J.G. Ross Case Study

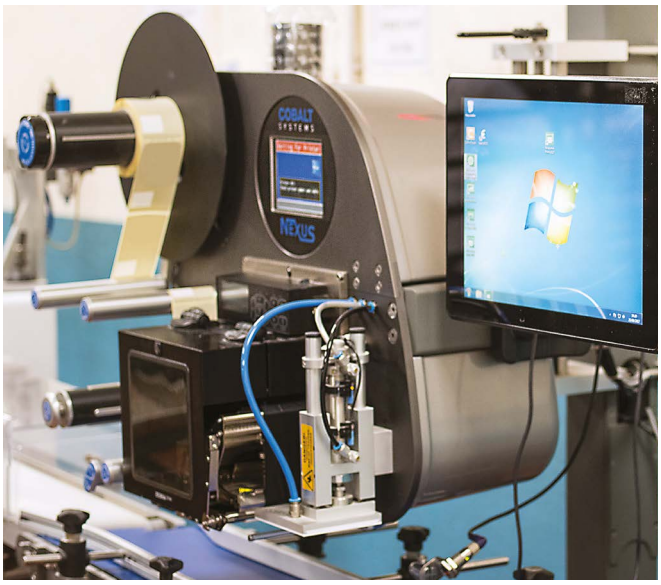
Independent craft bakery J.G. Ross expands production with an automated print and apply solution

J.G. Ross is an award-winning independent craft baker based in the North East of Scotland. With a chain of coffee shops, retail distributors and a direct-to-customer offering via Uber Eats, the family-owned company has gone from strength to strength since trading began in the early 1960's.

As the company has expanded its production and product offering, it has invested in machinery and equipment to improve the manufacturing process and drive efficiency.

In 2014, the company first approached Cobalt to implement an automated print and apply labelling system as hand labelling was becoming increasingly hard to manage due to the scale and speed of operation.

The first system installed was a single-label application to the top of a flow-wrapped pack, mostly of multipack goods but also individual items.



Due to the relatively small size of some of the packs and an increasing requirement for greater amounts of nutritional and allergen information, the labels were simply not big enough to contain everything and still be attractive for retail environments.

To overcome the problem, Cobalt specified a Combi System capable of applying two labels to the top and bottom of the pack. The top label is decorative but still contains a small amount of variable data, whereas the bottom label would hold all the additional allergen and nutritional print data.

To handle this requirement, Cobalt designed a split conveyor system which allows labels to be printed and applied to the top and bottom of a pack by vertically opposed machines.

The machine on top uses pneumatics to apply the label, the bottom wiping the label on through the small gap in the conveyor. When the product passes over the second, lower machine, a sensor detects that the product is ready and prints a label.

A fixed applicator beak acts as the label peel point and the label is applied to the underside of the pack using the weight of the product itself. This generates sufficient pressure for label application, without the need for secondary pneumatics. The pack then moves along the conveyor, which acts as a secondary wipe to ensure adhesion.

> **"We've been delighted with the support we've received and the strategic approach adopted by Cobalt, which has streamlined and automated a fairly complex labelling challenge."**
>
> Cameron Ross, Director at J.G. Ross

The Combi Print and Apply solution was designed with a **custom-built chassis** and **integrated conveyor** which allowed for comprehensive off-site testing and configuration.

Label design and management is managed by a **specialised food and beverage label software system.** Data is pulled from that and overprinted onto the two labels to **ensure compliance.**