

## Wilkin & Sons i-mark Case Study 2

Embracing differing marking and coding methods across its operations.  
Wilkin & Sons -Embracing differing coding methods across its operation  
Since i-mark became the supplier of choice Wilkin & Sons have:

- Access to repairs from OEM trained engineers
- Next day delivery of consumables
- Consistent quality of printing
- Decreased downtime
- Constant innovation in the technology offered

### Introduction

Wilkin & Sons Ltd is a jam, preserve, sauce and spread manufacturer operating in the food and beverage industry for over 135 years, with a turnover of over £47m. Across Wilkin & Son's operation, different technologies are embraced from i-mark uk for different applications and substrates, Hot Stamp, Continuous Inkjet and Print & Apply labelers. **i-mark are the supplier of choice** for marking and coding, due to **providing an unbiased approach to printing solutions**. This is due to supplying premium ranges of equipment across all different printing Technologies for different substrates and areas across the production line and notwithstanding **i-mark's program of introducing continuous improvement practices to improve efficiencies within their operation**.

### The Story

At Wilkin & Sons Ltd there is a **unique focus on home-growing produce** on the surrounding farmland whilst other manufacturers move their operations abroad. **Quality is of the upmost importance**, which is reflected in the premium marking and coding equipment utilised. The fresh fruit picked just minutes away from the factory ensures that fresh fruit flavour is maintained in the preserves. **Wilkin & Sons Ltd have held the Royal Warrant since 1911** showcasing the enduring exceptional nature of the business, culminating in Royal visits from Her late Majesty Queen Elizabeth II and HRH The Earl and Countess of Wessex. By introducing more and more products, primarily manufactured using produce grown on the farm Wilkin & Sons Ltd continuously innovate.

### Challenge

Wilkin & Sons **biggest challenge** before i-mark was the supplier of choice, was the quality of ink and solvent previously provided. The **ink supplied was low quality**. This **resulted in** production **downtime** and labour time wasted checking **misprints and reprinting without smudging**. Thereafter an alternative manufacturer of ink jet was introduced but quality issues still prevailed and **didn't meet the standards of the Royal Warranted manufacturer**.

i-mark's Managing Director, Garry Summers, met with Tim Gilvray, Chief Engineer, to discuss the supply of consumables to Wilkin & Sons (including genuine Hitachi ink and solvent). They had already been an i-mark customer for a number of years as we supported their analogue-driven Hot Stamp technology coders providing ribbon foils and expert technical support.

Why Wilkin & Sons Chose i-mark

After becoming familiar with i-mark as a supplier of Hot Stamp equipment it was an easy decision by Wilkin & Sons Ltd to move to i-mark also **supplying Hitachi CIJ machines, with original OEM servicing parts and consumables**. It was explained that the conversation with Garry Summers set Tim Gilvray at ease regarding the supply of the ink and the servicing capability. This was especially **important considering Wilkin & Son's past issues with ink quality**. They are now **confident** that all the jars sent out to their customers are printed with the Lot Numbers and Best Before Dates **perfectly presented**. This allows for easy traceability and means that production **downtime has dramatically reduced**. Furthermore, using genuine OEM consumables improves the overall asset life of their machines, reducing costs in the long run from reprinting and damage to the machines. **Confidence has been further reinforced by the introduction by i-mark of a 7 year warranty to Hitachi printers** since 2019.

How i-mark Have Continued To Respond

Following the acquisition of Allen Coding into private ownership, i-mark have continued to provide consumable and servicing **support to Wilkin & Sons Ltd for all their technology: CIJ, Print & Apply and Hot Stamp**. "I-mark always look to improve efficiencies within our operation such as our return to base repair offering". This service is used by Wilkin & Sons Ltd, where they can swap out machines on the production line and send the machine in need of repair to our technical centre. This decreases production downtime as the line doesn't have to stop for an engineer, reduces travel and thus the associated repair costs- **"An exceptionally good service response"**. This service for CIJ is particularly unique to i-mark in the industry.

**i-mark also provides innovations** in the technology provided such as working to update the 'analogue' hot stamp technology with **new digitised technology** to further bring **cost and efficiency** savings. With the rising cost of consumables Hot Stamp T-Slotted characters advising of new technology ensures that **our customers** like Wilkin & Sons Ltd are **utilising the most cost-effective solutions** to their printing needs. This reinforces our program of introducing **continuous improvement practices to maximise efficiencies** within our customers operations.

Further **innovation** comes from the premium manufacturer, **Hitachi**. One of the most pressing concerns to Wilkin & Sons Ltd is ink blockages caused by the machines not running continuously as per best practice, (due to operator mishandling). Therefore, at i-mark we are introducing the new **Safe-Clean Station** compatible with the latest Hitachi Printer the UX2. This **automates the cleaning of the printhead**. This **prevents ink buildup and thus costly repair bills**, caused by equipment not being shut down correctly.

## The Outcome

Overall, since i-mark has become the supplier of choice Wilkin & Sons have experienced:

- Multi-Technology servicing and repairs from OEM trained engineers
- Next Day Delivery of consumables for multiple technology types
- Consistent quality of printing across their operation and thus a lower risk of customer complaints regarding the misprinting of Lot Numbers and Best Before Dates
- Decrease in the downtime experienced due to printers being 'out of action'
- Constant innovation in the technology offered to improve the efficiency and cost effectiveness of their production