

# Seeking an Effective Solution

AUTOMATICALLY APPLIED NECK HANGERS ALLEVIATE MANUAL MISHAPS AND GENERATE MUCH NEEDED MARKET BUZZ.

BY SEAN RILEY

Ever wish you could get another opinion when it comes to solving a packaging problem? One packaging expert shares their solution to a difficult scenario.

**Challenge:** We're seeking a creative way to differentiate our beverage product on-shelf. Ideally, we'd like something that's both eye-catching and functional. Any suggestions?

**Solutions:** Consider blow-on neck hangers.

"Our Cytomax sport drink has been available in powder form for about 18 years, but when we decided to produce a ready to drink (RTD) version we knew it would be tough to compete with the likes of Gatorade and Powerade. As a new product on the market in a difficult category, we needed to find ways to differentiate the product while encouraging consumers to purchase it. The idea of neck hangers seemed like a good way to do it – not only was it an eye-catcher around the neck of the bottle, we could also use it as a coupon. It was both a visual and financial incentive to buy – anything we could do to encourage an impulse purchase.

"We tried running Cytomax RTD at a juice facility in City of Industry, Calif., with sheeted, manually-applied neck hangers and trying to get the hangers on effectively was difficult. In a case of 12 bottles we were only able to get three or four neck hangers applied because of the



Rather than change its entire label each time a promotional opportunity arose, Cytomax and Label-Aire created a solution that permitted neck hangers to be applied as part of the packaging line.

pace of the line. This particular facility didn't have the equipment that would allow us to apply the neck hangers so we had to do it manually. We had production workers lined up along the assembly line and they would try to apply the hangers as the case came off the line. It takes enormous dexterity. They weren't being put on consistently and it was comical, quite frankly. We never got all of them on a full case. It was really hit or miss and we decided we weren't going to do it again this way. The Langer's team did the best they could, but without a neck hanger applicator, it proved too difficult.

"Even though we only did it once, we got great results in the market and realized that the neck hangers really helped our sales. Then we came across Taylor

Made Labels Inc. (a Lake Oswego, Ore.-based distributor for Label-Aire Inc. of Fullerton, Calif.) and were introduced to the idea of a blow-on label.

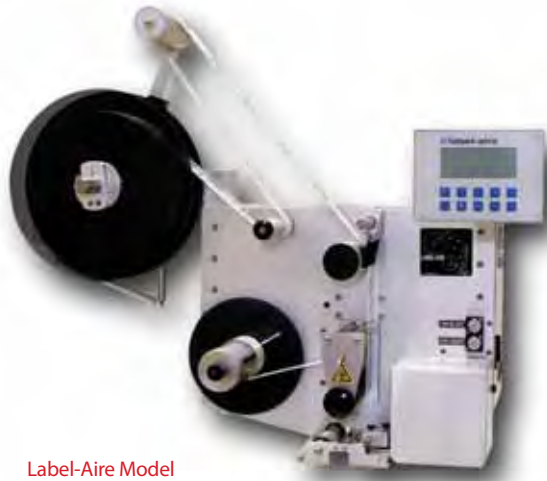
"We rented a Label-Aire Model 3111 Blow-On Applicator for two months and it easily adapted to Langer's production line without any technical issues. It placed one hanger on a bottle at up to 250 per minute.

"The automatically applied hanger was a roll form, flexo-printed, four-color process plus two and laminate that was custom die-cut shape in a folded booklet format on 60 lb. hi-gloss paper with a clear poly base. The label has a smaller footprint than our manually applied label, with the fold offering the same print area. It also had a pressure sensitive backing to keep it firmly on the con- |

tainer even in the case packing. The label had a clear base which applied to the lid and then folded down the side of bottle.

"The new neck hanger was expensive, but cost effective – the total applied price point was lower than our previous hanger. Obviously you get 100 percent redemption because it's attached to the bottle. It was an expensive promotion but it helped move product. The retailers like that, the consumers like it. It's not something that we would do every production run, but we really like the technology.

"It's not only a way to discount the product, but it also allows us to design a neck hanger that can educate the consumer, to highlight or cross promote other products. There are so many ways to utilize the technology and whatever we can do to give ourselves an edge is to our advantage.



Label-Aire Model  
3111 Air Blow

"It gives us almost 100 percent application with a lot of flexibility in terms of what we could design. Last fall we designed a neck hanger featuring Jerry Rice, one of our celebrity athletes. It's a 50 cents off neck hanger and it's been very well received. Right now we're in the middle of redesigning our package so we

will probably come up with another message for our blow on hangers later this summer. The hanger was slick, cost-effective and we intend to continue experimenting with different messages and styles.

"We'd like to use the hangers on a regular basis and we've pretty much decided to change out the type of promotion we do on the hanger from time to time. We're currently doing a big promotion with The North Face so that will most likely be

the next application we display on the neck hangers to promote our affiliation with this great company." **PMT**



550 Burning Tree Road, Fullerton, CA 92833 USA  
v: 714.441.0700 f: 714.526.0300 w: [www.label-aire.com](http://www.label-aire.com)