

Case Study

Craft Beer Brewing

Fast-growing craft brewery looks to Hitachi Marking and Coding Solutions to keep a promise of freshness to their thirsty fans.

SUMMARY

Stony Creek Brewery needed a product marking solution for their sizeable craft beer canning operation. Explosive growth outpaced the capabilities of their previous printer. With installation support from their local Hitachi distributor, they experienced increased marking consistency and worry-free operation with their UX-D160W model printer.



CUSTOMER
Stony Creek Brewery

INDUSTRY
Craft Beer Brewing

Stony Creek Brewery

Step through the doors and you'll quickly see how the people of Connecticut-based Stony Creek Brewery live out both elements of their "Aggressively Laid-Back" mantra. On one side, they're good guys and gals committed to producing creative, high quality beer in a relaxing space that hosts 350,000 visitors per year. On the other side, they're experienced professionals and ambitious entrepreneurs who have taken the business from 8,000 barrels to 23,000 barrels within three years.

"Almost every single company said that we shouldn't put a printer on a gravity-fed twist rinser because it wouldn't work. Hitachi made it work."

Nick, Brewery Engineer at Stony Creek Brewery

CHALLENGE

Stony Creek Brewery also utilizes can marking as an extension of their "Aggressively Laid-Back" brand. Date coding is used to ensure only the freshest beer reaches the hands of their customers. And sometimes they'll delight fans by including fun, cheeky messages on their creative varieties like "Crankenstein" and "No Egrets." At first, they printed stickers and attached them to the product by hand. But with increasing volume, stickers became cost prohibitive and labor intensive. A printer solution followed, but sensor issues persisted. Plus, the printer couldn't meet the marking clarity and speed demands of their system that runs up to 21,000 cans per day. Additionally, Stony Creek's priority to stage product marking immediately following the can rinse occasionally introduced moisture to the print. The brewery's use of both 12- and 16-ounce cans in the production process required a need for a printer to have an easy changeover capability to accommodate the different can sizes. The printer also needed to endure frequent chemical cleanses.

PRODUCT

Inkjet Printer



“It’s really, really
user friendly.”

Nick, Brewery Engineer at
Stony Creek Brewery



The UX-D160W printer in operation.

SOLUTION

Leaning on prior experience with another brewery, the plant manager convinced Stony Creek leadership to invest in a Hitachi industrial printer because it would stand up to their unique needs. Then they consulted the experts at Hitachi, who provided on-site guidance through the implementation of a Hitachi UX-D160W model.

“I worked with Hitachi at another brewery in the past. I had my mind set that it was going to be a Hitachi printer coming in here.”

Jay Kendig, Director of Operations at Stony Creek Brewery

RESULTS

The Hitachi inkjet printer has met speed and clarity demands, while eliminating the expense of stickers and downtime of their previous printer. The can size changeover has been quick and toolless. Plus, there’s been no change in performance due to moisture or chemical cleaning. While local is just a call away, Stony Creek said they only needed to call to order more ink.

“What sets us apart? From the beginning, it definitely was a very ambitious and diverse team that came together to start Stony Creek. The fact that, a lot of us are local, and a lot of us are from out of state helped make us a really strong team—one team that has grown the brewery very quickly to the 23,000 barrel mark this year.”

Jay Kendig, Director of Operations at Stony Creek Brewery

