

Award-winning machine display

KIEFEL GmbH has developed a modern and pioneering HMI solution for its thermoforming machines based on Weidmüller's PROCON-WEB software. The result was so successful that it received a Red Dot Award.

"Driving your performance" is the KIEFEL GmbH motto. The company specialises in machines, tools and automation solutions for high-quality packaging, including for food and technical products. As a technology partner for packaging solutions, Kiefel offers turnkey solutions for a wide range of packaging types, e.g. trays, containers, collapsible boxes, pallets, blisters, lids, technical applications and much more. Kiefel provides customers with a one-stop-shop solution, from product development and the process to the mould and customised automation.

The requirements for industrial operating concepts have undergone huge changes and have been influenced by the touch functions of tablets and smartphones. Kiefel therefore totally replaced the existing HMI software of the thermoforming machines and devised a modern and future-oriented solution. The new development should significantly simplify the complex process to configure settings, making it more user-friendly for operators. A display with an interface that could be easily configured was therefore sought that required no specific programming or knowledge of the Internet. An automation technician should also be able to use the software to create an HMI via configuration and parametrisation. Graphic and design-related customer requirements should also be considered. The GTI software PROCON-WEB from Weidmüller was finally selected.

PROCON-WEB

PROCON-WEB is a modern WEB HMI that fulfils the greatest demands on modern interfaces and also provides all the necessary functionalities and data processing for complex machine applications. HMI solutions with PROCON-WEB per se are no longer rigid, single-user applications, but are now based on a client-server architecture. They are installed on an HMI host that can be accessed by any client, e.g. a panel, IPC or embedded device, via a browser.

No software installations are required for this. The ability to include external JavaScript code enables core developers to create code to customise or expand functionality. This expanded functionality is also available as a configurable control in the library, so that PLC programmers can use it in their routine work tasks.

The award-winning solution

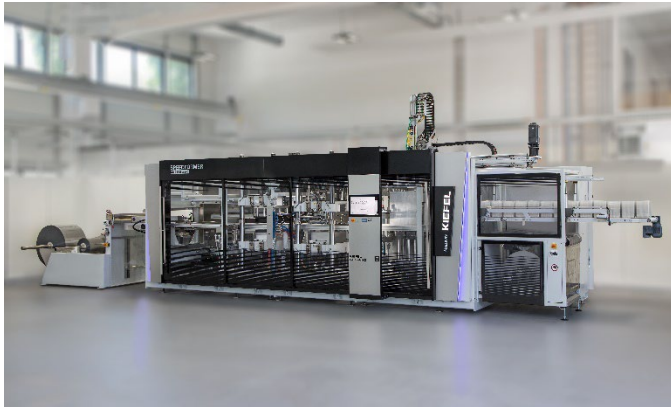
For Kiefel, the development has paid off. Several machine types have now installed the new HMI solution. PROCON-WEB uses the integrated role and rights concept to support a total change in the operating philosophy, moving away from a device-specific presentation towards a *user-centred design*.

The groups of people accessing the data, such as plant operators, production managers, quality managers and maintenance staff, therefore receive precisely the information they need in the form that is most effective for their tasks and the nature of the operating devices. Kiefel was able to carry out the engineering of the HMI largely independently after two five-day product training courses.

One example of the many advantages of the new software is the simplified registration. Operators only have to log on once to machines that are grouped together in a line. This makes their work processes easier and more efficient. In addition, it was important to Kiefel that users could identify themselves and log in using an RFID chip.

The concept and the design (*assisted by an external UX designer*) have not only convinced the end users: in 2020, Kiefel received the Red Dot Award for the HMI solution in the category Brands & Communication Design 2020.

The panel of judges explained their decision as follows: “The new user interface design for Kiefel automated packaging machines is an excellent example of how design and technology can be intelligently combined to achieve not only higher performance and efficiency, but also greater ease of use for the operator. The meticulous design ensures an almost intuitive control of the system and a quick grasp of its functions.” Kiefel and Weidmüller GTI software – a success story.



(Image: Kiefel)

Image caption: On a Kiefel packaging machine with the PROCON-WEB HMI/SCADA software, the interface can be configured with no programming or Internet knowledge required.

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