

**INDUSTRY**

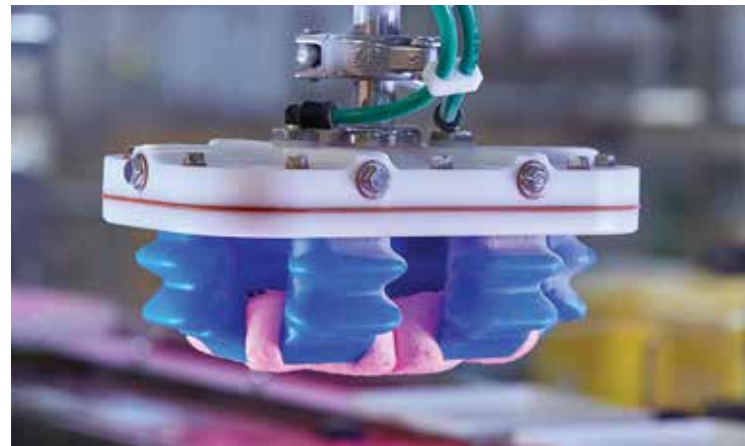
Bakery: Confectionary

**AUTOMATION CHALLENGE**

Delicate Marshmallow Peeps® Handling

**CUSTOMER**

Just Born Quality Confections

**THE APPLICATION**

Fully automated picking and packaging of soft, delicate marshmallow Peeps from the production line into retail boxes.

**CUSTOMER'S NEEDS**

The customer needed a cost-efficient automated system that could replace the old packaging line. It was important to ensure there would be no uptake of sugar crystals into the system, as the operation could not halt due to filter cleanings and any added downtime.

A critical requirement was to find a system that could keep up with changing product mix, while keeping up with a high production rate. With all of these goals in mind, vacuum end of arm tooling was no longer an option.

**PRIOR PROCESS**

The existing packaging line involved using ten associates for tray denesting and hand packing. Resources were running short because the customer had to use so many employees to staff the production.

**SOLUTION**

Soft Robotics designed 3 different food-safe gripper configurations that Just Born could use to handle thirteen (13) SKUs. The closed-loop system eliminated Just Born's need for manual packing. The soft gripping technology allows delicate marshmallow Peeps to be picked and placed consistently with a millimeter to spare, showing no marks or damages, and ensures ingress protection. Just Born has experienced a higher-than-expected return, and is able to produce 360 ppm on bunnies and other 2-D product and 450 ppm for single (3-D Peeps) chicks.

Soft Robotics was able to pick up delicate marshmallow – was able to do that job and keep the same excellent quality that we had when we manually picked the objects and placed them. It enabled us to have a lot more flexibility in our process.

**— Randall Copeland**

Senior Vice President of  
Operations and Supply Chain,  
Just Born Quality Confections