



PACKAGE DESIGN

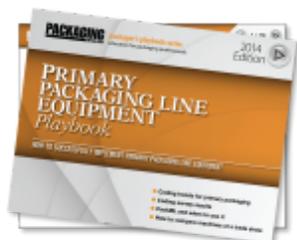
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On-case inkjet printer saves time, labor, and materials

Switch from hand-applied p-s labels expands flexibility and provides opportunity to print more data on much larger shipping case panels.

FILED IN: Machinery > Coding/marking > Ink jet

By Judy Rice, Contributing Editor

Bix Produce Company, St. Paul, MN, is a leader in specialty produce distribution throughout the Twin Cities metro area, greater Minnesota, western Wisconsin, and eastern North Dakota and Iowa. The company's product lines include quality bulk and pre-cut fruits and vegetables, dairy items, and various other food items for foodservice outlets such as restaurants, hotels, educational institutions, and country clubs.

For the primary packaging of its fresh cut produce, Bix uses poly film bags and rollstock from multiple suppliers.

Corrugated shipping cases also are sourced from multiple suppliers, including [International Paper](#) and [PCA Packaging Corp. of America](#).

Using Produce Pro as an enterprise software to run daily operations, including labeling, Bix had been creating and printing shipping case labels for value-added items, based on what each production or pick sheet showed as the



products being conveyed. Each message contained unique information per customer request. A worker would manually apply the labels to the shipping cases. Making sure this data was properly input into the labeling software program and then checked for accuracy after printing took up dedicated man power, extra time, and added to labeling costs.

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Bix decided that some better printing options and flexibility could streamline the production process and reduce printing costs. The company wanted to get beyond the conventional encumbrances of printing, storing, and applying labels. Instead, Bix wanted to establish wireless scanning of pick sheets and the ability to change the information on-the-fly.

Toward that end, Bix integrated the Model Z640 Hi-Resolution print system from [Zanasi USA](#). In a pioneering move by Zanasi and Bix, the Z640 has been custom-tuned to work with Produce Pro software. Every morning the Bix pick sheets data is printed out with the production schedule and then scanned and sent to the Zanasi Z640 console via Wi-Fi technology for message printing as product gets packaged.

Bix Produce Senior Manager Algirdas Vosylius notes, “We first encountered Zanasi printing technology at a Pack Expo show. Over time, we got to know them and appreciated their understanding of our operating needs. We installed our first Zanasi Model Z640 about a year and a half ago to run on two casing lines. Then, about 6 months ago, we added a second Z640 to run on another single line.”

No labels required

The high-resolution on-case printing system eliminates the need to use costly labels. Each box comes down a conveyor, and the message is printed onto the box. The previous method of hand-applying labels is eliminated. The Z640 HD inkjet printer can print high-quality, high-contrast barcodes, alpha-numerics, logos, and graphics on both porous and non-porous substrates using fast-drying, solvent-free inks.



The Z640 unit also features a 12” touch-screen display panel, 4” per head printing capabilities, and full logo/image/graphics/barcode programming and editing. Wi-Fi connectivity allows for wireless access and remote access/programming.

Vosylius says, “Zanasi provided outstanding support. They basically were there from A to Z, helping us to configure our systems and integrate our software.”

Bix now has excellent print change versatility and much broader printed data capacity. Vosylius says, “We used to have to print our product data on two-inch by four-inch pressure-sensitive labels, and we still do that for some products. But that’s small real estate. Now we have a much larger canvas. We use four-inch print heads and have printing space that measures 4 inches high by as long as the shipping case. So we have the ability to print a lot of

info, including things like customer sales order numbers, item numbers, and barcodes reference numbers for easy scanning and tracking.”

Bix also is saving on labor and inventory costs due to the fact that the shipping info is printed directly onto the cases rather than onto labels that were previously being manually applied. Bix estimates that their printed shipping label cost is about 1.5 cents versus the Zanasi print-on-case cost of about .002 cents per print.

Companies in this article:

- SUPPLIERS: » **International Paper**
» **PCA Packaging Corp.**
» **Zanasi**