

Crescent Case Study

► The Challenge: Labor and Finding the Automation that Fit

Crescent was doing all of their co-packing by hand – hand-case-erecting, hand-packing, hand-sealing, hand-palletizing. And as time went on, the strain of growth on manual operations grew. Crescent’s Senior Director of Engineered Solutions, John Marietta, explained that over the past five years, “cost and labor availability at our sites, has been an issue. And it was just getting to be more and more of an issue.”

The labor problems that John outlined are not unusual, but they never point to one quick solution. John remarked that, “for five years, we were always looking for something that could do case erecting for us.”

But Crescent’s challenge in automating wasn’t a lack of case erectors on the market; it was the options that were available. Nothing was right. Crescent has an extremely varied SKU-mix, with tight lead times of 2-3 days per product. Finding a case erector that fit their range and throughput was enough of a challenge, but they also wanted to keep the price down, and “floor space was a premium for us.” Five years of labor issues; five years of searching for a solution; and five years where nothing fit their needs.

#1

Labor Costs & Shortages

#2

High SKU Mix & Tight Lead Times

#3

Modest Budget & Floorspace



Crescent: A Driven, Premier Co-Packer

Crescent is a premier co-packer, serving industries from beauty products and salty snacks to aerospace defense. They are headquartered in West Chester, Ohio, and have been in service for 40 years.

Crescent’s drive comes from what they call the “Crescent Way–” it’s more than just their values, it’s their framework for service. “Do it right; do it safe; do it well,” those are the gold standards directing their work.

Crescent is advancing their goal of providing premier packaging services, with any partner, in any sector. On the surface, they are a co-packer, but deep down, Crescent is in the business of solving problems and meeting customer needs.

► The Solution: A Partnership Built on Service

It was at PACK EXPO that John heard about INSITE. He was talking with a friend in the Cincinnati area. His friend suggested, "Let's go see Douglas."

John had experience with Douglas machines through a previous position at a large-scale manufacturer, and knew them to specialize in highly customized solutions. "You know, I'm looking for something else – they're too high-end."

But they made their way to the Douglas booth anyway, and there they found INSITE – the quality and design-intentionality of Douglas, but with the right price, the right specs, and the right footprint for Crescent's needs. John admitted, "Guess I was wrong about all that." INSITE Director, Andy B. explained, "That's exactly the problem INSITE was designed to solve." For customers who aren't looking for a highly customized solution, INSITE offers a more modest alternative, but with the same rigor and intentionality of Douglas' values.

From there, Crescent worked with INSITE to find the right fit for their operation. INSITE visited their site, took a few notes, and sent the quote a few days later. But John noted that the sales process was more "than just giving us a quote. You know, I do think there was some solution service there." John recalls the sales experience as being a process of meeting Crescent's needs – it was personal; it was partnership.



"I don't know that there's somebody out there with your footprint, with your changeover ability and speed."

– John Marietta,
Senior Director of Engineered Solutions at Crescent

They decided on INSITE's E30T Case Erector. It maximized the use of space in their facility, with its compact 14.90' x 4.66' footprint. And the max speed of 30 cases per minute (CPM) was ideal for mixing with their hand-packing system, while still meeting lead-time demands. A few years later, and Crescent is now operating with INSITE in three of their lines: with 3 case erectors, 3 hand-pack stations, and 3 case sealers.



INSITE®: A Partner in Simplified Packaging Automation

INSITE, a division of Douglas, was established in 2017, to create a simple, straightforward path to packaging automation. INSITE takes the quality and 60+ years

of experience of Douglas, but focuses its engineering efforts on a more standardized set of modular machines, for accessibility and scalability.

INSITE designed their automation to expand with the user – tool-less changeovers with adjustable fittings, simple HMI's and parameterized recipe creation, modular builds and hand-pack stations.

While known for their case erector, INSITE offers machines for every step of the secondary packaging process: from case erecting to palletizing. And they view every customer, not as a sale, but as a partner – someone to collaborate with through all the years of expansion and growth.

► The Results: Reduced Headcount and Continued Growth

After a few years of collaboration, Crescent and INSITE have built a close partnership – one that jokes during meetings and keeps up with each other's growth. Crescent's main problem, labor cost and availability, was remedied through their INSITE installations.

John explained that the initial investment they made with INSITE paid back: "the ROI was there, because we had removed four people – two people each shift – off the line." Not only has that reduced Crescent's overall headcount by 20 people in total, but it's cut the stress and cost of managing, hiring, and paying for that labor.

They've run around 1,000,000 cases on their first erector and only experienced one or two failures, which were remedied through "a repairman in there really quick – like in two days – which is good..." recalled Mike O'Brien, Crescent's Contract Packaging and Facilities Engineer. Other than that, they've seen no issues, and are really pleased with their equipment.

At a different location from their West Chester site, Crescent has an older machine from a competitor installed. John explained that over the couple visits he makes per quarter, "it's not uncommon for me to walk by there and they're hand-erecting cases and not using the machine," because it's such a pain for the operators to use. When he goes out to his floor with INSITE installed, "I can tell you I never walk out there, and they are hand-erecting cases." That's the difference that's been made with their INSITE partnership.

They've seen a decline in their overall unplanned downtime, even as they moved from manual erecting to automation. And their changeovers are getting faster all the time, as their operators undergo trainings and gain experience with automation.

Crescent now looks forward to greater goals that would



**Solution
Service**



**Personal
Partnership**



**Reliable &
Intuitive**



**10% Labor Reduction
on 11 Lines**



**3-4x Smaller than
Competing Models**



**1,000,000 Cases
in One Year**



**Easy Maintenance &
Reduced Downtime**

"We bought another erector, and we're looking for places to buy other machines. That's about as good of a review as we can give."

– John Marietta, Senior Director of Engineered Solutions

have been difficult to implement in the past. Currently, they're looking to add display trays to their line-up, which is easily enabled through their erector's scalable changeover and parameterized controls. Even despite the flexibility of their INSITE case erector, Crescent is still looking for places where they can add to their INSITE line-up. They've seen the tremendous growth and day-to-day benefits that simple automation brings.

"I would tell anyone I knew – I don't know how much I talk about case erecting with my friends, but anybody who wanted a case erector or case sealer – I would definitely recommend they give you a call," John said. "My life is so much better now."