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FAST, RELIABLE PRINTING DRIVES \$500,000 COST SAVINGS FOR BERNER FOOD AND BEVERAGE

Company Minimizes Manual Relabeling with Zebra® PAX4™

About Berner Food and Beverage, Inc.

For more than 70 years, Berner has made high-quality Swiss and other cheeses in the U.S., continuing the family tradition started generations before. Today, Berner Food and Beverage, Inc. has grown into a leading private-label supplier of quality food and beverage products with a full line of dips, cheese sauces and beverage items sold through retailers such as supermarkets, mass merchandisers, distributors, and club and convenience stores.

As a private-label supplier, Berner makes store-brand products that emulate, but are not limited to, Cheez Whiz®, Tostitos® Salsa Con Queso, Starbucks® Frappuccino® and Slimfast®.

Challenge

Berner Food and Beverage Inc. operates three state-of-the-art facilities with more than 215,000 square feet of manufacturing and warehousing space. On average, five to six million pounds of product roll off the 24x7 production lines every month.

As a maker of perishable foods, the clock starts ticking on expiration dates—usually less than a year—as soon as products go into containers, so the company must get them labeled and shipped as quickly as possible. Additionally, Berner applies barcode labels to every case to track them through the supply chain according to the customer's specifications.

Recently, the company began packaging products in smaller pack quantities, from up to 24 or 12 eaches per case down to packs of only four, six or eight eaches per case. With the need to get more cases through the line, the company had to speed up the print-and-apply labeling process.

"Our case line rate is two to three times faster than it was before," said Troy Grove, CIO. "We had to maintain consistency and accuracy at the higher speed to avoid manual relabeling later."

At the higher speed, the current print-and-apply process missed some cases, requiring Berner to employ people to check and label missed cases manually on each line.



Zebra® 110PAX4™

Customer

Berner Food and Beverage, Inc.

Industry

Food & Beverage

Challenge

Berner began packaging products in smaller quantities on multiple lines, increasing the line rate. The company needed a fast, reliable solution to minimize manual relabeling.

Zebra Solutions

- 110PAX4™
- ZM400™
- 105SL™

Results

- The company labels cases twice as fast as before.
- Virtually eliminating manual relabeling cuts labor costs by approximately \$500,000 annually.
- The print-and-apply solution holds up to the 24x7 production lines and requires fewer replacement parts.



Solution

Already familiar with Zebra® ZM400™ and 105SL™ printers for stand-alone applications, Berner again chose Zebra's 110PAX4™ for use with Domino print-and-apply labeling machines. Zebra had demonstrated a history of durability, and the PAX4 was compatible with a variety of labeling machines and software applications.

The combined Zebra-Domino solution, which includes pneumatic cylinders extending tamp pads, automatically applies labels to cases as they move along the production line.

"In trying to avoid downtime, we have a comfort level sticking with what's been successful in the past," Grove said. "With the Zebra-Domino combination, there are minimal replacement parts we need to keep on hand. That means fewer pieces that can have problems and less cost tied up in parts on the shelf."

Zebra's print-and-apply PAX4 print engines are designed to work in high-volume, mission-critical environments like that at Berner. The printers offer fast throughput, durability with all-metal construction and outstanding print quality. All that means Berner can keep the line moving.

With wireless connectivity, Berner can more easily move printers or reconfigure lines as needed. "We can move printers faster because we don't have to deal with cables. All we need is a power and air supply," Grove said.

Results

The Zebra PAX4 keeps pace with the demands of Berner's production lines. Before, the company labeled 12-15 cases per minute. Now, labeling has increased to 30-32 cases per minute—twice as fast as before.

Labeling reliability has improved as well. With printing that stays up with the line rate, the company minimizes manual labeling of cases. In fact, the percent of cases requiring manual labeling has dropped to almost zero.

"We don't have a lot of extra cost putting a person at the end of the line hand labeling for machines that can't keep up," Grove said. "It's become so reliable that we don't need someone at the end of the line."

Previously, Berner manned two to three lines per day, across four shifts, in a 24x7 operation. Printing reliability now allows the company to reallocate at least two positions each shift, up to eight in a 24x7/four shift operation—saving the company an estimated half a million dollars in labor costs.

"We've seen a significant return on investment with the speed of these machines," Grove said.

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