

THE BENEFITS OF DIRECT-TO-CAN PRINTING

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Can printing in the craft brewing industry usually involves printing a label and adhering it to a can. However, with recent strides in inkjet machine technology, the ability to produce aluminum cans with the graphics printed directly onto the product is now a reality. The benefits of direct-to-can printing include ensuring your product is recyclable, producing stunning graphics, and even lowering costs.

The ability to create high-quality graphics on demand opens up new business opportunities for craft brewers. They can also gain complete control of the supply chain by bringing everything in-house, as well as adopting a more sustainable practice.

A noteworthy statistic from a Nielsen survey states that 71 percent of consumers say they would most likely try a beer that has a unique graphic that stands out, making graphics one of the most important elements of craft beer packaging.

Cylindrical direct-to-object printing enables full-color, high-quality, consistent graphics while also making it possible to use design elements that alternative methods are unable to achieve. These machines are well-equipped to reproduce high-quality graphics with accurate, brand-consistent colors on cans, crowlers, bottles, glassware, and more. In addition to eye-catching imaging, this method makes it possible to produce much smaller runs. Limited-edition brews can be more frequently added to the product mix, as well as customized branding for any release or special event.

The use of decorating methods such as shrink sleeves and adhesive labels produces excess waste. Direct-to-can printing is a sustainable alternative that not only greatly reduces the amount of plastic waste from label backings and adhesives, but also enables the product to be completely recyclable after use.

IMPROVING THE BEVERAGE CAN BUSINESS MODEL

Direct-to-object printing changes business models for the better because it allows producers to have complete control over their supply chain. Bringing beverage can printing



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in-house and utilizing digital cylinder printing reduces the stress of long lead times and eliminates minimum order quantities. Companies can take charge and improve inventory inefficiencies because they are in control.

Companies are also able to differentiate themselves in a competitive marketplace. According to the same Nielsen study, 66 percent of American craft beer buyers say that a beer's packaging is "very" or "extremely" important in capturing a consumer's attention. This number justifies the idea of bringing labeling in-house to be able to quickly adjust, customize, and even test markets with different graphics before entering.

DIGITAL PRINTING MACHINES AVAILABLE TO PRINT ON CANS

There are two types of cylindrical direct-to-object printing systems in today's market. High-end cylindrical inkjet printers can be expensive and highly complex. Only a few producers are targets for this equipment, typically companies that print very high volumes of product.

Small- to medium-volume cylindrical inkjet printers are perfect for companies looking to produce roughly 200 to 500 parts per hour (pph) depending on image size. These printing

machines are ideally suited to environments where the bulk of the work is small- to medium-length runs and the graphics change frequently. The machines are also flexible in that they can provide uniform adhesion to aluminum, glass, and various plastics (Tritan™, polypropylene, and polycarbonate), giving craft brewers the opportunity to get creative and diversify their product mix. Craft brewers can print amazing graphics on cans and pint glasses.

Cylindrical direct-to-object printers are necessary—and purpose-built—for this kind of work and craft brewers should strongly consider leaning on their benefits. Learn more about direct-to-can printing at the Craft Brewers Conference & BrewExpo America September 10–12 at Booth #4302.

Inkcups is a leading supplier and manufacturer of digital inkjet equipment, pad printing equipment, laser plate-makers, and corresponding supplies. Inkcups manufactures high-quality industrial machines for a wide range of industries. For more information, visit inkcups.com.