

British-American Tobacco (BAT) Relies on HoloTrak® to Keep Products Rolling Along



High density bar codes can be scanned reliably with Metrologic's HoloTrak® IS8300 Holographic laser scanner. 5,250 lines per second make the IS8300 equally effective for close range

In a world pre-occupied by statistics, those provided by British American Tobacco at their enormous plant in Brussels, Belgium, are staggering to say the least. Manufacturing products for locations as far apart as Finland in the North and Portugal in the South, it is estimated that during 2000, the total quantity of packets of cigarettes produced at that one plant was around 400 million marketed through forty different brand names.

To keep up to date with the orders from the various distributors that it supplies, the factory production lines are able to change brands very quickly. The swapping of brands on a given production line entails changing the packaging, cleaning of the pipes and hoppers, and the replacement of the tobacco, cartons and filters. Brussels estimates that it swapped the brand lines approximately 2,500 times last year.

Around four years ago, BAT began a major upgrade of its stock control processes throughout the plant, with the reconciliation of goods produced being a top priority. Bar code printers were changed to ensure a unique bar code for every carton so that it could be traced from the production line to the central warehouse. There are three scanning locations within the site, with the first being at the end of the production area where the carton is packed with cigarettes and begins its journey on the conveyor. It is then scanned again when it reaches the central store and finally when it is put on to a pallet, ready for dispatch and eventual delivery. At each of the scanning points, the data is downloaded to the stock control system, providing detailed information on any given package throughout the huge facility.

BAT selected the HoloTrak IS8300 product from Metrologic due to its ability to provide accurate high density scanning within the confines of a size-sensitive conveyor location. As Philippe Heuse, Electronic and Automation Manager, explains, "The 8300's omnidirectional scan pattern, size of the scan area, and long depth of field all contributed towards BAT's decision to choose the 8300 against competitive products. Since its installation, performance has been terrific."

The excellent first pass read rate was crucial for BAT's automated environment. The benefits include the ability to trace products which means more accurate stock control and deliveries, and therefore a more efficient and cost effective production process. It is again an example of Metrologic providing a reliable and effective solution within a critical environment.

BAT
Brussels,
Belgium



British American Tobacco has manufacturing facilities in 66 countries and employs almost 90,000 people worldwide

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