

How PakTech helps PLD meet the needs of retailers

Faster, better equipment. Improved sustainability. Flexible financing.

CASE STUDY



Faced with growing demand for twin packs of its liquid products, [PL Developments](#) (PLD) was challenged to meet this demand with its existing machinery, which was too slow and inconsistent.

PLD turned to [PakTech](#), which provided a seamless, flexible solution consisting of new, high-speed equipment and recycled handles. Partnering with PakTech enabled PLD to satisfy its customers and meet growing demand with minimal capital for the equipment.

PL Developments—an innovative private label powerhouse



Founded in 1988, PL Developments has grown through innovation and acquisitions into a leading manufacturer of private label OTC products. At a dozen locations across the United States—including facilities for R&D, manufacturing, packaging, and distribution—PLD's more than 1,600 employees produce private label products for some of the largest retailers in the country.

PLD produces hundreds of skus of private label products in categories including allergy, analgesics, cough and cold, digestive products, feminine care, first aid, and personal care.

Among PLD's top priorities are consistently delivering quality products that meet customers' standards, while fulfilling the demand for each customer and always delivering the right products in the right quantities at the right time.

A complex manufacturing process that requires precision

With so many products and skus for multiple customers, creating a seamless manufacturing process is not easy. "It's a challenge because we have a lot of moving parts," said Patrick Smith, Senior Engineering Manager at PLD's Piedmont, South Carolina facility.

Smith explained that PLD compounds and manufactures all of its products at the South Carolina facility. With high volumes and strong growth, coordinating everything with the company's suppliers—which provide raw materials, bottles, labels, cases, and more—has to be in sync.

It is also essential that all manufacturing equipment and every aspect of every line works properly. If even one aspect of PLD's manufacturing operation is out of line, production will come to a stop, costing the company time and money.

"It's definitely a challenge for us. It's got to be a well-oiled machine. Everything has got to function right for us to hit the volumes agreed upon."

Patrick Smith, PL Developments

Meeting the needs of the retailer—with help from PakTech

PLD's Piedmont facility makes liquid first aid products, such as hydrogen peroxide and isopropyl alcohol (a disinfectant), as well as witch hazel, mineral oil, and mouthwash.

In mid-2022, PLD was building a process and packaging line from scratch to manufacture and package single bottles and multipacks of mouthwash for various retailers.

After researching several options for multipack handle and applicators to best suit the needs of the line, PLD chose PakTech. "This ended up being the right choice," said Smith.

PLD installed the PakTech machine in-line, performed validation and followed with extensive line trials. During the trials, the machine ran at the speeds as specified, along with accurate and consistent placement of the handles. PakTech's machine worked far better than a competitor's machine that PLD had used for some time. Implementing PakTech's equipment enabled PLD to deliver the quality and volume that customers needed.



"These handles applied much more consistently than the previous applicator. The operation of the machine was very intuitive. It was a really good fit for the line. It performed better than was expected for a brand-new machine that we didn't have any experience with."

Patrick Smith, PL Developments

Consolidating manufacturing and increasing capacity—with more help from PakTech

A little over a year after building the mouthwash line, PLD decided to consolidate the production of all liquid first aid products to the Piedmont facility. This would require an additional two packaging lines. Initially, Smith's team planned to utilize existing twin pack handle application equipment on the new lines.

PLD tried this approach, which utilized a competitor of PakTech to apply the handles, but it wasn't compatible with the packaging line, said Smith. The existing machinery couldn't handle the higher run rate in Piedmont and didn't apply the handles correctly, causing constant downtime. Because of these issues, PLD had to add additional personnel to the handle application area, which increased production costs.

“We needed to do roughly 30 cases a minute and our old machines could only do 20 at best. We were not going to meet our demand with those machines, so we had to go in a new direction.”

Patrick Smith, PL Developments

Based on PLD's experience with PakTech's handles and machinery on the mouthwash line, PLD contacted PakTech about partnering on additional lines. They were very responsive and quick to get the new project off the ground. They were able to expedite the new machines as well as the creation of the new handles. The PakTech handles could even be used on the competitor's equipment prior to the arrival of the new machines.

The day after the new equipment arrived at PLD's Piedmont facility, a PakTech technician was onsite. He had the new machinery up and running well within one or two days.



Since these new machines have been installed, they have performed well. The machines have been some of the most consistent pieces of equipment that are on the packaging line and create little downtime or maintenance issues. PLD has been able to meet the needs of its multipack volume due to the integration of the PakTech applicators.

As PLD has gotten more experience with these machines, PakTech has provided minor modifications and new functionality as requested by PLD. This includes a program that creates more versatility with its spacing between cases to help alleviate any downstream bottlenecks.

“The beauty of these PakTech machines is that there is very little adjustment between running bottles with or without handles. It's able to be loaded up with material and started during a standard changeover.”

Patrick Smith, PL Developments

Not just great machinery, but also flexible financing

In deciding to acquire new equipment from PakTech, PLD faced an issue. “We were looking for creative financing solutions to support this important investment in operations,” shared Smith.

PakTech worked with PLD to provide flexible financing. Smith described the arrangement as similar to a lease-to-own deal. PLD committed to purchase a large number of handles over several years and PakTech amortized the cost of the machinery into the cost of the handles, helping PLD quickly get up and running with new equipment with minimal capital outlay. After purchasing handles over several years, PLD will own the equipment.

An added benefit: Sustainability

While line speed and production capacity were PLD’s main reasons for seeking out and partnering with PakTech, sustainability is also a big deal. Sustainability is important to PLD and is very important to many major retailers, including Walmart.

The fact that PakTech’s handles are made from 100% recycled materials and are recyclable—compared to the handles of PakTech’s competitors, which to PLD’s knowledge are not recycled or recyclable—is a major selling point.



“The PakTech handles helped PLD become a landfill-free facility.”

Patrick Smith, PL Developments

An outstanding experience and relationship

The initial reason for contacting PakTech was to acquire machinery that produced at the speeds and consistency that PLD needed, but working with PakTech has proven to be a pleasure.

PakTech has been fast, responsive, and flexible. PakTech’s team has shown great communication skills in asking probing questions to ensure the equipment performs optimally for PLD and has made valuable modifications and enhancements. From PLD’s perspective, the entire experience of working with PakTech has been outstanding, as have been the business results.

“Their machines have been great and they’re one of the easiest equipment manufacturers we’ve ever dealt with.”

Patrick Smith, PL Developments

Learn More

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- **PL Developments** at pldevelopments.com
- **PakTech** at PakTech-opi.com