

CASESTUDY



Conveyor Manufacturer “Decentralizes” Control Significantly Reduces Installation Costs, Opening New Doors for Prospective Customers

Challenge

SpanTech LLC, located in Glasgow, Kentucky, produces continuous plastic chain curving conveyors used in food production, packaging, pharmaceuticals and manufacturing. They also produce a complete line of transfers for handling products at the start and end points of the conveyor.

Like other businesses in today's economy, SpanTech's prospective customers are increasingly challenged with finding new ways to cut costs – which often means delaying or preventing system upgrades or new installations. It's often the cost of the installation that prevents SpanTech's prospective customers from moving forward.

Solution

SpanTech had heard of SEW's Decentralized Control System (DCS) – the practice of placing the controller at or near the motor rather than in a centralized control cabinet – being used in other applications. They knew that:

- SEW's components are engineered specifically for use in a DCS setting.
- SEW's system is fully UL and cUL listed for group motor installations.
- Motor controllers can be daisy chained together, resulting in a substantial reduction in the infrastructure required by a system.

Decentralized Control appeared to be the perfect solution for SpanTech. So they ran the numbers, comparing the cost of DCS to the cost of a standard installation. The biggest system they compared included 112 motors, 1,536 photo controls and 1,536 solenoid controls. The system was designed to use DCS in conjunction with DeviceNet field bus communication.

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A continuous plastic chain curving conveyor

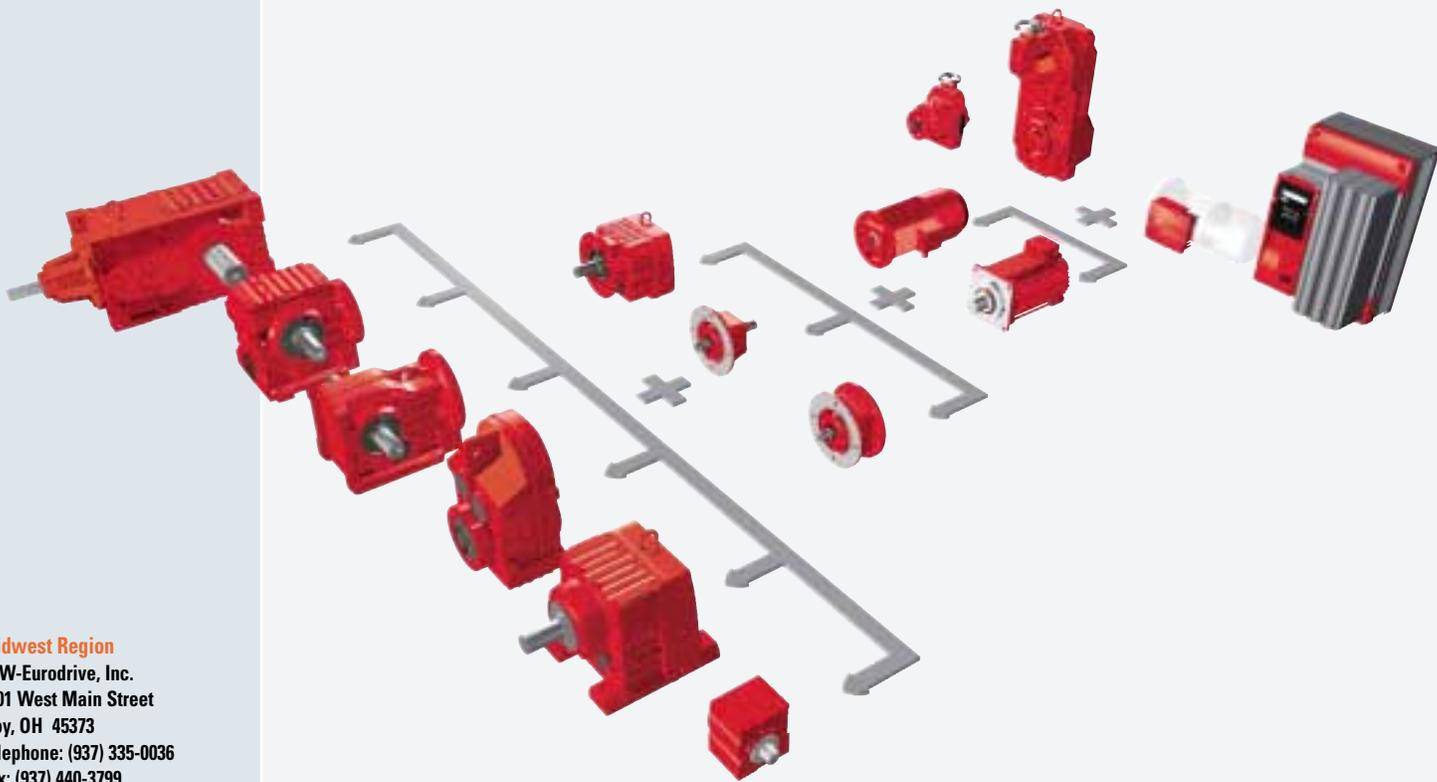


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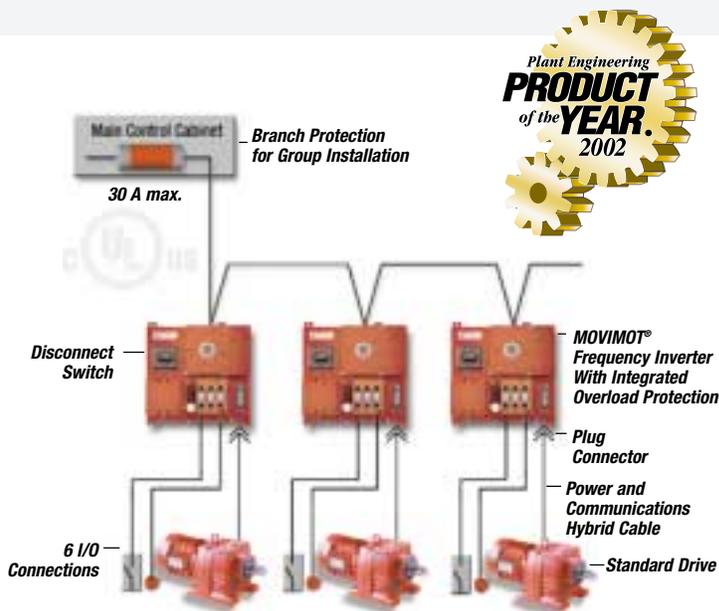
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Results

Although the upfront material costs to implement an SEW Decentralized Control Solution was \$18,000 more than a comparable conventional system, the overall cost of the installation was significantly lower. The standard installation cost for a system of this size and complexity, factoring in labor, would normally be expected to run in the neighborhood of \$180,000-\$200,000. With the SEW Decentralized Control Solution however, the overall installation cost was only \$20,000. Despite the higher initial costs, the overall savings implementing Decentralized Control was overwhelmingly better.

“SEW’s Decentralized Control is ideal for conveyor systems,” says Skip Ward, SpanTech Vice President of Research and Development. “When you don’t have your drives in one cabinet, you don’t have to deal with all the additional wiring, so there is a monumental savings in the installation. The increased upfront investment in components is very minor when you consider the savings in installation cost.”



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