

Go With What You Know

SOMETIMES THE BEST SOLUTION TO A PACKAGING PROBLEM IS RIGHT UNDER YOUR NOSE.

Nothing frustrates a packaging operation more than inconsistent machinery. For 3M Drug Delivery Systems in Northridge, Calif., and Packaging Engineer Jess Duran, inconsistency became an almost everyday occurrence due to an antiquated labeler. Fortunately for 3M and Duran, a solution was available from a supplier the company had been very happy with in purchasing previous pieces of still in use machinery.

Challenge: An antiquated labeler caused significant downtime on a daily basis.

Solution: Use a supplier that you are familiar with to provide a custom, easily integrated system.

“At 3M Drug Delivery Systems our specialty is innovative drug delivery technologies, whether it be pill or capsule formulations or complex mists and sprays. Clients working with us can access 3M’s manufacturing, development, components and regulatory expertise. Successfully teaming our delivery technology with molecules from many major pharmaceutical firms has helped make us a world leader in inhalation and transdermal drug delivery systems.

3M Drug Delivery Systems works with major pharmaceutical companies throughout the world. These relationships are tailored to our clients’ needs—from components to co-development and manufacturing. To be frank, when it comes to our packaging operations, we expect the same kind of attentive service. Recently, however, we were saddled with a situation that left us frustrated. Long

story short, we had a very antiquated piece of labeling equipment that was a daily headache. We are running two shifts a day of solid dose pills in a rectangular bottle with literature applied and not a shift went by where the machine did not experience unplanned downtime. That meant a minimum of twice a day this one machine was interrupting production because of breakdowns with label placement.

To top it off, when we tried to fix the machine, parts were not readily available and the supplier was unavailable to assist us.

While 3M explored some other options, we were already very comfortable with NJM/CLI Packaging Systems International, Lebanon, N.H., as we had bought a labeler from them previously. We knew from our previous experience that the machine would perform flawlessly and be easy to set up and use for our line technicians.

The Model 326 Auto-Colt III Labeler we ultimately settled on was all that and more.

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From an integration standpoint, NJM/CLI built the new machine to fill the exact space of the previous faulty machine. The Model 326 is equipped with a servo-driven label dispenser and adhesive transfer system that immediately corrected the issue we had with misplaced labels. The rectangular bottles we run require three panel labels with an outsert on the fourth, and final, panel. This was by far the biggest problem with the previous machine as the tack was simply insufficient to wrap all three sides.

The vision system we had with the previous machine was also antiquated and didn’t meet all of our needs. We knew that NJM/CLI could solve this issue as well since they had retrofitted ►



an Optel Vision (Quebec City, Que.) vision system on the labeler we purchased from them previously. In this case, they provided the Model 326 with a vision system already installed. Unlike our previous vision system, this one could inspect codes, label straightness and scan bar codes.

Within three months, from the time

we told NJM/CLI what we were looking for until it was incorporated into our line, our operators were running 50 ml and 100 ml bottles at 60 bpm. This was the speed we sought all along, but our previous machine couldn't get near it.

All told, the machine instantly improved productivity by more than 30

percent. Considering the time it would take us to set up the line multiple times a day, the simple fact that the Model 326 allows the line to run consistently also reduces setup time by 30 percent. **FMT**

Jess Duran

Packaging Engineer

3M Drug Delivery Systems