



## Local & Nationwide Cheese Producer and Distributor Gibbsville Cheese Replaces Machinery Jaws For the First Time After Ten Years

### LOCAL & NATIONWIDE DISTRIBUTING CHEESE PRODUCER

- Family-owned, local and nationwide cheese producer and distributor
- Committed to making the finest Wisconsin cheese
- Passionate about quality, local ingredients in their cheese
- Purchased Viking Masek's first machine sold, serial number 1

### CRITICAL ISSUES

- Limited space available for packaging machine
- Product leaks due to inferior seal quality
- Simple machine needed to grow with business needs

### Business Background

Gibbsville Cheese, a 4th generation, family-owned cheese producer located in Sheboygan County, Wisconsin, has been making cheese from local ingredients for over 65 years. Gibbsville Cheese has earned a reputation as a fine producer of Cheddar, Colby, Monterey Jack and the famous Gibbsville Two-Tone Cheese. To fulfill their commitment to producing the finest Wisconsin cheeses, the Van Tatenhove Family has worked tirelessly to perfect recipes and processes. Along with loyal, local customers, visitors from across the United States stop to purchase factory-fresh cheese sliced from blocks while they wait. Their factory and ecommerce stores distribute to southeastern Wisconsin and ship their branded products nationwide.

### Critical Issues

In 2006, Phil, the 3rd generation owner of Gibbsville Cheese, was in the market for a new packaging machine. His previous machine from another packaging OEM, while still functional, was bulky and tall, required an indexing conveyor to relay product for filling that took up too much space on the limited factory floor, wasn't sealing well, and didn't meet their needs for versatility and growth. Phil was looking for:

- A shorter machine with a smaller footprint
- A machine with the ability to be filled from the top by actual employees (instead of an indexing conveyor)
- A machine that provided better seal integrity to prevent product spills or leaks



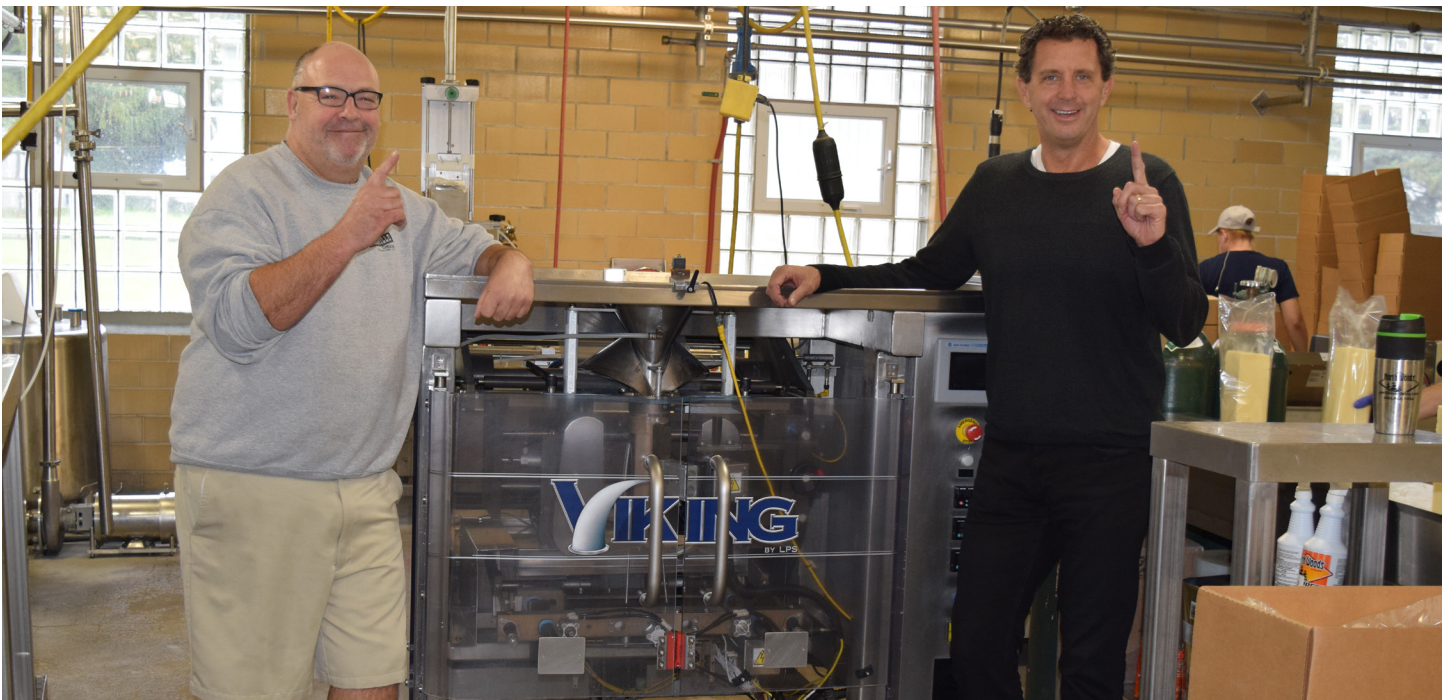
“We wanted a simple, but custom, cheese packaging solution and I wasn’t finding anything on the market that would work. The place is small and I needed to use every square inch to its fullest potential.”

- Phil Van Tatenhove, Owner at Gibbsville Cheese

At the time, no packaging OEM was making a shorter machine. Utilizing the space to its fullest potential while increasing speed and efficiency were Phil’s main priorities. But he knew exactly where to turn for a customized, simple machine: newly founded Viking Masek and its owners, Rick Leonhard and Robb Leonhard.

## Strategy

Phil’s previous relationship with Viking Masek’s founders meant he knew he could trust their judgement to provide his growing company with the packaging machine they needed. When asked how much research he did ahead of time, Phil smiled and shook his head, saying, “I didn’t do any. I didn’t *need* to do any.”



Phil Van Tatenhove (Gibbsville Cheese Owner) and Rick Leonhard (Viking Masek President and Co-owner). This is the machine purchased by Gibbsville Cheese with serial number 1, the first machine Viking Masek sold.



The Viking Masek machine they recommended, and Phil ultimately went with, was much fancier than the competitor's machine he already had in commission. The Viking machine was a reduced drop vertical bagger custom-built for Phil's factory floor, needs, and dairy products. With a servo drive, resistance sealing system, and stainless steel enclosure necessary for packaging dairy, "it was a pretty deluxe machine," Phil adds. It offered more flexibility to package different items and would grow with the business.

## RESULTS

- Viking Masek machine installation was plug & go
- Purchasing process was educational and *simple*
- Machine quality is evident in the lack of servicing needed
- First replacement part installed ten years after original purchase



A look inside Gibbsville Cheese's Viking Masek packaging machine

## Results

"Working with Viking's team was, in a word, simple. They took my problem and made it their own," says Phil. Workers measure and weigh the cheese and drop it right into the top of the Viking Masek machine, which takes up considerably less space than their old machine. They package cheese curds, whips, and shred - basically any loose-type product that they can drop into the machine gets packaged on it.

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- Phil Van Tatenhove, Owner at Gibbsville Cheese





Original Gibbsville Cheese Packaging Machine

Phil notes that during the purchasing process and throughout their relationship since then, he's felt taken care of by Viking's team. Viking did whatever they could do to make the process simple and painless. Owner and Vice-President Robb Leonhard comes from an educational background, and it showed when he was helping Gibbsville Cheese during the machine purchase process. Service Manager Tim Parrish, who did the original installation, was very thorough and took care of everything so Phil was able to literally just plug the machine in and start using it immediately.

In fact, it was the first machine Viking Masek ever sold - serial number 1 - and the quality of Viking Masek's machinery shows. In ten years of use, the only parts that have needed replacing were the sealing jaws, which were just replaced in the fourth quarter of 2016. It's even still using the original pull belts; Phil adds, "I've got an extra set just sitting there, but I haven't had to use them yet." And what about service? "I always have to think about what [service manager] Tim's last name is because I never call him. I don't know any other service guys [at Viking] because I never need them. And that's how it should be."

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Packaged Gibbsville Cheese Fresh Cheese Curds