



Continuous Ink Jet Bokomo Foods Case study

The 1000 Line increases usability and productivity at Bokomo Foods.

Bokomo Foods UK Ltd, owned by Pioneer Foods, is predominately a private label and contract manufacturer but is starting to diversify into selling its own range of cereals under the Grain, Breakfast Saver and Sunny-Bisk brands. Bokomo UK specializes in the manufacturing of wheat biscuits, muesli, granolas and crispy and crunchy oats cereals.

Bokomo produces and packages cereals for all the UK's largest supermarket chains including Tesco, Sainsbury's, ASDA, Morrisons, Marks & Spencer and Lidl. Bokomo also manufactures breakfast cereals for well-known companies under their brands.

Production at Bokomo is of the highest quality standards and is spread over two world class production sites in the UK, Peterborough and Wellingborough. With 120 people on site, Peterborough produces 70 tons of finished product per day, and with 70 people on site, Wellingborough produces 20 tons of finished product per day. At the Peterborough site in particular, there are a wide variety of packages including pods, cartons and pouches.

“The printers work in the background which is good news. I never really hear about any problems from them. They offer the reliability factor that I need without any headaches. They do exactly what you want them to do which is what you want from an engineering and production perspective.”

Neil Hackney, Group Engineering Manager of the Wellingborough and Peterborough sites.



Since each package must have a code on it, Bokomo decided to use the most versatile coding technology, Continuous Ink Jet (CIJ), in order to standardize printing across most of its lines. Even though the packages may be different, the codes are the same: two lines of traceability and consumer information. For traceability, Bokomo prints a Julian date, a manufacturing time and for products produced on multiple lines, a line number. For the consumer and retailer, Bokomo prints a sell by date.

Bokomo had been a customer of Videojet for over 10 years at its Wellingborough site. Videojet supplied all of the printers at Wellingborough including four older CIJ models and two case coders. However, the Peterborough site was using older generation CIJ printers from one of Videojet's competitors. Over time, the printers from the competitors no longer performed up to current standards after years of use. The lines would stop frequently to perform printer maintenance, and managing code changes was difficult. In addition, the competitive printers used a lot of consumables, and changing the fluids in the printers was onerous.

Bokomo decided that they wanted to upgrade to the newest generation of CIJ printers immediately as they were having problems with a particular competitive printer on one of their lines. They investigated the newest models of CIJ printers from all the major companies. Given their relationship with Videojet, the benefits of the 1000 Line printers and Videojet's ability to get a printer up and running on the line immediately, Bokomo agreed to a trial with Videojet. Videojet installed the new 1000 Line printer onto a cartoner that was packaging cereal. After a three month trial, Bokomo was so pleased with the performance of the 1000 Line that they not only decided to purchase that unit but also purchased another three units to replace all of the competitor's CIJ printers installed on the other lines.

One of the major benefits that Bokomo has seen with the new printers is the simple and easy to use interface. Bokomo produces products for so many different customers and each customer has specific requirements for how they want their codes to look. Therefore, Bokomo is required to make a significant number of code changes per day, sometimes more than five code changes per day on a single line. Bokomo has found the new printer extremely easy to navigate. The 1000 Line printer features a highly intuitive interface to streamline daily functions. It displays all of the printer operation information and even displays exactly what you are printing on the screen.

“The Videojet 1000 Line has a very clear interface. It is easy to figure out what to do. I can quickly find the settings to make my codes bigger or adjust them for new customers,” said Lukasz Maziarz, Line Leader at the Peterborough site. Additionally, the Videojet 1000 Line offers standard message storage of up to 100 complex messages, with additional memory available with a USB. The memory offers plenty of room to store codes for each of the products that are run on the line. *“Starting up the line has become very easy in the morning,”* explained Lukas Richter, Line Leader at the Peterborough site. *“The 1000 Line allows me to store all of the codes I need. I just come to the line in the morning and select the code for the first job of the day.”*





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Bokomo has also seen an increase in the productivity of their lines. Working in the production environment of Bokomo can be very challenging for most ink jet printers due to the dust and crumbs in the environment. Dust, ink and other particles in the environment can clog the printhead, shutting the line down until the printhead has been cleaned. This was a common problem with their older printer which had to be shut down and cleaned often. However, with the 1000 Line, the production line is rarely shut down and the cleaning process is simple for them, when it is required. The benefits seen by Bokomo are due to Videojet's CleanFlow™ printhead which reduces ink buildup that can cause traditional CIJ printers to go down. Therefore, the 1000 Line requires less cleaning for Bokomo and helps ensure longer runs.

“The new Videojet printers are much more reliable than our older printers. I rarely have to go near them,” said Mick Williams, Engineering Supervisor for the Peterborough site.

Additionally, the 1000 Line allows Bokomo to run longer between preventative maintenance activities and schedule maintenance time appropriately.

Additionally, the older ink and makeup bottles would leave a trail of ink around the facility. Operators did not want to handle the ink bottles for the older printers because they would get ink on their hands and clothing. The ink would also spread to whatever they touched including the production lines.

The sealed Smart Cartridge™, new with the 1000 Line, is a revelation in ink and makeup cartridge design. The operators are no longer concerned about changing the ink and makeup in the printer. According to Maziarz, “I am very happy with the Smart Cartridge™ and ink replacement. The process is so easy. It is just like replacing the cartridge in your printer at home. With the older printers, the ink would leak and get all over your hands which I hated. Now, it is a very clean process. Also, it is extremely simple for people who have never done it before to replace the cartridge.” The Smart Cartridge™ fluid delivery system virtually eliminated spills and ensured that all the fluid in each cartridge is used and the embedded microchip confirmed the correct fluid was being used. The self-contained cartridge with needle and septum design virtually eliminates fluid spills while the internal bladder design ensures all fluid is drained from the cartridge, saving money on supplies. This is one of the favorite features of Williams. “We now use a lot less ink and consumables with the 1000 Line. It has really had a positive impact on our monthly budget.”

In addition, it was once obvious where the printers used to be because of the ink stains on the floor, but this too is no longer a problem.

Finally, there were some ink issues during the first part of the trial. There was not enough time for the ink to dry before the folder on the cartoner smudged the ink on the cartons. This was a big issue for Bokomo. Since Bokomo is primarily a private label and contract manufacturer, they want a high quality code that reflects the quality of their customers' products. In addition, they understand how poor quality codes can affect a brand and its profitability, including product returns and potential increases in unsaleables. But the issue was quickly resolved with Videojet's assistance. Videojet's portfolio of CIJ inks is the broadest in the industry and includes specialty inks for almost any application. After replacing the first ink with a higher performance, fast dry ink, the codes on the cartons are now crisp and clear.

With the success of the 1000 Line at Peterborough, Bokomo placed an order for an additional four 1000 Line printers at their Wellingborough site to replace Videojet's older printers on the lines. They are also looking to invest in more case coders across both sites. When asked whether he would like to work with Videojet in the future and purchase the case coders from Videojet, Hackney replied,

"I am a happy customer. I always like to do my due diligence but I think a good example of where I stand is the path we went down at Wellingborough."



Call **800-843-3610**
Email **info@videojet.com**
or visit **www.videojet.com**

Videojet Technologies Inc.
1500 Mittel Blvd. Wood Dale IL 60191 / USA

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