

Switching from manual to automatic labeling operations

Skin care products company spruces up packaging efficiencies with new in-line pressure-sensitive label application equipment.

Judy Rice, Contributing Editor

Rocky Mountain Soap Co., Canmore, Alberta, Canada, a manufacturer and packer of upscale skin care products, natural soaps, and bath products, had been manually labeling its products. Two to three-person labeling crews were achieving labeling rates of approximately 6 labels/min. per person. The film labels are supplied by Parrot Label.

The company needed to improve labeling speeds to meet growing product demand. After reviewing equipment options that could accommodate its line of round and oblong-shaped products of various sizes, Rocky Mountain Soap purchased the new Inline Series 6000 Oblong & Round Wrap Label Applicator, an in-line pressure-sensitive labeler from **Label-Aire** (www.label-aire.com), through Canada-based packaging machinery distributor and integrator **Ahearn & Soper Inc.**

Label-Aire technicians ran a series of tests of Rocky Mountain's products on the Inline Series 6000 at Label-Aire's facilities in Fullerton, CA. Then technicians from **Ahearn & Soper** (trained by Label-Aire) installed the machine at the Canmore plant in late June 2006, and assisted in the machine start-up, as well as training of Rocky Mountain packaging staff.

According to Rocky Mountain Soap production manager Matt Armstrong, "The labeler is flexible enough to handle all of our products. But currently, about 90% of its task time is devoted to our 'Body Butter' moisturizing lotion line. We package Body Butter in deodorant-stick-type, oval-shaped containers in two sizes—55-gram size (about 4.5" tall x 2.25" wide) and an 18-gram travel size (about 2.5" tall x 1.25" wide). Size and shape changeovers can be accomplished in approximately 10-30 minutes, requiring recalibrations to adjust the labeling head, conveyor height, and machine timing."

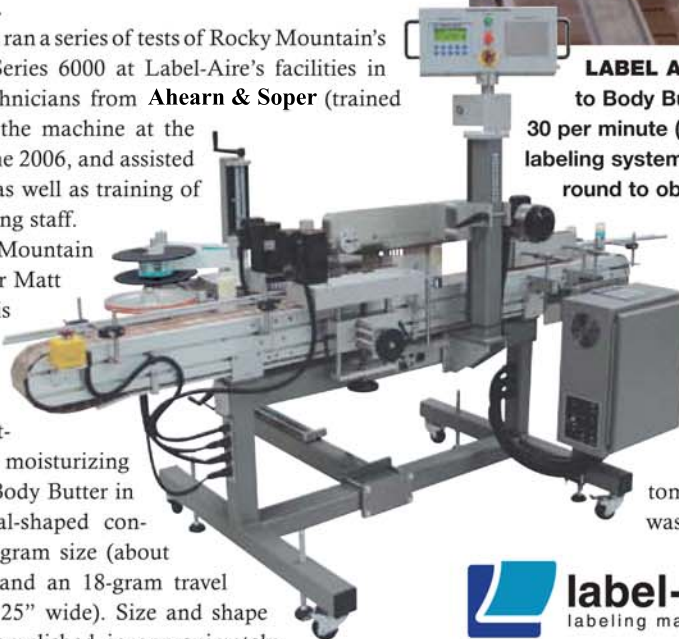
While Armstrong was well satisfied with the manual label positioning accuracy his staff previously delivered, he adds, "We are now



LABEL APPLICATION. The new labeler applies labels to Body Butter containers at speeds of approximately 30 per minute (above). Label-Aire's new Inline 6000 Wrap labeling system (left) can make the quick change from round to oblong containers possible.

achieving labeling speeds of about 30 per minute for our Body Butter packages. And we've saved on manual labeling costs. When necessary, the machine can run 24/7."

By automating the labeling process, the company can realize quicker turnaround times from receipt of orders to delivery to customers. No additional new packaging equipment was needed to accomplish the upgrade. 🌐



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