



Back to the future for the baking industry



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By

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Industry veteran Rowdy Brixey, president, BEST: Brixey Engineering Strategies & Training, recognized the potential of several virtual reality systems during iba, held in Munich in September.

“Even though many of these systems are in their infancy, there are many attractive aspects,” he observed. “The biggest advantage I see is for training. Virtual reality or augmented reality gives us the ability to train in a safe, fun environment.”

It also saves tons of time.

“You can disassemble a machine, rotate the view and reassemble in moments versus hours,” Mr. Brixey said. “The level of detail is amazing, and you feel like you are actually ‘there’ versus just watching a video. The other advantage will come from problem solving remotely. This too helps the industry overcome the lack of experienced talent in a new facility or where there are inexperienced associates.”

Robert Burgh, president of Nexcor Food Safety Technologies, suggested the ideas of “Lights Off Production” and “Only One Down Shift a Week” are still considered futuristic fantasies by most in the baking industry.

“Yet, in recent times, consistent, incremental developments are yielding better equipment, better controls and better data,” he said. “And new technological systems are moving the industry in this direction. Our maintenance systems are designed to repair what needs to be fixed, and our sanitation systems optimize cleaning in the most efficient way. Both correct issues before they affect product quality. Companies with the foresight to be proactive and maximize the abilities of their systems are getting the most return on their investments.”

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