



How a box manufacturer tackled labor issues by automating palletizing tasks

Summary: Alliora, a high-end packaging manufacturer, needed a way to stabilize production flow across seasonal fluctuations and free operators from demanding tasks. In collaboration with Sterkelec, Robotiq's local partner, they targeted the end-of-line and implemented the Robotiq Palletizing Solution. Employees are grateful, and the production line is flowing better than ever.

1. Giving automation a second chance

Alliora is located in Fougères, a small town in the Brittany region of northwestern France, where it manufactures boxes for a wide range of clients in industries like board games, cosmetics, and champagne.

Antoine Bruno, general manager and president, explains that Alliora had wanted to add automation to its production lines for a while. Unfortunately, their first experience was difficult. Industrial robots were too complex. They bought one, but they were never able to get it to work properly. Meanwhile, the need for automation remained as they were forced to hire many temporary workers to meet seasonal demand. "Having lots of temporary workers on a line can cause the line to slow down," he said.

That's not all: the job is physically demanding, and employees develop musculoskeletal disorders from the repetitive tasks. "The boxes are quite heavy, and after a while, you start to get back pain," said Patricia Chevalier, production leader at Alliora. They needed something that would solve these issues while being easy to install and program.

START PRODUCTION FASTER



2. One solution to many pain points

Alliora's team did some research online and approached Sterkelec, a local distributor of robotic products and solutions. Davy Pourrieau, Sterkelec's product manager, toured Alliora's workflow. After discussing the issues they faced, he recommended that they automate the palletizing process.

They needed flexibility, simplicity, and fast results, so Pourrieau recommended the Robotiq Palletizing Solution. Since this solution lets end users quickly create different programs, it was perfect for Alliora, which manufactures a unique product for each client.



Bruno gathered his team, and Davy Pourrieau demoed the solution. The team was enthusiastic. Bruno instantly knew it was the right solution for them. With Pourrieau’s help, it was a fast and easy implementation. As Éric Bleau, Alliora’s production director, said, “I am not a roboticist. I’m not an automatician. But Davy Pourrieau explained it to me right away, and within 45 minutes, I understood how the system worked.”

3. An 18-month ROI, smoother production lines, and relieved team

It’s been a few months since the first Robotiq Palletizing Solution was integrated on one of Alliora’s production lines, and it has made a difference. The cobot’s presence allows Antoine Bruno to hire two fewer temporary workers during high production periods, which helps stabilize the production line. “Robots allow us to have much smoother production lines, and that’s exactly what we were looking for,” he said.

The production team is also giving positive feedback. “We wondered why we hadn't thought of it before, because it's such a huge relief for the staff,” said Patricia Chevalier.

Antoine Bruno estimates the ROI at 18 months, which is fast. It's a successful experience that he plans to replicate soon—the goal being to add a Robotiq Palletizing Solution on three or four more production lines.



