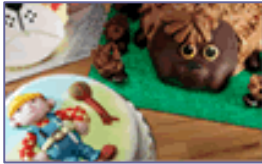




## Recipe system ensures leading UK cake manufacturer is not 'Poles Apart'

Speed was certainly the order of the day when Stevens Weighing Group won an order to supply and install a multi-station Vantage Recipe Formulation and Traceability System for Inter Link Foods at their newly acquired facility in Poland. The complete system had to be installed and operational within five weeks, including writing the software in Polish!

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Blackburn based Inter Link Foods plc is one of the top three suppliers of cakes and pastries in the UK, with the primary focus on offering a wide range of high quality, low cost, own label products to major retail multiples. In December 2004 they acquired Cukiernia Mistrza Jana SP.z.o (CMJ), a private company based in Szczecin (pronounced "Shtetchin") in North West Poland, providing the company with a first step into the important and growing mainland European markets.

CMJ produces a wide range of quality small cakes and cookies, operating from a well-invested 70,000 square foot factory with considerable spare capacity. Inter Link intend to use part of this new capacity to manufacture a range of products for UK customers and with Szczecin only 30 minutes from the German border, products can be shipped to UK distribution centres within 24 hours.

Stevens have built up a strong association with Inter Link over the past decade and their equipment has proved itself at a number of sites across the UK. The catalyst for this latest installation was a new contract to supply a range of cakes to Tesco. To ensure competitiveness Inter Link took the decision to manufacture these at the new facility in Poland, but first they needed to satisfy the stringent requirements of the Tesco Audit on quality



and traceability. As Stevens' Sales Manager Stuart Hunt explains: ***"We had only five weeks to complete the installation and met the deadline with a few days to spare. This clearly demonstrates not only our ability to react to such situations, but also the flexibility and versatility of the Vantage system, which offers 'out of the box' recipe formulation and traceability. The PC based units are extremely powerful and can be easily configured for each application. Throughout the project we worked in close cooperation with our Italian parent company Dataprocess and their Polish facility. This ensured excellent on site communication during installation and commissioning, and enabled the Vantage software to be written in Polish within the short time frame"***.

As with most specialist food manufacturers, the variety and diversity of Inter Link's products dictate that the recipes are made up by manually adding the ingredients. Recipe consistency relies on operator diligence and dexterity to achieve accurate target weights for the ingredients. Therefore keeping track of the individual amounts of each ingredient used, whilst also ensuring all the correct ingredients are added, can be a daunting task. Stevens Weighing have extensive experience in this area and the Vantage recipe formulation modules have been specifically developed to provide a complete recipe management, stock control and traceability

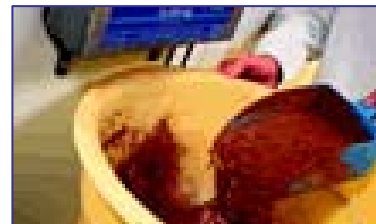
system. This virtually eliminates onerous paper based systems and allows customers to operate in control mode, not panic mode.



The installation in Szczecin, which provides full factory floor recipe control and traceability, comprises five Vantage Recipe Weighing and Labelling stations and two Vantage Collation Systems, all controlled by a central PC. The recipe stations are used to weigh out specific ingredients to form sub-mixes, which are then labelled and palletised before being taken to the mixing vessels. The formulae for particular products are entered into the central editing PC via the recipe formulation screen. The system allows management to enter and determine the exact recipe characteristics, including individual ingredient weight

tolerances and how the products are added. For instance, recipes may be a mixture of weighed and non-weighed ingredients where some bulk products are added by volume or as pre-weighed blocks or bags. To facilitate accurate ingredient weighing, the Vantage features a unique analogue dial weight acceptance screen. Experience has shown this concept is easier to use than conventional traffic light systems and presents the simplest, easiest and most accurate method to help operators achieve fast and repeatable target weights.

Depending on the batch size requirements for particular works orders, the system automatically calculates the amounts of individual ingredients needed and downloads the order to the relevant station. Making up the batches is then simplicity itself and the large screen prompts the operator throughout the formulation process.



The collation systems call for the required sub-mixes, which are then scanned and placed into the mixer. This procedure ensures that all the correct components are included in the batch. For the bulk ingredients such as egg, sugar, flour and water, operatives are prompted via the Vantage screen to dose the required amount of each product into the mixer. This ensures full traceability for the finished batch and all its sub components.

Joe Tattersall, Group Operations Director for Inter Link is delighted with the new system. ***“We were under extreme time pressure to install this system and we needed to rely 100% on Stevens. We didn’t have to worry and despite the short time frame, they came through with flying colours. We know the Vantage will improve our productivity and profitability in Poland and because the system is so easy to use, operator training takes only a few minutes. The system provides full traceability in line with European legislation and we can access important data at the touch of a button”.***

# vantage

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