



RELIABILITY SEALS CODERS' SUCCESS AT SMITH & NEPHEW

Maintenance free and reliable operation are the key factors that have made the Wolke m600 thermal transfer ink jet printer, supplied in the UK by Sunala Ltd, the coder of choice at Smith & Nephew's Advanced Wound Management factory in Hull.

Fifteen m600s are installed at the facility, all of which operate with specially created validated pharmaceutical software, developed by Wolke in conjunction with Smith & Nephew.

The thermal transfer ink jet printers are being used to code a variety of information, including lot and date codes and machine/production line details onto both primary and secondary packs in a variety of materials, including directly onto bandages, operating at speeds up to 300 packs per minute.

"Reliability is critical to our operation and this is what sets the m600 apart from the competition," comments Andrew Marris, Asset Care Manager, at Smith & Nephew. "Wherever we have put a Wolke m600 onto a line, machine downtime has been significantly reduced.

"In fact, in the past five years we have had just one problem with one machine and this was speedily sorted out by Sunala and Wolke as part of the m600's five year parts and labour guarantee."

Mr Marris says running costs for the m600 are also extremely favourable. "Prior to the installation of the Wolke m600, we used thermal transfer printers but we found spares and maintenance costs very expensive on these machines," he explains.

By contrast, the m600 uses a unique HP cartridge system that contains both the ink and the print head to ensure maintenance and trouble-free operation since the key elements of the printing system are replaced at the same time as new ink is required. This also ensures a consistently high quality and easily readable code.

The coders are running 24 hours, five days a week. An easy to use control panel allows product set up and changeovers to be carried out by operators on line.

"The m600 sells itself." concludes Mr Marris. "There really is no other coder for us."

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