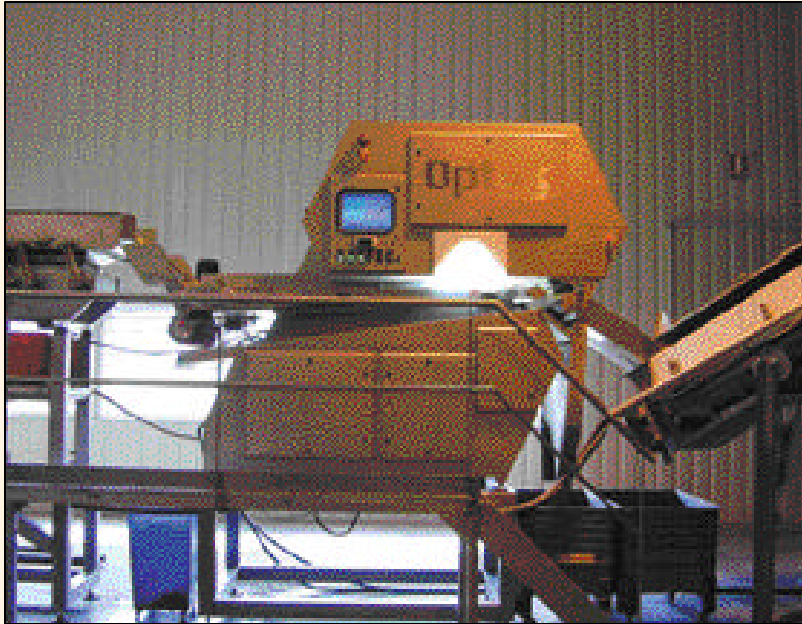


Delichips Gets Back in the Game Quickly with Optyx®



The Optyx can do a much better job than a person.

When you have a lot of crisps coming, the belt doesn't stop. You do the best you can but if you have a certain kind of defect, you miss some.

The Optyx doesn't."

*-- Dominique Hillion,
Sales Manager*

You never know what cards you will be dealt in life or business. And Delichips, a manufacturer of high-end potato crisps (chips) located in Aubagne, France, has had its fair share of bad hands. The company's facility burned down in 1991; disaster struck again 10 years later with another fire. But both times, the company got back in the game and rebuilt.

This time, the company's comeback had to be quick. Delichips' customers were willing to stick with them, recalls sales manager Dominique Hillion, as long as they could be back in production by January 2002. "This was our challenge. So we put a lot of pressure on our suppliers both for technology and delivery time."

And that's where Key Technology BV, Beusichem, The Netherlands, played the winning hand. While another manufacturer was competitive in terms of price, Key won the contract for major portions of the sorting and conveying functions

because of superior technology and a commitment to meet Delichips' tight timeline. Key said they could supply the company with the specified [Optyx®](#) compact optical sorters and [Iso-Flo® Vibratory Conveyors](#) on time.

Before the 2001 fire, Delichips had planned to double the size of the old facility. At that time, the company's capacity was 2,500 metric tons per year. This wasn't enough to keep up with a growing private label market. Additionally, consumer demand in France is seasonal and peaks during the summer months.

"Crisps are associated with the sun, with picnics and outdoor meals," Hillion says. He goes on to note that consumption of crisps in France is about 500 grams per person per year. In the United States, where chips are a year-round snack, consumption is more than two kilograms per person annually.

In addition to keeping up with private label markets and the seasonal demand in France, Delichips wanted to expand into new markets. They exported crisps to the old French colony islands in the French Caribbean and the Indian Ocean; they were exploring the feasibility of marketing their products in Italy.

Delichips' production demands became even more challenging when a new government regulation mandated a shorter work week. Before the new law, Delichips' operation ran 24 hours a day, six days a week. Now they were challenged with only 35 operating hours per week.

So as Delichips shifted its focus from remodeling to rebuilding, increased capacity remained a priority. And automating manual processes was a critical part of redesigning the processing line. "With the new line, everywhere we could replace someone by with equipment, we did," recalls Hillion.

For example, one person picked out the bad crisps as they were conveyed from the fryer. The job was hot and tedious and required changing people every thirty minutes. Instead of adding a second person to inspect a planned second line, Delichips decided to find a better solution. And that solution was automated sorting.

Since Hillion and his team were unfamiliar with this technology, they read literature and talked to other food processors who had experience with optical inspection equipment. Their research led them to Key Technology and the Optyx sorter.

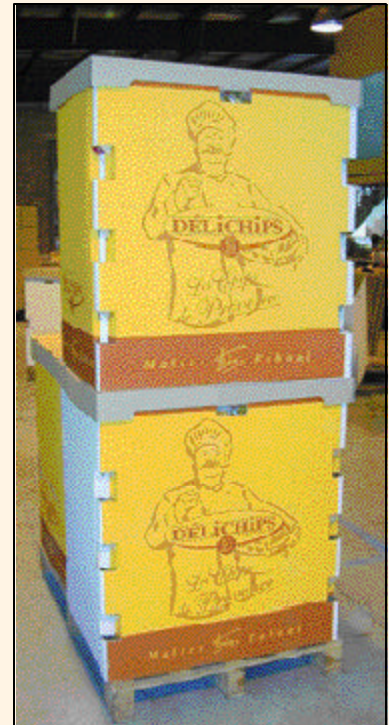
Optyx is compact so smaller-volume processors such as Delichips can justify automated inspection and achieve unmatched

product quality in a small space and with a smaller investment. Optyx features the same camera, lighting, imaging, shape detection, and ejection technologies found in Key's [Tegra®](#) and [Prism®](#) sorters, but it is proportionately sized for lesser volumes.

Since adding Optyx to automate inspection, Delichips has seen a reduction in labor costs and worker fatigue. Plus, Optyx efficiently sorts out defective crisps at a much higher degree of accuracy.

"The Optyx can do a much better job than a person," notes Hillion. "When you have a lot of crisps coming, the belt doesn't stop. You do the best you can but if you have a certain kind of defect, you miss some. The Optyx doesn't." Optyx also detects a wider range of defects, even with the variances from one type of crisp to another.

Key's Iso-Flo Vibratory Conveyors feed crisps from the fryer to the Optyx; [Impulse HS electromagnetic conveyors](#) feed the scales in the packaging distribution area. Prior to adding the Iso-Flo and Impulse conveyors, product flow and speed were manually controlled. "Now Key's conveyors do everything," says



Hillion. "We don't have to look after that at all. Key's conveyors automatically distribute crisps to the packers," saving Delichips' even more in labor costs.

Delichips started running a second line in May, bringing their total capacity to 5,000 metric tons per year. Now they are able to meet the demands of their private label customers, keep up with the seasonality of their local market, and continue to expand into other markets.

Delichips also has rolled out new products since the plant opened. Although plain potato crisps are the company's premiere product, they recently introduced a new range of snacks crackers that are made with potato flour.

With the new plant running smoothly and ongoing training and support from Key Technology, Hillion and his staff feel like they are winning. "We are happy today with the quality we have. We have no regret at all about Key's equipment and staff."