



Case Study – Cape Cod Potato Chips

Leading Snack Manufacturer Improves Packaging Efficiency and Cuts Costs with On-Demand Carton Labeling



Cape Cod Potato Chips, the leader in popular kettle-cooked potato chips in the United States, produces 37 different varieties and sizes of snack flavors at its manufacturing facility in Hyannis, Massachusetts. All Cape Cod's chips are cooked in small batches and case cartons are hand packed at the end of the production lines. For every variety and size of snack product, Cape Cod was purchasing preprinted labels for case marking. They wanted to move away from the expense and inventory problems of preprinted case labels and enable label printing at each individual packaging line.

The Challenge:

At Cape Cod's Hyannis, Mass. manufacturing facility, over 80,000 packages of snacks are made daily. Despite this production volume, all cases of snacks are packaged by hand and manually labeled with the appropriate case label denoting the product enclosed, individual package size, weight, SKU, quantity, etc. Cape Cod had been purchasing and using preprinted labels for every one of the numerous chip varieties and sizes they produced, which caused several challenges: first, the preprinted labels were expensive; secondly, inventory of the preprinted label stock was cumbersome to maintain and manage. Labels were kept in a large storage room where line workers would have to go to retrieve rolls of carton labels for the particular line of snacks they were packaging that day. Workers could easily find themselves in a low- or out-of-stock situation if label stocks were not replenished properly, and labels were also frequently misplaced or difficult to find; thirdly, Cape Cod found itself placing label orders weekly to avoid inventory shortages, thus adding to the already high cost of preprinted labels. Cape Cod wanted to take control of carton labeling on its eight production lines to increase worker productivity and eliminate all of the issues associated with preprinted labels.

The Solution:

Inovity (formerly BarCode ID Systems) provided a complete end-to-end distributed printing solution for Cape Cod Potato Chip that allowed on-demand printing at the point of activity. As a Platinum Channel Partner with Zebra Technologies, Inovity installed and configured Zebra 140XiIIIPlus printers with external printservers for each of Cape Cod's production lines throughout its entire facility. Inovity's Professional Services team connected each printer to Cape Cod's LAN for controlled TCP/IP printing by production supervisors during each shift, and trained Cape Cod staff members on printer configuration, use and features. Inovity also provided all printing supplies and included annual on-site service contracts for repair and maintenance protection on all Zebra printers.

To drive the printing solution, Inovity's Professional Services team provided a robust bar code

labeling program with a powerful built-in database. For initial database population—and for subsequent, periodic updates—data was imported from Cape Cod’s SAP-generated data file to ensure that the printed data contained correct product information for proper label printing.

Labels were designed for every variety and packaged size of Cape Cod’s snacks and staff members were trained on software operation. During production, shift supervisors send batches of appropriate labels to each packaging line from a central network PC, thereby eliminating the need for line workers to go to the storage room to retrieve rolls of preprinted labels. Printers at all stations are set to run in peel-off mode, where single labels are printed and held until the line workers are ready to apply them. Workers on each line hand pack every case carton then take a label from the printer and apply it to the carton, which then moves down the line for taping and palletizing. When a label is taken from the printer, the printer then generates and holds another label from the batch.

The Results:

Inovity provided a total production line printing solution for Cape Cod Potato Chip’s manufacturing operation. The Zebra 140XiIIIPlus printers with external printservers provided Cape Cod with the high volume, rugged performance they required on their packaging lines and enabled them to completely eliminate the high costs and associated problems of using preprinted labels. By using one size blank label printed with variable data from SAP, Cape Cod was able to reduce inventory costs, decrease man hours previously needed to manage and order preprinted label inventory, and free up a considerable amount of storage space. With the proper carton label presented to line workers from individual printers, line worker efficiency was increased. Spare printers ensured that Cape Cod’s carton labeling lines would run without significant downtime, and annual printer service coverage provides for factory-authorized repair services and proper maintenance of line equipment.

Formerly BarCode ID Systems, Inovity is a business process improvement company that transforms technology into powerful, integrated solutions that drive efficiency and reduce costs. As a specialty IT systems integrator, Inovity designs and delivers innovative solutions that connect and relay crucial business information between all points of operation activity, in real time. By emphasizing workforce mobility, ERP data mobilization and business process intelligence, Inovity provides automated technology solutions for manufacturing, distribution, healthcare, retail and field service environments.

The company was established in 1993, is privately owned with headquarters in Atlanta and maintains sales and engineering offices in Atlanta, Chicago, Boston, Greenville, SC, Greensboro, NC, Columbus, OH, Huntsville, AL and Ft. Lauderdale. With innovation at its core, combined with solutions for productivity, agility, efficiency, connectivity, and visibility, BarCode ID Systems has become Inovity. Contact Julie A. Leonard, Marketing Director, 800-452-7418, ext. 9045, jleonard@inovity.com, www.inovity.com.