A better way to bake bread

Bakery products require precise amounts of flour to ensure consistent quality, which means bakeries must have sufficient flour on hand at all times. This is more challenging than it may sound. Running a bakery seven days a week, around the clock, doesn't leave much time for inventory control. On top of that, basic inventory measurement systems will detect full or empty, but nothing in between.

Many classic inventory management processes rely on patterns of use to forecast flour requirements; any changes to the norm can result in a less-than-ideal inventory level. When extended to suppliers, this can result in partial deliveries or overfilling. Worst case? Silos run empty, and production comes to a standstill until an emergency shipment can be arranged. Costs associated with downtime and expedited deliveries are high. In this scenario, both bakeries and flour mills could benefit from improvements in silo inventory management.

What if there were real inventory levels in your pocket?
Siemens offers a versatile and complete solution for inventory management. Continuous inventory readings can be achieved with the SITRANS store IQ remote monitoring app tied to any Siemens level measurement device.

After the level data is sent through an existing network or transmitted to the cloud, the store IQ app provides instant inventory information. Bakery and mill staff will be empowered to monitor silo inventory accurately, regardless of location, and schedule precise and timely deliveries – ultimately avoiding shutdowns and ending inefficient delivery practices.

Keep in mind: SITRANS store IQ can provide alarm event handling and data capture for any remotely installed process instruments, including flow, level, pressure, temperature and weighing. With store IQ, the user can monitor equipment from anywhere using a computer, tablet or smartphone, and the virtually unlimited data storage of the cloud allows for analysis of usage patterns and inventory forecasting. Exporting of information for use in Excel provides detailed information for data logging using the CSV file format. SITRANS store IQ offers standard alarms and notifications to remote personnel via phone, email and/or SMS messaging.

What the future holds
Remote data management results in cost savings stemming from better inventory control, less downtime, lower stock requirements and fewer delivery charges – cost savings that pay for the modest initial investment in under a year. With this system in place, key personnel at mills and bakeries will have immediate access to flour levels and accurate records of usage.

Mills can use the charts and data export features of store IQ to determine how many lines the bakeries are running. Staff can then anticipate the bakeries' needs and avoid sending a truck too early or receiving one back that's partially full. In turn, this type of transparency enhances the level of service mills can provide their bakery clients. Thanks to the SITRANS store IQ solution, empty silos and idle production lines are things of the past.