

CLASSIC OPTICAL

FROM MANUAL TO AUTOMATED LABORATORY IN FOUR YEARS

Classic Optical Laboratories, Inc. is an award-winning, Ohio-based ophthalmic fabrication laboratory, now in its 40th year. Since its inception, this independent full-service lab has manufactured over 14 million spectacles; it produces well over 2,000 jobs daily and is currently in the process of ramping up for further growth.

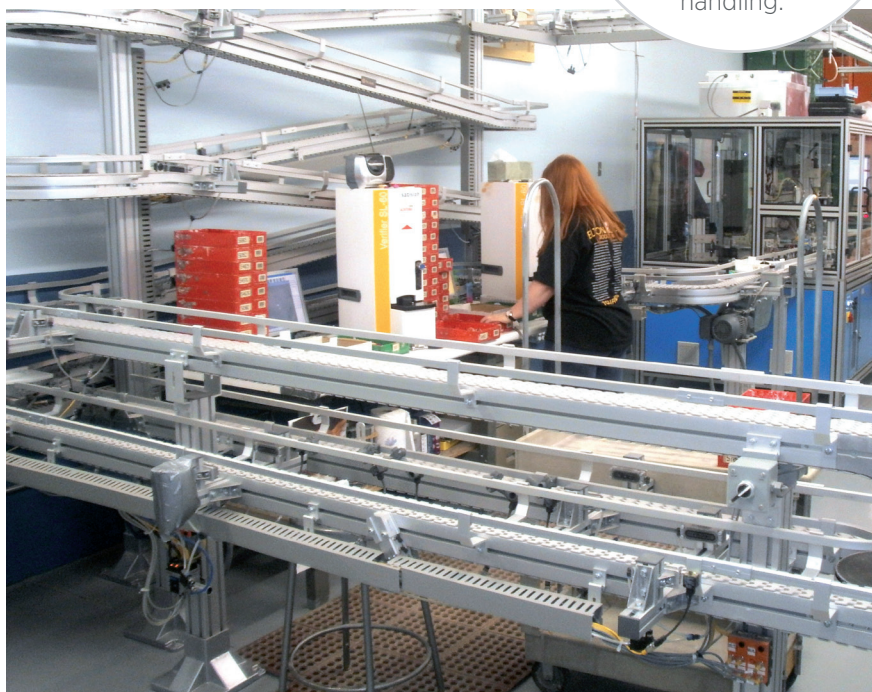
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In addition to the normal prescription eyeglass business they handle for eye-care providers from coast to coast, Classic Optical specializes in high volume vision materials contracts with governmental agencies, Managed Care Organizations, traditional brick-n-mortar optical retail chains, and some online “virtual” optical shops. To most efficiently manage the mass production processes of their business, they worked closely with the FlexLink team and have transformed their lab into an automated facility.

Automation evolution

Mr. Rodney Remsey, Director of Laboratory Operations for Classic Optical, spearheaded the automation evolution. Beginning in 2007, he and his team, led by Peter Daniels, Operations Engineer, managed the transformation of the business from a manual laboratory to an automated laboratory — dramatically increasing capacity, without the need for additional personnel.

“It took a little work to get everything set up, but once it was installed it created huge savings in our labor cost. There is no way that we could have managed to expand to this volume of manufacturing



profitably without installing automated materials handling” said Remsey.

Smart routing

One of the key features of FlexLink installations is the ‘smart routing’ software which ensures the right jobs go to the right processes.

“It was like learning a new operating system on your mobile phone. At first you might get a little frustrated and then you have that aha! moment and understand how it all works. It’s exciting when you see the results and then you just want to see how much further you can go,” Remsey continued. “We had great

→ service from FlexLink throughout the process, beginning with the initial facilities planning and layout design, through the completion of the installations”.

Optimal use of space

Classic Optical is a 40,000 square foot facility comprised of many different rooms, some with low ceilings making efficient layout challenging. However, by using some of the new product releases from FlexLink, such as the spiral elevators, they managed to make optimal use of the space while keeping walkways clear by using the vertical clearance above the manufacturing equipment. The spirals can be more cost effective than vertical elevators, as they do not require any automation or control and consequently have a very low maintenance requirement.

Each stage of the conveyor installation in the laboratory was installed by the FlexLink installation team, who were “absolutely tremendous to work with” says Ramsey, “they managed to minimize disruption to production, while working long hours to get the system online as quickly as possible.”

Growth is the future

Classic Optical’s business development goal is to continue to grow and

expand in the coming years. To realize their objectives, they are following a long-term concept plan for production. The facility plan was developed in partnership with FlexLink engineers, and it enables Classic Optical to add capacity incrementally in a stepwise manner. As part of this multi-phased plan, the office is currently being totally rebuilt and relocated. When completed, additional space will be transitioned to manufacturing functions. Ramsey and his team know exactly what to do with that space — and it most certainly will involve FlexLink.



NATIONAL OPTICAL SALES



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Celebrating 30 years!

As the inventor of modern conveyor systems, FlexLink have always been the driver of the development in conveyor technology and production logistics solutions.

R&D (Research and Development) and quality have been decisive factors at FlexLink from the start in order to create sustainable value to its customers. The investments in further developments will continue and new products are in the pipe-line to be launched.

Upcoming Events:

22-24 September, 2011,
Vision Expo West, Las Vegas.
Visit FlexLink’s booth LP4078!

“Looking Forward” is intended to be a briefing note for those of you in the optical industry involved in improving productivity and developing solutions to meet the latest trends in the market.

*Paul McEllin, General Manager
FlexLink Systems, Inc.*