NiceLabel

International dairy company standardizes its global labeling and direct marking software to gain a competitive advantage

An international dairy company implemented a standardized label management solution for all of its labeling and marking printers. This enabled them to reduce costs, increase label accuracy and improve productivity.

Case Study

Industry: Food and Beverage
Solution: NiceLabel LMS

Challenges

- Solutions from many labeling and marking vendors
- Scattered integration with MES
- Risk of human data entry error
- Costly technical support
- Occasional unplanned downtime
- Escalating IT costs

Solutions

- Single platform for labeling and marking
- Standardized integration with MES
- Accurate labeling and marking
- Centralized support
- Controlled access and print history

Results

- Reduced IT costs
- Less rejected product
- Less re-worked product
- Less unplanned downtime
- Competitive advantage
- New levels of productivity

Background

This international dairy company produces various kinds of products at more than 70 dairies around the world. It is one of the world's largest manufacturers of organic dairy products and sells its products under well-known brands.

Existing environment

The company prides itself on being at the forefront of technology. Its master data and production data are maintained in its SAP ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) system while each of its dairies is equipped with a Wonderware MES (Manufacturing Execution System) to run production. Each dairy's local MES system synchronizes with the centralized ERP system for master and production data. This company has thousands of label and direct marking printers across its dairies. The printers were typically integrated with the MES by local system integrators who were also responsible for supporting the integration. Each location, and in some cases, even production lines, used different methods of integrating their printers. Some printers on production lines were not integrated with the MES and production data was entered manually on standalone systems.

In addition, each of the company's dairies has label and direct marking printers from many different manufacturers. The dairies used a variety of printers from companies like Zebra, SATO, Honeywell, Videojet, Linx and Domino. 50% of their printers are direct marking printers (continuous inkjet) and they print information such as best before date and lot number directly onto product and packaging.

Business goals

In order to streamline production and position the company for future growth, the company needed to achieve the following business goals:

- Standardize integration to MES
- Reduce complexity
- Minimize escalating third party IT costs
- Eliminate unplanned downtime

Challenges

Scattered integration with MES

The company enjoyed rapid growth fueled by acquisition, however each acquired dairy had its own labeling and direct marking printers from many different manufacturers. Consequently, integration with the company's MES varied between dairies and at times, even production lines so productivity and accuracy suffered. Most dairies contracted local system integrators to integrate their printers to the MES while other diaries ran standalone manual data-entry solutions. The company needed a single solution with a standardized method of integration between each dairy's label and direct marking printers and the MES.

High risk of human error

Manual data entry for standalone printers increased the likelihood of printing errors such as the wrong best before date. This could result in re-working product, customers rejecting product, lost sales or even lost business. If product was rejected, the company's competitors could fill the store shelves. The company needed a way to eliminate human error.

Multiple labeling and marking solutions

The company's vision for a unified solution from a single vendor posed a big problem. The merger of many dairies resulted in a wide variety of label and direct marking printers from many manufacturers. Replacing these printers in an effort to standardize would have been costly. Their legacy labeling systems only supported label printers. The manufacturer of each proprietary direct marking system only supported its own brand of printers. This meant that the company had to maintain many labeling and direct marking systems.

The company explored the option of having its existing label software providers develop drivers for their direct marking printers, however they all declined. They needed a single, unified label management solution that supported both its label and direct marking printers.

Escalating IT costs

Because each dairy had different brands of printers and methods of integration, the company had many solutions to support. The dairies depended on local small businesses (system integrators) for maintenance and technical support. If the printing systems went down, it became a support nightmare; often resulting in unplanned downtime and lost sales opportunity. The company needed to standardize on a single label management solution and method of integration to be able to take control of technical support.

Solutions

NiceLabel shared our vision for a single solution for labeling and marking. They were a true partner in helping us achieve our goal. NiceLabel was willing to go the extra mile when other label software providers wouldn't help us.
Senior Solution Architect

Standardized integration

Nicelabel enabled standardized integration with the MES at each dairy to automate printing. Now, master data flows directly from the MES to the printers, eliminating manual data entry errors, mislabeling and the associated costs.

Labeling and marking accuracy

With the NiceLabel system being rolled out, more and more printers on production lines are integrated with the MES so the company no longer has to rely on manual data entry. Accurate product and production data flows directly from the MES to labeling and direct marking printers.
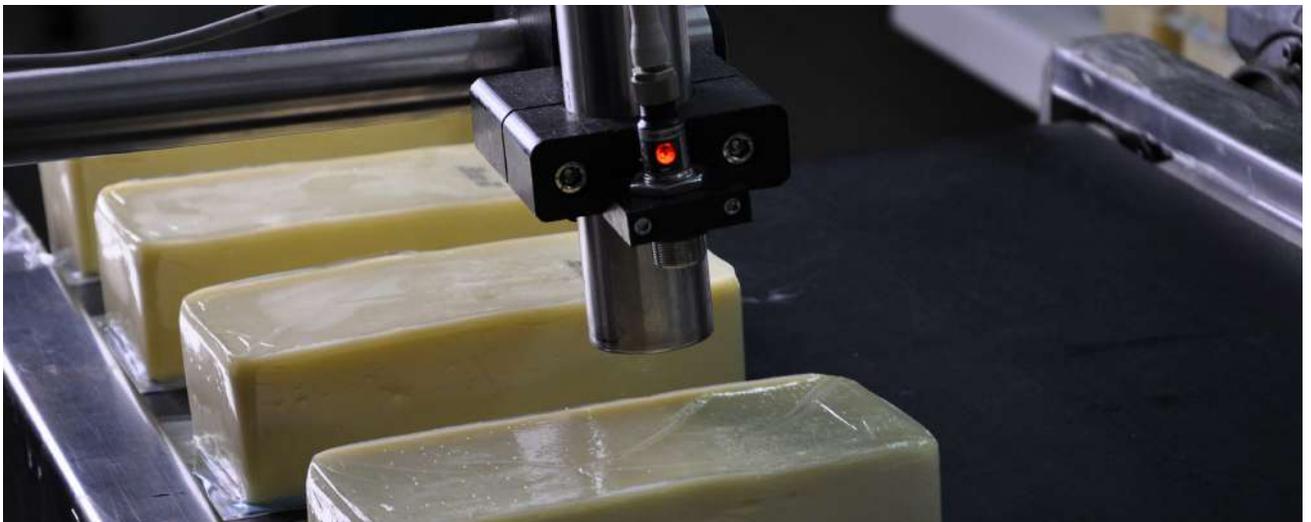
Unified labeling and marking

NiceLabel shared the dairy company's vision for a single label management solution that would support both label and direct marking printers. NiceLabel developed printer drivers for their continuous inkjet printers including Videojet, Domino and Linx, allowing the company to unify and control labeling and direct marking from a single system.

Centralized support

With labeling and direct marking now standardized under a single system, the company no longer needs to rely on local, small businesses to support various systems at each of its diaries. The company's centralized IT team now provides 24x7 support to each site, rapidly addressing issues before they result in production downtime. In addition, the company can remotely monitor all activity and diagnose errors.

Our customers have come to rely on us for accurate labeling and quality product information. NiceLabel helps us to meet their high expectations and we no longer have to worry about lost revenue associated with mislabeling.
Senior Solution Architect

Results

> " *With NiceLabel, the company has become an innovator in labeling and marking. Together, we are building label management solutions that previously weren't available.*
>
> Senior Solution Architect

The direct and indirect costs of the company's labeling and direct marking have been drastically reduced, making the software investment small in comparison. The return on investment will continue to grow as the company implements the NiceLabel solution at more of its dairies.

Minimized revenue loss and increased sales

Lost revenue associated with mislabeled and rejected product is no longer an issue for the company. Label and direct marking accuracy means that product is now less likely to be rejected. Their product quickly reaches store shelves helping them to increase market share.

Reduced IT costs and less unplanned downtime

Standardizing on a single solution has allowed the company's centralized IT team to provide expert 24x7 technical support to its dairies. This significantly reduces the cost of support while delivering better service to its dairies. The company can now establish a service culture with zero tolerance for operational breakdowns, in turn minimizing unplanned downtime.

New levels of productivity

The company's dairies are becoming more productive because they no longer need to re-work mislabeled and rejected product. In keeping with its vision to leverage leading edge technology to propel growth, the company is laying the IT foundation for a fully integrated, extended supply chain, enabling them to do more, faster, with less.

> " *We've seen an increase in productivity thanks to NiceLabel. Our labeling systems run more efficiently. We no longer spend time mitigating manual data entry errors and support is streamlined.*
>
> Senior Solution Architect

To learn more about NiceLabel's solutions for the food and beverage industry visit | www.nicelabel.com/food-beverage

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NiceLabel®

About the NiceLabel LMS

The NiceLabel label management system (LMS) provides businesses with everything they need to standardize, centralize and control their entire labeling process to achieve maximum print productivity. The NiceLabel LMS includes a label designer, application builder, document management system, web printing system, integrated printing system, a non-production environment and a change and transport system. It is scalable from five users to many thousands of users and can be extended to remote locations, suppliers or contract manufacturers. NiceLabel's core technology is proven with hundreds of thousands of customers, making it the most robust enterprise labeling solution.

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