CODING AND

PRINT-APPLY

Scanning moves further upstream in the industrial supply chain

Using plant wide data: *ALX720 print-apply machines from ALS are part of Turtle Wax's new system*

There is nothing new about retailer concern over bar code quality, and manufacturers of finished products are well aware of the possible consequences of not providing consistently scannable codes, whether for the consumer pack or the traded unit. But increasingly, manufacturers themselves are encouraging their own suppliers to standardise on symbologies and ensure that quality is up to scratch.

Nestlé in the UK has been scanning EAN-128 codes on incoming packaging materials for some time says supply chain data standards manager Robin Kidd. He explains: "When you scan a pre-labelled pallet-load of packaging, you get the batch number, when it was produced, when it was to be delivered and the number of items on the pallet – all from one scan! Now I'm looking forward to extending this system to some of our ingredients suppliers.

"My experience with packaging suppliers was interesting," Mr Kidd continues. "We spoke to 15 different suppliers last May, and encountered a complete range of knowledge about coding requirements. Every supplier we approached agreed to use EAN-128, but the necessary quality is not always there, so we get them to send in sample codes for trials."

Increasingly, suppliers to industry are coming under the same sort of pressure that the retailers have been exerting for several years. This emphasis on codes which are automatically scannable and which include several elements of variable data represents just as much of an opportunity for print-apply machinery suppliers as it does a potential headache for end-users.

At the beginning of the year, the electronic business standards association, the e-centre, published a new set of guidelines for bar coding. Entitled *Bar Coding: Getting it Right*, the recommendations covered the ground previously mapped out by the IGD's 1997 guide, affectionately known as Mr Big.

Technical changes between the current and earlier specifications include adjustments to the minimum height for pallet bar codes and to sizes of ITF-14 and UCC/EAN-128 codes. But there are also broader differences in emphasis, says John Pearce, a senior executive at e-centre.

One of these is the much greater amount of attention paid to bar code verification, and the importance of having some sort of off-line selective checking which goes beyond the simple scannability of the code.

Bar code quality issues

While many end users are understandably attracted by the cost-effectiveness of direct ink jet coding on to outer cases, the perceived – and in many cases real – code quality issues here continue to provide opportunities for print-apply alternatives.

For example, Graham Labelling has installed a series of print-apply systems at Hazlewood Pizza which, as a supplier to retailers including Asda, Sainsbury and Somerfield, required universally acceptable coding quality.

Hazlewood had opted to replace standard ink jet coding on outer cases, as project engineer Robin Roscow explains: "Initial thoughts were to go with high-resolution ink jet printing. However, the supermarkets only give these the bare minimum pass rate." The cleanliness issue was another determining factor in Hazlewood's choice of print-apply rather than ink jet.

Wet glue print-apply: *Langguth system from Sussex & Berkshire Machinery cuts material costs*

It is not only the output from coding and marking systems which is coming under increased scrutiny: data input to the coder is also of vital importance. Faster processing speeds usually mean higher line speeds.

Several UK suppliers of print-apply systems are using Novexx/Avery Dennison print engines, especially the 924. One of these is Sessions of York. As Sessions explains, the 924 is designed to build the next print job while the previous label is still in the process of being printed. This rapid image building allows the labeller to

MARKING report

achieve speeds of up to 400mm/sec with a print resolution of 12 dots/mm (around 300dpi).

Defective elements within the thermal printhead are one of the main causes of below-quality bar codes. So the 924 has an integral dot check feature, which means that all elements are monitored before printing begins. A further option allows constant checking of the printhead elements. This does slow the coder down, but only marginally, says Sessions. As well as the dot check, the print head includes a foil save system.

"With the 924, speed is the real key, and the ability to print at that sort of speed at such a high resolution," says Sessions service manager Simon Davy. This combination is achieved thanks to the 64-bit technology used in data processing. "It receives information in 64-bit 'chunks', which in turn means that it can generate labels a lot faster," he explains. This type of speed is maintained even when complex graphic images are being downloaded.

Labelling case blanks: *Travtec TR-1000 case feeder can be equipped with a labeller and bar code scanner*

The 924, 925 and 926 – with label widths of 100, 125 and 150mm respectively – can also be integrated into pallet labellers if required, says Simon Davy, but the high speeds achievable with the coder would make it more suitable for other print-apply jobs.

As he explains, the 1:1 system makes mismatches between label and pack less likely than a loop system. The 720 version of Sessions' print-and-apply labeller uses this sort of loop but the print engine is not as fast as on the 924. "However, because you have a loop you can, in effect, store labels, and the actual application speeds can be higher," he says.

Other suppliers using Novexx technology include Avery Berkel and Codeway, which both offer the PA-146 print-apply unit. Like Sessions, Advanced Labelling Systems (ALS) also uses the Novexx 924, but sales and marketing director Phil Donaldson does not believe that this common technology is leading to uniformity in the marketplace. "It's what you do with it that matters; you have to handle the product correctly, give it the right software control and integrate it properly," he says.

Integration is one of ALS's strengths, as a recent installation for Turtle Wax at Skelmersdale demonstrates. Working with the Siemens subsidiary that was designing an Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) system for the plant, ALS ensured that its new print-apply equipment for outer cases could access all the necessary data from this plant-wide system. As a part of this networking, data available to the ALX720 case labellers is also used when creating the labels for its Chess pallet label printers.

Basis for the pallet label

Jacqueline Smith, European IT manager at Turtle Wax, explains that one of the case labels is scanned, and this information then forms the basis for the pallet label. "This system will eliminate all handling paperwork, including delivery notes, and provides us with the means of controlling stock from a central location," she says. "It also speeds up the whole operation, and minimises human error."

For industrial, heavy-duty print-apply, ALS has integrated Zebra's PAX3 print engine into its ALX 2038 system. The system can be accessed via the Internet, allowing remote reprogramming of print settings, even for coders installed on different sites.

The PAX3 also sends out operator alerts via text messages for up to 16 different conditions, including 'low labels' and 'offline'. These messages can be sent to other devices including PCs and mobile phones, alerting operators more quickly and so helping to reduce downtime.

The range of print-apply combinations on the market in the UK continues to grow. Espera Scales is now the UK distributor for the range of label applicators and coders from German manufacturer European Labelling Systems (ELS). The ELS 200 labelling station can be fitted with the ELS 190 direct thermal or thermal transfer printer to give speeds of up to 200mm/sec at 300dpi resolution.

The system comes with its own Easylabel design software. The SME control system uses software which allows the storage and recall of specific parameter settings, and can manage the applicator with or without the print unit.

In addition, the ELS 520 cross-web labelling system for multi-lane packaging machines such as thermoformers can also be equipped with a printing or coding head to handle variable data.

For print-apply onto cases, Travtec can combine its TR-1000 case feeder with a Collamat 6620 applicator and barcode scanner, which is the system that has been installed at North Downs Dairy in Wincanton, Somerset. Production manager Tim Walker first saw the Travtec TR-1000 case feeder at the PPMA Show in London last September and, he says, "recognised it as a way to improve our outer box coding".

"The machine was installed early in the New Year and has proved itself an easy-to-use system enabling us to code both side and end faces of our cases," he says.

The TR-1000 is designed to feed flat-packed corrugated cases at speeds up to 40 a minute for labels to be applied. Labelling offline in this way is often the preferred option where there are two or more completely separate product lines, says Travtec sales manager Graham Roux, with the additional advantage that side and end labels can be printed and applied in a single pass.

Weber Marking Systems has just launched the Model 5200 Series of print-apply machines

offering a choice of 203 or 300dpi resolution and the capacity to print labels from 25 to 150mm wide and up to 150mm long at speeds up to 300mm/sec. There is also a choice of application methods: airblow, flex-tamp, or tamp-blow.

Options include a quick-change tamp pad that allows the system to be easily adjusted to accommodate different label sizes, and a a height sensor, to allow items of varying height to be handled at random.

Meanwhile, German labelling machinery specialist Langguth has introduced a print-apply labelling machine to operate with plain paper and wet glue, so cutting the cost of materials compared with more expensive pressure-sensitive label stock, traditionally used for case and tray coding.

Reduced labelling costs

"For any operation with a throughput of more than 10 cases or trays a minute, the new Langguth E21 offers reduced labelling costs," says Paul Lothian at UK agent Sussex & Berkshire Machinery.

Depending on label size, the machine can operate at speeds up to 30 cases a minute and is reel fed, adding variable information and bar codes on demand via a thermal transfer printer. The label is then cut from the reel and delivered to the glue wheel and applicator head. Print resolution is 300dpi and label size range extends from 50 x 20mm high up to 150 x 210mm high. Label designs can be held in memory or downloaded from a networked PC.

A faster wet glue print-apply machine, for speeds up to 46 cases, pails or similar containers an hour, has also been announced by KHS which says the machine is ideal for those plants already using cold glue. Based on the KHS-Anker Variant wet glue labeller, the system uses thermal transfer coding, and then cuts the label to the right height. A pneumatically operated transfer plate then indexes the cut and printed label to the glue roller. ■

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INK JET PRINTING

Confidence gets a boost from e-centre quality guidelines

When it comes to printing quality bar codes on outer cases, ink jet has a mixed reputation. As many suppliers are happy to explain, while the systems they install are often perfectly capable of generating bar codes of acceptable quality, the way they are configured, used and maintained may undermine this quality, with potentially damaging consequences.

Now e-centre's Bar Code Innovations Group has put together a guide* to take the wary end user through this difficult area. As the document mentions, most UK retailers expect to be able to scan 99 per cent of bar coded products, no matter what coding technique is used.

The guide recognises the effect that details such as the smoothness of the case conveyor, the proximity of the printhead and atmospheric conditions can have on the quality of the final code; but it also recommends that online scanning should be used to check the legibility of bar codes, together with off-line verification checks at regular intervals.

The role of operator training and regular preventative maintenance is also underlined, with twice-yearly reviews by the supplier recommended. Importantly, it maps out those areas of responsibility which are the vendor's before, during and after an installation, which are the customer's, and where those responsibilities overlap.

As an association spanning a vast array of technologies and types of end user, e-centre maintains a scrupulously even-handed approach to the various types of coding and marking on offer. Clearly, though, both suppliers and the e-centre itself felt that there was a job of education needing to be done, and that many potential end users are still influenced by an image of ink jet which does not take into account either the technical advances in the coders themselves, or the checks that are now available on code quality.

An option to consider

"We are simply saying that ink jet is an option to consider," says senior executive John Pearce. "It does require a lot of monitoring, though, and its suitability will also depend on the amount of available space in any given factory."

It is not only end users who will be reassured by these guidelines. Manufacturers of ink jet systems will be relieved by the underlying assumption that quality outer case bar codes are possible using their technology.

Markem was involved in the series of trials, carried out over a two-year period, which provided the basis for the e-centre recommendations, and was one of the first suppliers to welcome them. "They finally prove the reliability and consistency of ink jet coders to print UCC/EAN-128 and ITF-14 bar codes directly on to cardboard cases," says marketing manager

New generation: *Alpha Dot has introduced the Merlin 170 high resolution ink jet*

Touch dry: *Markem's new 5400 ink jet uses touch dry hot melt inks. Up to four heads can be controlled*

Tony Walsh. "The implementation of these recommendations will see an increase in the efficiency and speed at which products get to supermarket shelves."

End users have in the past been reluctant to rely on on-demand ink jet printing for their outer cases, despite the cost-effectiveness and improved inventory management that this allows, and have tended to stay with pre-printed cases and use print-and-apply for variable data. "Manufacturers can now strip out all the costs associated with the design, administration, storage and wastage management of pre-printed generic outer cases," says Tony Walsh. "Over a trading year, this can often be a substantial amount of money."

Competing with print-apply

It is not only suppliers such as Markem with an established reputation in the high-resolution ink jet area which are becoming more confident about industry acceptance of the technology. Willett has introduced its 610 digital ink jet printer, designed for outer case coding. According to business manager Andy Millar, this offers a vertical resolution of 180dpi and a horizontal resolution of 360dpi, meaning that in print quality terms it can compete directly with print-apply.

"With ink jet, the perception has been that, yes, it's much cheaper to run, but that there is a high maintenance requirement and that it is very messy," says Andy Millar. Willett's liquid ink system uses foil-sealed bottles and includes a patented automatic priming mechanism. According to Millar, this avoids much of the downtime associated with repriming in production environments filled with fibre dust.

The new e-centre recommendations clarify the importance of case handling, as well as coding quality per se, and case-feeding specialist Travtec is among those with experience in this area. According to sales manager Graham Roux, its TR-1000 unit can be linked up via a shaft encoder to a high-resolution ink jet system to code onto flat case blanks. "It takes the cases from a stack, feeds them through the coder at a known speed, known orientation and at a known distance, before restacking them," he explains. The company's TR-2000 unit is available to handle erected cases.

Only time will tell whether the greater availability of higher-cost, higher-resolution systems, together with the confidence boost of the e-centre guidelines, do in fact transform the market for direct ink jet coding on to cases. Meanwhile, suppliers of ink jet for all applications are keeping their eye on the ball with a series of new developments aiming at improved code quality, greater flexibility, or a combination of the two.

Tackling flexibility issues, Imaje has introduced the Crayon X-tra large character ink jet printer, with the option of running a single 16-nozzle printhead or two seven-nozzle printheads for two lines of text. On this system, print height can vary from just 10mm to 64mm, with

line speeds up to 90 metres/min possible.

The control unit has a two-line, scroll-down LCD display, with memory for up to 350 product codes of up to 15 characters each. The keyboard/display has access protection to minimise operator error.

At the other end of the coding size spectrum, the company has installed its S4+ ink jets at metal tubing manufacturer Fine Tubes, with a height requirement down to just 2mm on 3mm tubes. The customer needed reliable and legible coding of size, material, specification, inspection number, melt temperature and customer name, plus optional additional data.

Mark-O-Print is boasting a maximum print height of 100mm on the third generation of its Multiline high definition ink jet coder. The 768 nozzle printhead now being used by the company is said to give high quality results not achievable with multiple printhead systems. There are also touchscreen controls and a self-clean and ink-collection system.

For small character applications, Mark-O-Print has its Waxmark system, which can code up to five lines of high resolution text or graphics while avoiding use of potentially hazardous solvents.

Offering three different options in character heights, Alpha Dot's Merlin 170 will print text and time codes at resolutions up to 300dpi. There is a wipe-down keypad and LCD display, with an internal memory offering capacity for 50 messages of up to four lines each. An internal clock means that sell-by and best-before dates are automatically calculated and again, with security in mind, there is a password protection option.

Hot melt ink system

Markem Systems has introduced two new large character ink-jet printers for case coding, the 5200 with one or two print heads from a single controller and the 5400 which will operate up to four print heads from a single controller. Both systems use touch dry hot-melt ink which prevents ink weeping into substrates and gives a definition unaffected by the recycled content or other variation in corrugated board quality.

The problem of dust contamination in ink jet units is one which dogs certain types of manufacturing environment. But Videojet claims the fact that compressed air rather than an electric motor is used to circulate the ink on all its ink jet coders means that there is less contamination of this sort. Since little heat is created inside the cabinet, says Videojet, there is no need for ventilation, and so less likelihood of impurities being drawn in to the machine.

Indeed, Artex-Rawlplug has installed a Videojet 37e ink jet printer to code decorative mouldings for the DIY and home improvement markets. Previously, the company had applied labels, but decided that it required a more professional system with greater guarantees of traceability. The code, containing the time and date of manufacture, is applied just after the product has left the mould. Although MEK inks were originally used, Artex has since moved to a water-based alternative.

Extended distances

The fact that this particular customer was reassured by the quality achievable with water-based inks, even onto damp plaster, is testimony to the way that ink jet systems suppliers in general have addressed the issue of non-solvent-based coding quality.

According to Videojet, which was sold to the Danaher group by Marconi earlier this year, the 37e manages good print quality even at extended printhead-to-substrate distances. Its SurePrint software also plays an important role, says the company, by monitoring and controlling ink viscosity.

Despite the preference of Artex-Rawlplug for ink jet, and Videojet's ability to avoid problems in a dusty work area, not everyone sees this technology as the ideal solution for such hostile environments.

For instance, Cap Coder says it has sold over 40 of its Pulsar contact ink coders to a customer in the US, where they are required to operate in a hot and dusty factory. The customer needed round-the-clock performance, says Cap Coder, in printing variable production codes onto moulded rubber components for the automotive industry. ■

**Ink jet printing UCC/EAN-128 and ITF-I4 bar codes on to fibreboard cases.* Available from the e-centre, 10 Maltravers Street, London WC2R 3BX, tel: 020 7655 9000, e-mail: info@e-centre.org.uk

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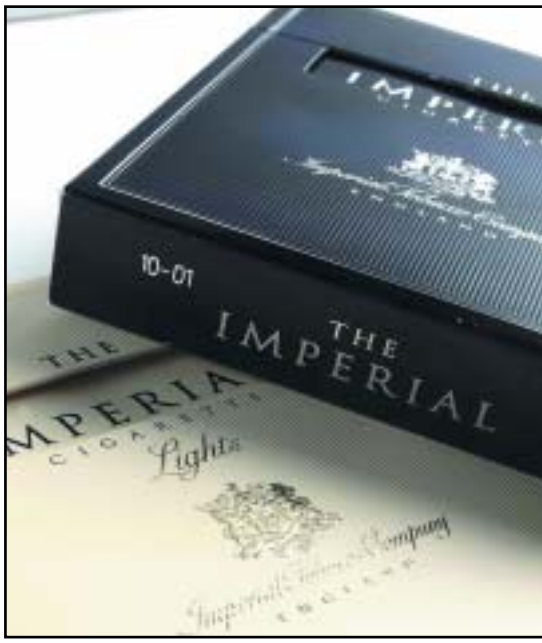
LASER CODING

Scribing lasers gain speed for top quality marking

Dot matrix lasers have received the most attention over recent years, sometimes portrayed as being a flexible – if slightly more high-cost – alternative to ink jet for high speed lines. But scribing or vector systems are now coming into their own as a more cost-effective solution for certain applications. Increasingly, they are also reaching very competitive speeds, while the marking quality is considerably clearer than with dot-matrix.

According to Ian Judd, European distribution manager at Domino UK, while the supplier's DDC3 dot matrix system can reach line speeds



Coding cigarettes: *Imperial Tobacco has installed two Domino scribing lasers*

of 400 metres/min, and its DGM scribing graphics marker manages a more modest 40 metres/min, its latest scribing system, the DSL, is capable of matching line speeds up to 300 metres/min, depending on the substrate.

Developed in conjunction with Sator in Germany, the DSL was introduced by Domino last year. A 10W version of the DSL suits general applications and materials such as board, while the 25W version can be used for more difficult substrates including glass, or to reach the highest rated speeds.

Vector laser: *Code on white pharmaceutical carton produced by the VisioMark system*

Imperial Tobacco, manufacturer of Embassy, Lambert & Butler and Superkings, has purchased two DSL1 laser printers from Domino for its Nottingham site. The first was fitted to a Molins Emperor packing machine producing a brand called The Imperial at speeds up to 110 cartons a minute. The second was integrated into a Focke 350 machine, where it codes up to four packs at a time. In both cases, an extraction system was fitted.

More cost effective

Imperial Tobacco seems satisfied with the installation. Says project engineer Bob Colley: "The DSL1 is much more cost-effective than the dot matrix lasers we originally employed. More importantly, it gives us the flexibility and scope to respond to new product and market launches in the future."

Current speed ceilings on scribing lasers are dictated by the limitations of the mechanical galvanometer used to manipulate the laser beam. But according to Ian Judd at Domino, a considerable amount of R&D work is going into purely electronic systems which could take coding speeds even higher.

It is no coincidence that it tends to be the manufacturers of higher-margin products which feel able to justify greater levels of investment in laser coding, with a significant capital cost differential remaining when compared with continuous ink jet.

Pharmaceutical packaging equipment company Uhlmann Pac-Systeme has a subsidiary, VisioTec, which specialises in coding and inspection technology. Its latest system, the VisioMark, is a vector laser designed to replace the mechanical embossing stations which are so often used on pharmaceutical cartoning lines.

Multilane coding of up to 400 cartons a minute is possible, says European sales manager Christoph Lehmann. UK drugs manufacturers which have already installed VisioMark include AstraZeneca and Pharmacia.

Another vector system which can be used for static or 'on the fly' marking is Rofin-Baasel's Rofin Multiscan VS105. Based on Windows NT, the system software allows variable or fixed data to be positioned anywhere within its 105 x 105mm scanning field.

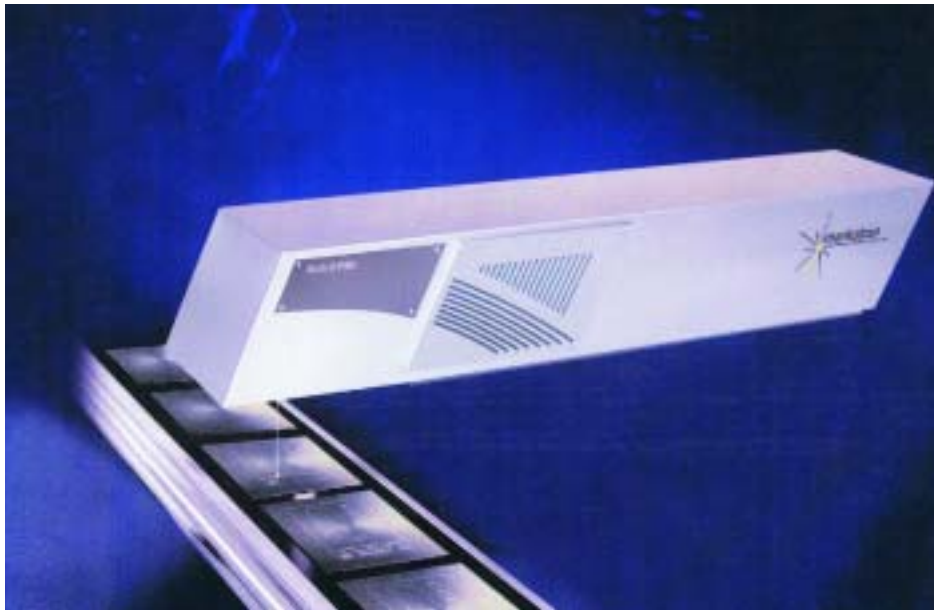
The heart of the VS105 is proprietary diffusion cooled CO_2 laser technology. According to Rofin, this type of laser generates an especially high peak laser power for effective, indelible coding and marking. The system's depth of field means that codes will be accurate across the whole scanning area as well as on curved or irregular items.

Four times the print area

Other laser systems coming on the market include Mark-O-Print's Markotron which, says the company, can be used for dates, logos, graphics and bar codes at high speeds on intermittent or continuous lines.

Markem is introducing an enhanced version of its SmartLase laser coder, offering four times the print area and the capacity to run at 60 per cent higher line speed.

Up to four lines of print can be coded within an area of over 60 sq cm by the new SmartLase SL at speeds in excess of 100 metres a minute, depending on the substrate and code to be printed. The coder is hand portable, measuring 600 x 170 x 120mm and weighs just 10kg. Air-cooled, using a CO_2 laser, it operates from a 13A power supply and, says Markem, can be readily mounted on cartoning and other types of packaging machinery. ■



New on the market: *Mark-O-Print has introduced the Markotron laser coder*

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THERMAL TRANSFER

High speed communication brings direct benefits

Speed and simplicity of communication is one of the fastest-moving areas in thermal and thermal transfer coding, with direct benefits for users of desktop systems and coders mounted on web-fed packaging equipment, as well as print-apply units.

Launching its NX series of thermal transfer printers, Thermo Allen Coding puts the emphasis on the control engineering and the impact this has on performance. Built around powerful digital signal processors (DSPs) from Texas Instruments, the NX2 and NX4 can link directly into an Ethernet or other network for fast data communications.

It is not only that the speed of data download is increased, says the company, but also that real-time communication of the next batch of data is possible during printing. Print areas for the two machines are 53mm x 90mm and 107mm x 90mm respectively.

Designed-in Ethernet connectivity is a feature of Videojet's Dataflex thermal transfer overprinter, together with a capability for Claricom software links to coding equipment of completely different types and from other suppliers. But Videojet's principal claim with this system is that it cuts the overall ownership cost by reducing downtime.

One of the ways this is achieved is through the use of twin stepper motors rather than the usual clutch system to maintain optimum tension on the ribbon. With each advance of the ribbon, throughout its life, the required tension is recalculated. Customers can also use a narrower ribbon for certain jobs, if preferred.

Ethernet connectivity: *Videojet's new Dataflex thermal transfer printer*

As end users of horizontal or vertical form-fill-seal machines have moved from intermittent to faster continuous motion machines, they have traditionally had to replace their thermal transfer overprinter at the same time. But Videojet explains that a further benefit of its Dataflex technology is that it can be transferred from an intermittent to a continuous motion machine if required, with minimal adjustments. This can also be an advantage if a company's overprinting needs change from time to time between different continuous and intermittent machines in the same plant.

Other suppliers are focusing on an ability to avoid potentially costly cabling through wireless solutions. Zebra Technologies has introduced the ZebraNet Wireless Card Socket for use with its Xi series and R-140 printers.

"End-users require the flexibility of transporting printers around the working environment without having to install additional network points and using cumbersome Ethernet cables," says product marketing manager Els Van Nieuwenhove.

Saving cost and time

According to customers, being able to avoid the cost and time involved in installing Ethernet cables is a significant consideration.

The pharmaceutical industry is not known for accepting new packaging and coding procedures lightly, and ITW Betaprint claims to be breaking new ground in a multi-lane thermal transfer system that has been selected by a major drugs multinational for use in the USA.

The Jaguar 106, or Thermalpak as it is known in North America, will be installed in a multi-head format on a reel-fed packaging line which allows the customer to use between two and six printheads at any one time. The system, which can be adjusted to match product flow, will be used to print variable information including date codes, ingredient statements, bar codes, graphics and real-time traceability data. ■

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KHS

Plastic and paper singles applied by same machine

Cut single labels in plastic, as well as paper, can now be handled on the Innoket Roland HS hot melt labeller from KHS-Anker, allowing users to alternate between the two media without the expense of reel-fed materials and equipment.

KHS-Anker has developed modifications for the machine that eliminate problems of static which, up to now, could cause plastic labels to adhere and feed in multiples.

For example, finger guides have been integrated into the top strip of the label magazine to avoid build-up of static and the associated risk of extracting several labels at once.

Depending on the length and material properties, labels are momentarily held at specific points by specially developed fingers, which ensure careful extraction and gentle handling of the plastic labels.

Paper or plastic: *Innoket Roland can handle both labelling media*

The gluing drum has been repositioned away from the label stack so that pressure is no longer exerted directly, avoiding the risk of labels sticking together.

Also, because the glue drum's supplemental pressure and tensioning functions are no longer operating, a sprung steel yoke has been fitted to apply even pressure over the entire surface of the label, to provide the required tension.

"The operating principle of the Innoket Roland HS remains the same," points out KHS-Anker, "therefore changeover from paper to plastic labels of the same size can be carried out immediately without changeparts or machine downtime."

The Innoket Roland HS is available in seven different sizes with output ranging from 4000 to 45,000bph.

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WEYFRINGE BARCODE & LABELLING SYSTEMS

Labeller suits most jobs at lower outlay

The Series 6000 label applicator has been introduced by Weyfringe to reduce the cost of automatic labelling machinery by limiting the specification to suit most, but not all jobs.

Weyfringe says it has established that 95 per cent of automatic labelling jobs involve a label width less than 116mm and line speed less than 40 metres a minute.

"Armed with this information the Weyfringe design team created a label applicator to meet the majority of labelling requirements at a price not inflated by the extra bulk and cost associated with larger and faster machines," says the company.

The machine occupies just 455mm of line length and is suitable for top, side and bottom application.

More information - enter 153

GRAHAM LABELLING SYSTEMS

Applicators operate with delicate chocolates

Graham Labelling has supplied Nestlé UK with six of its Commander 128-25 pressure sensitive machines to apply labels to the underside of the new Quality Street chocolate "The Big Purple One".

Working with Packaging Overhaul,

Delicate task: *Labels are applied to the base of the chocolates*

Graham Labelling also devised a method of holding the chocolates securely for accurate label placement without squeezing them.

The hazelnut in caramel chocolate is twist-wrapped in cellulose film and then presented to the labellers via a system of conveyors and side drive belts, for the 30mm diameter label to be applied to the flat underside.

An inclined outfeed then takes the labelled product to operator height for loading into trays.

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