



a **TNA** case study

**200%** production volumes

The installation of tna immerso-cook® direct-fired continuous frying system alongside two stainless steel conveyors and a tortilla piston cutter enabled Donkey Brands LLC to double production volumes, while tna quik-coat® seasoning drum ensures uniform coating to safeguard continuous product quality.



# tortilla

Based in Carol Stream, Illinois, USA, privately-owned Donkey Brands LLC produces all-natural, high quality flour tortilla chips in salted and unsalted varieties. In a bid to optimise its production process to meet increased demand and boost growth, Donkey Brands was looking to replace an out-of-date manual process with an efficient automated system.

## challenge 1.

### increase production levels

As a growing manufacturer and snack brand, Donkey Brands was looking to increase production levels with a frying system that optimised colour, texture and flavour. To protect their brand legacy for great tasting tortilla

chips, Donkey Brands was confident that tna immerso-cook® direct-fired continuous frying system was the right choice.

## solution 1.

### optimising throughput speeds

The tna immerso-cook® features innovations like a state-of-the-art belt feed system. Customisable for a wide range of products including tortilla chips, this feature minimises the risk of product breakage while optimising throughput speeds. While breakage is minimised, any unpreventable waste that can result from delicate snack applications like tortilla chips, is continuously discharged from the fryer by the system's base-mounted mesh conveyor. This ensures the product quality is not compromised.

Through its innovative continuous oil filtration process, tna immerso-cook® keeps oil clean with particulate removal and a fresh oil infeed system. This prevents oil from overheating and prevents harmful fatty acids and free radicals from forming, which contaminate oil and compromise the quality of the product. Increased capacity from the tna immerso-cook®, along with its advanced oil filtration system, means Donkey Brands can produce more tortilla chips with significantly less downtime from changing oil.

"With demand growing for quantity and quality, we needed a flexible frying system to build on our capabilities and enhance production capacity," comments Robert Tisljar, partner at Donkey Brands. "Our previous line was predominantly manual and included a smaller fryer, as well as more conventional conveying systems.

Looking for the best way to step into the world of automation, we saw the answer in TNA. The aim, quite simply, was to increase production output while at the same time improving the overall quality of our products."

Also commenting on the installation, Tim Reardon, group solutions manager – processing for the Americas, said: "Our immerso-cook range offers a heavy duty, highly efficient system that can be customised for a wide variety of applications and processing requirements. Together with our service-led approach, maintenance support and engineering knowledge, we were able to supply Donkey Brands with a reliable and high performance system that meets their exact specification – and which we're confident will continue to do so for many years to come."



## challenge 2.

### consistent flavour coverage

Seasoning is vital to a product's overall taste, texture and appeal. Because each type of snack product has its own set of attributes, unique product structure, surface and topography, Donkey Brands needed a seasoning system that would ensure uniform coating on every single tortilla chip produced.



## solution 2.

### consistent appearance and taste

The tna quik-coat® was designed with flexibility in mind and was a perfect fit for the Donkey Brands range of products. tna quik-coat® system effectively seasons uneven surfaces and gently tumbles the product, evenly dispersing the right amount of seasoning so that all Donkey Brand tortilla chips have a consistent appearance and taste. As a manufacturer of tortilla chips, it was fundamental that the new seasoning system could handle coating irregular shaped products consistently and with ease.

Where there's a need to season products, there's a need to keep equipment clean. With Donkey Brands' goal to increase productivity, along with their high standards of hygiene, they needed an easy-to-clean solution that also minimised downtime. As part of the tna quik-coat® installation, casters were adjoined to the system that can be pulled away from the production line – simplifying and accelerating the cleaning process.

"As a food manufacturer, consistent flavour profiles are naturally a top priority," comments Tisljar. "Without consistent quality in product flavour, consumers would lose trust in our brand. Fully equipped with TNA's expertise, we were able to find the right system to allow for great taste and optimum coverage every time, while maintaining global hygiene standards."

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## onwards and upwards

“Now that the new system is up and running, we are experiencing double the production volumes, consistent seasoning application, reduced product breakage and virtually no downtime,” Tisljar adds. “The whole project ran extremely smoothly and we were especially impressed with TNA’s exceptional level of service and flexibility in system design. We immediately saw the benefits of their cutting-edge manufacturing solutions which delivered the speed, performance and accuracy we were looking for, while still producing the quality tortilla chips Donkey Brands customers have come to expect.”

Reardon comments: “We are delighted to partner with Donkey Brands to help develop a modern, automated system for their tortilla line. Our technical expertise and industry know-how equips us with the ability to create and supply innovative products to our customers worldwide, offering start-to-finish solutions for the entire production line.”

TNA solutions is a global leader in food processing and packaging solutions, committed to helping people succeed responsibly in a changing world. With over 40 years of experience, TNA's global team of experts have installed more than 14,000 systems in over 120 countries. The company creates and sustains solutions that help customers realise goals and exceed their expectations, with performance, responsibility, and a customer-centric approach at the core of the business. A collaborative, consultative approach ensures measurable results and lasting success, with solutions designed to evolve and perform over time.

As an inclusive partner, TNA supports a growth agenda that goes beyond business, emphasising its commitment to people, prosperity and the planet in harmony. TNA is a powerful advocate of social justice, and aims to support children in disadvantaged communities through education, healthcare, and social enterprise programmes, through the humanitarian initiatives undertaken by the Nadia and Alf Taylor Foundation.



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