

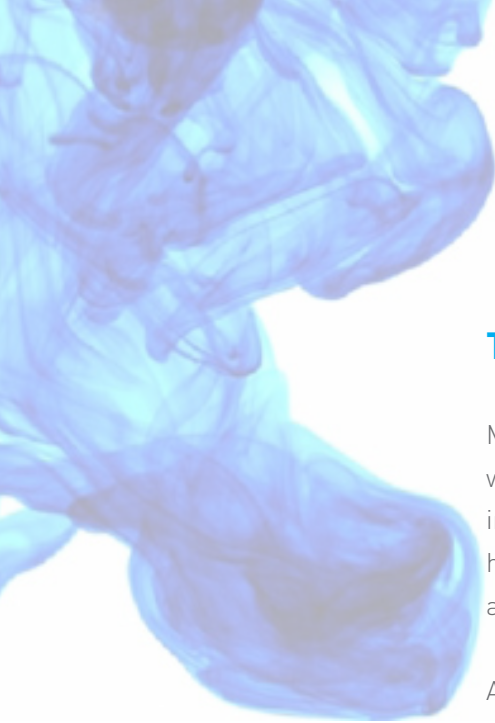
Fujifilm Sericol

Fujifilm Sericol, which employs around 1250 personnel world-wide, is a leading supplier of UV curing and solvent-based inks for digital press applications. The company works closely with leading press and print-head manufacturers around the world ensuring products are available for the widest range of graphic POP and industrial applications. In the UK Fujifilm Sericol manufacture a wide range of printing inks and pre-press products and export to over 80 countries.



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The Solution

Marco have built-up a long-standing business relationship with Fujifilm Sericol and were therefore ideally placed to advise their technical team when they needed to increase throughput of their special digital inks. In their own words, Fujifilm Sericol has created a dedicated factory within the main manufacturing plant for this crucial and rapidly expanding part of their business.

Although based around Marco's tried and tested Trac-IT modules, the new system has been engineered and built to meet Fujifilm Sericol's exact requirements and is a prime example of Marco's lateral thinking approach to each and every application.

As Marco's Technical Director Paul Seamons explains: "Understandably customers do not always have a clear vision of how the finished solution will operate. Typically they know what they want to achieve but often do not realise the importance of the weighing part and how the data can be integrated within their management systems to provide a wealth of control and traceability functions. We have developed our approach to recognise what the customer is looking to achieve overall. Our solutions are a balanced blend of sound mechanical design, innovative control functionality and software integration. Unlike many software companies who often use a "smoke and mirrors" approach, our concepts are pragmatic, cost effective and not tied up in jargon. We allow the factory floor to communicate freely with the management systems, allowing real time data to be used to its full potential. Each part of the process is addressed separately and drawn together towards the final concept. We make it clear who is responsible for each part of any project thereby ensuring a fully functioning system from the outset."

The System

The DataMaster workstations are designed for filling 1 litre to 5 litre containers in relatively short runs to fulfil customer specific orders. Each filling booth is of a bespoke design and equipped with a stainless steel weigh platform, cantilevered out at the optimum operator working height. This gives clear all-round access for cleaning in the event of any product spillages. The QWERTY key pad is readily available if any batch notes need to be added, this slides neatly away below the station and the DataMaster screen is situated within easy reach.

When orders have been scheduled, the Supervisor pre-allocates booths and operators specific filling jobs and releases them as works orders to the workstations. The operator is presented with a tailored list of jobs that are at, or past their release date, but not yet complete. These are then sorted by release date and priority order, and the operator selects the actual job to complete. No two workstations can start the same job and simple prompts on the large DataMaster screen codify the entire set up and filling procedure guiding the operator through the complete filling process.

At the start of the filling process, the operator places the empty container on the scale which then checks if the tare weight is within a specified weight band for that size of container linked to the works order. The scale is then set to zero and if checks are satisfied the filling process automatically starts.

Management limits and tolerances are pre-programmed into the system for each product and container type. The system calculates the cut-off point taking into account the product in-flight after the feed valve to the filling head has been closed. As fills are completed, the system checks the target weights against the actual fill and automatically re-adjusts the cut-off point using an innovative automatic optimisation process. If the fill is completed successfully within the required tolerances, the operator is allowed to continue with the next fill. The twin label printers associated with each station provide label information relating to the unique product, customer and batch code.

The system is already bringing important savings and as Fujifilm Sericol's Engineering Manager, Steve Jones concludes: "The batch size and diversity of our orders dictate that we need a manual filling system but these can be very labour intensive and rely too much on individual operator efficiency. The Marco system gives us much more than just a filling system and now, at a glance we can see the efficiency of the entire filling process.

Errors in filling and labelling have been eliminated and we have also eradicated time consuming paperwork systems. Data is stored on every single fill, giving maximum reporting flexibility including filled quantities by product and customer, together with statistical filling performance. We have a clear picture of what is going on at any time, giving us total control of our process and ensuring our customers are completely satisfied."

To learn more about Fujifilm Sericol click here

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