



Coca-Cola achieves new standards of coding reliability and efficiency with Domino lasers



Overview

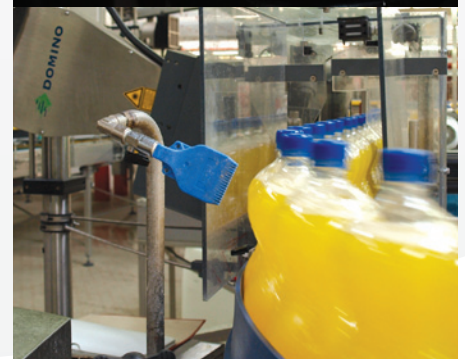
Domino was the perfect match for the demanding production requirements for Coca-Cola AG, Germany's largest and best known soft drinks producer.

“Domino’s laser coders are extremely reliable and flexible while maintaining the highest level of quality,” he says. “Their cost-effectiveness combined with low maintenance has significantly improved our overall production efficiency.”

Ralph Mächler, Coca Cola AG

Fast facts

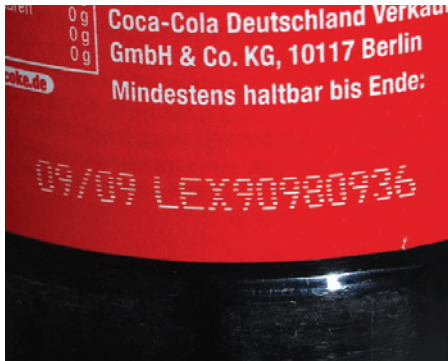
- Consistent quality laser coding on high speed bottling lines
- Coding up to 72,000 bottles per hour
- Coding directly onto PET and labels
- Integrated with Kronen bottling lines and Kronen Topmatic Labelling Units



Domino. Do more.



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With an astounding annual production of over 3.5 billion litres of non-alcoholic beverages across more than 25 regional manufacturing sites, Coca-Cola AG is Germany's biggest and best known soft drinks producer. The 80-year old company, which has a portfolio of more than 70 brands, including water, different types of fruit juice, tea, sport drinks as well as the classic Coca-Cola drink, is constantly striving to achieve the highest levels of customer satisfaction, efficiency and effectiveness.

A production schedule of this magnitude combined with the commitment to providing the highest quality across the board were the catalyst for a review of coding systems on the company's high speed production lines.

Ralph Mächler, manager central engineering for Coca-Cola AG, was tasked with identifying a flexible and productivity-enhancing coding system for eventual roll-out across all German manufacturing sites.

As part of the exercise, Herr Mächler commissioned extensive testing to determine the efficiency and reliability of proposed equipment, a challenge to which Domino's solution, the DDC3 dot matrix laser, proved more than equal. Specifically developed to provide consistent, quality coding on high speed bottling lines, the flexible DDC3 dot matrix laser printer reproduces variable text, data and logos on a variety of substrates

including glass and PET at speeds up to 72,000 bottles per hour.

On the basis of the trials, Herr Mächler was convinced that Domino was the perfect match for Coca-Cola's demanding production requirements. "Domino's laser coders are extremely reliable and flexible while maintaining the highest level of quality," he says. "Their cost-effectiveness combined with low maintenance has significantly improved our overall production efficiency."

A further key benefit for Coca-Cola comes from the printer's proprietary seven-laser tube system with inherent redundancy: in the unlikely event that one or even two of the exclusive air-cooled sealed CO2 tubes fail, the DDC3 continues to operate, so that unplanned downtime is avoided and tube exchange can be scheduled when convenient.

The DDC3 requires no wear parts and minimal consumables so that reliability is further maximised while the need for maintenance and associated costs are virtually eliminated. The DDC3 is also extremely easy to integrate with host machines, using air rather than water for cooling and boasting a compact, modular design to facilitate operation in any orientation and fast changeover between jobs.

The system also offers the advantage of a direct interface to the Domino DPX fume extraction system for automatic removal of fumes and particles, thereby providing a clean working environment.

So impressed was Ralph Mächler that he recommended adoption of the DDC3 lasers as standard across all regional Coca-Cola facilities to boost company-wide productivity.

Two of the sites that have implemented Domino's DDC3 lasers have already benefited from the printer's high flexibility. Although all of the company's German operations follow the same stringent coding guidelines, methods and technologies may vary from site to site, depending on the product. The prospect of a flexible coding system that would be compatible with a wide range of products and

materials was therefore very appealing for local site managers.

The DDC3's laser power can be custom tuned, via the integrated control panel, to the precise level needed for different coding applications, which might include bottle labels or directly onto PET, where it codes reliably and consistently onto even the thinnest PET or thermoplastic with no risk of perforation.

At Coca-Cola's production site in Genshagen, Germany, Domino was benchmarked against three other suppliers with regards to reliability, speed, general availability and service. These results, combined with recommendations from the headquarters technical team, persuaded local managers that the DDC3 was the right solution for installation on each of three Krones bottling lines. The lasers are used to print 'best before dates' and batch numbers directly onto the PET bottle to ensure full, accurate traceability from manufacturer to consumer via an indelible, smudgeproof code.

Volker Wielsch, production manager at the site in Genshagen, comments, "There were many factors to take into consideration but the fact that our machine supplier Krones has enjoyed a fantastic relationship with Domino for many years combined with Domino's willingness to support us by keeping service spares on stock, were decisive."

At Coca-Cola's site in Weimar, Germany, which has an annual capacity of more than 1.2 million litres, Domino has installed a DDC3 laser system on each of two Krones Topmatic labelling units, applying a 'best before date' and batch number onto the back label of bottles. Labels feature a coated panel that is etched by the laser to create a permanent and highly legible code.

The compact print head can be fitted and positioned anywhere on the production line. As a result, the company was able to integrate the coder seamlessly onto the wet glue label applicator at minimal cost.

Domino's relentless efforts to work closely with Coca-Cola have meant that other sites are currently reviewing the benefits of the DDC3 laser printers with further installations expected to take place soon.