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# FOOD & BEVERAGE PACKAGING

Market Insights to Packaging Solutions

A **bnp** PUBLICATION

## high society automation

Sophisticated robotics reveals new technology and controls to increase efficiencies. **P. 20**

**PRO**  **PACK** 

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## FLEXIBLE ROBOTIC COLLATOR & LOADER SAVES TIME, MONEY AND SPACE

Take five with Propack Processing & Packaging Systems president Chris Follows.

**Food and Beverage Packaging: What's the difference between robotics and automation?**

**Chris Follows:** While the terms have become perhaps incorrectly interchangeable, robotics is the term used to describe the field of robots and its uses. In the packaging industry, robotics is a programmable, automatic machine that replaces specific human effort, but does not look humanoid or perform a task in a human-like manner.

**FBP: Are robotics affordable?**

**Follows:** Certainly! While I wouldn't suggest a Mom and Pop shop purchase one upon start-up, certainly for better-established companies looking to improve efficiencies, then adding robotic pieces is the way to go. But, it's more than just simple dollars and cents. We have a lot of customers throughout both North and South America. Even though labor is less expensive in SA, line efficiencies featuring robotics are quickly recognized. More product in less time can be effectively processed with next to zero product loss with robotics than by cheaper labor any day – and that is where the return on investment is made.

**FBP: What's the latest addition to your robotics line-up?**

**Follows:** The LB-SRT robotic collator & loader is the latest addition to our range of efficient products. It provides a cost-effective means for the packaging industry to handle

flat or on edge output from medium-speed flow wrappers to be picked and placed within a flexible carton loader neatly, gently and quickly. And it sits within a small and compact 68-inch x 60-inch footprint.

**FBP: What are the benefits of the LB-SRT?**

**Follows:** The LB-SRT is reasonably priced, which means that even small companies can afford it, while at the same time it enhances the selection of robotics available for larger companies.

**FBP: How does it work?**

**Follows:** The LB-SRT collates flow wrapped products and loads them into tri-seal cartons or trays. From Rockwell Automation, Propack uses the advanced Allen Bradley brand CompactLogix PLC with Kinetix 350 Ethernet IP servo drives and motors to provide the machine with state-of-the-art motion control available. And since we are cognizant that not everyone is a computer genius, we've made the operation a simple task with a user-friendly Allan Bradley PanelView Plus 1500 color touchscreen HMI control panel and CompactLogix that provides machine monitoring data. You'll always know exactly how well your line is running.

Our partner, Kliklok Woodman, provides the case erectors that take corrugated blanks and erect the carton to create a top-load container.

ABB Robotics provides the LB-SRT with the keen picking capacity of its IRB360 Flexpicker delta-style robot, which is able to work within a compact footprint while maintaining accuracy and high payloads of up to 400 products per minute.

We also designed the robotic collator and loader to operate 24/7, utilizing a rugged stainless steel sanitary frame that will also allow the operator to easily perform quick and easy changeovers.

The LB-SRT provides a tremendous variety of options with flexibility to the customer. At Propack, customer satisfaction is paramount. **F&BP**

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### ABOUT PROPACK:

Established in 1996, Propack ([propack.ca](http://propack.ca)) has quickly established itself as a leading manufacturer and supplier of integrated automated and robotic packaging machinery. Headquartered in Beamsville, Ontario, Canada, Propack and its partner network are proven commodities in the ever-changing and competitive global robotics industry.