WAYNE AUTOMATION CORPORATION

WAYNE AUTOMATION CORPORATION'S

ULTIMATE GUIDE TO CASE PACKERS

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Introduction

Every packaging line has a rhythm. Products flow from one stage to the next—filling, capping, sealing, and labeling. But when they reach the end of the line, that rhythm often breaks. Operators hustle to keep pace, stacking items into boxes by hand, and one small slowdown ripples backward.

That bottleneck is where automation makes the difference. Case packers replace manual packing with precision machines that keep products moving into cases smoothly and consistently. They improve speed, reduce strain on workers, and protect the quality of what you ship.

For project engineers and maintenance managers, investing in case packing machines boosts production speed, reliability, and safety. This guide explains what case packer machines do, the different types available, the benefits they bring, and how to evaluate the right fit for your operation.

What Are Case Packers?

A case packer machine automates one of the most repetitive tasks in packaging: putting products into corrugated cases or trays. Some systems focus solely on packing, while others combine several stages into one machine. Wayne offers both approaches—stand-alone packers like the WTP and the new gantry compact case packer, as well as all-in-one systems such as the WR that can erect, pack, and seal cases in a single sequence. Instead of relying on manual labor, these machines align, group, and place products in a consistent pattern. The case is then closed and sealed, ready for palletizing or shipment.

Without automation, packing requires multiple operators. Each worker lifts and arranges products, often for hours at a time. This work is slow, inconsistent, and physically taxing. An automatic case packer eliminates those constraints. These machines use mechanical guides, servo-driven motion, and sensors to handle the process with repeatable accuracy. Products enter on conveyors, are organized into sets, and then lowered or pushed into cases.
The advantages go beyond speed:

- **Consistency:** Every case looks the same, reducing palletizing errors.**Care** - Will it help protect the product and maintain its quality?
- **Protection:** Fragile products, such as bottles or cartons, are handled carefully to minimize damage.
- **Efficiency:** Machines operate for entire shifts without fatigue, keeping pace with upstream equipment.

Imagine a beverage line running 300 bottles per minute. Hand-packing that output would require dozens of workers. A bottle case packer handles it effortlessly, even shifting between SKUs with minimal downtime.

Maintenance managers see fewer jams and less equipment strain. Project engineers get machines that connect easily with conveyors and palletizers. All of this keeps products moving without interruption.

Types of Case Packer Machines

Case packers differ mainly in how they handle products, form the case, and they fit into the line lay-out. The following breakdown keeps the distinctions simple so engineers can match the right type to their goals.

Tray Packers

Open trays support products without enclosing them, which is why this style often appears on beverage lines and in display-focused packaging. The machine forms the tray, stabilizes it, and arranges products in a steady sequence that works well when items share a similar shape. Most tray systems load from the side, which suits rigid products that slide cleanly into place.

Pros:

- Clear presentation for retail and multipack formats
- Smooth operation with shrink-wrapped bundles
- Reliable handling for items with consistent dimensions

Cons:

- Limited protection during transport
- Not ideal for containers that fracture easily

Bottle Case Packers

Bottles require steady control during grouping and placement, as even slight movement can cause tipping or breakage. These machines use guides and gripping systems to gently lower bottles into cases to keep them upright and avoid lateral pressure.

Pros:

- Steady placement reduces breakage
- Consistent bottle grids support firm pallet loads
- Built around bottle spacing and geometry

Cons:

- Suited mainly for bottle lines
- Shape changes may require added setup time

Wraparound Packers

This style forms the case around the product. Instead of placing items into a prepared box, the corrugated blank folds and closes while the product remains in place. The result is a compact case with strong edges and minimal empty space.

Pros:

- Tight, stable packs that travel well
- Case structure resists crushing
- Efficient use of corrugated material

Cons:

- Works best with stable, rigid items like cans, cartons, and boxed multipacks
- Not suited for fragile items like glass bottles or jars that need vertical loading

Compact Case Packers

Some facilities need automation but don't have the floor space for a large machine. Compact systems fit into tighter layouts while still providing controlled product loading and consistent case output. They offer a straightforward shift away from manual packing. Compact systems can use side- or top-loading, depending on layout and product stability.

Pros:

• Fits into restricted floor plans

• Practical option for lines upgrading from hand packing

• Supports a variety of product setups without major changes

Cons:

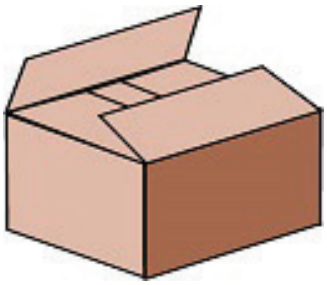
• Throughput may not match larger units

• Limited space for added features or customiztion

With the machine type in mind, the next step is the case. Which case format matches your product and downstream handling requirements?

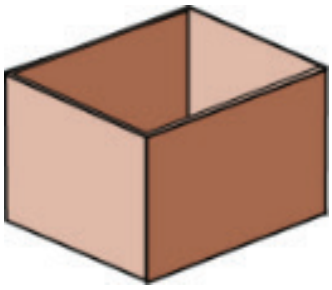
Case Styles

Case packing machines can handle several common case formats:



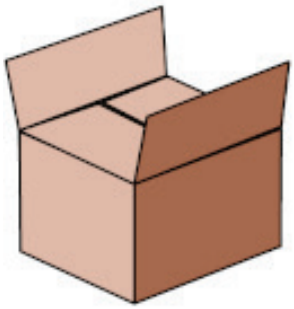
Regular Slotted Container (RSC)

Standard shipping case with center-closed flaps.



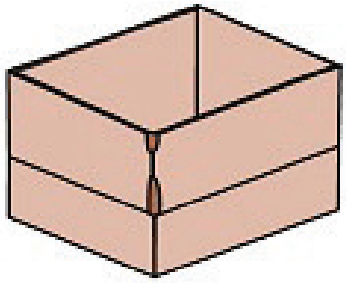
Half Slotted Container (HSC)

Similar to RSC but open on one end, often used with trays.



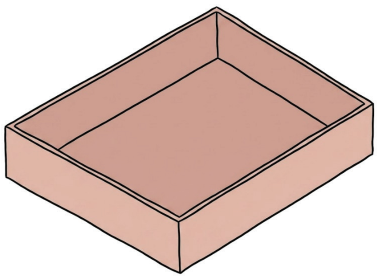
All Flaps Meet (AFM)

Stronger closure for heavy or delicate products



Tablock

Includes locking tabs for extra stacking stability.



Tray Packing Styles

Can handle Two 12-Packs, Four 6-Packs, and Six 4-Packs per Tray

Choosing the right style depends on product fragility, shipping requirements, and stacking needs.

How Case Packers Improve Operations

The shift from manual packing to automation brings benefits across the plant floor.

Labor Efficiency

Manual packing relies heavily on staffing. During labor shortages or peak demand, finding enough operators becomes a challenge. Automatic case packers reduce that dependency. Instead of three or four people working a line, one operator can oversee a machine.

Reduced Downtime

Misaligned products or poorly formed cases slow down manual packing. Automated systems eliminate most of those issues by maintaining tight control over every step. Sensors detect misfeeds, and guided motion keeps products steady. The result is fewer stoppages and smoother runs.

Better Integration

Case packing machines are designed to align with upstream and downstream equipment. Whether discharging cases vertically into palletizers or moving horizontally onto conveyors, they keep production flow continuous. This integration reduces accumulation points where jams or backups often occur.

Access to Data

Modern systems connect directly to plant monitoring software, giving maintenance teams clear visibility into cycle counts, efficiency trends, and causes of downtime. This data helps them act early instead of waiting for a failure. Wayne's Machine Condition Monitoring adds real-time feedback on sensors, air pressure, and vacuum performance, while KeyGuard® Control uses RFID access to limit adjustments to authorized personnel. Together, these tools tighten oversight and speed up troubleshooting

Safety Improvements

Packing by hand means constant lifting, bending, and twisting. Injuries from repetitive motion are common. By shifting that workload to machines, plants reduce the risk of strain while keeping operators focused on supervision instead of heavy labor.

Taken together, these benefits create packaging lines that are faster, safer, and more predictable.

What to Look For in a Case Packer Manufacturer

Choosing the right case packer manufacturer is as important as choosing the right machine. A reliable partner ensures the investment continues to deliver value long after installation.

Reliability

Machines must operate across long shifts without frequent breakdowns. A dependable design reduces emergency repairs and keeps production on schedule. Look for proven track records and references from established plants.

Flexibility

A packaging line rarely runs one SKU forever. A strong case packer machine handles multiple case types and product formats. This flexibility allows companies to adapt without purchasing new equipment each time product lines evolve.

Maintenance-Friendly Design

Tool-less adjustments, clear operator interfaces, and recipe-driven controls shorten changeovers. Maintenance managers benefit from easy access to wear parts, while engineers reduce downtime tied to complex setups.

Service and Parts

Even the best equipment needs upkeep. A case packer manufacturer should offer accessible parts and responsive support. Service delays can mean hours of lost production, so availability matters as much as machine design.

When decision-makers weigh these factors, they avoid short-term fixes and secure long-term performance.

Manual vs. Automatic Case Packer ROI

The return on investment for automation comes from more than labor savings.

- **Throughput gains:** Manual teams can pack only a handful of cases per minute. An automatic case packer runs dozens, matching line speeds that humans can't sustain.
- **Consistency:** Automation ensures each case is packed the same way, reducing rework and improving pallet stability.
- **Safety savings:** Fewer injuries mean lower compensation costs and higher morale.
- **Reduced waste:** Fewer damaged products protect margins and brand reputation.
- **Scalability:** As production grows, automation absorbs the increase without requiring more operators.

Instead of looking at cost only in terms of labor reduction, it's more useful to view ROI as a combination of speed, quality, and safety. Each element compounds to deliver long-term value.

Key Questions for Maintenance Managers & Project Engineers

Before selecting a case packer machine, decision-makers should address critical questions:

1. What SKUs and formats will the system need to handle?
2. How many changeovers per shift are expected, and how fast must they be?
3. What safety standards apply to this environment?
4. How will the system integrate with upstream and downstream equipment?
5. What space constraints exist on the plant floor?
6. What spare parts and technical support are guaranteed?
7. Can the system scale with projected growth?

These questions ensure a thorough evaluation before making a financial investment.

Wayne Automation's Approach to Case Packing Machines

Wayne's case packing lineup spans stand-alone units, integrated systems, and compact modular designs. Each model solves a different set of production constraints—speed, space, case style, container stability, or the need to separate functions across multiple stations.

Our Packing Solutions

- **WTP Tray Packer:** Packs up to 15 trays per minute, handling HSC case types. Plants often choose it when they need a dedicated tray solution that can sit anywhere in the line, especially in beverage multipacks and retail-ready applications where presentation matters and floor space is limited.

- **Wraparound Packers:** The WR's throughput depends on the application, but its value comes from combining erecting, packing, and sealing in one sequence. It supports RSC, Tablok, and AFM case types and gives plants a single controlled workflow instead of managing three separate machines.

- **Bottle Case Packers:** The packer works with case erectors, partition inserters, and basket carrier inserters to keep bottles separated and supported before loading. Wayne also provides soft-touch case inverters and automated sealing systems, creating a controlled path that limits breakage and maintains pattern stability during palletizing.

- **Compact Case Packers:** These modular systems produce roughly 10 cases per minute per module, allowing output to scale with additional sections. They support HSC, Tablok, AFM, and other formats, making them a fit for lines with limited space or teams upgrading from manual packing in stages.

Design Advantages

- Servo-driven motion for precise placement
- Modular construction for adapting to different lines
- Tool-less adjustments for quick changeovers
- Safety features such as guarded enclosures and light curtains

Service and Support

As a leading case packer manufacturer, Wayne pairs equipment with training, responsive support, and ready-to-ship parts. Maintenance teams gain confidence knowing help is available without delay. By combining engineering expertise with customer focus, Wayne delivers systems that match real-world production challenges.

Strengthening the End of the Line

Packing has long been one of the toughest stages of production. Manual work slows throughput and puts strain on operators. As speeds have increased, automation has become essential—and Wayne Automation is a powerful answer to that need.

For nearly 50 years, Wayne has focused on end-of-line solutions that eliminate bottlenecks. Our equipment has evolved with industry demands, handling trays, bottles, and complex case styles focused on food, beverage, chemical, glass, and plastic packaging manufacturers. What hasn't changed is the goal: consistent, reliable packing that protects product quality.

Today's case packer machines combine that history with modern design. Servo motion, modular layouts, and operator-friendly controls keep production on pace while simplifying changeovers and maintenance. For engineers and maintenance managers, this means less downtime, safer operation, and systems that adjust to changing product lines.

Packaging will continue to evolve, but dependable end-of-line performance will always be critical. Wayne Automation's long experience and forward-focused engineering ensure that investment in their machines isn't just about solving today's problems—it's about building the capacity to meet tomorrow's.

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