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CASE  
STUDYINDUSTRY  
FOOD AND  
BEVERAGELOCATION  
GALWAY  
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## WEST-BAKE RISES TO NEW LEVELS OF EFFICIENCY WITH ROCKWELL AUTOMATION'S PLEX MES

West-Bake's journey demonstrates how strategic technology adoption and strong partnerships drive operational excellence, empower employees, and position manufacturers for sustainable growth.

### CHALLENGE

West-Bake, based in Glenamaddy, County Galway, Ireland, is a leading bakery producing muffins, cookies, and cakes for major retailers across the UK and Ireland. With rapid growth – from 20 employees in 2007 to 150 today, and a turnover reaching €35 million – the company faced mounting operational complexity. Data silos, manual paper-based processes, and fragmented communication channels limited visibility, slowed decision-making, and made it difficult to maintain quality and traceability at scale.

“We had so many different data silos. Information was there, but it wasn't collaborative. Real-time information is important to allow us to make strategic decisions to grow our business fast.”

IT Manager PJ Shanks added: “We operated well, but reached our limitations. There was too much paper – sales orders, delivery dockets, everything was manual. We needed a way to store and share data meaningfully across the business.”

#### PEADAR SHANKS

Managing Director, West-Bake

As West-Bake prepared for ambitious expansion into Europe and the Middle East, the need for a scalable, integrated digital solution became urgent.



## SOLUTION

West-Bake partnered with Rockwell Automation and Cumulus Consulting to implement the Plex Smart Manufacturing Platform – a tightly integrated solution combining Manufacturing Execution System (MES), Quality Management System (QMS), and Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) components.

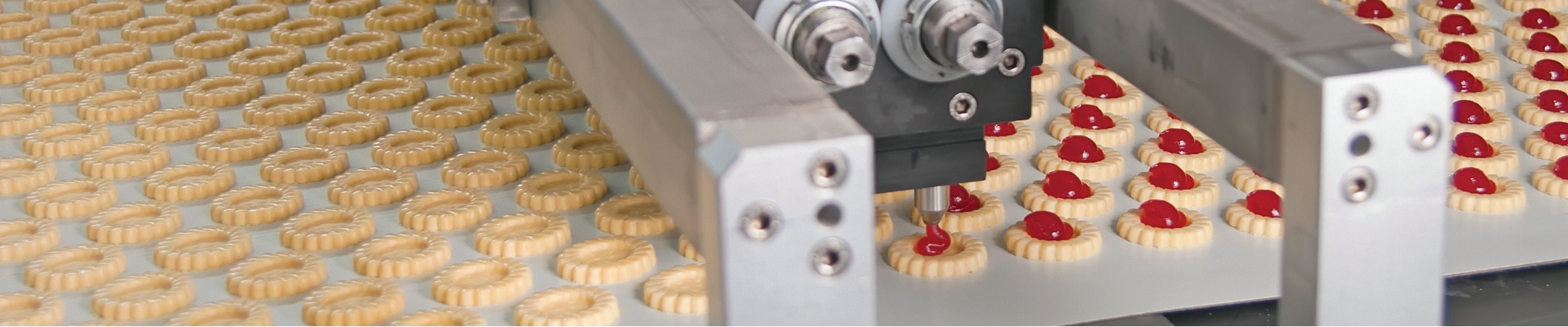
The implementation was guided by a consultative approach: Rockwell’s team worked closely with West-Bake to understand their unique processes and challenges, ensuring buy-in from directors, management, and shop-floor operators. “It’s about making your job easier, more efficient, and growing the business,” said Peadar Shanks.

Key features of the solution included:

- Real-time visibility – providing insights into production, inventory, and quality data.

- Digitization of manual processes – replacing paper and Excel sheets with a unified platform.
- Enhanced traceability – serialized barcodes and batch management for instant product tracking.
- Scalability – supporting West-Bake’s vision to triple in size over the next decade.
- Empowerment of employees – training and intuitive dashboards enabled staff to make data-driven decisions.

PJ Shanks noted, “With Plex, we get insight straight away into what we’re producing. Are we running ahead of schedule? Are we running behind? Everybody can see it. It flags up issues instantly, allowing us to respond quickly.”



## RESULTS

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The transformation delivered measurable improvements across West-Bake's operations:

### **Efficiency & Agility:**

Real-time data enabled faster, more informed decision-making. Production planning improved, and inventory management became leaner, reducing excess stock and smoothing supply chain fluctuations.

### **Quality & Traceability:**

Digitized quality records and serialized barcodes provided instant traceability, supporting compliance and building customer trust. "If we ever got a product recall, within an instant you can press a button and get all your traceability records," said Peadar Shanks.

### **Employee Empowerment:**

The workforce embraced the new system, with improved communication and collaboration. "Everyone is on the same

journey together, so the results are more accurate and efficient," said Peadar Shanks.

### **Scalability for Growth:**

The Plex platform established a strong, scalable foundation for West-Bake's expansion into new markets. "We have capacity within the building to double our throughput. With Plex, we'll know straight away how to address new customers and opportunities," said Peadar Shanks.

As PJ Shanks summarized, "By digitalizing our inventory and quality records, we anticipate significant time, effort, and cost savings. The 'train the trainer' approach means we can be self-sufficient as we grow."



## ABOUT PLEX

Plex, by Rockwell Automation, is a leader in cloud-delivered smart manufacturing solutions, empowering the world's manufacturers to make awesome products. Our platform gives manufacturers the ability to connect, automate, track, and analyze every aspect of their business to drive transformation. The Plex Smart Manufacturing Platform™ includes solutions for manufacturing execution (MES), ERP, quality, supply

chain planning and management, asset performance management, production monitoring, process automation and analytics to connect people, systems, machines and supply chains, enabling them to lead with precision, efficiency and agility. To learn more, visit [www.plex.com](http://www.plex.com)