

LB Foster Materials Handling conveyor increases process efficiency of Honda assembly line

Client Case Study



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Neil Adams
New Model Project Engineer, Honda

Leicester based LB Foster Materials Handling has recently completed the installation of a continuously moving, inverted monorail conveyor for a dashboard sub assembly line at Honda's UK manufacturing plant in Swindon.

Designed to transport new Honda Civic dashboards around a 20 station assembly line in Car Plant 2, the LB Foster conveyor has increased the process efficiency and reliability of the line. It is an enclosed track, equally pitched trolley conveyor, constructed to pull the 20 individual trolleys carrying the dashboards around the assembly line. The conveyor runs at a speed ranging from 700mm to 1700mm per minute.

Trolley conveyor for stability


Trolley conveyors are one of a comprehensive range of floor conveyors manufactured by LB Foster. They consist of a floor mounted, enclosed track conveyor towing a series of work trolleys to carry the products.


This type of conveyor provides stable transportation and is particularly useful when the products to be carried are an unusual shape or size for traditional conveying. A trolley conveyor can be mounted on the floor, or, should a flush floor be required, they can be mounted within an excavated pit with floor plates to cover the gap.

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LB Foster
Materials Handling

 The trolley conveyor makes working on the dashboards easy

The conveyor is future model proofed - to assemble a different dashboard only requires a redesigned jig 



A proven design for Honda

Over 3,500 people work at Honda's busy manufacturing site in Swindon. Each shift builds 300 cars which are destined for the UK, Europe and Russia.

Neil Adams is one of Honda's New Model Project Engineers; he explains why a new conveyor became a necessity for the dashboard assembly line in Plant 2, "The dashboard of our new Honda Civic model uses the latest technology so we needed more work stations and therefore a longer assembly line to be able to build it. Originally we had a 10 station conveyor to build the current dashboard; with the extra processes we needed to double that to 20 stations.

"I made a shortlist of three companies and when the quotes came in the one from LB Foster Materials Handling was the most cost effective we received. It was for a monorail conveyor built around a 42m loop constructed from a proven design which is particularly suitable for the automobile industry.

"Although I had considered a friction drive conveyor, the one we selected from LB Foster is a predominantly electronic, chain driven conveyor. Being robust, the conveyor requires low maintenance which is important for long term cost efficiency. The conveyor is also future model proofed - to assemble a different dashboard we only need to redesign the jig to fit a new model."

Project management to meet tight deadline

He continues, "We had a very tight installation timescale of just four days to take out the old conveyor and install the new one. Work started as soon as production finished on Thursday and due to a detailed installation programme and a lot of hard work over the weekend the conveyor ran perfectly in time for the Tuesday morning shift.

"LB Foster also developed the software controls for the system. Software reliability is particularly important as the controls for each sub assembly line link into Honda's main assembly line software. Every assembly line is sequenced so as each finished dashboard comes off the line it is immediately transferred across a short gangway to the main assembly line. Here it is fitted into a car body which is exactly in position to receive the dashboard. Working in this systematic way, a new Honda car is produced every 85 seconds."

Leicester based LB Foster Materials Handling (previously CI Logistics) is a market-leading UK supplier and manufacturer of quality materials handling and storage systems. The company supplies equipment internationally including overhead conveyors, floor conveyors, garment conveyors and storage systems; it also has an in-house electrical controls design and build service enabling it to provide innovative solutions to all materials handling challenges.

LB Foster Materials Handling is a subdivision of its parent company LB Foster Rail Technologies UK - previously Portec Rail Products (UK) Ltd. which is owned by the American multi-national, LB Foster.

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