

INDIVIDUAL REQUIREMENTS. CUSTOMIZED SOLUTIONS.

VARTA Microbattery GmbH uses range of printing and labeling solutions from NOVEXX Solutions to increase productivity and reduce costs.

BACKGROUND

VARTA Microbattery GmbH, the largest producer of micro batteries worldwide, generates sales of approximately 190 million annually. They develop, produce and pack almost one billion micro batteries for use in electrochemical systems. Brands include VARTA and power one.

VARTA requires fast, cost-efficient printing and labelling systems for its packaging lines. These lines are tailored to each individual site and must satisfy the demanding quality requirements the company expects of them. NOVEXX Solutions has been a solutions provider to VARTA since the first printer was put into operation at their Ellwangen plant in 2005. One of the first NOVEXX Solutions ALX print and apply systems commissioned by VARTA has processed nine million orders and 935km of material.

THE CHALLENGE

VARTA required a printer which could handle 350g package labels with thermal transfer processes in high quality. Setting up the machines was too time-consuming and the film labels were not printed efficiently. An operator was responsible for the manual set-up and inputting of data into the individual machines, filling them with material and also for all monitoring and observation. "More than 15 minutes in which production was stopped would go by until all data was correctly put in, the individual screens had been called up and the set-up procedures had been completed", explained Klaus Schöbel, Lean Manager at VARTA Microbattery. "Also, the set-up procedures had to be carried out up to four times a day – which was extremely time-consuming and costly". Furthermore, the traditional printing and labelling solutions used by VARTA did not use the film labels efficiently as the majority of the labelling surface remained unprinted, resulting in wasted material and unnecessary costs.



THE SOLUTION

Firmware Solution

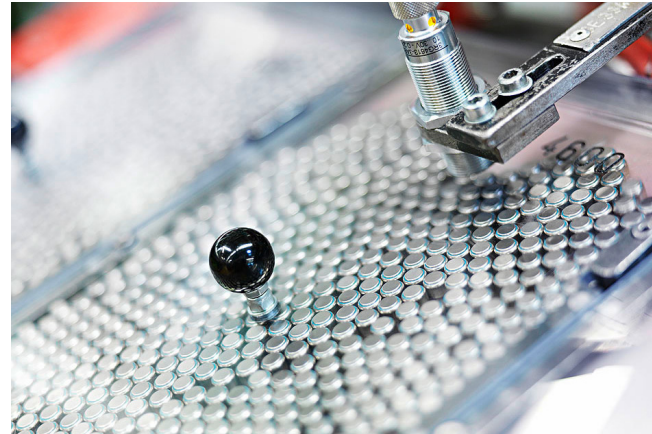
Together with VARTA a software has been developed that releases the operator from costly, manual time-consuming activities. The new system saves VARTA a lot of time and minimises the risk of errors occurring. The data is automatically sent from an individual font and bar code library which saves around 15 minutes per entry with no need to halt production.

"NOVEXX Solutions' developers set themselves the task of fulfilling VARTA's requirement for a continuous print function and worked closely with their development department until the printer firmware was adapted accordingly", said Manfred Bradler, co-ordinator of the engineering and packaging team at the VARTA plant in Ellwangen.

Printing and Labelling Solutions

With NOVEXX Solutions printing and labelling solutions – ALX 92x series, 64-0x printers and TDI – VARTA Microbattery GmbH is equipped with excellent print and apply solutions. In total, 32 NOVEXX Solutions systems are used in an area of 13,700 square metres on 15 packaging and production lines which are used to label packages and pallets.

64-0x and ALX 92x series printing and label dispensing systems allow for an intelligent use of label film courtesy of the foil-saving mechanism. "From 6mm of unprinted label area this mechanism can reduce material consumption by raising the print head, holding the foil and only letting the labelling material run. With this technology we save roughly 10-20mm material per printing run. With a label roll that is 600m long, the costs that are saved soon mount up", said Manfred Bradler. In addition they are still using the TDI, a single tag thermal transfer printer which was the only solution on the market which could fulfil Varta's requirements to print directly on packaging cardboard and to generate the print data from the batch and SAP information.



RESULTS

There are currently 32 NOVEXX Solutions printing, dispensing and labelling machines on all packaging and production lines at the VARTA Microbattery GmbH site in Ellwangen.

Many of these machines were specially adapted to Varta production processes. The battery manufacturer saves considerable time on set-up and therefore saves costs, reduces labelling errors down to almost zero and continues to improve on already high levels of quality. These innovations have become indispensable especially when considering a constantly increasing set-up frequency whilst batch sizes were simultaneously becoming smaller due to changing customer requirements. From 2005, the number of our machines at VARTA has continuously increased. "Naturally we aim to work with a system that is as standardised as possible and to consistently optimise our packaging and production lines. "We have already ordered the next new systems.", explained Bradler and Schöbel.

INDUSTRY

General Manufacturing / Battery Production

AT A GLANCE

In conjunction with VARTA, the worldwide leader in micro battery production, uses fast, cost-efficient printing and labelling systems developed and adapted to their requirements.

Challenge

Optimisation of printing and labelling processes at the Ellwangen site.

Results

- Printing, dispensing and labelling solutions tailored to individual requirements
Improves data accuracy, as our solution is integrated with the company's SAP system
- Saved time and fewer errors in the labelling process
- Saving costs and material due to the automated recovery mechanism

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