

LNK International and Thomas Processing: partners in excellence.

Interview with David Bergen, Director of Operations at LNK International Inc., who has chosen Thomas Processing CTC continuous coaters to boost and modernize its plants in Hauppauge, New York.

Case study

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Introduction

LNK International Inc. is one of the US largest manufacturers of solid and liquid dose, Over-The-Counter (OTC) pharmaceuticals. For over 40 years, the Company has built a reputation for delivering the highest quality products, outstanding service and product innovation. After all, there is a commitment to quality in every department at LNK. Founded in 1980, LNK is a family-owned pharmaceutical manufacturer located in Hauppauge, New York. Over the years, the Company has grown but never at the expense of quality. Today LNK produces over 150 formulas in the pain relief, cough and cold and gastro-intestinal categories. LNK's mission is to provide the highest quality over-the-counter pharmaceuticals to satisfy the needs of the customers and the health and safety of the end users. This commitment to quality means that all the products meet or exceed statutory and regulatory requirements. LNK achieves this through compliance with Good Manufacturing Practices, a culture of continuous improvement and strong relationships with clients and suppliers.

What sets LNK apart? Throughout the years, LNK has made a considerable qualitative leap when it comes to technological innovation. At the core of its strategy, there is the installation of Thomas Processing's Continuous Tablet Coaters (CTC): thanks to this technology, the Company is able to introduce more production cycles, while optimizing processes for better quality, safety and environmental sustainability. «The continuous coaters we have adopted», says LNK Director of Operations David Bergen, "raise our capacity to a level of quality and innovation only achieved by the major pharmaceutical companies».

How does the CTC fit into your business?

The CTC reinforces the automation of production processes at LNK, paving the way for new development opportunities and new commercial scenarios to comprehensively meet the multi-faceted requirements of the pharmaceutical market.

Which feature do you appreciate the most in the CTC?

The new Thomas Spray Bar (TSB) upgrade on the first CTC has helped us from pausing the process 3-4 times per shift to wipe off the guns to 1 or less times per shift. We can also run the coater for a 2-day campaign, without cleaning from the first to the second day, with just 3 hours of machine downtime. These two items allow us to finish the batch in about 2 hours less time and then we save the 4 hours of cleaning on the in between days. Apart from minimizing the downtime, the Thomas Spray Bar (TSB) offers easy calibration, clean operation and streamlined sanitation; it can be configured for independent atomizing and pattern air control or combined atomizing and pattern air control. The results are more elegant-looking tablets, even in case on difficult-to-manage coating. For all these reasons, we have decided to upgrade the other three CTCs installed in our plant.





How do you manage the switch from batch to continuous?

It is not purely a matter of volume; it is a matter of efficiency. Thanks to continuous coating, we achieve reduced Lab costs, optimized cleaning cycles and superior quality of the final product. It comes from experience to understand the relationship between spray rate, temperature and speed. We set process parameters on the system and leave it alone: no problem at all occurs during all day.

What is the added value of the partnership with Thomas Processing for LNK?

Thomas Processing is our sole supplier for tablet coaters. LNK operates many Thomas batch coaters and continuous coaters. They give us total support not just up to machine start-up but throughout production. They are process experts and work closely with our own R&D technologists. Even after the sale, the customer cannot be left alone – and this is something we at LNK always try to do with our customers. Human relationships are an added bonus in our partnership with Thomas Processing: we have created a climate of trust, esteem and respect. This climate allows us to create the optimum conditions for major projects ■