

NEW PRINTING SYSTEM SIMPLIFIES LABELING OPERATIONS, CUSTOMER SAVES \$400K PER YEAR

MANUFACTURER

UNITED STATES



industry

MANUFACTURING – HEAT SHRINKABLE TUBING

applications

SHIPPING/RECEIVING

situation

A West Coast manufacturer of heat-shrinkable tubing needed an improved system for applying labels to a wide variety of boxes used to ship product.

critical issue

The company's shipping labels were not regularly satisfying the standards set by the firm's quality control department. Also, the company was forced to train and maintain an expert labeling person due to the intricacies of the label selection and printing operation. Each shift had at least one "label expert" in a special labeling room that was typically staffed by two people during first and second shifts (one person on third shift).

reasons

It was difficult for the company to maintain consistently high accuracy on its shipping labels because the labels had to meet a wide variety of standards, including rigid customer specifications on certain shipments. One factor that contributed to the accuracy problem was that the label printing system required the operator to re-type data from the company's mainframe computer, thereby introducing the element of human error.

vision & capabilities

The customer wanted to improve and streamline label printing operations, while at the same time reducing the required expertise of label printing operators. The ability to access label data directly from the mainframe computer without the operator re-entering data, was an important criteria for the new label printing system. Also, the company wanted to store multiple print formats and label pictures in the printer itself (rather than on the mainframe), so that operators could simply select from a menu of label formats when running each job.

intermec solution

The company began using MODELS 4000 and 4400 Direct Thermal/Thermal Transfer Bar Code Printers, which were deployed throughout the factory floor on an Ethernet-based LAN. Intermec partner Kessler Rollins, Inc. provided a system built on a relational database that interfaced with an IBM mainframe computer for data pertaining to each shipment. At the same time, the label operator is able to place text, bar codes, line boxes, pictures and logos for each job from a pre-configured menu.

benefits

The company estimated savings of \$400,000 per year, resulting primarily from the elimination of a dedicated labeling room staffed over the course of three shifts. Now, labeling operations occur directly on the factory floor, without any need for labeling specialists. The ability to store frequently-used labeling requirements for specific products, clients, and ship-to conditions also made the system more efficient. Additionally, label quality has markedly improved, thereby reducing costs associated with running the same label job more than once. This also results in faster shipping operations.