

A Lesson in Loyalty

A N.J.-BASED SNACK AND NUT PROVIDER AND A MONTREAL-BASED MACHINERY SUPPLIER FORMED A LASTING UNION AFTER AN INITIAL MEETING NEARLY 20 YEARS AGO.

BY SEAN RILEY



From left: Katie Ojedis, operations manager of IFS; Dan Baron, CEO of IFS; David Lipson, president of IFS; Trevor Dawe, WeighPack territory manager and Robert Burns, maintenance supervisor of IFS.

When International Foodsource LLC, Dover, N.J., Owner and CEO David Lipson purchased his first VerTek 750 vertical/form/fill/seal machine from WeighPack Systems Inc., Montreal and Las Vegas, for his snack and nut business, he did more than simply enter an agreement to buy WeighPack's first bagging machine. That initial purchase started a business relationship that has seen his company grow into a 100,000 sq. ft. facility with 22 WeighPack machines. In less than 20 years, International Foodsource partnered with WeighPack, a complete system solution manufacturer of state of the art packaging machines to constantly strive to fulfill Lipson's maxim of "always moving forward."

Louis Taraborelli, founder and CEO established WeighPack in 1992 after 18 years in the packaging machinery business.

"We had just completed building our first inexpensive, simple vertical form and seal equipment that complimented the linear scales when I met David Lipson at a trade show. When Dave and I first talked we realized we had lots in common. We both had small businesses, few employees and limited financial means though both hard

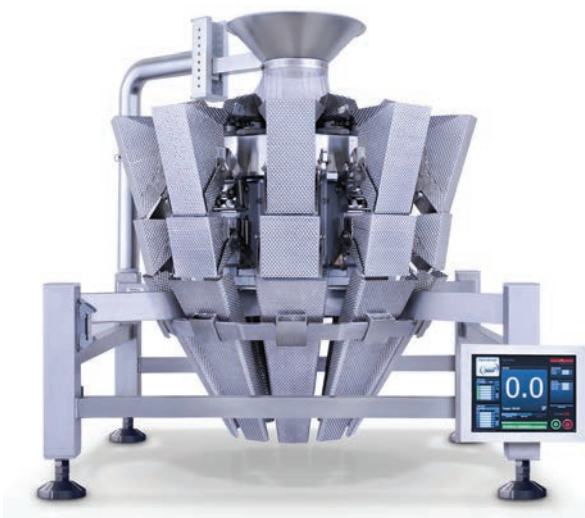
working determined individuals," says Taraborelli. "The stars aligned as I needed Daves' business to begin creating user references as a supplier of complete integrated weighing and bagging manufacturer and Dave needed a reasonably priced automated solution that would be reliable and productive. He trusted me and agreed to buy our machine. As often said the rest is history. His business blossomed as WeighPack has as well.

"WeighPack today has two facilities and employs over 100 people. WeighPack never sits still and invests close to a million dollar per year in new product development and improvement. Our

staff of 20 engineers are always developing or enhancing and keeping up with the needs and desires of companies like International Foodsource. Today as part of Paxiom which includes end of line equipment manufacturer in Florida, Eagle Packaging Machinery, we can supply from infeed conveyor to palletizer with everything in between, a true single source manufacturer."

International Foodsource, imports high quality, often commodity, natural dried food items from around the globe. While it handles larger-size packages for foodservice accounts or high-end bulk retailers, the majority of its business is its retail accounts via its Valued Naturals retail program. Stores that have brought the program into their produce department—ranging from Albertsons and ShopRite to convenience stores across the U.S.—have seen it account for four percent of its product department sales.

Valued Naturals is a premier snack, dried fruit and nut program for retailers. Its farmer's market style racks are coupled with tailored programs to meet a store's specific wants and needs. Once in store, the racks increase the profitability



A PrimoCombi multi-head weigher with Windows PC Controls.

of in-store produce sections by improving the density of sales and growing foot traffic in produce areas. “[The racks] become a destination for current customers and return the snack customers that may have been looking elsewhere,” says Lipson. “Our Farmer’s Market style racks provide pre-priced clear bags for great value, high quality, fresh flavor and a gold standard for safety.”

As Lipson’s SKUs have increased to over 100 different combinations of almonds, trail mixes, etc., he has had to expand his lines to meet the growing demand. In each case, WeighPack has been brought in to bag the product. It sometimes seems to Lipson that whenever WeighPack engineers design more cutting edge versions of its baggers, International Foodsource is there to purchase one for its facility.

“We write our own software and have created a paperless system that accounts for every piece of product from the minute it enters our facility until it is on a store shelf,” Lipson says. “As our systems evolve, WeighPack has kept up with us throughout. We have been able to slide their machines in seamlessly every time.”

This evolution that started with the VerTek 750 vertical form and seal machine soon included the addition of the VerTek 1150 v/f/f/s system and the Zippy bagger horizontal bagging machine for pre-made wicketed bags. These additions increased speed and output.

WeighPack’s systems proved flawless with International Foodsource’s standard operating procedures (SOP) when it came to changeovers and sanitation.

“Because we run so many SKUs, we have SOPs of 45 minutes to changeover from one product to another, whether its almonds to cranberries or trail mix to bananas. Cleaning is the same each time,” Lipson says. “WeighPack easily meets our standards in terms of cleaning up and

getting ready for the next run.”

Typically International Foodsource runs a one-shift operation with the ability to go longer when seasonal or individual orders cause a spike in need. Whether standard shift or overtime, Lipson is confident in the durability and reliability of his WeighPack systems.

“We run a lot of product and they always maintain their flow,” he says.

From 2005 to 2007 Lipson began incorporating XPdius 800 high-speed v/f/f/s machines into International Foodsource’s lines, complete with PrimoCombi 10-head and 14-head multi-head weighers.

When the XPdius Elite 1200 was unveiled, International Foodsource was one of the first in line to begin ordering and incorporating it into its packaging lines in 2011-2012. The Elite 1200 system can produce over 100 bags per minute at accuracies within one gram on average. The interface logic between the bagger and the scale is optimized with a logic of timed anticipation of product drop time from the scale to the bag. This logic eliminates the need of using a timing box between scale and bagger and achieves the highest possible speed.

The PrimoCombi multi-head weigher is the first CAN-BUS wired combination scale that houses all electronics from one central electrical enclosure, hence offering serviceability advantages that no other manufacturer in the world offers. Its PC controls and Windows operating system include WIFI and are embedded with Crystal Reports, Skype, LogMeIn.com for free online support and more. The Primo360 software installed to operate the weigher comes bundled with reporting software that offers effective yield and cost control management. The bar code scanner easily recalls product setup so going from one product to another or one size to another takes seconds regardless of the level of operator training. Clean up time is reduced to a min-



WeighPack’s XPdius Elite i130 is the latest addition to International Foodsource’s packaging line.

imum with the open frame, individual slide chutes on the PrimoCombi. The complete machine can be flushed out without the use of tools and within minutes. These features coupled with the production speeds and high accuracy provided by the PrimoCombi, have helped elevate WeighPack as one of the largest manufacturers of multi-head weighers in the world.

It took Lipson less than one month of using this new system to realize that the investment was worth repeating and replaced existing machines with more state-of-the-art WeighPack Systems.

This culminated with his recent acquisition of the new XPdius Elite i130 high-speed v/f/f/s machine with PrimoCombi 14-head multi-head weigher.

The new i-130 offered faster performance than the previous vertical baggers and is capable of speeds of more than 130 bags per minute. New features like toolless removable pull belts, vacuum pull belts, air actuated cantilevered film shaft and automatic film tracking are just a few of the examples of WeighPack’s continuous commitment to product performance.

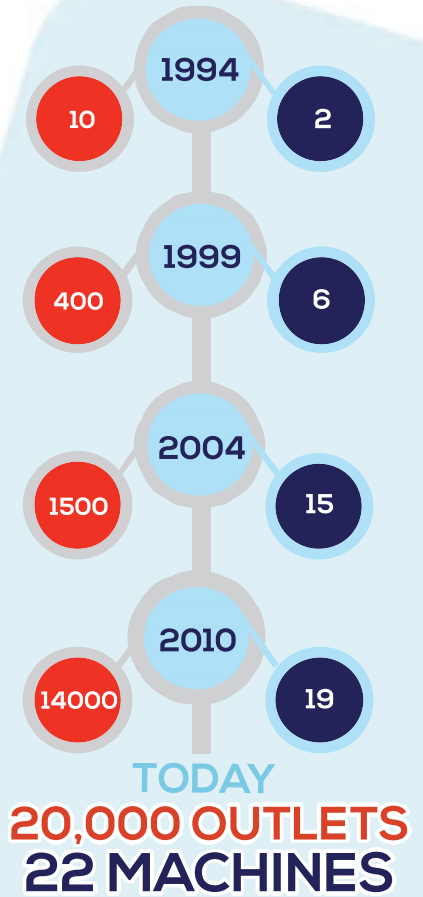
Most important to Lipson, the i130 integrated into the International Foodsource in-house system with ease. In the end Lipson sees the parallels between his company and WeighPack.

“We are always growing and I think we both like steady growth,” Lipson says. “We are always moving forward.” **PMT**



We met years ago...
22 machines later,
 we continue to grow together.

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- Weighpack Machines



David Lipson, President of International Foodsource Inc, started his business 20 years ago. Dave purchased his first WeighPack machine to service 10 customer outlets. 22 WeighPack machines later, today Dave services over 20,000 outlets with his unique retail program, Valued Naturals.

WeighPack manufactures quality, state of the art semi and fully automatic weighfilling and packaging systems for bags, containers and boxes of all types, sizes and speed ranges.

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