

## MAJ Enterprises Presents from Cognex

### DataMan barcode readers help achieve 100% read rates at HJ Heinz



As one of the most recognised and respected brands in the world, HJ Heinz produce a wide range of food products for their global consumer market. At their factory in Cumbria in the UK, Baby Milk Powder is manufactured and packaged for distribution overseas. Due to the sensitive nature of the products, accurate barcode reading is essential to ensure that correct products are identified and shipped to each customer. Before employing DataMan® barcode readers, the factory was using a label verification system where one element of the system could only read ladder barcodes and although a separate system was created to read the picket fence barcodes, the readers could not cope with the speed of production. The production managers at Heinz were keen to upgrade to a more reliable

system which could achieve 100% read rates and eliminate the risk of packaging errors. They employed Olympus Automation to install a barcode reading solution to achieve complete code reading accuracy. Peterborough, UK-based Olympus Automation worked alongside Cognex to develop the code reading solutions and they selected DataMan fixed-mount image-based barcode readers which, given its advanced functionality, allowed all images to be seen in real time and immediately establish if a code had been read or not. In addition to meeting the requirements for 1-D code reading, the DataMan barcode readers are able to read new 2-D codes planned for use on products in the near future.

The DataMan barcode readers were chosen because they deliver high resolution, image review (while running via the Ethernet cable), high read rates, and a rugged design. The high speed production line runs at 97 cans per minute, and in order to read the picket fence 1-D barcode on the round can, each unit has to be rotated. To cope with the convex structure and reflective surface, six DataMan fixed-mount barcode readers are placed in a row along the can turner. As the can is rotated through 360 degrees, each reader is triggered in three batches of two. This process results in at least two of the readers being able to read the code on each can.

If incorrect barcodes or ‘no reads’ are detected, alarm beacons and display screens alert the operators who will stop the line and clear the defective product to ensure no incorrect can continues to the packaging area. Reporting for read rates is generated as part of the standard Olympus PDX Autocoding system, allowing for easy monitoring of production performance. The system also links to the site’s Domino inkjet printers and Markam case printers to ensure the correct dates are printed on each pack, ready for shipment.

The key benefits of the system have been:

- elimination of false line stoppages due to ‘no reads’
- prevention of incorrect tins being packed
- print control to ensure the correct dates are applied.

Robin Sandman, Engineering Manager at Heinz commented, “Heinz chose Olympus Automation and Cognex to deliver their Autocoding system because they were the only suppliers we reviewed to offer 100% read rates on products. The integrated quality checks on the Autocoding system and Olympus’ ability to offer 24 hour support have added significant value to the business.”

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