

Case study – NiceLabel replaces several applications in beverages factory

This case study shows how labeling can be automated using NiceWatch and easily, yet thoroughly controlled by NiceForm.

Publish date: 10. January 2007

Company: Fructal

Industry: Food & beverages

NiceLabel product: NiceLabel suite Network edition for 10 users.

Summary

Fructal, the largest beverages factory in Slovenia decided to unify labeling on the production lines. The customer required connection between the labeling application and existing information system, plus allowing full control to the print operator.

Each product line got equipped with NiceForm for simple label control, while NiceWatch makes sure labels are printed immediately after the palette is finished.

Customer profile

Fructal produces and markets high quality products made of fruit and some other goods. The brand is recognized in south, east and north Europe, UK and USA.

The origins of the company are dated in the year 1945 when 5 men started to distill brandy. Soon after it became the largest provider of beverages in the ex Yugoslavia. After the collapse of the country, the company coped with new market situation. Fifteen years later, things made another turn when Slovenia, where the company is based, joined EU.

These circumstances significantly influenced number of employees and production automation process. Approximately 670 employees (55% less than in the year 1991) work in fully automated environment creating annual revenue of over 60 mio €.

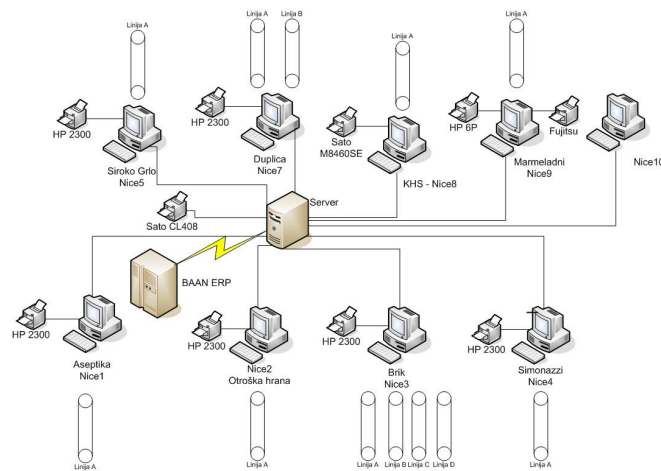
Challenges

Objectives

The customer needed a centralized labeling system supporting 12 production lines, on 10 workstations and printers.

The production process is organized and monitored by the BAAN ERP system, which contains all label data, therefore the labeling system should use it as data source.

Connection to the ERP system is necessary.



Automated and operator triggered printing must be supported

The production process is automated and labeling should be no exception. Labels must be printed when the ERP system instructs it or when a palette with products is ready. However, the printing operator should have the possibility to verify and change label data, as well as manually start printing.

Labels need to be printed also in the warehouse upon receiving new fruit.

Choosing the solution

The company was using other software packages before. With some of them they were satisfied, with some not. One of the problems was software compatibility with different printers.

NiceLabel offered a unified solution.

Using different software for similar tasks was anyhow inconvenient. NiceLabel offered a unified solution, satisfying all demands, supporting different printers, causing no additional adaptation in the information system.

Solution

Production part

Work plan number must be entered in NiceForm.


When a new work plan is entered in the ERP, the system generates a text file with label data. When the production according to this plan is started, the operator enters the work plan number into custom made NiceForm. If necessary, the data can be changed.

If needed, the operator can change data and print labels.



When the palette passes the photocell, NiceWatch is triggered and the label previously prepared by the operator is printed. Simultaneously some data is saved in another file. VB script takes care of it.

NiceWatch prints the label immediately when the palette is ready



Labels are printed immediately after new record is entered in the database, without user interface

Filter makes data retrieving simple.

NiceLabel took the job of different applications without causing additional work on the information system.

Warehouse part

After fruit quality is approved, the operator enters data in the ERP system. The system immediately generates text file with label data. NiceWatch is monitoring the directory where this file is created and immediately prints the label.

NiceLabel works in background, without user interface. To the operator it seems that the ERP prints the label.



Keys to success, conclusion

NiceLabel makes sure the production process runs smoothly. Data is collected in the existing system, which needed no changes because of NiceLabel implementation. The print operator still has full control over the label printing.

NiceLabel successfully replaced more different applications, enabling easier system maintenance.