Upgrade Your Indicator for Improved Communication Capabilities

Facilitating Real-Time Device Communication

The need for data, particularly when weighing in a production process, is critical and growing. We need information, we want it to be accurate and we want it fast. Data collection from your scale in real time can help improve your product quality and process efficiency.

If you have an older scale indicator that is sending weight data to any other devices, it is likely doing so using RS232. his method has some limitations and requires cables to be run between devices. Newer devices utilize Ethernet TCP (Transmission Control Protocol) to transmit data. Ethernet TCP allows you to plug the device into your existing network using an ethernet cable. This connection gives you visibility via the IP address to see basic weighing data and link scales through your internal network.

Whether you need to send the data to your ERP or quality system, record the data in an Excel spreadsheet, or even connect the indicator to a printer, Ethernet TCP provides the needed connection. Scale manufacturers also offer data collection software for individual scales or networking a hub for multiple scales. Examples of this include Mettler Toledo Collect+ and Rice Lake Weigh Vault.

Older Indicators and PLCs

If you are using an older scale indicator to feed data into your PLC to control things like batching, filling, checkweighing, inventory monitoring, or automation, it is likely utilizing an analog output signal. This output type normally uses either a 4-20ma or 0-10ma signal to relay measurement data. Analog signals are less than ideal because the signal has to be calibrated to the weight and even once calibrated the data isn't quite as clean due to the nature of the transmission.

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On the other hand, if you use a digital signal such as Ethernet IP (Ethernet Industrial Protocol) the signal is much cleaner and will provide your PLC with more accurate and reliable weighing data. This is critical when controlling processes such as batching and filling when an incorrect weight can result in wasted raw materials and/or inconsistent product.

By upgrading your indicator to a newer model with digital ethernet communication protocols you can reduce the risk of wasted raw materials and scrap, while also improving the quality and consistency of your final product. In addition, newer models make it easier to network your devices and give you better real-time data about what is going on in your process.

If you are interested in upgrading your indicator reach out to our team of measurement experts today to learn more!