



COMPANY CAPABILITIES

FROM OUTRAGEOUS TO OUTSTANDING

A pair of printer-applicators helped a snack packager eliminate the bottlenecks of hand labeling.

Mark Refe took one look how packaging was done at ICD/Davis Lewis Orchards, Garden Grove, Calif., and knew he could help.

“When they called me to look over production, it was outrageous,” Refe says. The packaging “operation” consisted of a stainless-steel table with a three-foot-high pile of product, in either pouches or tubs.

“It was crazy,” Refe says. “There were six people around that table with preprinted labels, and they would put the backside on, flip them over and put the topside on. It would take those five or six people up to two hours to label that table of product.”

Refe is a label equipment specialist for Taylor Made Labels, which is an authorized distributor for Label-Aire. He had been approached at the WestPack show by an executive at ICD/Davis Lewis Orchards, which packages dried fruit, nuts, candy, trail mix and similar snacks.

ICD/Davis Lewis has three production lines. The labeling took place at the end of each production run, and since production took less time than labeling, it meant backups were almost guaranteed.

“Then they start another production run, and they’ve got another two hours to label all of that,” Refe says. “So you have labor intensity that almost doubles, because now you’re back-to-back.”

Refe and the customer discussed the application and determined that, due

to volume and variety, print-and-apply labels were the way to go. Two machines would be required, one each for the bottom and top labels. The question was the application method.

The bottoms of the containers, both bags and rigid tubs, stayed in a relatively stable position as they moved down the line, which made wipe-on or merge labeling the most efficient option. The tops were another story. The lids for the rigid tubs had a recessed area that was the target for the label, meaning wipe-on labeling was not an option. For the bags, too, the variation in size and shape meant that a merge-type labeler wouldn’t have a stable target.

ICD/Davis Lewis ended up going with two 3138-NV printer-applicators from Label-Aire: a merge-style model for the bottom labels, and a tamp-blow model for the top.

The new system, installed on one of the lines last October, cut labeling time from two hours to 15 minutes, while maintaining placement accuracy within 1/32-inch. This enabled labeling

to easily keep up with production. “So you’ve got an hour and forty-five minutes that they don’t have to pay for, for five people [labeling by hand],” Refe says. That cut staffing for the entire line from 10 people to five.

“The owner was ecstatic once we got that thing on-line,” Refe says. “She was just so enthused to see that the production went through, the labels were going on, the accuracy of the labels was right there.” The company plans to install similar equipment on its other two lines. **F&BP**



Printer-applicators from Label-Aire helped a snack packager transition up from hand-labeling.



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