



Food producer Alatoni Ltd optimises its labelling processes with the A-Class print engine

featuring A-Class Print Engines
print-and-apply labelling ■ ■ ■



For many years, Mediterranean food has been growing in popularity throughout the world. The United Kingdom is no exception and it is difficult to imagine British supermarket shelves stripped of antipasti and other Southern European specialities. From grilled vegetables preserved in oil, e.g. aubergines, courgettes and peppers, and marinated seafood to spicy pepperonis or green and black olives – the range of products available is becoming ever greater and more varied.

Alatoni Ltd is a British manufacturer and supplier that has specialised in the production of Mediterranean foods. The company was founded in 1995 in the town of Bicester and is well-known throughout the country for its marinated olives and other fine specialities from all over the Mediterranean. Products such as tomatoes, mushrooms, feta cheese and, above all, olives are marinated and packaged to the highest technical standards in the company's purpose-built nut-free factory. Alatoni has become an important and reliable supplier of Britain's largest supermarkets.

Due to the growth in the market for Mediterranean specialities, Alatoni has expanded its production continuously over recent years. The company has not just focused on creating new products, but has also looked at implementing fast and error-free packaging and delivery processes. Simply increasing production would not ensure that supermarkets and delicatessens received the correct supplies in the minimum amount of time. The packaging of orders and fast, error-free labelling of shipping carton boxes became much more important.

Problem ■ ■ ■

Unnecessary personnel and material costs in existing processes

An analysis of the company's existing processes showed that, especially in these areas, there was a considerable scope for optimising processes. For example, it became clear that labelling errors occurred repeatedly because the labels were printed several days before actual production. These were often applied to the wrong cartons causing unnecessary, expensive material waste

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*- Roy Buchanan
Factory Manager, Alatoni*



as well as shipment delays. Moreover, workers had to be drafted in from other important areas of the business, such as production or product development, in order to provide adequate resources for manufacturing the labels required over the following few days. "These processes were extremely inefficient. The costs incurred due to the extensive overtime worked by our employees and material waste could have been avoided. In addition, the delays in delivering our products could also have done permanent damage to customer satisfaction. In the worst case scenario, this would have resulted in a loss of revenues," says Roy Buchanan, Factory Manager at Alatoni, summarising the consequences.



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To eliminate the weaknesses in the system and create more efficient processes, the company decided to equip two packaging lines with high performance printer applicators. The project managers had specific requirements for the solution: first, it was necessary to end the process of producing labels in advance in order to avoid personnel costs due to overtime claims. Secondly, the solution should minimise the waste of materials and significantly speed up the labelling process so that products could be dispatched to customers more quickly. As space was limited in the room where the two machines were to be installed, the solution would have to be compact.

Solution ■ ■ ■

High performance printer applicator with integrated print engine from Datamax-O'Neil



The company selected the P100 printer applicator from the British manufacturer Codeology with an integrated A-Class print engine from Datamax-O'Neil. The solution impressed Alatoni's project managers with its outstanding performance and reliability and also

scored high due to its compact design when compared with other systems. With a width of just 875 mm including an integrated conveyor, it projects less than one metre into the narrow room. In spite of this, Codeology had to develop an opposite hand version in order to be able to install two machines in the given area. "This ensured that we could optimise the space used so there would be no obstructions despite the tight space available," says Roy Buchanan explaining the decision.

Codeology delivered the standard version of the P100 within one week and even the design, production and installation of the opposite-hand machine version was completed after just four weeks. Both systems incorporate the Datamax-O'Neil A-Class print engine, which was specially designed for integration into printer applicators and offers the capacity required for manufacturing large

quantities of labels thanks to its fast throughput of print material. As well as high performance and easy operation, the unit has a number of impressive and innovative design features. For example, it has a stainless steel cabinet, which permits continuous availability even in rugged and extreme environments. Furthermore, the modular design of the A-Class makes servicing and maintenance simple. Normal wearing parts, such as printheads, can be replaced quickly and easily and accessories cleaned with relative ease. The unit's LAN connection as well as parallel, serial and USB ports offer efficient data transmission and effortless integration into existing IT systems.

Results ■ ■ ■

On-demand label printing solves the problem of incorrect labelling

Installing the P100 with the A-Class print engines has allowed Alatoni to eliminate the weaknesses in its processes. The improvements achieved in the area of labelling have been particularly significant. The number of incorrectly attached labels and wastage of materials have been minimised. Labels are now no longer printed several days in advance but on-demand by the A-Class print engine when the corresponding carton passes through the system. The labels are applied as soon as they have been printed. This allows Alatoni to label between 5,000 and 7,000 shipping cartons every day without the assistance of employees from other areas of the company. The result: lower costs and a noticeable increase in productivity. Importantly, fast, error-free labelling not only makes it possible to adjust the production volume to meet the rising demand. It also means there are no longer any problems in supplying supermarkets punctually with Mediterranean specialities. Alatoni has therefore succeeded in raising customer satisfaction once again.

The high reliability of both the P100 printer applicator and the A-Class print engine also virtually excludes the possibility of system downtimes. Lost revenues due to flawed packaging and labelling processes have been consigned to the history books. On the contrary: using this modern system has even allowed Alatoni to increase its revenues. "We are very satisfied with our decision to purchase the P100 with integrated A-Class print engine. The solution has eliminated a number of weaknesses and optimised our processes allowing us to focus on important areas of our business such as product development – so we can remain a reliable and innovative supplier to Britain's major supermarkets and delicatessens," says Roy Buchanan.

