



Domino and Firestone Walker Brew Success



Overview

California-based craft brewer Firestone Walker Brewing Company integrated two of Domino's advanced continuous inkjet and laser printing solutions to clearly and efficiently date code the packaging of all their products.



"Firestone Walker trusts Domino printers... because they work!"

- Firestone Walker Packaging Manager Will Crosby

Fast facts

- Distributing 17 core brands of beer, Firestone Walker sells an amount equivalent to 3.5 million cases annually.
- Domino's A420i Continuous Ink Jet printer and the D320i Laser were installed to provide the cleanest, most efficient, flexible and reliable application to Firestone Walker's three product lines.
- Regular preventative maintenance performed by Domino's expert technician not only keeps the machines running smoothly, but also sustains a face-to-face relationship with Firestone Walker's packaging manager and staff.



Domino. Do more.

“One of the most critical elements to packaging is the date codes,” Firestone Walker packaging manager Will Crosby confirmed. “It’s our commitment to show full visibility of when the beer was packaged and to ensure that customers are receiving the freshest product on the market.”

Firestone Walker Brewing Company, based in Paso Robles, California, is renowned for crafting award-winning pale ales and barrel-aged beers on the Central Coast. Distributing 17 core brands of beer, Firestone Walker sells an amount equivalent to 3.5 million cases annually. In the last nine years, Firestone Walker has almost quadrupled in size and is projecting to double in size within the next two years.

Firestone Walker attributes their success to earning the trust of consumers by delivering the freshest brew possible, with the date code clearly presented on the packaging. With a firm commitment to quality, the Firestone Walker management team decided three years ago that it was vital to display visible date codes on all packaging leaving their facility. “One of the most critical elements to packaging is the date codes,” Firestone Walker Packaging Manager Will Crosby confirmed. “It’s our commitment to show full visibility of when the beer was packaged and to ensure that customers are receiving the freshest product on the market.”

After assessing all the printing options available, the team found Domino offered the best quality, best value and the right laser for their needs.

The Application

Firestone Walker required a comprehensive application to meet a diverse set of demands within their three main production lines of bottles, kegs and cans. Most importantly, to address their primary goal of featuring clear, legible and permanent date codes on all three packaging materials, Firestone Walker needed a reliable laser ink jet solution. “We decided that a laser would be the cleanest and best looking application,” Crosby shared. Furthermore, their high-speed production line required a printing and coding system that could be easily implemented and maintained while continuing to run without interruption at an optimal pace. All this, in a challenging environment with harsh wash downs, like those required to thoroughly clean brewing equipment.

The Solution

Firestone Walker installed Domino’s D320i Laser and A420i Continuous Ink Jet printer to unprecedented results. “Since switching to the Domino lasers on the date coding of bottles,” Crosby beamed, “we’ve had almost no downtime due to date coding equipment.”

Domino’s D320i Laser, installed to code bottle labels and cartons, features a scribing laser which permanently applies codes to a variety of materials at low to high production speeds. It is capable of producing unlimited lines of text in any orientation, in many fonts and sizes ideal for consumer readability.

The lasers are managed by an intuitive remote TouchPanel, or through the web-based interface from any industrial PC. “They just run. They run smoothly. They run well. They run all day,” Crosby shared. “They don’t stop... Which is what I care about.”

Domino’s A420i Continuous Ink Jet printer was installed on Firestone Walker’s can lines. Offering the lowest total cost of ownership of any ink jet printer, the A420i includes a new i-Tech (intelligent Technology) service-free ink system that delivers ultra-low makeup usage, reducing costs and operator intervention.

In addition to the i-Tech service, Domino’s ongoing preventative maintenance keeps the printers running smoothly. “We have a great service technician who is here whenever we need him,” Crosby stated. “He does 2,000-hour preventative maintenances and those keep us from having downtime.”

Proving a successful partnership consists of more than the exchange of dollars and hardware, Crosby concluded, “I think the other guys make okay printers, but if they can’t service them and provide me with that same support, with someone that I get along with, who does a really good job for us... I’m really not interested,” he stated. “This business—in the same way as the beer business—is about relationships. I’ve got a great relationship with Domino. Thanks, Domino!”