



Gaining Visibility & Uptime with PLEX

Production Monitoring

CASE STUDY

Country Maid, a baked goods manufacturer based in Iowa, wanted better visibility into its cake roll and Butter Braid® pastry lines. The company's production data was manually tracked and shared through spreadsheets and chat logs, limiting visibility and consistency. With high employee turnover and a need for accurate uptime and performance metrics, they partnered with Interstates to implement PLEX Production Monitoring. Through strategic configuration and hands-on support, Interstates helped Country Maid deploy real-time dashboards to track performance, reduce ambiguity in downtime reporting, and engage employees in production improvement.

Understanding Production Monitoring (PM)

Production Monitoring is a digital solution that gives operators and managers real-time visibility into manufacturing performance across work centers. Through dashboards that track cycle counts, status events, and run rates, PM enables contextualized data-driven decision-making. By aligning this solution with Country Maid's unique structure and operations, Interstates helped create a clear, shared view of how the site is running and where improvements could be made.



Outcomes



Real-time dashboards improve visibility and replace manual reporting



Employees are more engaged with performance data, especially new hires



Improved accuracy in uptime and downtime tracking



Foundation set for future use of historical data and RCA

Challenges

1

Limited Visibility into Production: Country Maid's team lacked consistent, real-time insights into how each area of the production line was performing, making it difficult to react to issues or optimize processes.

2

Inconsistent Downtime Tracking: Downtime events were tracked manually in spreadsheets or TEAMS chats, leading to conflicting records and incomplete root cause analysis.

3

High Turnover and Training Needs: Rapid employee turnover created a knowledge gap on the shop floor. New operators had limited tools to understand performance expectations or recognize how their role impacted downstream operations.

4

Disconnected Data Sources: Daily operations meetings relied on a mix of handwritten notes, spreadsheets, and selective system access. This lack of standardization slowed communication and hampered continuous improvement efforts.

Solution

Interstates commissioned and configured PLEX Production Monitoring for Country Maid, integrating the tool into the cake roll and Butter Braid® pastry lines. The project involved building the necessary network and server environment, defining plant logic, configuring cycle counts and production statuses, and deploying real-time dashboards. The dashboards offer a comprehensive view of OEE (Overall Equipment Effectiveness), capturing production, downtime, and maintenance events in a standardized, accessible format.

Hour	Plan	Actual	%	Cumulative Plan	Cumulative Actual	Downtime	Scrap	Notes
10	108	65	60.2	4823	1065	0	0	
9	472	281	59.5	4515	1000	0	0	
8	473	336	71.0	4043	738	0	0	
7	472	282	59.7	3570	403	0	0	
6	466	121	26.0	3098	121	0	0	
5	0	0	0.0	2632	0	0	0	
4	0	0	0.0	2632	0	0	0	
3	0	0	0.0	2632	0	0	0	
2	0	0	0.0	2632	0	0	0	
1	0	0	0.0	2632	0	0	0	
24	0	0	0.0	2632	0	0	0	
23	0	0	0.0	2632	0	0	0	
22	0	0	0.0	2632	0	0	0	
21	0	0	0.0	2632	0	0	0	
20	0	0	0.0	2632	0	0	0	

The PLEX Whiteboard view provides Country Maid with real-time visibility into hourly performance by job and part number, supporting accurate shift reporting by capturing plan vs. actual output, downtime, scrap, and operator notes directly on the production floor.

Interstates' ability to bridge gaps among the ERP, controls systems, and operators was key to the implementation. The team introduced features like a virtual whiteboard to retain shift notes and integrated FactoryTalk Batch to automate data capture. Interstates also worked around PLEX provisioning delays with temporary custom development to ensure timely delivery.

Training was streamlined by the intuitive dashboard design. Interstates conducted hands-on support with operators and supervisors, empowering them to take ownership of the dashboards and customize displays as needed.



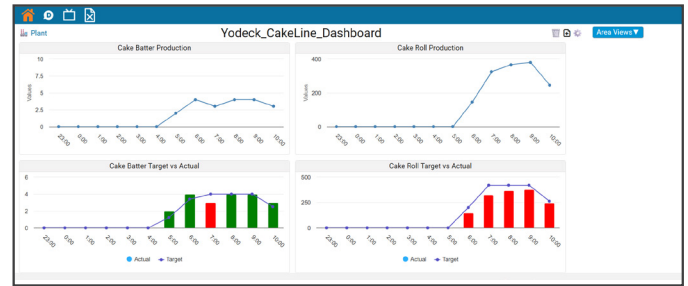
PLEX Production Monitoring provides Country Maid with real-time insight into OEE, detailed performance metrics, and production trends to deliver key visibility into their manufacturing processes.

Results

With PLEX PM in place, Country Maid gained objective, real-time insight into line performance. This data is now central to daily operations meetings, replacing manual logs with a shared, accessible view. Teams can identify performance trends, respond faster to issues, and reduce miscommunication. Operators can now monitor their area's metrics and proactively support other work centers.

The system improved employee engagement by giving new hires clear expectations and visibility into how their work contributes to overall performance. Management is using the dashboards to support RCA, track variance from targets, and lay the groundwork for historical reporting.

Downtime tracking is now aligned with objective data, making it easier to identify and eliminate inefficiencies. The TEAMS chat, previously used for downtime estimates, now focuses on root cause analysis.



PLEX Production Monitoring gives Country Maid real-time visibility into batter and cake roll production performance, comparing actual output to hourly targets and highlighting deviations for proactive response.

Going Forward

Country Maid plans to expand PM across additional work centers and incorporate new automation equipment. With foundational visibility established, the company is developing a “Hour of Power” initiative to optimize start-up processes using Lean principles. As more data becomes available, the team will deepen its use of reporting and further refine performance strategies.