

**T**he first challenge for Intamac occurred at the start of lockdown and the imminent arrival of an IPS-8BT stand up pouch machine urgently needed by a British co-packing business. A normal FAT would have taken place in Italy, but it quickly became obvious that this would be impossible. Instead, it was delivered to its warehouse in Petersfield, then given a deep clean before the UK engineers performed a virtual FAT.

Helping to install new and vital equipment at food manufacturers in lockdown drove the need for digital FATs at Engelmann & Buckham. Its principal Volpak has developed a streaming platform for a live FAT that allows interaction with the customer in real time with a number of remote FATs already successfully completed.

**CHEESE CUTTING LINE**  
txapack Global helped to set up a cheese cutting line remotely from its site for one of its customers in Eastern Europe. To achieve this, teams connected to the customer's network, but also directly to the new block cutter and two portioning machines, specifically with access to the different cells of the equipment.

Line commissioning was first carried out in empty mode, with the support of the teams on site for direct response by video to ensure the correct functioning of each station. Product was then introduced, and portions cut in variable weights very successfully.

AMP Automation has been incorporating remote access systems into its machines for several years, and the company believes it has never been more evident of how important it can be for all parties than in the last few months.

During the early travel restriction period, the



Intamac's Tom Poston says the delivery of this new pouch machine was definitely a more clinical sign off than usual

## How remote can you get?

**Travel restrictions** have seen technical support being delivered remotely and here you can find out how...

company had a customer who had a problem with a machine installed overseas. To handle this, its remote service team accessed the software, found the problem and had the machine up and running very quickly. However, the line stopped again after only five minutes, and following a further fast investigation, a problem with a motor was identified. The error code showed the motor was overheating.

The time taken between the initial phone call from the customer to the new

motor being packaged and despatched by courier was just six hours. "This is a very quick turnaround, and a much faster scenario than someone flying out to another country to identify the problem," explains Adam Malpass of AMP Automation.

### A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE

Following its despatch, a simple step-by-step guide was sent to the customer showing how to calibrate the new motor within the machine. "While the customer was able to do this with the

guide provided, there was still the option of remote access by one of our service team members if needed," Malpass tells *Machinery Update*.

Other companies that have been actively offering remote services are OAL, who has begun offering remote training sessions, something that had only been carried out on-site previously; Ulma's Remote Services is a suite of tools designed to offer flexible packaging machinery servicing support and maintenance, with optimal efficiency and security in

mind, and many of Proseal's customers have taken advantage of the additional connectivity offered by upgrading their machinery to have an internet gateway installed. This allows Proseal engineers to remotely dial into the machine while speaking with the engineers on site.

Lots of PPMA member companies have also set up on-line showrooms. Minebea Intec, for example, now offers a digital platform for new and existing customers to visit one of their showrooms in a virtual space. Via an online video conference, interested parties have the opportunity to ask experts questions, see live product demonstrations and get the best solution for their individual requirements.

#### **VIRTUAL DEMO SERVICE**

At the same time, Endline Machinery has introduced a new virtual machine demonstration service to ensure end-of-line machinery specifications are met exactly, without the need for face-to-face interaction, while Romaco has also set up a virtual show room as well as harnessing digital channels for servicing and maintenance.

Flying in the face of all this remote interaction is Shemesh Automation, who managed to solicit the help of US Senator Ron Johnson to clear the path for some of its technicians to pass through the US border on a temporary basis to ensure all its US customers could be fully supported during the pandemic.

With manufacturers of disinfectant wipes and hand sanitisers urgently needing to

upscale production, Shemesh has doubled its engineering team as well as other departments, with an overall headcount increase of 35%.

## **Shemesh Automation**



**Tony Bryant  
has joined  
Shemesh  
Automation as  
sales director**

**In response to increased demand for its equipment in the UK. He brings over 27 years of experience in capital machinery sales to the new role, joining from Ilapak where he was technical sales manager. Previously he headed up the EMEA region for Peco-InspX and the UK territory for Loma Systems.**



**Minebea Intec has virtual show room**