

CRISTALIA DOES THE CHA. CHA, CHA

Cristalia upgrades its multipack options in an effort to keep up with demand.

With a commitment to purity that is equaled only by its commitment to customer service, Cristalia Premium Water has established itself as the premier bottled water in Puerto Rico.

Just a few years ago the production plant in Ponce, PR, was largely a manual operation but keeping pace with demand has necessitated rapid automation of the operation. "Every time we expand we think we'll have some room to grow," explains director of operations Tom Terrell. "But we just end up keeping pace with growth." It's not a bad problem to have, but Terrell says it's meant constant upgrades at the plant and necessitates close relationships with reliable suppliers.

For instance, Cristalia currently has two Polypack (Pinellas Park, FL, USA) bundlers installed. One is more than 15 years old, but Terrell says it still gets the job done. "It's a real workhorse like no other. We run bulk bottles on that machine and it runs great. It was originally designed for small 6-packs, but now-after a few upgrades from Polypack-we run big 30-bottle trays on it and it's still running day in and day out at 15 trays per minute, and sometimes twice that speed, with no problems," he says. After 15 years of service that Terrell says has been "quite frankly, just great-almost unparalleled," it's no wonder that Cristalia also turned to Polypack when it needed a registered film bundler that would allow it to upgrade its multipack options. "We wanted to capture a market here- to do something that no one else was doing," explains Terrell and so they opted to go to market with a 12-pack of half-liter bottles shrink-wrapped in registered film.



Polypack developed a new machine to Cristalia's specifications and gave it the unique name of Cha Cha Cha. According to Terrell, the development process involved a good deal of tweaking in order to ensure that the machine would be as fast and as flexible as Cristalia was hoping for, but the end result exceeds expectations. The machine, which has a top speed of 15 cycles per minute has been running reliably in plant- usually at about 10 cycles per minute, according to Terrell.

"It saves a lot on corrugated and looks great, but best of all, the machine is so versatile," says Terrell. "With the corrugated multipacks there was a great expense with each changeover, but now it is simple and quick. We're very happy with it. Polypack said they could do it and they stepped up to the plate and they delivered. We came out way on top." -AF

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