

Coty Inc

Coty Inc, with sales of over one billion pounds, is one of the world's leading manufacturers and marketers of colour cosmetics, personal fragrances and skin treatments in both the mass and prestige markets. The company, founded in 1996, to operate the worldwide business of Joh A Benckiser GmbH, can trace its heritage back to 1904 when Francois Coty established the modern fragrance industry in Paris.

Today, with a strong presence in over 25 countries, Coty's unique business model, based on developing their 'power' brands, licensing agreements, acquisition and joint ventures, gives the company an agility and flexibility that they believe sets them apart from other beauty companies. Their brand portfolio includes famous names such as Rimmell, Addidas, JOOP! and Esprit, while their 'living' brands include Celine Dion, Jennifer Lopez and Vivienne Westwood, the latter being based on the philosophy of helping consumers enhance the lifestyle they aspire to.

Coty Operations at Ashford in Kent produces the company's lipsticks, mascaras and powders for worldwide distribution. As customers become more discerning and colour shades ever more subtle, maintaining a competitive edge in today's colour cosmetics market requires extremely close control on the accuracy and consistency of the production process.



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Factory Solution

Over 7000 raw ingredients including liquids, pastes and powders, form the basis for these products and ensuring batch consistency can be a logistical and manufacturing nightmare. Spoilt or inconsistent batches are very costly, both in time and lost revenue. As Coty's Manufacturing Manager points out: "Each finished product is made up of between 20 and 40 different ingredients with batch sizes varying from 20-1000kg. Like many companies, our batching procedure had evolved around labour intensive and often cumbersome paperwork routines. The adding of ingredients is a manual process and keeping a check on the amounts of each ingredient going into a particular batch, together with ensuring that all the required ingredients had been added was very difficult. The procedure relied totally on operator efficiency and any distractions or errors leading to an incorrect batch often only came to light after the final product had been produced. Furthermore, trying to keep track on product usage and product traceability was almost impossible."

Coty realised that they needed to replace this existing system with a more efficient recipe blending system which could also be integrated within their existing management system. Their original brief highlighted the key criteria for the new system which should include:

- Improved batch accuracy and repeatability
- Reduction in paper work system
- Full batch, ingredient and lot traceability
- Eventual integration with their MRP system
- De-skilled operator function
- Reduction or elimination in spoilt batches

The System

The system combines Marco's highly reliable weighing equipment with their inspirational Trac-IT software suite. Trac-IT fully encompasses all facets of factory data capture and being based on industry standard operating platforms, it is equally at home running any bespoke in-house software application. Ingredient weighing is carried out at six PC-based, DataMaster stainless steel work stations. These form the hub of the recipe application and are designed to incorporate the weigh scales, working surfaces and operator interfaces, all at optimum working height.

The scheduled work plan is downloaded automatically from Coty's AS400 MRP system and the batches filtered to ensure the correct permissions are granted. These are then forwarded to the relevant workstations, depending on the materials and weight requirements to complete the batch.

Operators select the job they wish to complete and are prompted for the first ingredient. They then confirm the correct raw material selection via barcode scanning, thus ensuring that the correct batch/lot has been selected and recorded. All the scanners incorporate RF wireless technology to ensure the operators can easily locate the barcodes on the raw materials without the added constraints of a cable.

Although the workstations are fully digital, operators also have an analogue bar graph which indicates weight change. It has been shown that this is a highly effective method for displaying and controlling operator initiated filling processes. Operators rapidly 'tune in' to such displays and stop adding the raw material nearer to the minimum tolerance than the maximum.

Weights below the target are shown as amber, changing to green in the acceptance zone. If the operator allows too much product to be poured, the graph goes red and an out of tolerance message is shown, preventing the operator proceeding further. The comprehensive display at each station shows all manufacturing instructions together with any pre and post weighing prompts that may be appropriate including relevant health and safety instructions and general product information.

Coty's Manufacturing Manager is in no doubt as to the benefits of the new system: "At first we were reticent about the claims made by Marco but it soon became clear that we had no reason to worry. Marco's professional approach and attention to detail surpassed our expectations. The new system gives us accurate weighing and full software integration, all supported by Marco's Assistcall total support package. Installation took place with the minimum of disruption and apart from some initial scepticism from the operators, the advantages have been very quick to show. The operators are very comfortable with 'their' workstations, stock details are now accurate and raw material bottlenecks, resulting in incomplete batches waiting for missing stock, have disappeared. We can now plan our raw material ordering much more precisely, avoiding both costly over-stocking and material shortages."

Coty have seen a 20% increase in productivity and the system has paid for itself in less than five months. They now have full batch traceability and 'right first time' batches have risen from 80% to 98%. Any variances are now due to acceptable variations in the natural colours of the ingredients. Another major benefit of the new system is that the Trac-IT system gives them instant access to archived manufacturing data, without having to plough through reams of paper. This is particularly relevant bearing in mind that Coty need to store records for five years.

To learn more about Coty Inc click here

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