



Continuous Inkjet Britvic Case study

Britvic puts Videojet Ultra High Speed printer to the test

Britvic Soft Drinks is one of the leading branded soft drinks businesses in the UK. With great names such as Robinsons, J20, 7UP and Tango, Britvic is committed to building brands that bring enjoyment to consumers.

Paul Ash, Maintenance Technician at Britvic Rugby, has history with Videojet products and has always been impressed with the product quality and high levels of customer service received from the company. Paul explains, "All our printers are Videojet, we have been using the Excel 170i UHS (Ultra High Speed) since 1996. The age and number of prints is now showing on the older coders so we are looking at the next generation of machine."

Paul continued, "Our current machines require a continuous ink and makeup change with cleaning every 10 hours, with a cycle time of approximately nine minutes per machine. While the running is OK, there is also a four minute shut down and restart. Not only that but operators that clean the machines aren't always gentle, which can cause issues with restarting jets."

“I cannot fault the customer service and after sales support we receive from Videojet.”



Videojet – via its ultra high speed continuous inkjet solution – gave Britvic the opportunity to increase production line speed by 30m/min and also benefit from excellent print quality, larger printed characters, and a more reliable, easy to clean machine.



Paul Ash,
Maintenance
Technician, Britvic

Once Paul was presented with the operational benefits of the UHS printer, he was keen to put the machine through its paces. He was eager to upgrade his present coding machines to meet the increasing production demands of the beverage industry; with a particular focus to improving print quality, print speed and machine reliability.

Based upon Britvic's need to upgrade to meet growing demand and their long standing satisfaction with the performance of their Excel 170i UHS, the company agreed to run the new UHS coding machine under trial conditions as part of Videojet's Global R&D program.

Paul commented, *“I cannot fault the customer service and after sales support we receive from Videojet. The backup is always very good in terms of engineers to site and phone support. I have never had any issues, I could not have been dealt with any better.”*

Videojet worked closely with the Britvic site in Rugby for three months to put their new UHS continuous inkjet printer through a challenging production trial. The Rugby site cans Pepsi-Cola products as the company has an exclusive agreement in the UK with PepsiCo to make and distribute their global brands.

Britvic runs a 24 hours a day, seven days a week operation, coding on metal cans at very high speeds – approximately 90,000 codes per hour. Due to this high speed application, the company is looking for the best coding equipment in the industry to replace their existing fleet of printers and to ensure they have the highest print quality for their traceability codes.

During the trial, the UHS printer coded in excess of 23 million codes at the soft drinks site, and the printhead is yet to need cleaning. That's because the printer features a patented CleanFlow™ printhead design that provides maximum uptime with minimal maintenance. By reducing the ink buildup that can cause traditional inkjet printers to shut down, the CleanFlow™ printhead requires less maintenance and delivers longer runs without intervention.





For legal requirements and traceability purposes, Britvic codes two lines of text with the following information: a best before date, Julian date, lot number, line number and site number. It is important that the company achieves the highest standards of traceability codes as poor quality could lead to financial penalties.

One of the advantages of the new Videojet UHS printer is that it is over 40% faster than its predecessor technology, the Excel UHS. This gives operators greater flexibility to run faster or print more content. Britvic chose to take advantage of both, increasing the line speed by 25% to 150m/min and increasing the size of the print character from 7x4 to 7x5 – all without compromising print quality.

Britvic has noticed a number of additional advantages since trialling the UHS printer. For example, daily maintenance has been reduced with far fewer line stops due to poor print quality, and the period between cleaning intervals has increased. Paul Ash commented, “We now choose to clean the printhead once a week at a convenient time when there is no pressure from the line being down. Due to high print makeup and ink volumes, ink lasts three to four days, maybe more. There is no mess. No problems.”

Like other continuous inkjet printers from Videojet, the UHS model includes the Smart Cartridge™ fluid system. By reading the embedded microchip, the printer identifies whether the correct fluid has been installed. This prevents errors in ink type or swapping makeup and ink fluids. Saving time and money, the Smart Cartridge™ fluid system is designed to drain completely, to prevent waste. The needle-and-septum design eliminates the need for operators to pour ink, preventing fluid spillage and waste. Paul adds,

“When changing cartridges there is no mess and the display indicates when replacements are needed. This enables us to monitor levels so there are no excuses for staff not to change fluids and makeup at the right time.”

The integrated core consolidates the printer's key ink system components into one part, enabling the UHS to perform up to 14,000 hours between planned maintenance, or approximately 19 months for around the clock operations. Core replacement is simple, mess-free and is designed to be customer-replaceable without necessarily requiring a visit from a trained technician. A countdown meter offers easy monitoring of time remaining before the core must be changed.

The UHS printer is easier to integrate into existing systems with advanced connectivity options, including its USB port, which allows for hot swapping print jobs and backing up messages. The convenience of off-site control and diagnostics via Ethernet capability through CLARISOFT™ and CLARINET™ software enables simple, seamless real-time message changes.

Britvic is more than impressed by the trial and is considering bringing forward the replacement of all of their existing Excel UHS printers. Coupled with their great customer service and professional knowledge, Videojet can promise that the new UHS printer will exceed Britvic's expectations. As Paul concludes,

“We were happy with our Videojet Excel printer but we are even happier with the new UHS model”.



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