CAN A BLISTER LINE SURPASS ITS VALUE?
THE MARKET LAUNCH OF THE UHLMANN BLISTER LINE BEC 300 WAS BACK IN 2009. Particularly pharmaceutical manufacturers processing many small batches favour the compact line with its fast format changeovers. The sales figures confirm the high demand in this sector: over 150 such lines are currently in operation worldwide.

No other machine in this category has met with similar demand. Uhlmann now has a refined BEC 300 in its portfolio:

“Based on our many years of experience in the packaging of solid dose products, the BEC 300 was a robust, well-engineered line from the outset. But it is always possible to make a good thing even better. Technical improvements and features based on specific customer feedback have been incorporated in the new BEC 300”, explains Jürgen Walser, Global Product Manager at Uhlmann Pac-Systeme GmbH & Co. KG. Many minor modifications result in added performance, improved user-friendliness, and, furthermore, a wider range of products can be packaged on the line.

The Blister line BEC 300 is geared to a maximum output of 300 blisters and 150 cartons per minute. However, this performance could not be fully exploited in certain cases: when processing large, rigid aluminium blisters, for instance, or when feeding unusually shaped solid dose products. Uhlmann has adjusted the processes so that the new BEC 300 reaches maximum output here.

“Many minor modifications have been made. Added together, they make the line even more efficient and versatile for customers. We are very pleased to be able to offer the Blister line BEC 300 with enhanced net performance at a similarly attractive price as before", states Jürgen Walser.
**Added Speed with New Feeders**
A vibratory feeder or a brush box feeder, both accurately aligned to the optimised BEC 300, ensures higher output. The SimTap 3s c feeder is also an alternative, which has been newly adapted to the BEC 300. SimTap stands for “simultaneous tablet placement”: the products are placed directly in the blister pockets at high speed. A format changeover with the SimTap 3s c is also faster: the parameters are stored, which means that many settings can be simply taken over for a product changeover.

**User-friendliness Improves Efficiency**
In addition to output, a focal attribute of the new BEC 300 is its user-friendliness. “In the first instance, user-friendliness sounds as though we wanted to enhance procedures for the operator, which we did, of course! However, when a line is easy to clean, reset, and operate, it also means less wasted time, greater efficiency, higher productivity, and lower costs”, sums up Jürgen Walser. Particular importance has been attached to fast, GMP-compliant cleaning. The fill section is an obvious example: hoses and cables are now concealed. The area is more orderly and easier to clean. The cartoner module has also been improved, resulting in a simpler and more reliable line clearance.

**Three-dimensional Format Changeover in 30 minutes**
Other small refinements also lead to greater efficiency. In response to a customer request, for example, the manual replenishment has been optimised. Automatic initial filling is now also possible. Furthermore, accessibility to the entire line has been improved so that format parts can be reached more easily and faster. This means that a three-dimensional format changeover, which can be carried out by one operator in 30 minutes, is even easier. The small number of lightweight format parts, which can be exchanged without any tools, plays a key role here. An operating system leads the operator step by step through the format changeover and provides support during the production stage. A new feature is also incorporated here: instead of a fixed monitor, two SmartControl panels are each mounted on a pivoted support arm. This allows the operator to move the information and control unit to a suitable position at the line as required. SmartControl is a well-engineered system, which is also used on the larger Blister line BEC 500. Instead of just concentrating on the line setup when developing the system, Uhlemann paid greater attention to the work sequences of the operator. Straightforward guidance through format changeovers and production processes, as well as the availability of illustrated explanations and short videos, mean that personnel from a different machine only need a short familiarisation period before operating the BEC 300.

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Greater Application Versatility
The original Blister line BEC 300 handled a diverse range of solid dose formats, but Uhlmann has extended the spectrum of the new BEC 300. The processing of aluminium blisters with a maximum forming depth of ten millimetres is now possible without compromising output. Uhlmann has also developed a solution for the packaging of very long products, such as caplets and capsules. While the previous maximum blister pocket length was 28 mm, up to 40 mm long blister pockets are now possible for solid dose products. A polygon roller is used in this case: differently to a round-shaped roller, the blister pocket areas are flattened. This prevents excessive bending of the blisters, allowing them to be sealed reliably. The Uhlmann experts also achieved a larger range of carton sizes by increasing the maximum carton height from 90 to 100 mm. “The new height allows larger blister stacks, e.g., a 10-blister stack of size 00 capsules plus a booklet can be packaged in a carton”, explains Jürgen Walser.

Space for Track & Trace as Standard
The BEC 300 has been refined overall, but the possibilities for customers are still not exhausted. “Every customer has specific requirements, which we take into account in the line setup”, states Jürgen Walser. “Even the use of components from other manufacturers, or subsequent retrofits and upgrades are no problem for Uhlmann”. The development engineers already allowed sufficient space in the first generation of the BEC 300 to accommodate relevant auxiliary components. It is now standard that the cartoner module has sufficient space for the fitting of Track & Trace modules. The line, around eight metres in length, is still compact. “Tracking and tracing solutions are becoming a must. We have to allow space for upgrades for those who nevertheless first wish to buy a line without serialisation systems”, adds Jürgen Walser.

Global Service Network
Examples, such as the refinements to the new BEC 300, demonstrate just how intensively Uhlmann focuses on the needs of its customers. This is also reflected in the company’s range of services. Uhlmann specialists are available via a telephone hotline 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The globally operating service network ensures that a technician is quick to hand anywhere in the world. Jürgen Walser sums up: “A well-engineered product must go hand in hand with well-organised services. Both are provided by Uhlmann when deciding in favour of the new Blister line BEC 300.”

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