Barcode Consultancy for the Retail Supply Chain

Although one of the last processes on your production line and sometimes the most overlooked, the application of barcode labels to supermarkets' specifications is one of the most essential to your business. Get it wrong and not only will your products fail to scan in the retailers automated warehouses but the supermarkets can and often will reject your products. Reject products get returned to you, which most likely means you will have to dispose of them. That means an unhappy customer and the supermarket may even fine you as well. Result: upheaval, lost production and lost profit.

However help is at hand in the form of the Codeology team. We have over 40 man years experience of supplying labelling solutions for the retail supply chain. As a manufacturer of labelling machinery we have years of experience of getting the best from ribbons and labels. Our consultants are GS1 trained (GS1 are the global organisation responsible for barcode standards) and have close working relationships with scanner and verifier manufacturers. In short, we have probably seen any problems you are likely to have and can tell you how to fix them.

Irrespective of whose labelling machinery you have, if you have barcoding problems then call us. For the cost of a telephone call, we may be able to resolve your issues and for that there would be no charge.

How is your barcoding knowledge?

Even if you think your barcodes look fine, there may be problems that are not easily distinguishable to the naked eye. Take a look at these three barcode labels; see if you can identify the problems.

The first one is obvious, there are horizontal lines running through the barcode. This is caused by a print head that is either worn, damaged or has not been properly cleaned. What you may not spot but a verifier would pick up is that the barcode is too far left on the label. This means the 'quiet zones' on the left of the label is too small, and again it would not read.

You have to look a little harder on this one. Notice that the label is applied in the wrong position so that the barcode wraps around the corner of the carton. This barcode will not read as the scanner will not be able to see all of the barcode on that face.

What about the third one? Although this one looks reasonably good with no horizontal lines and the quiet zones are wide, a verifier would reveal the problem. The dark bars on the barcode are too wide in relation to the gaps. This is caused by the temperature setting in the label design software set too high, and again this will not scan correctly.

If your labels look like any of these you should call us in now.

Do you really understand your customers labelling requirements?

The specifications can be really confusing. For example you need to know the answers to these questions:

- Which type of barcode you should be using, ITF or EAN128?
- What magnification do you require?
- What is the minimum barcode height you should use?
- How big should the quiet zones be?
- Do you need labels on all four sides, or only two adjacent sides, or side only?
- Do you need thermal transfer or cheaper direct thermal labels?
- What ribbon should you use, wax or wax resin?
- Should I verify or is just scanning my labels good enough?
- I have coloured labels, will all the colours scan?

The answers can be quite simple. Get it right and you will have no problems. Get any one of them wrong and you should be prepared for the call from your customer's compliance officer.

Don't take our word for our service, ask our customers.

Ask to speak to any of our customers. We regularly deal with manufacturers in the retail supply chain and they invariably have less or no problems after consulting us. Talk to any of them and ask them if it was worthwhile and cost-effective calling in Codeology.

I'm on 72 hour watch from the retailer, what should I do right now?

If your back is to the wall already, call us as it may not be too late. We can arrange labels, ribbons, verifiers, bench top printers or print and apply systems at short notice, for sale or short term hire to enable you to put the right labels on your products within 24 hours.

What else can Codeology offer?

Too support your barcoding needs, we manufacture and supply print and apply labelling machines, pre-printed label applicators and bench top printers. We can offer sales, lease and short- and long-term hire of all of our machinery. We can also provide the correct labels, ribbons and Clean start ribbons for your application.