



Continuous Ink Jet
HP Bulmer
Case study

Cider maker HP Bulmer speeds up profits with Videojet's 1600 series high-utilization printers

English cider company HP Bulmer manufactures two of the UK's most popular brands of alcoholic cider: Bulmers and Strongbow. Founded in 1887, HP Bulmer makes 65 percent of the cider sold in the country and most of the UK's cider exports.

At its Hereford, England, facility, the company produces 132,000 cans and 11,500 bottles of Strongbow per hour and distributes them to suppliers throughout the UK.

In 2010, the Hereford facility had two canning lines that each produced more than 60,000 cans per hour, and a bottling line that processed 11,500 PET bottles per hour. Such high-capacity processing required reliable ink jet printers to apply variable data codes, so in the past, HP Bulmer had relied on Videojet Technologies' equipment to handle the coding on their packaging lines.

When HP Bulmer management decided to upgrade their machines, they asked Videojet to recommend the very latest in ink jet printing technology.





The codes on the cans required two lines of text including a Julian date, a best-before date, the time, and a reference to the production line.

Videojet suggested the 1600 Series continuous ink jet printers since they can print up to five lines of text and run at HP Bulmer's extremely high speeds. The 1600 Series is part of Videojet's industry-leading 1000 Line of continuous ink jet printers designed for 24/7 production and extended run times before requiring maintenance.

Bulmer's new Videojet 1600 Series printers replaced a number of aging Videojet Excel 170i UHS printers. Although the Excels had consistently supported Bulmer's needs for ten years. John Lewis, Training Manager, has been impressed with the new 1600 Series printers' even greater reliability and more compact design.

“The machines are so reliable, we don't need to enter anything. Best-before dates are created for the end of the month, limiting how often operators need to change messages.” John Lewis, Training Manager

Andrew Rawcliffe, Packaging Engineering Maintenance Manager, adds: “The Videojet printers are simple and easy to use. 80% of mistakes occur due to human error, and the intuitive operator interface reduces this.” Andrew also appreciates the modular ink system. Videojet's Smart Cartridge™ eliminates spillages and ensures the correct fluid type is installed.

To date, nine 1600 Series machines have been installed at the Hereford site. As HP Bulmer grows, Videojet looks to support them to achieve their goals for continually increased uptime and production levels.

“Even under the most difficult situations, the support of Videojet has been there,” says Lewis.



Call **91-75063 45599**
Email **marketing.india@videojet.com**
or visit **www.videojet.in**

Videojet Technologies (I) Pvt.Ltd.
Unit 101/102, Rupa Solitaire,
Building No. A-1, Sector -1,
Millennium Business Park,
Mahape, Navi Mumbai - 400710,
Maharashtra, India.

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