

“How PowerDRIVE Systems help obtain maximal machine flexibility”

Interview with Dirk Verbeek, manager electrical engineering at Sollas.

What are Sollas' key elements to success?

DV: The realization of high quality packaging, machine designs that offer maximal flexibility while sticking to a relatively small machine footprint!



Flexibility:

One single Sollas machine can package a wide range of boxes with all kinds of sizes without requiring a lot of adjustments. Only a few 'replacement parts' are needed when preparing the machine for the next type of packaging. The rest of the machine remains unchanged.

The PowerDRIVE adjustment technology contributes significantly to the flexibility of Sollas machines! In the past, our machines used to be converted manually. This could easily take up to half an hour. With the help of PowerDRIVE systems the same task can be accomplished in under seven minutes!

High Quality:

Our quality is determined by the tightness and tension by which a foil is wrapped around a product. Especially square faced packages are a challenge! There either is too much or too little film available to neatly wrap and seal the cellophane around the square side of a box. In spite of these limitations Sollas has become the expert in this field.

70% of all cellophane-wrapped products in the well-known cosmetics stores are wrapped by Sollas machines. Brands like Dior, Paco Rabanne, Puig, Estée Lauder, CK all use Sollas machines to seal their products with cellophane.

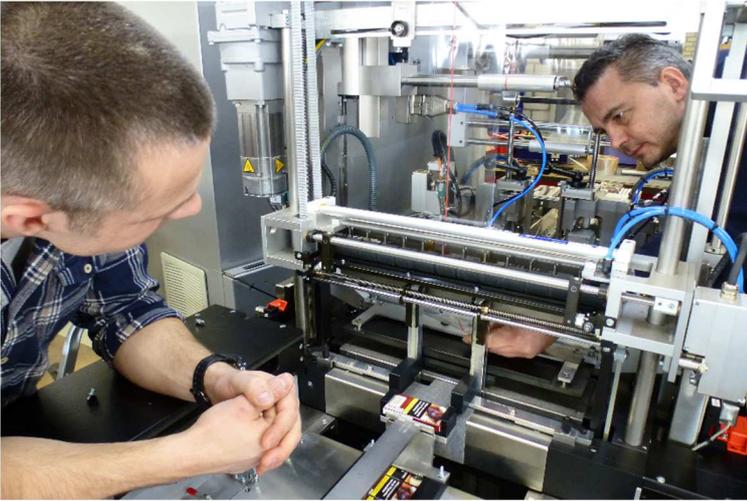
Small footprint:

Sollas designs machines with a footprint of only 2 m². This compact design is unmatched! Additional options, such as bundling and handling systems and banding lines, can be added to the standard overwrapping machine.

How does the FSX line symbolize the direction Sollas is heading for?

DV: Our 'FSX' machine is currently equipped with PowerDRIVE positioning units. The FSX line is our high-end machine line, our showpiece. It has the capacity to seal up to 120 containers per minute, the highest packaging speed Sollas can currently offer. The Lenord+Bauer positioning motors contribute to the shortest set-up time possible and therefore to a high level of flexibility. The combination of a high speed packaging machine and a minimal amount of changeover time makes the FSX a truly unique solution, both within and outside Sollas' product range.

Sollas began developing the FSX in 2009. One of our cosmetic customers had challenged us to build a overwrapping machine that could be changed over within ten minutes. We decided to take on the challenge. Already in a very early stage we considered using Lenord+Bauer PowerDRIVE systems. These systems were easy to configure thanks to ready-made software blocks. Our principal, however, demanded us to use a brand they were standardized on. These positioning units unfortunately brought a whole range of challenges. It took us lots of hard work to get them properly implemented in our machine.



Today, seven years later, we have decided to give way to technical advantages of Lenord+Bauer' superior Power Drive Systems. Lenord+Bauer recently launched a compact 6109 GEL positioning motor, a unit we are now using to automate up to eleven different axes in the FSX 2.0. We are very happy with this. The technological advantages of Lenord+Bauer are:

- Great position control: PowerDRIVE's DC motors deliver a maximal torque irrespective of the motor's speed. This is a big step ahead compared to the stepper motors we have been using in the past!

- Lenord+Bauer's PowerDRIVE systems are

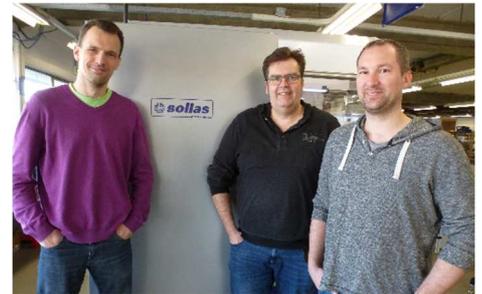
modular! The previous system would not allow us to leave out certain positions. It required one connected, completely used system. Sollas builds modular machines because its customers regularly are not using certain options. This creates 'empty slots' in the full-option rigged adjustment system. Fortunately the Lenord+Bauer PowerDRIVE systems are built for such modularity!

- *Faster and quieter drives. This is such a world of difference! The gearboxes of our previous stepper motors were much noisier and slower!*

How easy was it to integrate the PowerDRIVE software blocks and templates in your motion control system?

DV: These blocks are in full use right now. We are very satisfied with them! We have decided to write our own interfacing software for the calculations of lengths and positions. This software is used when calling the PowerDRIVE function blocks. Thanks to Lenord+Bauer's clear documentation we have been able to develop our software in-house. Apart from a few small questions the system really showed itself!

The PowerDRIVE boxes are an essential for our control system. Although originally designed to be placed in a control cabinet, we have chosen to place the boxes in the machine frame. This saves some space in our cabinet and keeps our cables as short. It is also a nice thing to have the control boxes next to the positioning units.



The Sollas-team that has realized the PowerDRIVE integration. Fltr: Dirk Verbeek, John Bakker & Daniël Rouwendaal

Can you think of any improvement for the PowerDRIVE solution?

DV: That's a good question! The way we are using the PowerDRIVE positioning motors, I can see no need for improvements. So: no!

What is your experience in regards to Lenord+Bauer and tsb – bescom's service and support?

DV: tsb - bescom and Lenord+Bauer have proven to be very flexible partners. They know what it takes to think along with a customer. It was a very positive experience for us! During the implementation of the PowerDRIVE positioning systems we fortunately did not experience a lot of problems. The whole process went really smoothly. Both Lenord+Bauer and tsb - bescom have given their full support. The enthusiasm of Lenord+Bauer was contagious: their representative has visited Sollas many times this past decade. He was already involved in the start-up phase of the FSX. He really deserves a prize!

We are looking forward to working together with tsb - bescom and Lenord+Bauer on the same foot as we have done the last couple of years. It is a comfort for an OEM like Sollas to be able to ask questions and see concrete solutions being offered. A good example is the birth of the GEL6109 positioning drive that was presented to us by Lenord+Bauer after we had asked them for a more compact positioning unit.

Will there be more customers opting for the extra flexibility that PowerDRIVE systems are offering?



Integrated PowerDRIVE positioning unit

DV: We are already noticing this trend! Initially we thought this solution was interesting for the cosmetics industry only. But our first new FSX 2.0 has been sold to a tobacco customer! We see a growing need for quick machine overhauls in more and more markets. The reduction of batch sizes – often due to the increase of product diversification - has become a trend. Also stocks are being kept as low as possible. Companies are producing more and more 'on demand' these days. Batches of a only a couple of thousand are now the norm in the cosmetics industry. We are moving towards a scenario in which format changes take place every couple of hours. To accommodate this trend our machines, especially the FSX-line, have been designed 100% future-proof.

About Sollas

Sollas was founded in 1948 as a general engineering firm in the Amsterdam region. In the late 50s Sollas' founder came in contact with a new way of wrapping: cellophane wrapping. This discovery resulted in the development of the first manual sealing machines that were used to close sealing bags. Soon after this initial type, Sollas began developing a range of complete cellophane packaging machines. From that moment on the company's focus was set: wrapping boxes and other types of packaging with PP and PE film. Sollas has grown to now have subsidiaries in France, Germany and Great Britain.



Other interesting facts about the company

Sollas ...

- is big in the cosmetics industry where there is a demand for high quality packaging & fast machine adjustments
- supplies to all markets where a foil seal is needed: coffee and tea industry, confectionery, tobacco, etc.
- is specialized in pre-packing rectangular boxes
- is global market leader when it comes to cellophane wrapping technology
- applies different technical approaches to meet a wide range of requirements: airtightness, clean look, bundle formation, etc. For all of these packaging requirements Sollas has created special

solutions and machines. The company enjoys the challenge that this great amount of requirements sets forth!