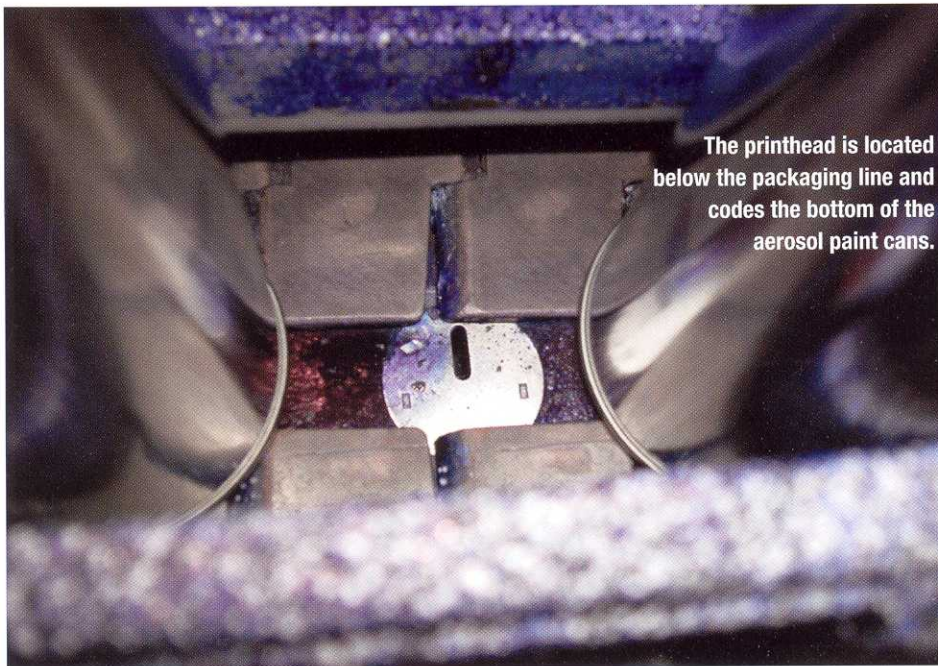


packaging digest®



The printhead is located below the packaging line and codes the bottom of the aerosol paint cans.

Bar codes paint a pretty picture

Raabe Corp. upgrades print quality and cost savings for bar codes on its aerosol paint cans with the help of a new ink-jet nozzle.

Raabe Corp., a precision-matching paint company in the U.S., maintains its competitive edge by constantly looking for new ways to reduce operating costs while maximizing product quality. The

Wisconsin-based company manufactures custom-matched touch-up paint and provides private-label aerosol and liquid-filling services to industrial and retail markets.

Raabe recently discovered the EZ JET™ nozzle from InkJet, Inc., designed for use on all Videojet EXCEL series coding and marking equipment. The nozzle features field-replaceable components and offers a simple and cost-effective alternative to high-priced

OEM nozzles, PD is told. Charlie Thon, equipment maintenance manager at Raabe, says, "With the nozzle, we can take it apart and change the orifice and filter. Or, we can flush it out and replace only the components that are faulty rather than having to buy the entire nozzle. This has helped reduce operating costs and inventory carrying costs."

In February, 2003, Raabe installed the nozzle on one of its seven Videojet printers in a trial run. Since then, the nozzle has been tested on several lines and now operates on the company's highest-speed line, which handles steel, 211/604 aerosol cans at the rate of 6,000 units/hr. This high-speed line sits in a corner of the plant that is subject to temperatures reaching 100 deg F and humidity up to 90 percent. Challenging the operation further, Raabe prints on the bottom of the cans and requires the printhead to be placed below the line and be directed up, making the nozzle more susceptible to clogging. Thon adds, "We were initially interested in the nozzle in an effort to lower costs, but the real measure of success is print quality and uptime."

The nozzle is designed specifically so in-house operators can easily replace critical nozzle components themselves. As parts wear or problems arise, the company can replace the orifice and filter, instead of buying an entire closed unit—nozzle, orifice and filter. Additionally, the nozzle accepts all orifice sizes that are used with the Videojet EXCEL series printers from 36 micron to 120 micron, further reducing the need to carry a large inventory of changeparts.

Listening to customers

The versatility of the nozzle to be cleaned or swapped out matches the versatility that Raabe demands. The Raabe motto, "your product, your package, your way," illustrates the company's commitment to superior customer service and the resulting short production runs that come with a robust custom-fill business.



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