

Case study – solution provider suggests NiceLabel to ensure reliable and user-friendly label printing.

The customer required simple and reliable interface for the user with some complex functions in the background. Their solution provider Barcode-IT suggested NiceLabel.

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Company: John West Foods Ltd

Solution provider: Barcode-IT <http://www.barcode-it.co.uk/>

Industry: Food processing

NiceLabel product: NiceLabel Suite

Summary

An important part of any manufacturing process is labeling and packaging the product, to ensure the actual product corresponds in all aspects with the product descriptor on the final packaging.

John West came to Barcode-IT with an outer case labeling query in early 2004 after being referred by another supplier. They required a system that would reduce errors in labeling but would require as little human input as possible.

Customer profile

John West Foods Ltd is part of the H.J. Heinz Co. Ltd. and has been supplying a range of high quality canned fish products for over 100 years. The company has canneries all over the world, products from which come into the distribution centre at Liverpool in the UK.

Partner profile

Barcode-IT is a data capture and barcode solutions provider based in the North West of England and serving the whole of the UK.

Barcode-IT is a well established company with a proven track record both in products and services, specializing in barcode driven Warehouse Management Solutions, mobile data capture and the printing and reading of barcodes for industrial and retail applications.

Barcode-IT is a member of Dash computer products group.

Challenges and solution

Objectives

The John West project appeared simple. They wanted to ensure identification of each product complied with customer requirements, but to prevent operator error at the time of manufacture they also required a system that would minimize manual intervention.

Solution

Barcode-IT recommended to John West that they should use NiceLabel Suite to solve their problem.

NiceLabel makes production simple and error free.

NiceLabel Suite contains tools for creating data entry and printing applications, making label production simple and error free, exactly what John West required.

The basic project worked as follows. Heinz supplied a modified version of their own master product database (NOP) to retrieve the information, NiceLabel Suite was used to print labels offline and then the rolls of labels were placed onto applicators.

Crucial fact—the provider developed the solution.

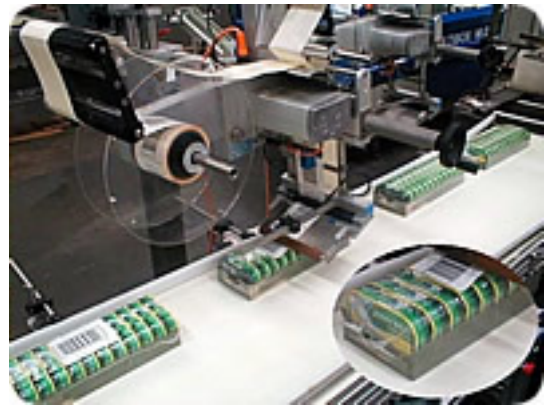
Barcode-IT developed a NiceForm front end for operators in the canneries so that all the operator was required to do was scan a NOP code from the selection given, the database found the corresponding label, the operator was asked to preview it and add quantity and then the final stage was simply to hit the print button. The correct labels were then added to the correct quantity of boxes solving the initial problem.

However, the project is not quite as simple as it initially seems. Canned goods also require a best before date which must be shown on the label, and additionally there was a requirement to print the Julian date code of manufacture (a number generated from a specific point in time).

In order to incorporate this data correctly into the label, a number of calculations and considerations had to be made.

To do this Barcode-IT designed the label to be put onto the outer casing, containing the product barcode, product description, the

best before date, calculated by the computer clock from information provided by the NOP, the origin and the Julian date, calculated using a complex VB script designed in house by Barcode-IT.



Note corporate identity of the customer and solution provider in the application.



Scan NOP

Enter Production Date

Enter BBE date

Label Quantity

Select Printer



As simple as it gets.

Barcode-IT
 www.barcode-it.co.uk
 sales@barcode-it.co.uk
 T +44 (0) 1200 441 977
 F +44 (0) 1200 440 250

After testing the software it was discovered that modifications to the generation of the best before date needed to be made due to possible delays between canning and packaging which potentially resulted in different best before dates being shown on the product and the barcode label. A simple solution was found and operators are now allowed to override the best before date if necessary.

Both John West and its parent company Heinz are very pleased.

The system can be operated easily, knowing all cases are correctly identified.

Conclusion

Both John West and its parent company Heinz are very pleased with this outer case packaging project created by Barcode-IT.

The systems continue to be rolled out to sites throughout Europe and North Africa and even with language barriers, no problems have been encountered. What was once a costly problem to John West was solved by an off the shelf software package and a little help from Barcode-IT.

The system can be operated easily and products are now received into the distribution centre in the U.K. with the knowledge that cases are correctly identified and meet customer expectations.