

Case Study

Off-Line Carton Coding



Dragonfly Foods Removes Coding Bottleneck



Launched in 1984, Devon based company, Dragonfly Foods, produces plant-based protein foods which are sold in health food shops and supermarkets. The range includes burgers, soysages and tofu products.

Dragonfly currently produces by hand and packs into a variety of cartons and sleeved trays. It sends out between three and five thousand products each day. Customers include Holland & Barrett, Ocado, Morrisons and Abel & Cole. The company also exports products to Sweden, Denmark and Australia.

Pressure on production

Faced with growing demand for its products and pressures on production capacity, Dragonfly Foods needed to remove the bottleneck caused by manual date coding. The company is now using a PrintSafe *udaFORMAXX* carton feeder with continuous inkjet coder to print date codes for its 15 different product lines.

Production Manager, Gareth Burton recognised that hand labelling was no longer tenable. He says, "Before we had the carton feeder, we were hand labelling with one of the sticker guns that you see

in supermarkets. It was an outdated way of doing it. Unfortunately it was also prone to error and risked stickers falling off."

Packs were labelled at the end of the line. Operators would have special sheets with the dates for that day's production. Burton describes the consequences of getting it wrong. He says, "If a product goes out with the wrong date on it, or no date at all, we risk getting fined by our customer. Not only that, it would damage the good relationship that we work hard to maintain."



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Time spent coding halved

The *udaFORMAXX* sleeve and carton feeder has given Dragonfly Foods a fast, accurate method of printing date codes. Operators load the cartons into a magazine, select the required message and quantity and press start. The machine feeds the packs underneath a print head and into a hopper for collection.

The production team can be confident of the right date on the right product. It has also cut the time spent coding by more than half. Burton says, "What I really like about the *udaFORMAXX* is that we can set it up for each day with the right codes and they can't be changed accidentally. It's also accurate."

Burton adds, "It's a big time saver. We have one operator who spends probably half an hour in the morning just quickly



doing the day's boxes. Before, we had someone stood there at the end of the line for three hours date stamping. It was quite a big bottleneck in the line."

Operators find it easy to code packs for the different batches produced each day. Burton says, "We have all of our

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boxes stored so that they are easy to select. We just load the cartons, set the amount and send them through."

Fantastic customer service

Demand for Dragonfly Foods' products is growing rapidly. Burton says, "In the last couple of weeks our daily production numbers have been higher than ever before, especially for our tofu products."

To handle capacity, the company is planning a new line which will include an *alphaJET* into continuous inkjet printer, supplied by PrintSafe for printing date codes on film.

Burton says, "The fact that we are sourcing a second coder from PrintSafe says it all about how well they have looked after us. They have been fantastic."

Fast Facts

- 5,000 packs coded in 30 minutes
- 15 different product lines
- *udaFORMAXX* carton feeder with *alphaJET* continuous inkjet printer
- Replaced error-prone manual process
- User settings and password controls ensure correct code
- Accurate print placement
- Easy to code different batches



About PrintSafe

PrintSafe is a coding and marking specialist serving manufacturing and packing companies throughout the UK and Ireland with a comprehensive range of coding equipment and after-sales services. PrintSafe is the UK distributor for KBA-Metronic GmbH.

Call 01962 761761
email sales@printsafe.co.uk
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