Printing in the Food Industry

ALLEN CODING
A DIVISION OF ITW

Case Study

What is the best way to print on premier chocolate?

THE BACKGROUND

When Montezuma's, the maestro of chocolate makers, needed a high-quality printing service to print expiry dates on their products, they turned to Allen Coding Systems.
It was very important that print quality was crisp and legible, to reflect the high quality of their chocolate. Read on to discover Montezuma's amazing journey.

Montezuma's®
innovative british chocolate

THE STORY

Back in 1999, two lawyers, Helen and Simon Pattison, both trained lawyers, decided to break out of the straitjacket of corporate life and travel around South America.

Whilst camped in a cocoa plantation, they hit on a light-bulb moment – the urge to create the wonderful chocolate they had sampled whilst on their travels and launch it into the UK market.

Back in Britain, they started out on their quest, armed only with a small machine, tons of enthusiasm, and a lot of naivety. At first, they only had a small shop in Brighton, where they personally hand-made all the chocolate bars themselves. Helen explains:

"We started Montezuma's in 2000, with only a kitchen-sized machine, spades of naivety and most importantly, a broad ideal to bring chocolate innovation to a boring and staid chocolate market."

As Helen points out, being self-taught meant a very steep learning curve. However, four more shops later and with a retail footprint that means Montezuma's chocolate is available in more than 2,500 fine food stores, Helen and Simon are as firmly committed to their ideals, as when they first started.

The emphasis is on sustainable and organic business growth, whilst their Trading Fairly policy remains at the core of their business ethos.

All their suppliers are paid well over the market price for their cocoa and the company is also committed to the environment. All packaging is from Europe and is from sustainable or recycled sources. They re-use their cardboard outer boxes, have movement sensor lighting and have reduced the aluminum in their chocolate bar packaging.

THE PROBLEM

Top quality is the most important aspect of the Montezuma's brand. The chocolate used is made from the best cocoa in the world and the packaging is designed to be eye-catching so any printing of date codes on the packaging, must reflect these high standards.

With their range of products expanding, Montezuma's turned to Allen Coding Systems to supply a Hitachi RX CIJ printer when it came to printing dates on the products themselves. Wesley Cole, General Operations Manager at the chocolate company, commented:

"Allen Coding was recommended to us and since contacting them, the service has been great."

He added: "On the few occasions when the new programs were being created for new products to be presented to the system, Allen Coding worked out any technical queries immediately, whilst we were learning to use the new printer."

THE SOLUTION

The Hitachi RX printer is easy to install, operate and clean and offers clarity of print. The printer system uses the continuous inkjet principle which produces electrostatically charged ink droplets.

The CIJ printer systems offer such benefits as:

- **An easy to use interface**. It is very simple and quick to change marks, numbers and text.
- **Economical use** of solvent and very cost-effective
- **Easy and quick** to maintain
- **Robust and reliable** – performs very well in challenging environments (IP class)

THE OUTCOME

At Montezuma's, the CIJ printer replaces date gunning by batch as well as having to apply labels manually as the products come down the line. Dates are now quickly printed onto the finished products before they are packed into the outer cases. This has accelerated the whole process.

The Hitachi printer offers ease of use and speed and now operates on Montezuma's production lines at up to 60 ppm, printing date codes onto gloss cardboard for a variety of products.

Wesley concludes: *"The RX has been easy to install, learn and maintain and the quality of print is always good".*

For the final word, however, listen to Helen Pattinson, co-founder of Montezuma's.

"Along the way, we have had many great products, some OK products and some awful failures. But we've never been scared of experimenting and listening to our customers."

Both Montezuma's and Allen Coding focus on great quality and listening to their customers which is why they are a good match. This is the core of their ethos and ensures they are both perfectly placed to go far in the future.

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