

Silwood Numberplates -i-mark case study

0% downtime over many years. High speed customer service.

Since i-mark became the supplier of choice Silwood Numberplates have experienced:

- No downtime on their equipment
- Increased labour utilisation
- Confidence that print will happen on-time every time
- Access to next day consumable distribution
- Excellent priority telephone support

Introduction

Silwood is an owner-managed business based in Northamptonshire, primarily manufacturing vehicle numberplate components.

With their previous supplier not meeting the increasing identification requirements,(and not willing or able to find a resolution). i-mark (previously Allen Coding) was engaged to supply Hitachi CIJ machines after a recommendation from another customer within the industry. Following the installation, Silwood Numberplates have markedly improved production; only experiencing downtime during annual maintenance and experiencing a consistent output of 1000 numberplates per hour. As Managing Director, Andrew Coxall, stated 'we have forgotten what it is like for our printing to go wrong!'

The Story

The company began in 1959 importing and distributing cast acrylic, beginning the production of number plate components. Year on year growth of demand in the Vehicle Registration plate area of the company was experienced throughout the 1980's. With investment into developing bespoke production equipment and the move to the logistics hub of Northamptonshire the business moved to Numberplate components exclusively.

With their development of Special Grade of Impact Modified Acrylic, they meet the performance requirements to Bsau145d.

Challenge

Silwood Numberplates faced a challenge from their current supplier in meeting the identification requirements of the industry; their previous supplier's printhead could not cope with the transverse which was required to print, as the existing supplier's printhead wasn't stable enough, causing misprints, resulting in non coded product, which compromised industry regulatory requirements.

This resulted in additional wasted labour time resolving the issue and manually checking plates. The additional requirement was a printer which could meet the increased speed of construction throughput.

The Hitachi CIJ was recommended by Hills Numberplates and addressed Silwood's requirement for a printer that could perform the identification requirements and was compatible with the transverse. Silwood Numberplates engaged with i-mark (previously Allen Coding) after the recommendation because of their expertise when answering technical questions compared to their previous supplier who were uninterested and unresponsive.

Solution

After having the Hitachi CIJ printers recommended, i-mark was selected as the supplier of choice. It was commented that enquiry was answered promptly, and technical expertise was provided when answering questions about the suitability of the Hitachi technology. This was an important requirement for Silwood Numberplates which continues to the present day, when they have experienced the rare problem, they are able to receive telephone support from our technical team; described as 'like the engineer is next to you in the room'.

In 2021 following the management buyout of Allen Coding and changeover to i-mark, customer standards have improved to match the premium technology and engineering expertise on offer. Now offering next day delivery on consumables this gives peace of mind to Silwood Numberplates if they do experience an issue with their ink supply and solvent stock level. Upon placing the order, they are kept in the loop from acknowledgement of the email to the notification of despatch. This service means that Silwood Numberplates doesn't have to have a large stock holding freeing up valuable production space and thus lowering production stress. Our distribution was compared to that of a multi-billion-pound corporation, RS Components, in terms of the response and distribution timeframes.

ISO accreditation has also been undertaken since the management buyout showcasing to customers like Silwood Numberplates our commitment to our corporate social values throughout our supply chain. Furthermore, it displays that we value the future traceability requirements of our customers. To Silwood Numberplates it is particularly important because it demonstrates that we are well run and that we care about the environmental impact of our actions.

The Outcome

Overall, since i-mark became the supplier of choice Silwood Numberplates have experienced:

- No downtime on their equipment due to the robustness and performance of Hitachi equipment.
- Increased labour utilisation.
- Confidence that print will happen on-time every time
- Access to next day consumable distribution for peace of mind.
- Excellent priority support both over the phone and in person.