

Save space and increase throughput

Where space for material handling systems may be restricted or limited, new advances in spiral conveyor technology offer significant productivity and operational benefits for industries, says Astec Conveyors.

The technology provides continuous, smooth vertical transfer of product in either direction and is said to offer a cost effective handling alternative to traditional incline conveyors because of their small footprint.

Astec's spiral conveyors are designed to support high throughput and continuous vertical product flow; featuring a space saving small footprint, with the additional benefits of low maintenance requirements and long operational life.

The pressure to increase throughput and shorten order fulfillment can often not be met by conventional elevators and lifts. High speed next generation spiral conveyors are the solution to

conveying components and products in a continuous flow, operating at speeds of up to 50 metres per minute. As these conveyors can handle a large variety of load types and sizes, there is minimal to no time required for stopping the line for changeover or adjustment, which contributes to maintaining a high throughput.

The company says: "Lifts and elevators simply do not offer these kinds of productivity enhancements, and as norm are often more complex to operate, which translates into reduced reliability and higher maintenance and energy costs."

Astec's versatile slat bed spiral conveyors can transport loads up to 50kg up or down, in a single or multiple lane execution. Various products can be conveyed from small lightweight single cans and bottles, cartons, trays, tote boxes, shrink wrapped product, through to sacks.

Astec spiral conveyors represent a new concept in vertical conveying, based on a low friction chain slat

arrangement and high quality components assures low maintenance and long life.

The compact design means that these spiral conveyors can be pre-assembled, pre-tested and shipped in one piece to the end user to reduce onsite time, installation costs and avoid disruption to ongoing operations. Designed to elevate/lower product, the versatile spiral conveyors are simple to install and can be supplied with controls to interface with other suppliers equipment.

Several standard model configurations are available to accommodate a wide range of loads/applications and can have extended in-feed/ out-feed conveyors.

Combining two or more spiral conveyors can provide an efficient dynamic intermediate storage or buffering solution, utilising overhead space effectively, while preserving valuable floor space.

A typical application for buffering



occurs when products need extra time for cooling, drying, or curing. This configuration also provides dynamic accumulation to facilitate shorter production and packaging line interruptions.

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Robotic apps power growth for CKF Systems

On the back of record trading years in 2008 and 2009, Gloucester-based CKF Systems has announced continued success through 2010 as it approaches the £6.5 million sales achieved the previous year.

One of the prime factors in this success has been the continued growth in robotic applications and

bespoke machine development, primarily for food related industries.

Throughout 2010, CKF has completed a multi-million pound robot installation for a major UK-based food manufacturer plus a number of smaller robot based systems; and has secured further such work for the New Year. Applications range from handling and distribution of trays through to automated pallet stacking systems and high speed product loading arrangements. Most of these systems include highly specialised vision inspection facilities, advanced manipulators and grippers, plus an extensive range of conveyor systems incorporating an array of product conditioning features.

Sales director, Kevin Staines explains: "While the established benefits of installing robot systems such as efficiency, cost reduction, versatility, remain prime motivators for the introduction of such equipment, CKF can also demonstrate environmental benefits through increased stack heights (above acceptable limits for manual stacking) that improve utilisation of transport vehicles thereby reducing the size of vehicles required and number of deliveries."

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FASTRAX CONVEYOR ROLLERS THRIVE ON SHORT LEAD TIME CHALLENGE

Fastrax Conveyor Rollers is an established UK manufacturer of conveyor rollers, and one of its major industry sectors is warehouse and logistics materials handling.

The company says: "With our in-depth experience in this field we can advise on the specifications required for even the most arduous of applications."

"The Fastrax conveyor roller range is comprehensive, often we make rollers that no other roller manufacturer has the capability of producing."

Typical applications include light and medium duty box, carton and tote conveying up to heavy duty pallet handling.

The company

concludes: "We manufacture to very short lead times, 2 to 3 days is common and in emergencies we can often make rollers within 24 hours. Because of our flexibility we have a large number of customers who rely on us. We look forward to any challenges they may want to give us."

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