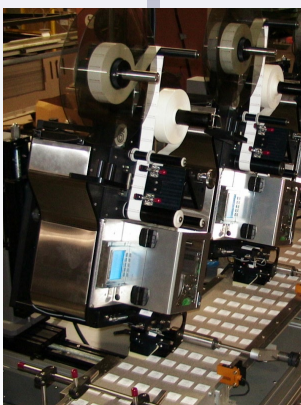## Positive I. D.

Before most consumers buy a new countertop for their kitchen or bath, they first gather together handfuls of sample chips to help them make informed decisions about color selection and surface choices. A few small chips pulled from a key ring or binder at a home improvement center might not seem like a big deal, but when the demand for those chips is multiplied by hundreds of shoppers in thousands of home improvements stores, keeping up with the demand for free sample chips becomes a monumental manufacturing endeavor.

To keep up with consumers' insatiable appetite for chips, **Wilsonart International**, a manufacturer of decorative laminate and acrylic based solid surfaces, has dedicated a full-time production line to the task. Running virtually non-stop, the Wilsonart sample chip line produces an astonishing number of laminate sample chips each year. While Wilsonart produces a variety of samples in myriad colors, each chip has one thing in common: a print-apply identification label.

Applying labels to sample chips is nothing new for Wilsonart. For more than a decade, they have relied on **Datamax** printers to do the job. During the past 14 years, Datamax printers have been reliably producing thousands of labels for Wilsonart without a hiccup. Because their Datamax printers had performed so well for so long, Wilsonart decided to use a new generation of Datamax printers when the company elected to modernize the operation of its sample chip line. To create a new technologically advanced print-apply system for the production of sample chips, Wilsonart returned to **code-in-motion LLC** (Irvine, Calif.), the OEM staff that designed their original sample labeling solution in the 1990s. code-in-motion's regional representative to Wilsonart is **First Choice Labels** (DeSoto, Texas).

According to Kathy Calhoun, manager, Wilsonart Marketing Services Center, Wilsonart sought an updated system that would minimize the number of labels wasted during the changeover from one batch of sample chips to another. To lower the total cost of ownership for Wilsonart, code-in-motion created an advanced system that relies on six Datamax **A4212** printers and their unique loose-loop wipe-on print-apply design. The Datamax A4212 printers are ideally suited to high-performance print and apply applications such as the one found on Wilsonart's sample chip line. The Datamax A-Class family of advanced print engines includes a number of innovative design features such as stainless steel hardware components, a modular electronic card cage, a field installable thermal transfer ribbon assembly, a remote control panel, and a full graphic display. Designed specifically for print and apply applicator integration, the A-Class utilizes the industry-recognized **Datamax I-class** firmware architecture with connectivity options to industry-standard communications interfaces.

On Wilsonart's sample chip line, according to Jovan Zivkovic, president of code-in-motion, the Datamax A4212 printers work in a unique and novel manner to minimize the number of labels wasted during product changeovers that are a frequent occurrence on the sample chip line at Wilsonart. The uniqueness is based on a code-in-motion developed loose-loop wipe-on application module where the Datamax OEM Print Engine functions as one of the two drive systems that manage the controlled and continuous movement of the label media through the automated system. According to Zivkovic, the integrated combination significantly increases application speeds and accuracy by separating the label printing process from label application.

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Labeling Equipment

code-in-motion LLC
4 Faraday, Irvine CA 92618 - phone: 949.361.CODE (2633) - fax: 949.361.2636
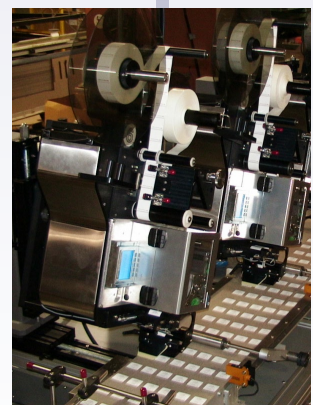**www.code-in-motion.com**

Case Study
Wilsonart

...continued

Zivkovic further explains how the system works: "A three-foot high stack of laminate sheets, up to 12 feet long, is automatically fed into the system by a vacuum-cup pick and place system. Each sheet is conveyed onto an application conveyor where up to six code-in-motion printer applicators, equipped with Datamax A-Class printers, print and apply six rows of labels; while the Datamax OEM Print Engine controls the rapid and accurate printing of labels, the loose-loop design maintains only a few printed labels between the printer and the application point. This unique code-in-motion loose-loop design allows the printer to rapidly and accurately print labels, while the actual label application to the laminate is independently maintained at the required speeds and accuracy. From there, the freshly labeled sheets are lifted by the second pick and place system and moved onto a stack of labeled laminate sheets. Subsequently, the sheets are cut into individual chips, each with a label clearly identifying it for ordering purposes."

An additional unique aspect of the code-in-motion solution is its ability to act as a broadcast print system. Zivkovic explains, "With the Datamax A4212 printers, Wilsonart has the option to use a PC to initiate one print command and have that data automatically communicated to all six printers simultaneously."

With six new Datamax A4212 printers incorporated into the code-in-motion solution at Wilsonart, the company is able to print and apply 300 labels every 12 seconds. "During peak periods, the Datamax printers run practically around the clock, printing accurately and reliably," says Calhoun. "The uptime is great, and there is minimal waste in terms of label stock. From an industry perspective, I am not aware of another loose-loop print-apply system that reaches this level of performance; it's a well proven system with high reliability, accuracy, speed and low cost of total ownership."

For additional information about this application and variety of available solutions from code-in-motion LLC, please inquire directly or contact us on the internet:

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