

## PRINTRONIX RFID PRINTER SELECTED FOR BALLANTINE RFID PILOT

*Printronix SmartLine 5000e RFID printer chosen for its intelligent tag management, scalability and ease of operation*

*Ballantine Produce selected the Printronix SmartLine 5000e radio frequency identification (RFID) printer for use in its distribution centers. Printronix and Manhattan Associates are expanding their strategic alliance to work with the produce leader to map its RFID strategy to Wal-Mart mandates and gain a competitive edge.*

### COMPANY INFORMATION

For more than 50 years, Ballantine Produce has provided the produce industry with quality treefruit and grapes. Established in 1943 as a partnership between a grower, a marketer and a wholesaler, Ballantine Produce was designed to meet the overwhelming demand for fresh produce at the end of World War II. During that time, Ballantine has progressed from its first-year production of 50,000 cartons to an annual distribution of more than 10 million packages. The company's continued growth is attributable to its constant attention to the science and art of farming, the demands of its customers, its disciplined management practices, and an eagerness to stay abreast of the trends affecting all aspects of the produce business.

That enthusiasm prompted the Sanger, Calif.-based company to explore RFID technology. Although the company is not required to place RFID tags on cases or pallets of the fruit it ships to any customers yet, it is among the first in its industry to meet the multiple RFID compliance mandates of its retail customers. Ballantine is well-positioned to meet the Wal-Mart 2007 date for perishables, and it has already established close working partnerships with other retailers and suppliers to become RFID-ready and enabled. Ballantine has begun deploying the technology at its primary packing facility in Reedley, Calif., and has already begun the process of gaining a competitive advantage through actual RFID product shipments and data evaluation, as well as further technology assessments for internal uses.

In an industry where hourly variations in temperature can affect a product's shelf life, Ballantine anticipates that RFID will revolutionize the tracking of its produce movement. By deploying Manhattan Associates' RFID-enabled supply chain execution and optimization solutions, Ballantine aims to realize increased order accuracy and inventory visibility, and to reduce operational costs, enabling the company to always deliver the highest-quality produce to its customers.

The company decided to move forward with the RFID deployment and pilot test in February 2005. It set a June 1 deadline to begin testing to take full advantage of its selling season, which runs from June to September. Although it had less than four months to get the tagging system up and running, the company began its pilot on May 18, ahead of schedule.

### BUSINESS NEEDS

Leading supply-chain solutions provider Manhattan Associates, which provided Ballantine with its RFID and warehouse management solutions, also played the role of systems integrator for Ballantine's RFID deployment. The supply-chain solutions provider helped Ballantine choose its hardware partners and assisted in linking those solutions with Manhattan Associates' Integration Platform for RFID. Ballantine needed RFID-compatible printers for tagging at the case and pallet level. To ramp up to RFID compliance, it was necessary to find a solution that offered:

- ➔ Intelligent tag management to identify and overstrike substandard smart labels
- ➔ Intelligent media detection to proactively identify media type and avoid wasting RFID labels with a standard bar code print job
- ➔ Multiprotocol capability support for evolving standards, such as EPCglobal Gen 2
- ➔ Ability to track Wal-Mart-required data, including SKU, description, product family, EPC data and grower detail
- ➔ Operator ease of use

## THE SOLUTION

Manhattan Associates' professional services team was tasked with helping Ballantine develop the best RFID solution. "Printronix is a natural fit," said Jeff Mitchell, Manhattan Associates' executive vice president, Americas. "As one of our key RFID technology partners, we already knew that the company offered superior product. The Printronix SL5000<sup>e</sup> printer has the ability to address the widest range of applications, is scalable for future needs and best of all, is simple to use and operate."

In early product assessment testing of the tags on reusable plastic containers (RPCs) carrying peaches, representatives from Manhattan Associates worked with Ballantine to find the optimal reader antenna and tag placements until it was able to successfully read between 40 and 45 RPC's for each 55-RPC pallet load. They're now using the same tag placement and reader configuration for the pilot project. David Silva, director of IT at Ballantine, reports that the company was reading a majority of the RPC tags during the first days of the pilot.

The pilot was carried out for the rest of the summer season, and will be extended to include other products, such as grapes and imported Chilean fresh fruit. Eventually, Ballantine also will begin deploying an active RFID system in which temperature sensors linked to battery-operated RFID tags are used to log the temperature history of produce from the time it is picked to the time it reaches a retailer.

"Printronix is proud to be the RFID printing solutions provider for Ballantine and to have earned Manhattan Associates' recommendation," said James B. McWilson, senior vice president, sales, the Americas and EMEA (Europe, Middle East and Africa), Printronix. "Since launching our first RFID solution in September 2003, Printronix has been committed to helping end users and integrators realize the benefits of RFID technology and meet compliance mandates. As the leader in RFID printing solutions, Printronix is in the unique position of having extensive first-hand knowledge, which in turn enables our customers to avoid the typical barriers to RFID implementation."

### About Printronix Inc.

Through its three-decade Leadership By Design strategy, Printronix Inc. (NASDAQ: PTNX) has been the first choice for industrial-marketplace and supply-chain printing technologies. Its line matrix, thermal bar code, laser and radio frequency identification (RFID) printers and software lead market share and innovate the industry. Visit [www.primtronix.com](http://www.primtronix.com) for company information.



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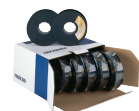
RFID SOLUTIONS



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