about the energy efficiency of their products, can now frame that same discussion they already have with their CPG customers to be about helping the customer on their quest for reportable emissions data for their Scope 3 ESG reporting.

“Now, it’s not just to sell a piece of equipment to them, but maybe it’s to help them monitor their actual usage,” said Vickers.

Vickers suggested that manufacturing companies can also borrow the concept of the nutrition label that their CPG customers in food and beverage use to present the machine’s greenhouse gas footprint succinctly when they sell the machine. Such a “label” on the machine, Vickers said, could provide information about the OEM’s GHG footprint, with details such as emissions produced, waste generated, and fuel usage during the manufacturing process that the CPG could use.

By providing a clear picture of the environmental impact of their products, OEMs will not only help establish themselves as responsible corporate citizens, but they will also differentiate themselves from competitors by partnering with their CPG customers to provide them with valuable information needed for their own sustainability footprint reporting.

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# ASSOCIATION NEWS

Sean Riley News Director



## Welcome New Members!



→ PMMI added 47 new companies to its membership following its Spring Board of Directors Meeting.

“We are thrilled to welcome these new members to our community,” says Andrew Dougherty, vice president of member services at PMMI. “As the industry continues to evolve and grow rapidly, so does PMMI. And we remain committed to providing the resources our members need to thrive and succeed.”

### **PMMI's new members are:**

#### **GENERAL**

Advanced Equipment  
AGC Heat Transfer  
American-Newlong, Inc.  
CMES Robotics  
DCC Automation  
Dispac  
Husky Technologies  
Kinematics & Controls Corp.  
Material Transfer and Storage  
Matiss Inc.  
MXD Process  
Pennsylvania Scale Company  
PSnC/Avanti  
Robotiq  
Silgan  
Tronics America, Inc.  
Vecoplan

#### **ASSOCIATE**

American Sleeve Technology

Bairespack USA LLC  
Boix Machinery USA LLC  
Canon USA, Inc.  
Elopak, Inc.  
Epson America, Inc.  
INNOVA GROUP  
Keyence Corporation of America  
Sanko Kikai  
Tecma Aries America

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BEXP USA  
Holt Logistics Corp.  
Mingo  
New Age Industrial Corp  
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POWER Engineers  
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SEW-EURODRIVE  
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## REGISTER FOR THE PMMI ROADSHOW | JULY 19-20, ROSEMONT, IL.

The PMMI Roadshow is a two-day event that travels across the country, bringing together PMMI members and consumer packaged goods professionals to drive the industry forward. Packed with informative discussions on industry trends and customer insights, the Roadshow showcases how PMMI's resources can boost your business. This event serves as a no-cost opportunity for industry experts to meet face-to-face.

As part of the program, Triangle Package Machinery Company, a PMMI member, will host a facility tour. Register today: [pmmi.org/roadshow](http://pmmi.org/roadshow)



## Easier Than Ever to Connect with Your Customers through PMMI ProSource

PMMI ProSource is the leading online directory of packaging and processing technology suppliers in North America. ProSource provides PMMI members with advanced category filters and a Link Booster Program, enabling them to showcase their strengths, improve their company's visibility, and drive direct traffic to their profile - all for free!

Stay ahead of the competition by updating your company's capabilities and taking advantage

of the Link Booster Program ([prosource.org/linkbooster](https://source.org/linkbooster))

Find out how you can build lasting connections with your customers at [pmmi.org/prosource](https://pmmi.org/prosource).



## Workforce Development Workshops – Save the Date!

### Risk Assessment Workshops

- Sept. 9–10, 2023 (PACK EXPO Las Vegas; Las Vegas)

### Certified Trainer

- Sept. 11–12, 2023 (PACK EXPO Las Vegas; Las Vegas)
- Oct. 5–6, 2023 (Septimatech, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada)

### Fundamentals of Field Service

- Sept. 11–12, 2023 (PACK EXPO Las Vegas; Las Vegas)
- Oct. 3–4, 2023 (Septimatech, Waterloo, Ontario, Canada)

### Packaging & Processing Equipment Selling in Today's Market (New)

- Oct. 19–20, 2023 (Annual Meeting; Stone Mountain, Georgia)

For more information or to register, contact [pmmiu@pmmi.org](mailto:pmmiu@pmmi.org)

## Join the MaX Marketing Share Group

The MaX Marketing Share Group is where PMMI member marketers connect, explore, and create new work product solutions that address common challenges in the industry. Whether you're a seasoned marketing executive or just starting in your career, we welcome you to join this community, open to all PMMI members—marketers or otherwise.

Join the MaX Marketing Share Group to share your knowledge, learn from others, and bring valuable insights back to your organi-

zation. Start networking and engaging with your peers today by registering for the Microsoft Teams community at <https://pmmi.media/maxmkt>.

## PMMI Foundation Camps

The PMMI Foundation continues to partner with Nuts, Bolts & Thingamajigs® (NBT) and the Foundation of the Fabricators & Manufacturers Association, Int'l (FMA), to support summer camps in your area.



PMMI Members recognize summer manufacturing camps are smart investments to encourage the next-generation workforce. Summer camps build students' skill sets that will influence their career decisions, strengthen communities, and enhance the industry. By supporting local camps, you can:

- Highlight manufacturing's significance to the local economy.
- Create business and educational partnerships.
- Showcase your company's facilities and advanced technologies.
- Recruit prospective employees and apprentices.

## Use PMMI U!

PMMI U's series of workshops, customized for the packaging and processing industry, is designed to equip industry professionals with the knowledge and skills needed to succeed. Our newest offering, *Packaging & Processing Equipment Selling in Today's Market*, will help capital equipment sales professionals and their managers learn systematic consultative selling techniques to make them trusted advisors to your customers.



As the packaging and processing industry becomes more technologically advanced, OEM sales professionals must be more knowledgeable than ever about industry equipment technology, materials, regulations, and customer needs. Based on the Sandler Sales System, this two-day in-person program, customized for the packaging and processing industry and exclusive to PMMI members, will help capital equipment sales professionals and their managers learn systematic consultative selling techniques to make them trusted advisors to customers purchasing packaging, processing, and automation equipment.

Our other workshops, including *Fundamentals of Field Service*, the newly updated *Certified Trainer program*, and *Risk Assessment*, are also available to help upskill your team. Don't miss out on this incredible opportunity to boost in-house capabilities. Save the date and sign up for a workshop today!

P.S. Did you know that these workshops are eligible for the *PMMI U Skills Fund* if you send three or more participants or *tuition reimbursement* if you sign up one or two people? Learn more and apply today – it's easy!

Learn more here: [pmmi.org/workforce](https://pmmi.org/workforce)

## PPWLN

### Join The Network

Join in the discussion with PMMI's Packaging & Processing Women's Leadership Network (PPWLN) and learn how to advance your career. Through the PPWLN Learning Circles and the upcoming PACK EXPO Las Vegas breakfast, the PPWLN network is excited to provide a unique opportunity for women to network with industry peers and gain fresh perspectives on best practices. The PPWLN network is committed to empowering women in the field and looks forward to sharing its expertise and resources with those seeking to grow professionally. Go to [pmmi.org/ppwln](http://pmmi.org/ppwln) for all the details.

**Going Global?** PMMI Global Marketing specializes in resources and international shows to help PMMI member companies stay ahead of the curve and capitalize on emerging opportunities globally. This fall, PMMI will sponsor a North American Pavilion at Gulfood Manufacturing (Nov. 7-9; Dubai, UAE) and Adina Pack (Nov. 27-30; Bogota, Colombia). Now is the perfect time for companies to leverage these resources, explore new markets, and take their businesses to the next level. For more details on these international shows and PMMI's global resources, go to [pmmi.org/global](http://pmmi.org/global).

### Register Now for the Young Professionals Conference 2023!

**July 19, 2023 | Rosemont, IL**  
**Hosted by the Emerging Leaders Committee**

**Registration Fee: \$195**

This one-day conference features a panel of industry executives sharing their career advice, sessions on leading an engaged team, mental health importance, and includes plenty of network-

ing opportunities. Following the afternoon sessions, attendees will take a plant tour at Triangle Package Machinery Company (Note: separate registration required).

The conference will be hosted at the Westin O'Hare in Rosemont, Illinois, the day before PMMI's free Roadshow event.

If you are looking for education and networking opportunities that are tailored just for rising leaders in the packaging and processing industry, you can't miss the Young Professionals Conference 2023. Register now! [pmmi.org/young-professionals/conference](http://pmmi.org/young-professionals/conference)



### Know CPG companies in the \$1M-\$20M Revenue Range?

Let them know about the Emerging Brands Alliance grant program. One lucky high-growth brand will receive a \$50,000 grant to purchase essential packaging or processing equipment this year. Also, the equipment they choose could be yours!

For questions about The Emerging Brands Alliance and how to spread the word about the grant program, contact EBA Director Kim Overstreet: [koverstreet@pmmimediagroup.com](mailto:koverstreet@pmmimediagroup.com)

### On the Rise Nominations Open

Have you heard the news? The 2023 On the Rise Awards have just launched, and nominations are being accepted through July 28! The awards program recognizes 10 young professionals who have demonstrated leadership potential in packaging and processing and gives them the opportunity to further their careers and meet others in the industry.

If you or someone you know is a rising star, please share the link below to learn more and submit a nomination! [pmmi.org/young-professionals/awards](http://pmmi.org/young-professionals/awards)

### AMERIPEN/PMMI Packaging Compass

The 2023 Packaging Compass: Evaluating Trends in U.S. Packaging Design Over the Next Decade and Implications for the Future of a Circular Packaging System, based on extensive research and analysis conducted by AMERIPEN and PMMI, highlights the growing importance of sustainability in the packaging industry, as consumers become increasingly aware of the environmental impact of packaging materials and manufacturers strive to reduce waste and emissions. The research seeks to close the gap between design needs and recovery needs by beginning a conversation on trends, presenting forecasts for the coming decade, and recognizing the role of multiple stakeholders in advancing a circular packaging system.

Upon releasing the Packaging Compass joint report, PMMI's director of custom research Rebecca Marquez returned to the unPACKed with PMMI podcast for a two-part episode on the study's findings and how future legislation could impact the results. Those episodes, as well as an earlier episode while the information for the report was being collected, can be found at [pmmi.org/ameripen-podcast-series](http://pmmi.org/ameripen-podcast-series).

## EXHIBITOR'S CORNER



# A Worthy Destination

*How to design an effective PACK EXPO Las Vegas booth.*

**Jefferson Davis**, President, Competitive Edge



**D**id you know that according to the **Center for Exhibition Industry Research (CEIR)**, the average attendee at a B2B trade show stops at 31 booths while at the show?

That being said, at a large and very well-attended show like PACK EXPO, the number of booth visits is likely to be more than that. The possibilities are endless with 2,000 exhibitors available to 30,000 attendees and countless networking opportunities. So, how do attendees determine which booths to stop at?

Every decision an attendee makes on where to focus their time and attention while at a trade show is based on where they believe they will get the most value. Always remember: Where the value is clear, the decision is easy!

It is your job as an exhibitor to create a value-based experience worthy of attendees' time and to make sure attendees are aware of the experience you offer.

The critical question to ask when designing your exhibit and visitor experience is: "What is our brand identity, our core value proposition, and what do we want our target visitors to SEE, DO, LEARN, and REMEMBER as a result of visiting our exhibit?"

A thoughtful and well-crafted answer to this all-important question will guide you in creating an exhibit and experience worthy of the attendees' time.

Here are six ideas to help you design a more effective exhibit worthy of attendees' time and attention:

1. **Budget:** At least 20% of your total show budget should be allocated to your booth and visitor experience. Do not cut corners here. Too much is on the line.
2. **Booth Size:** You need enough space for exhibit properties, furnishings, demonstration equipment, booth staff, and visitors. It is always better



to have a little more space than you need than not having enough space.

3. **Access & Layout:** Make it easy for attendees to enter, navigate, and exit your exhibit. Avoid placing tables across the entrance. Create clearly designed and highly visible zones for engaging visitors, demonstrating products and services, educating visitors, conducting meetings, and capturing leads.
4. **Identity and Branding:** Carefully consider the identity and brand message you want to communicate and make sure your exhibit quickly and visibly supports both.
  - If you are positioned as innovative or leading edge, or fun and easy to work with, or solid and stable, make sure your exhibit design elements support this identity. Work closely with your exhibit house to select materials, properties, A/V, images, shapes, and colors that support your

brand identity.

5. **Graphics:** There are three questions in the mind of a visitor as they walk the aisles:
  - a. What do you do?
  - b. Why should I care?
  - c. Who are you?
  - Make sure your graphics - whether printed and/or AV - answer these three questions quickly, visually, and effectively. Legibility is critical. Consider your booth location and determine how far away you want a visitor to be able to read your graphics. Remember, when it comes to exhibit copy, less is more. Usually having a large, well-placed benefit/solution-focused headline with a compelling visual and a few bullet copy points is all you need.
6. **Immersion and Interactivity:** According to CEIR research, the number one way attendees want to interact with an exhibit is through some form of product/demonstration or presentation. Ask:
  - a. How can we quickly and effectively show and tell how our products or services improve their packaging process?
  - b. How can we make our product/service accessible and easy for attendees to put their hands on and wrap their minds around?
  - c. How can we prove our claims?
  - d. And make sure you have messaging support, whether it be static or A/V, that visually delivers the top two or three messages you want the visitor to know and remember when they leave.

Here's a great example of how to create a fun and immersive product demo: A company marketing water soluble labels brought its product message to life and proved its claim through a fun and interactive game called the "Dissolve Away Derby." Playing on the water gun race concept used at carnivals, they placed their labels on plastic containers and had four visitors at a time shoot water guns at the labels. The contestant who dissolved their label first won a prize. It was immersive and fun, proved their claim, was memorable, drew booth visitors, and created a buzz around the exhibit hall.

These six tips will help you design an effective exhibit worthy of an attendee's time, as well as an exhibit that makes a powerful contribution to your brand and the success of your PACK EXPO experience.

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# Digital Transformation Needs Enterprise Asset Management

*Cloud-based asset management software provider EZO offers a centralized approach for all business, IT, and manufacturing equipment assets.*

**Stephanie Neil**, Editor-in-Chief

**A**ccording to Global Market Insights, the enterprise asset management (EAM) market was a \$4 billion industry in 2022 and is poised to grow by 9% in the next 10 years, primarily due to digitalization efforts.

**EZO**, a cloud-based asset management software provider, has a portfolio of intelligent asset management solutions for physical assets, IT hardware and software, equipment maintenance, and even equipment rental management. Its EAM offerings provide intuitive workflows and tracking for end-to-end management of all team activity involved in asset management.

EZO's recent launch of a computerized maintenance management system (CMMS), called EZO CMMS, will help OEMs with preventive maintenance of equipment. OEM magazine recently interviewed EZO CEO Syed Ali to discuss the impact of intelligent CMMS and EAM on the CPG industry.

**Why is the digital transformation trend driving demand for enterprise asset management systems?**

**Syed Ali:** In today's fast-paced and constantly evolving business world, many organizations are now recognizing the strategic importance of effectively managing their physical assets and inventory, especially since the pandemic hit, as we were all working remotely and managing people and assets remotely, too.

One of the key reasons for the growth in the EAM space is the increased efficiency and cost savings it offers organizations. With EAM, organizations can track the maintenance and repair of their assets, monitor inventory levels, and ensure that assets are being used in the most effective and efficient manner possible. This results in cost savings through reduced downtime and more efficient utilization of resources.

In addition, EAM is becoming increasingly popular due to its ability to improve the accuracy of inventory tracking and control. With real-time visibility into inventory levels and usage, organizations can make informed decisions about when to order new supplies and when to move inventory between locations.

More and more organizations have been using spread-

sheets for different locations, devices, and processes, inevitably leading to unnecessary and costly problems: duplicated work, compliance problems, and uncertainty about hardware assignments. The lack of a single, cohesive system has made tracking and tracing assets difficult to maintain in a consistent, consolidated database. Apart from data inaccuracy, providing access to different team members across different spreadsheets is also a major challenge. Working remotely and the other challenges of the pandemic only exacerbated this issue.

As a part of the digital transformation that is taking place, EZO has continued to pioneer the digital transformation of asset management, helping to empower all parts of an organization by providing the ability to simplify access, use, understanding, and administration of the business assets that each department relies on for daily success. EZO's centralized approach to asset management has placed us in the unique position of being able to offer operational solutions that are specialized for particular use cases and industries but also offer the benefit of over a decade of work crafting the comprehensive and streamlined systems for managing business assets in almost any imaginable workflow.

**What was the purpose of rolling out EZO CMMS?**

**Ali:** EZO launched its innovative equipment maintenance solution, EZO CMMS, in January 2023. It is an asset-first operations solution that seeks to go beyond simple work order management by providing intuitive workflows which support the end-to-end management of all team activity involved in asset maintenance. The system makes both assets and work schedules easily accessible and manageable by maintenance supervisors from a single location. It also helps teams resolve issues before they happen, supporting preventative measures to maintain equipment for stable, continuous operations—ensuring audit readiness and compliance, warranty tracking, and a focus on preempting issues that can be disruptive to business.

Preventative maintenance is critical for all industries, but it is especially crucial for manufacturing operations to ensure equipment reliability, prolong equipment

lifespan, improve product quality, enhance workplace safety, and comply with regulations.

As a concept, we found that the ability to optimize assets' lifecycles, and ultimately performance and uptime, requires a user-friendly connection of assets to the activities that maintenance requires – the management of a team's effort and time—through easy-to-use scheduling and internal communications. This innovative approach is meant to drive greatly increased maintenance efficiency and overall organizational productivity. Our expertise in asset management allows us the flexibility to layer on productivity enhancements that are required for unique use cases, and for maintenance, we believe we're offering a groundbreaking approach that will get results for maintenance organizations of all sizes and types, from facility management to manufacturing and beyond.

#### **How does EZO CMMS fill out your product portfolio?**

**Ali:** We have now consolidated our innovative asset management solutions to help thousands of organizations streamline their operations in key areas like physical asset management with EZOfficeInventory, IT asset management with AssetSonar, rental business management with EZRentOut, and now equipment and maintenance management with EZO CMMS.

EZO CMMS will help ensure peak uptime, equipment longevity, and productivity of both the maintenance team and all equipment users in facilities and manufacturing. It will streamline repairs and preventive maintenance for organizations.

We are now refocusing our attention on the unlimited potential that is locked away in our customers' assets and how operational alignment is not only a key risk and cost limiter but also a powerful growth driver.

#### **Is EZO CMMS for any type of industrial equipment in any industry?**

**Ali:** Yes. EZO CMMS will benefit any organization seeking to optimize maintenance operations, including industrial equipment. With an open API architecture, integrating systems to EZO CMMS is simple and provides significant automation for maintenance teams.

#### **There's a feeling that the CPG industry is behind in digital transformation. Can this tool help?**

**Ali:** Today, the CPG industry is facing several challenges related to product quality, safety, regulatory compliance, and sustainability. Asset management tools can help the CPG industry in adopting a digital transformation strategy to address some of these overall issues.

An EAM platform can streamline the maintenance processes, which is critical for ensuring product quality and safety. These tools can provide real-time data on the condition of the equipment and alert the maintenance team in case of any malfunctions or breakdowns. This will help to reduce downtime and improve the overall efficiency of the manufacturing process. An EAM plat-

form can also help to ensure regulatory compliance in the CPG space. The tool can provide an audit trail of all the maintenance activities, which is essential for meeting the many regulatory and compliance requirements.

Finally, an EAM tool can help to improve the sustainability of the CPG industry. The tool can provide insights into the energy consumption and carbon footprint of the manufacturing process. This will help to identify areas where energy efficiency can be improved and carbon emissions can be reduced.

#### **Could a machine builder use this tool to remotely manage preventive maintenance of machines that are onsite at a CPG's manufacturing facility?**

**Ali:** Yes, a machine builder can use a CMMS and EAM tool for remote preventive maintenance of machines that are onsite at a manufacturing facility. While a CMMS and EAM tool are often used internally within an organization to track all assets, they can also be used by external service providers, such as machine builders, to manage and maintain assets that are located at a customer's site.

This could include scheduling maintenance tasks, creating work orders, tracking inventory levels, and monitoring equipment performance. The tool could also be used to generate reports on asset performance and maintenance history, which would be useful for both the machine builder and the customer.

#### **Are there any specific features of EZO CMMS to call out?**

**Ali:** There are many features that businesses can take advantage of with the EZO CMMS platform. These include:

- **Visibility:** The total visibility into assets, team, and schedule ensures fast and effective decision-making and more accurate forecasting. It also allows a business to anticipate and prevent issues before they turn into major problems.
- **Scheduling:** Centralized management of the maintenance team's time, enabling a supervisor to centrally assign tasks, ensuring streamlined tracking and timely completion.
- **Communications:** Coordinated communications and data management ensure peak productivity across all operations.
- **Productivity:** Improved maintenance team performance helps organizations increase uptime, product targets, and more.
- **Analytics:** Historical data and analytics provide the insights that businesses need to understand and improve operations in meaningful ways.
- **Processes:** Advanced processes and continuous visibility ensure precisely timed equipment maintenance, reducing costs.

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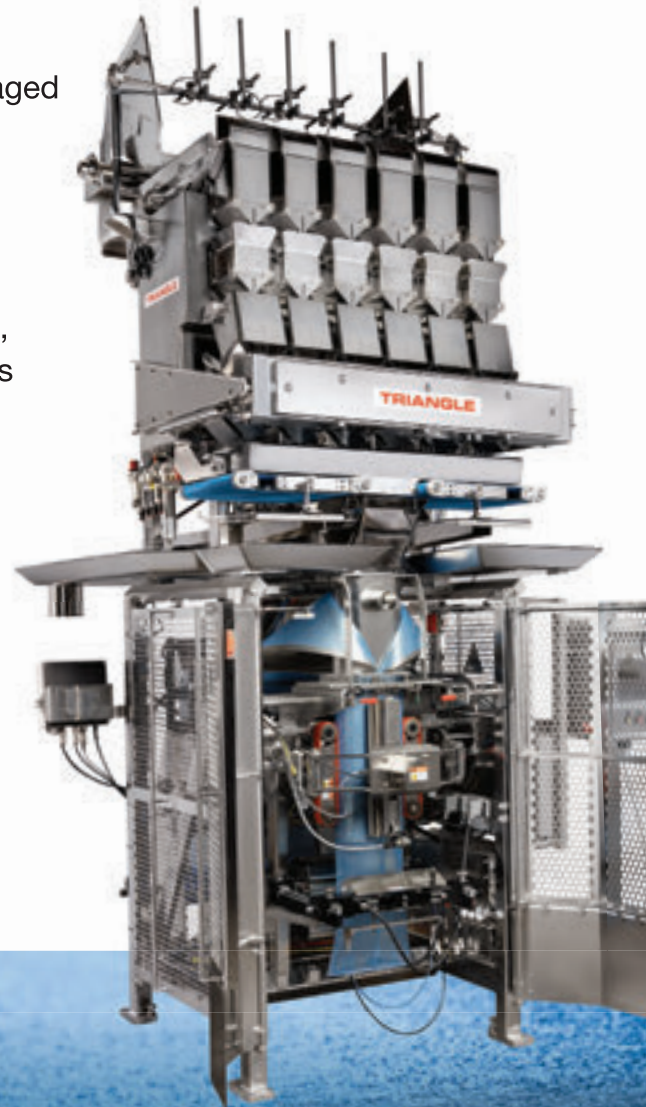
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## VOICE OF THE CUSTOMER



## CPGs Talk Workforce Challenges

*OEMs, who often struggle to hire and train skilled workers themselves, can be an important part of the solution for their CPG customers.*

**Mike Prokopeak**, Senior Director, Content & Brand Growth, **PMMI Media Group**

**C**OVID may no longer be a national emergency, but the fallout from the pandemic is continuing to cause pain in the workplace. Three years on, consumer packaged goods (CPG) companies are still struggling with high employee turnover, widespread burnout, ongoing labor shortages, and persistent skills gaps. One potential remedy? Deeper partnership with OEMs.

That was one outcome from the Top to Top Summit, an annual event organized by **PMMI**, that brings together executives from OEMs and CPGs to talk about solutions to the common challenges facing their companies. The event took place March 5-7 at the Waldorf Astoria Monarch Beach Resort & Club in Dana Point, Calif.

The event, conducted in an interactive format featuring panel discussions, group roundtables, and live polling and reporting, tackled a range of topics from extended producer responsibility legislation and increasing focus on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) principles to automation and digitalization. But it was the ongoing workforce challenges that rose to the top of many action agendas.

### Workforce challenges most likely to be acted on

The issues that keep executives up at night are likely no surprise. Productivity, automation, sustainability,



A panel discussion during PMMI's 2023 Top to Top Summit.

and cost pressures weighed heavily on the minds of attendees, according to a live poll of the audience run by PMMI's research team.

Digging deeper revealed a number of underlying workforce challenges. Workforce skills and recruiting were named by 20% of the audience as a key priority, followed by workforce retention (17%), and the next generation workforce (16%). Workforce training rounded out the top four, with 12% of the audience citing that as a key priority.

Many of the CPGs in the room are ready to take action, too. More than half (52%) of attendees noted that implementing technology to address their workforce challenges was the topic they were most likely to act on after Top to Top.

## Training needs are changing

Time pressures, cost sensitivity, and rapidly changing technologies are nothing new for OEMs and CPGs. For many, that means less time off the line to take part in critical training. Higher employee turnover and new technology also mean that training content can quickly become outdated.

One panelist in a workforce technology session cited the need to break down larger lessons into smaller bite-sized training. Commonly called microlearning, these lessons, sometimes as short as 30 – 60 seconds, are often delivered in the flow of work rather than in a training room.

New approaches to operator training is one place where OEMs and CPGs can work together to solve the challenge. One discussion leader at Top to Top shared how they shifted operator training from long, classroom-based programs rooted in theory to shorter, one-point lessons or video trainings as a way they have collaborated successfully.

“Just get to what you need to know to keep retention and to help learn those skills that you really do need,” he said.

One executive from a large cheese manufacturer pointed to his company’s investment in a learning management system (LMS) as a center point for his company’s training. Most modern LMSs allow companies to upload and deliver training content from external partners, such as OEMs.

The bottom line for OEMs: Simplify training and material to support more rapid releases and make it more accessible to end users.

## Recruiting and retention

A well-trained workforce is one solution to today’s business challenges. But finding and holding on to those skilled workers is another challenge entirely. One executive from

a large multinational CPG cited employee turnover as high as 70% in some of its manufacturing facilities. His company automated as many repetitive tasks as possible to avoid a hiring crunch.

In addition to showcasing their automation offerings, OEMs can support CPGs by partnering up front when customizing a production line. Creating “a full integrated line from start to palletization” resulted in a nearly 50% decrease in the number of staff needed and led to a jump in productivity from 40 pallets per shift to 238, according to one panelist.

Automation and operational efficiency can help, but CPGs need to look at other ways to close the skilled worker gap. Recruiting and retention is not just an HR problem, said one executive from a large food processor. His company has put the burden on plant operations to solve the problem at the ground level, and staffed those facilities appropriately to handle recruiting and development.

With some labor estimates showing nearly two job openings per unemployed worker, workforce challenges aren’t going away anytime soon. For OEMs, that’s both internal challenge and opportunity to build deeper, more collaborative relationships with their CPG clients.

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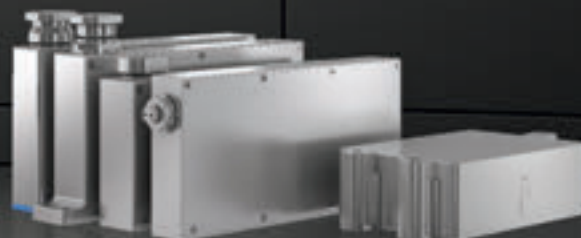


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## APPLICATION BRIEF



# Sortation System OEM Blends Intralogistics and Packaging Expertise in Custom End-of-Line Solution

*United Sortation Solutions bridges industries with EtherCAT-enabled cartoning equipment for rapid deployment in demanding applications.*

**Shane Novacek**, Marketing Communications Manager, **Beckhoff Automation LLC**

The high-growth intralogistics and packaging markets have developed an interesting overlap that experts in both industries have recognized for years. Once goods have been retrieved and picked to fulfill an order, orders are sorted and conveyed to the last 100 feet of the warehouse where packaging, weighing, and labeling occur before shipping—one of the critical final steps. Serving end users that operate in this crossover area takes knowledgeable equipment suppliers that are experts in both realms. One such supplier is **United Sortation Solutions (USS)**, which became a subsidiary of **Honeywell Intelligrated** in 2016.

“Prior to the acquisition, USS was a preferred supplier to Honeywell Intelligrated’s Warehouse Automation Group, because we’re very agile and not afraid to design something completely new,” explains Eamon Kelly, an advanced mechanical design engineer at USS. “Whenever Honeywell Intelligrated ran into a situation in a distribution center where they needed highly specialized equipment to be delivered very cost-effectively, they would come to USS to collaborate.”

Now, as part of Honeywell’s Safety and Productivity Solutions (SPS) business, USS maintains its role as a solution center for internal and external customers by providing specialized designs for tough or unusual material handling application challenges. While USS typically works in tote handling applications, often providing these solutions to the largest retailers in the world, the team there consider custom solutions as the



The USS next-generation Case Loading and Packing System (CLAPS) shows how the machine builder can adapt customer-specific solutions for future applications. Photo credit: Beckhoff

core competency. Packaging equipment is just one of a variety of different types of custom solutions they can offer.

“Where many other suppliers have a set catalog and can only deliver the items listed, we are truly a bespoke engineering house,” says Evan Bassett, an advanced software engineer at USS. “That said, we also have a deep catalog of custom-designed equipment, so we sometimes adapt previous designs or create entirely new concepts to meet each customer’s unique requirements.”

## Material handling and packaging expertise combined

A large manufacturer in the medical industry approached Honeywell Intelligrated in 2021 to auto-

mate its entire distribution center. The facility's end of line required a highly customized machine to handle complex packaging requirements unique to their application. The customer needed extremely precise product and package handling that assured zero damage after its medical products left the manufacturing area. This part of the project went to USS for a custom machine design.

The application presented USS with a number of engineering challenges. The products are placed in trays, which are then stacked and inserted into plastic bags in a clean room. It's critical that the bagged trays don't overlap beyond a set point, which would likely lead to product damage. The customer previously used a six-axis robot cell to complete the process of inserting bagged trays into boxes, but the cell's speed was too slow to keep up with their high rate of production upstream.

USS rapidly designed and built a custom solution for the application in approximately nine months. The resulting machine is now known as USS's next-generation Case Loading and Packing System (CLAPS).

The new CLAPS replaces many functions previously handled by a robot. The machine receives erected and labeled boxes from upstream conveyance equipment as previously packed and tied bags of barcoded product await. CLAPS moves the boxes into position and places cardboard liners at the bottom. The machine then moves the boxes to the next position, where bags of product are lifted and placed into the box via a patented gripping mechanism. Then another cardboard liner is inserted on top of the bagged products. While this is happening, barcode scanners simultaneously read box and product barcodes to record which products are packed in each box. After these processes are complete, the filled boxes are sent downstream for taping, final handling, and fulfillment in the warehouse execution system (WES).

### Standard automation for custom machines

For years, USS has standardized on a wide range of automation technologies from **Beckhoff** for high-speed sortation equipment and tote handling equipment, especially the scalable CX series embedded PCs for machine control. This includes the high-powered CX2040 with quad-core Intel Core i7 processor, the mid-range CX5130 with dual-core Intel Atom processor, and ultra-compact CX8190 Embedded PCs. The CX8190 is a microcontroller that can also act as an EtherCAT I/O (or E-bus) gateway to other PLCs over various Ethernet protocols, offering an easy solution with the benefits of EtherCAT on other PLC platforms.

EtherCAT is the common denominator for all USS machines. In the case of the custom CLAPS machine, a CX8190 Embedded PC communicates to all EtherCAT devices and uses EtherNet/IP to communicate with traditional PLC hardware for other functionality. EtherCAT I/O in IP20 and IP67 protection is distributed along

the entire machine with I/O mounted inside and outside of electrical cabinets. "In our standard machine designs, we try to minimize the amount of wiring that gets home run back to I/O in the main panel," Bassett says. "On a custom system like this, nearly all of the I/O is mounted directly on the machine to connect with sensors and other field devices. EtherCAT Box I/O lets us connect both input and output channels to a single module."

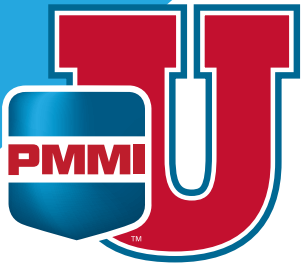
Doug Schuchart, global material handling & intralogistics manager at Beckhoff, adds: "Distributed I/O significantly reduces installation time while adding improved equipment uptime with extended diagnostics and simplified maintenance. It also makes the equipment much more flexible for later expansion. Since EtherCAT is not a switch-based protocol, customers like USS can freely design equipment with distributed I/O and not worry about network constraints, such as performance limitations, switch delays, limits on number of



IP67-rated EtherCAT Box modules from Beckhoff are convenient for direct mounting on the USS machine. Photo credit: Beckhoff



At the USS facility in Owings Mills, Maryland: Jay McNeil (left) and Doug Schuchart (right) of Beckhoff meet with the machine building experts at United Sortation Solutions, part of Honeywell Intelligrated. Photo credit: Beckhoff



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devices on the network, limits of the number of connections in the PLC or even in topology branching. This makes EtherCAT uniquely beneficial for intralogistics equipment.”

Previously, scanning and configuring the I/O system with thousands of points was a manual process that could take several days. “That was in addition to several more days of commissioning to check every individual I/O point to make sure that they were all mapped correctly,” Bassett says. “Today, this entire process is easily handled in minutes using the TwinCAT Automation Interface, which enables programming tasks to be automated.”

### Innovation, even in the smallest details

Even with simple design elements, USS is not afraid to develop a novel approach that results in reliable solutions for end users. One example is applying motor-driven roller (MDR) technology to extend the unique benefits of these brushless DC motors to many applications beyond just conveyor applications. USS had many challenges with previous MDR controller suppliers with unreliable fieldbus communication and limited-to-no safety integration. “The safety requirements in this application mandate that the MDR controller can cut motor power independent of the overall system power. But most manufacturers do not support this feature without powering down the MDR controller and the entire fieldbus network, which also interrupts the input feedback on the status of all the sensors in the application,” Bassett says.

The engineering team at USS found that establishing reliable communications in this way with MDR controllers was key for their machine to pass new NFPA 79 requirements. “We put a project team together to evaluate different ways to handle the new E-stop category requirements in the 2021 revision of NFPA 79,” says Donna Kiefer, business unit leader and senior engineering manager at USS. “We reviewed a series of vendors’ hardware and standardized on the Beckhoff EP7402 MDR controller boxes with EtherCAT P, which incorporates EtherCAT communication and power in a single cable. The EP7402 is also used on other box and tote handling machines from USS and other Honeywell Inteligrated systems.”

The EP7402-0057 MDR controller offers two motor outputs to directly connect 24 V DC conveyor roller motors or other brushless DC (BLDC) motors with a maximum of 3.5 A current. The new EP7402-0167 variant can control a range of motor-driven rollers from 24 V to 48 V DC. Eight additional digital I/Os enable easy connection of devices such as photoelectric switches and communication between the box modules in operation without a PLC. The EP7402 takes over the complete control of a roller motor or BLDC motor regardless of

the manufacturer. It can also be operated without a PLC and provides functions such as zero pressure accumulation (ZPA), single or slug mode. Freely available function blocks for TwinCAT automation software also offer ZPA functionality, merge and other important MDR control features. The MDR controller also allows integrated functional safety in the system architecture via TwinSAFE technology from Beckhoff.

USS also uses TwinSAFE in other areas to connect all safety inputs on the system. “We decided on TwinSAFE because of the safety segmentation required for the various zones of the machine,” Bassett adds. “We need the ability to independently disable each subsection to maintain throughput while the operators are reloading liners or clearing jams. We are also able to segment our machine into functional safety areas, so we don’t have to E-stop the whole line for a localized safety event.”

### EtherCAT ties every application together

The power of the EtherCAT protocol also proved invaluable to USS when incorporating a customer-specified PLC that did not offer the same networking performance as Beckhoff machine controllers. “With traditional PLCs, we usually get 10- or 20-millisecond scan rates for all of the I/O on the machine,” Kelly says. “But when we add Beckhoff embedded controllers and EtherCAT, we can achieve 1- or 2-millisecond scan rates in the EtherCAT I/O system. This enables us to utilize more I/O with a lower scan rate than what was previously possible with the traditional PLC.”

Smart sensors on sortation machinery often require very fast scan rates that can be difficult for traditional PLCs to meet. “If you’re trying to sense objects passing by a sensor while the machine is running, your pulse time is typically in the tens of milliseconds, so if your scan rate is 15 or 20 milliseconds, you’ll completely miss the trigger,” Bassett explains. “With EtherCAT I/O, we can solidly lock onto the object and get five I/O scans before the trigger goes away. Therefore, we’re guaranteed to track even the fastest moving objects on the machine and we can react with millimeter precision on the sortation systems.”

EtherCAT also offers a wealth of diagnostic capabilities and can provide information on exactly where cable breaks are in the system, as well as whether individual networked devices are not in an operational state. “In addition to meeting our functional and cost requirements, Beckhoff also went the extra mile for us by providing custom color-coded cables to ensure that the correct connections are made in the field every time,” Kiefer says. “Error-proofing is major value-add for our customers to reduce their support needs, and it helps reduce calls to our service department.”

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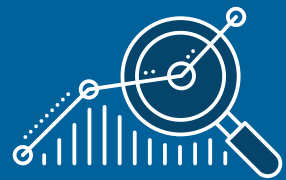
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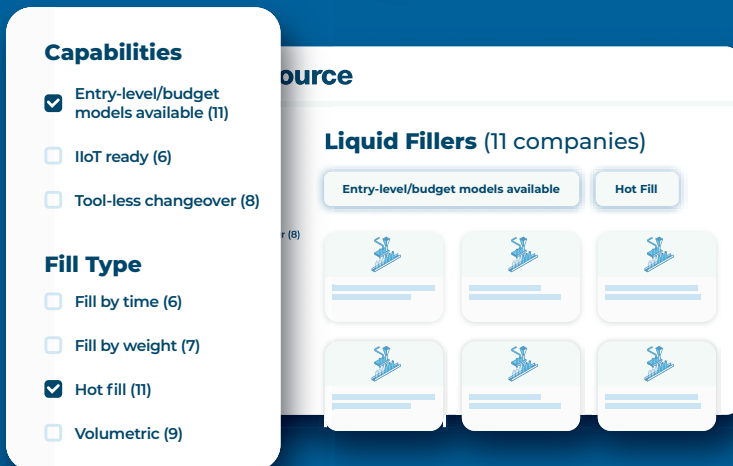


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## WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT



# Preparing the Future Machining Workforce

*An integrated skills-based trades program from Hoosier Feeder Company and New Castle Career Center prepares students for careers in machine assembly.*

**Stacy Johnson**, Vice President of Business Development, Hoosier Feeder Company

**T**he momentum in the labor market is shifting. Companies are struggling to fill positions as the market fluctuates and the gap of skilled, knowledgeable workers grows. Forward-thinking organizations are now using a skills-first method in the hiring process to meet demand.

**Hoosier Feeder Company**, located in Knightstown, Ind., produces vibratory, centrifugal, and specialty feeding systems designed to singulate and orient parts for packaging and assembly automation. The company has partnered with **New Castle Career Center**, located in New Castle, Ind., to support its integrated skills-based machine trades program and transform the way students are prepared for the workforce. The machine trades learning program, designed for local high school juniors and seniors, provides a high-quality education combined with real-life industry experiences to develop the skills and knowledge they need to be successful in a career in machining and machine assembly.

“Students get hands-on experience in the classroom with actual equipment and machinery, and then in their senior year, they get valuable work experience by going to facilities like Hoosier Feeder Company to work, learn, and grow,” said Greg Dickerson, teacher of the machine trades program at New Castle Career Center.

New Castle Career Center offers a machine trades class that allows high schoolers to learn machining and machine and assembly trade skills—providing two courses for beginners and intermediate students. The precision machining program enables students to become familiar with standard practices in the industry, such as surface grinding, drill press, lathe, mill, computer numerical controlled (CNC) machining, CAD software, and precise measuring equipment.

These two courses require students to be hands-on and to use problem-solving skills in both the laboratory and classroom. Students are taught to read blueprints, standard and manual machining, formulas to calculate the proper speed and feed of each machine they encounter, and how to maintain the equipment properly. The precision machining courses can be the gateway for students looking for internships or careers in machining businesses. When students reach their second year

in the program, they are introduced to CNC, allowing them the opportunity to secure internships with local companies, including Hoosier Feeder Company.

“We are extremely grateful to be involved with New Castle Career Center,” said Chris Schombert, executive vice president of Hoosier Feeder Company. “Machining is an art, and it takes a skilled artist to make these machines.

At Hoosier Feeder Company, students learn the skills to make that happen.” The communal impact swings both ways. “This program is a success because of the fantastic partners we have in the community,” said Dickerson.

Presently, eight current and former New Castle Career Center students work at Hoosier Feeder Company. Cody Byrd is a mechanical engineer at Hoosier Feeder Company and a graduate of New Castle Career Center’s machine trades program.

“After I graduated, I started with Hoosier Feeder Company full time. Right away, I was machining and applying the skills I learned at the Career Center. After a little while, an opportunity arose where I could move into a mechanical engineer role,” said Byrd. “I wouldn’t have the skill sets that I have today if it wasn’t for New Castle Career Center.”

Byrd also acknowledges his teacher, Greg Dickerson. “Greg is a great guy. He knows what he’s doing. The machine trades course is a great program that would benefit any high schooler interested in going into the world of machining and assembly.”

New Castle Career Center offers 18 different career training programs. These programs, through the support of local businesses like Hoosier Feeder Company, are able to provide students with advanced hands-on experience, as well as important soft skills that will allow them to be successful in today’s working world. As the labor market shifts and demand for skilled labor rises, adapting strategies will ensure the industry assembles a strong future workforce.

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The inaugural **Packaging Recycling Summit** will take place this fall at the Grand Hyatt Atlanta in Buckhead from November 6-8, 2023. Presented by *Packaging World*, this summit will be the first of its kind to bring together brands, packaging materials and equipment suppliers, reprocessors, and materials recovery facilities (MRFs) under one roof.

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## WOMEN'S LEADERSHIP



# How to Play the Networking Game

*Personal branding expert Melanie Denny outlines ways to gain visibility and create new opportunities for yourself.*

**Stephanie Neil**, Editor-in-Chief

**R**ule number one: Learn how to golf. Okay, maybe it's not golf; maybe it's going to lunch or happy hour or an awards ceremony. Whatever the auxiliary activities are that involve colleagues, just go.

"It's so important because so much of what happens at work actually happens outside of work. That is networking," says Melanie Denny, a personal branding consultant and international career speaker. Many people want to separate their personal time from office hours, but forming a career path is not a nine-to-five job. "It is important to be present to get some of the outside information you may not be getting [at the office] and to be a part of the conversations and decisions."

Of course, don't cross boundaries, Denny warns, meaning you may not be invited to your manager's golf outing, so rule number one is actually to have respect. Rule number two: Build a good relationship with the people around you, and you can do that by being your authentic self.

The same rule applies when attending a networking event. Be respectful of the people you meet, be genuine, but also have a plan. According to Denny, there are three things to do when walking into a networking event:

1. Express interest in the people you meet. Keep the conversation about them, asking them about their journey. "It's a good strategy to get to know people and to break the ice," Denny says. "When you make the conversation about the other person, they'll open up and want to talk further, and you'll be memorable."
2. When people ask you about your job, make it interesting. "Don't just say, 'I'm a manager.' Give it some life; make it a story that is conversational and intriguing," Denny advises.
3. When speaking with someone, make sure to get their contact information and follow-up within 24 hours—because if you do so a week later, they won't remember you. "Jot down something on their business card that you talked about to make sure the follow-up is relevant."

Whatever the game plan at a networking event, just

make sure there is intent behind it. It may be a goal of talking to three people that you connect with or getting five business cards or even just winging it. "It's okay to just go in and see what happens, as long as you are authentic," Denny says.

## Leveraging LinkedIn

In today's digital age, networking is not only about in-person meetings but also connecting online. And the best business tool for that is LinkedIn. Denny is an expert LinkedIn strategist and says the first and most important thing to do is to optimize your profile. Beyond a job title, make sure you use keywords and industry jargon. "What is your value proposition and your unique skills?"

A lot of that stuff is searchable," she says. "If you optimize your profile, you get more visibility automatically just because of the keyword-driven algorithm."

Social media requires engagement, so you need to log in and interact at least three times per week. Just comment on posts, which also drives visibility, Denny says, noting that LinkedIn is a great way to meet other people in your field. "Use advanced search features to search industries, job titles, or even filter by geographic area and reach out to people to say you'd like to have a conversation with them. People love it."

Or, use LinkedIn to find out more about the person you just met at the networking event in order to carry on a conversation. According to Denny, LinkedIn is easier and better than e-mail. "With LinkedIn, you can carry on a conversation through a post or an article. There are so many hidden gems on LinkedIn in terms of the opportunity to connect and network."

Regardless of the way you network—via in-person or online—Denny says women must first be confident with who they are as a professional. "It's good to be strong and voice your opinions, but you have to do the work within yourself first."

*This article originally appeared in the Voices of Women in Packaging and Processing report developed by the OpX Leadership Network and PPMI's Packaging & Processing Women's Leadership Network. Learn more: [oemgo.to/ppwln](http://oemgo.to/ppwln)*

# PACKAGING ROBOTICS LIVE & LOCAL



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- 3. New Mobile App**  
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All registered staff members will have access to badge scanning within our Emerging Brands Summit mobile app.
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Emerging Brands Summit sponsors who also exhibit at PACK EXPO Las Vegas will receive special identification as an emerging brand-friendly supplier.

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### Photoelectric Sensors

**Rockwell Automation**, [rockwellautomation.com](http://rockwellautomation.com)

The Allen-Bradley 42EA RightSight S18 and 42JA VisiSight M20A photoelectric sensors offer a range of sensing modes and mounting options. All models have a red light source, multiple connection options and adjustment knobs for light or dark operation. The 42EA RightSight S18 line of sensors offers a smaller package to deliver detection capabilities where size and shape matter, while the 42JA VisiSight M20A line offers a full range of sensing modes in a sealed, compact, cavity-free housing.



### 3D Vision

**Pickit**, [pickit3d.com](http://pickit3d.com)

The Pickit 3.2 release features updates to the DeepAL engine, which combines depth and color information into a deep learning algorithm that allows for more accurate pick point calculations, a vertical pick enforcer for support in depalletizing projects using 4-axis robots, a teach box model that eliminates the need for uploading CAD files or presenting parts to the camera, flexible pick orientation to increase pickable parts, and in-depth pickability insights. Additionally, a hardware update allows for use of the new M-HD2 camera, which is smaller, lighter, and has a wider view angle in comparison to the previous model.

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# Happy 90th Anniversary



**1**933 was a banner year for trade associations for one big reason: The National Recovery Act.

First, a quick history lesson. Coming out of the depression, the National Recovery Act led to the creation of countless committees composed of business leaders and labor and consumer representatives, each group seeking to develop codes for a massive variety of industries. However, the sheer size of the effort made the process unwieldy, and much of the code creation fell by the wayside.

But associations were here to stay as companies realized they could lobby and work together better as an industry than as individuals. Thus, the Packaging Machinery Manufacturer's Institute—PMMI's legacy title—was born in July 1933 with about 10 companies, and PMMI's first annual meeting included about two dozen companies. Ninety years later, PMMI has grown 100-fold, with member rolls exceeding 1,000 companies. In the last 15 years alone, membership has nearly doubled, and the Executive Leadership Conference was PMMI's largest in its history.

Often recognized as much for our trade show as anything else, the original PMMI tradeshow, dubbed The Packaging Machine and Materials Exposition, debuted in 1956 in Cleveland with 136 companies and at that time an impressive 43,000 net sq. ft. of exhibit space. Sixty-seven years later, the show is now one of the largest trade shows in North America, with PACK EXPO International 2022 welcoming over 2,500 exhibiting companies spread across 1.2 million net sq. ft. of McCormick Place in Chicago. While impressive in and of itself, PACK EXPO International is but one of the six biannual shows in the PACK EXPO portfolio of trade shows, joined by PACK EXPO Las Vegas (Sept 11-13, 2023), EXPO PACK Mexico in Guadalajara (June 13-15, 2023) and Mexico City (June 4-7 2024), PACK EXPO East (March 18-20, 2024) in Philadelphia, and our latest addition PACK EXPO Southeast in Atlanta (March 10-12, 2025). Every two-year cycle of trade shows now approaches three million net sq. ft. of exhibit space and welcomes over 140,000 potential buyers.

Obviously, the founders of PMMI would not recognize the magnitude of PACK EXPO or even have thought it possible for such growth, but it is only one

of many aspects they laid the groundwork for but couldn't have imagined in their wildest dreams.

A once little association of American packaging machinery companies, mostly based east of the Mississippi River, now maintains members throughout the US, Canada, and Mexico, with an office representing PMMI in Mexico City. We provide management services to other associations as the PMMI way is now an attribute other associations strive to emulate.

PMMI serves as the true global resource for packaging and processing, owning its own media company with PMMI Media Group, which produces the leading publications in the packaging and processing industry. We provide world-class industry research to our industry; we host over half a dozen meetings with end users and members throughout the year. We have pioneered making packaging and processing more inclusive with the Packaging and Processing Women's Leadership Network and Emerging Leaders Network. Finally, we provide for the next generation of our industry every day, giving away millions in education, scholarships, and matching training funds for members, welcoming students to our PACK EXPO trade shows, and much more.

I could go on and on with all we have added since a muggy summer day in 1933, but I leave you with a simple Happy Anniversary and congratulations on being the true home of packaging and processing.

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*Jim Pittas is the President & CEO of PMMI. He may be reached at [jpittas@pmmi.org](mailto:jpittas@pmmi.org) or at [linkedin.com/in/jimpittas](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jimpittas).*



**90 YEARS**

**1933 - 2023**





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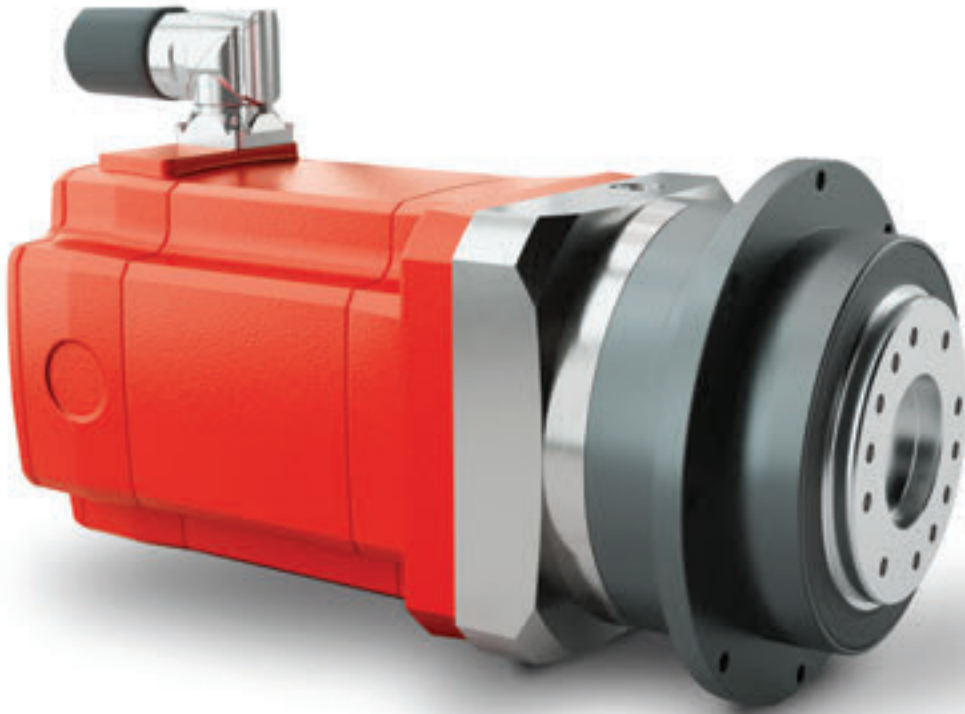
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