

# Simplifying bottle conveyor chain replacement

William Hall offers some basic guidelines that simplify the job of replacing conveyor chains.

When replacing conveyor chains, today's bottle producers can choose from a wide array of chain options. Replacement chains are available in many different widths, different pitches, different link designs, with plated links, with or without pin head guarding, in wear-resistant materials, with or without spacers and with a variety of sprocket guiding options. While these choices give buyers many alternatives, they can also make the task of selecting a replacement chain somewhat bewildering. Add this potential confusion to the fact that replacing conveying chains on IS machines or cross conveyors is expensive and often scheduled during brief maintenance shut downs and it is no wonder that buyers are very concerned about making the 'correct' chain choice.

## CHOOSE A KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCE

With so many different styles of conveying chains, an experienced and knowledgeable chain provider can simply one's life. Work with a company whose people have extensive product knowledge and are concerned with helping buyers make the best, most economical choices for their application.

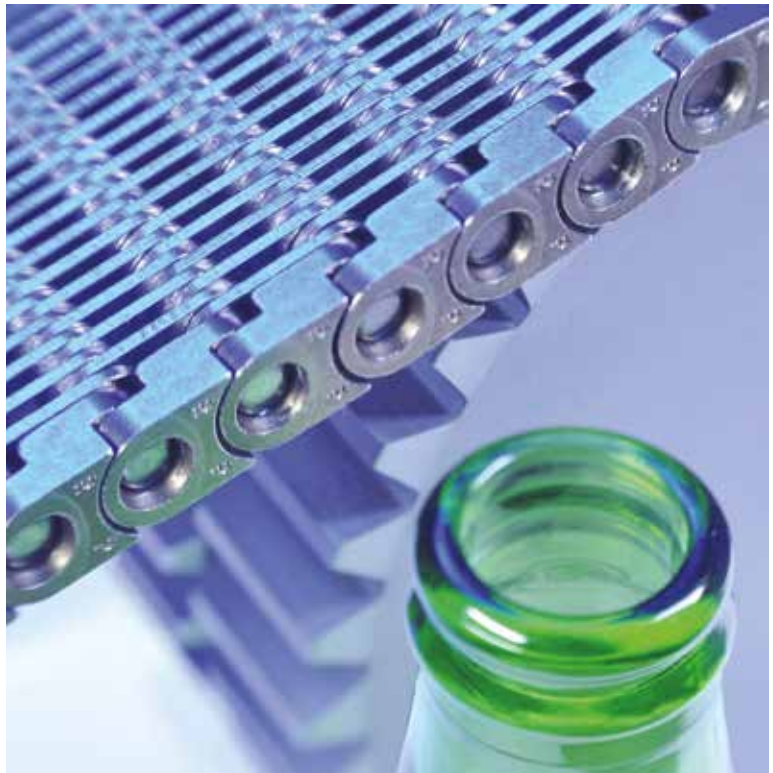
Ramsey customer service personnel receive extensive, ongoing training, not only about Ramsey's chain but about the products of all other manufacturers as well. They are taught to exactly identify a conveying chain, even with very limited information. The available information could be a chain photograph, a small chain sample, a producer's current part number or a part number from years ago. Positively identifying a chain is the first step in chain replacement and highly trained customer service people can make this easy for the chain buyer.

## UNDERSTANDING THE OPTIONS

Glass conveying chains are not commodity-like products and there is no single industrial standard that assures chain from different sources will be interchangeable.



Chain options may be confusing!



If a chain is working, keep it.

Instead, each manufacturer can have its own chain designs, part numbers and often its own chain component designs. Consequently, it is important to choose a manufacturer that has experience with the wide range of conveying chain options that are used on IS machines and cross conveyors around the world.

Ramsey has been making chain for over 90 years and more specifically, has manufactured single pin glass conveying chain for longer than any other company. With this experience, Ramsey can offer an exceptionally large range of chain replacement options and can also provide sprockets that are guaranteed to be compatible.

## IF THE CHAIN DESIGN WORKS, KEEP IT!

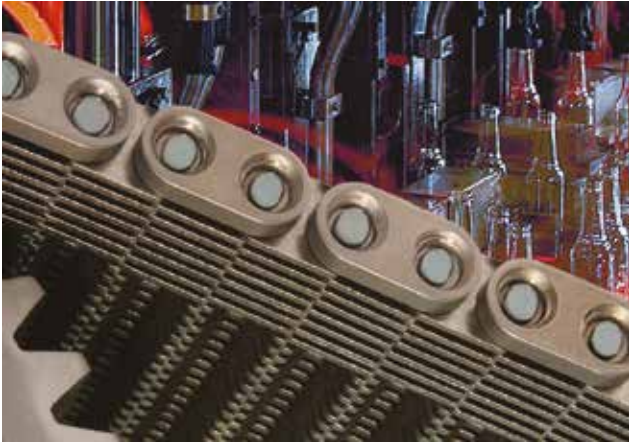
If a chain provides good service life and the user is satisfied with its performance, it is probably advisable

to stay with that design. In this case, replacement is very simple; just ask for a quote on a chain that is the same design as the one already used.

Ramsey can provide a fully compatible replacement, regardless of the chain source. To keep things



Large chain coils save time.



Consider different designs to improve performance.

really simple, just provide a part number but if this is unavailable, a photograph or a small sample is the next best thing to identify a chain design.

### TIME FOR CHANGE?

If a glassmaker is dissatisfied with conveying chain performance for any reason, it may be a good time to consider alternatives. Talk with the existing chain provider about the problems encountered and ask them for product suggestions. A knowledgeable chain provider will be happy to offer product advice and provide chain samples.

It is important to see and understand the benefits of the chain considered. Chains are available to address specific conveying challenges or to correct a wide variety of operational problems. Wear-protected chains like Ramsey Allguard FX and Lifeguard\* series chains have recessed pin heads to prevent pin head wear and to promote smooth product transfer on and off the conveyor. Lifeguard chain, a patented design with minimal gaps between adjacent links, is especially well suited for the transport of small bottles. Conveyor chains can also be manufactured from stainless steel or special wear-resistant materials.

### SIMPLIFIED INSTALLATION OPTIONS

Just as buying a replacement chain has its challenges, so does installing the chain. It is important to find methods that can simplify the job. In some production settings, where material handling equipment is suitable, it makes sense to order conveying chain in large coils, rather than the standard 10ft coil. This can save time by reducing the number of chain connections that must be made during the install.

Another important time saver is a chain connection and disconnection device, like Ramsey's RKO tool. The Ramsey Knock Out tool is designed to quickly and easily remove pins wherever a chain must be disconnected. The same tool simply installs chain connecting pins wherever chain sections are to be joined. The RKO tool (patent pending) also maintains chain link and spacer alignment during chain connection. ■

\*Lifeguard is a registered trademark of Ramsey Products.

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#### FURTHER INFORMATION:

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*Pictured is Ramsey's patented Lifeguard® chain*