VIDEOJET®

Code Assurance
Reducing coding errors during product changeovers

The Challenge

Ensuring the right code is printed on the right product time after time is becoming increasingly difficult as variations in product and packaging type leave producers with more codes to keep track of than ever before. Demand for case-ready and pre-packaged goods has led to an increase in unique codes and a greater risk for potential coding errors, which can be costly due to product rework, regulatory fines and recalls.

The Videojet Advantage

Videojet is able to provide a wide range of easy-to-use coding and marking systems that have built-in software to make putting the right code on the right product virtually error proof – we call this 'Code Assurance'. As part of Videojet's Code Assurance offering, customers have the following options to help reduce errors during product changeover:

- A handheld scanner linked to Videojet coders enables quick and precise message selection and accurate code loading during product changeovers

- Networked solutions with Videojet's CLARiSUITE™ software to enable centralized code management, removing message creation and selection from the production floor

Why is Code Assurance important?

There is a growing expectation for Consumer Packaged Goods (CPG) production facilities to produce and package a much wider variety of products within the same site. In addition, expectations in code content have also increased.

Whether the facility produces food, pharmaceuticals or any other consumer goods, the scrutiny of safety regulations is greater than ever, with new code requirements requested on a regular basis. Where simple date codes were acceptable in the past, codes today may require country of origin, allergen or ingredient information, 2D Codes, bar codes, product identification numbers and lot numbers.

This new level of coding complexity from additional product and packaging types, together with new code regulations have led to more code combinations and a challenge for quality control. With many facilities producing different products on the same day and the same packaging line, more codes leads to additional changeovers and increases the opportunities for coding errors. Entering the wrong code can be caused by simply pressing the wrong key, which can result in downtime of the line, product rework and potentially damaging and costly recalls. Therefore it is recommended to choose coding equipment with Code Assurance features that will help guarantee the easiest, most error-proof coding possible.

Quick, accurate message loading

Easy-to-use, intuitive equipment
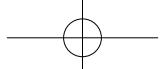
How to help ensure the correct code time after time?

While there are many systems designed to help prevent errors in code entry, there are two simple coding accessories that help make code changes easier during product changeover.

1. Bar Code Scanner

A simple handheld bar code scanner can be attached to a coder to easily facilitate code loading using a Universal Product Code (UPC) or a job card. Bar code scanners are a relatively inexpensive way to reduce the risk of selecting the wrong code when changing over to a different production run. The handheld scanner plugs into the bottom of a coder that either has an internal memory or is connected to a network. At installation, all codes used for the specific line are programmed into the coder or on the network along with a UPC code for each packaging type. During a changeover, the line manager simply scans the new package UPC or associated bar code from a job card to automatically retrieve the correct code format and content. Typing is not required which means no room for manual code errors.

2. Network Solution

In addition to using a bar code scanner to load product codes in a multi-product operation, coders can be networked to help ensure product code accuracy. Multiple coders can be connected together using common software through a company network and an internet or Ethernet connection. Networking enables centralized message creation and message loading to multiple coders on a line or in a facility.

Setting up a network of coders is ideal for production facilities which:

• Produce a high number of different product packaging types, customize codes for each customer, and ship products to multiple countries

• Have many production lines with multiple coding technologies on each line

• Receive standard message protocols by product from a corporate or centralized office

• Use an ERP, MES or DCS system to track inventory information

Connecting coders to a network enables a single person to load codes from a database to multiple coders on the production floor. Once all of the coders are connected to a single network, a production manager can use a computer to create or load specific codes from the saved database. Centralized code management helps ensure that all coders on a given line are printing the right message, time after time.
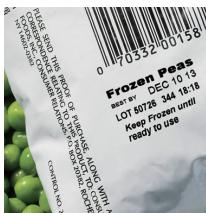
The bottom line

Getting the right code on the right product every time requires constant vigilance. The consequences of marking the wrong code on a product can be dramatic: costly rework, regulatory fines, recalls and even consumer illness. Choosing coders that expertly manage the creation and loading of codes can reduce these risks. Contact Videojet to discuss your variable coding needs.

We can create a customized, integrated coding solution which will help prevent coding errors and assure the right code gets on the right product time after time.

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