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The Challenge
A Canadian manufacturer of organic beauty and cosmetic products—including shampoo, conditioner, body lotion and hand sanitizers—looked for an alternative to label print-and-apply and manual application of bar code and item description labels to the side of corrugated shipping boxes. The marks had to meet a variety of export, domestic and retailer requirements for information placement, positioning and layout. Their previous solution experienced high costs for consumables and labor, plus was prone to jams and mistakes in content and placement. Their requirements included:

- Printheads capable of marking variable data and bar codes in multiple combinations directly on Kraft corrugated cartons
- Ability to produce crisp, high-resolution marks in both vertical and horizontal orientations across three lines at rates up to 10,000 units per day
- Universal controller to manage a broad range of customer- and destination-specific bar code and product identifier data compliance requirements
- Ability to operate with minimal operator intervention, allowing reassignment of labor to other tasks

Matthews’ Solution
Matthews recommended replacing the label printers and manual application process with three VIAjet™ T-Series E high-resolution piezo printers—one per production line—powered by Matthews’ marking and coding automation platform, MPERIA, with a standard user touchscreen interface. Each printhead is mounted to a conveyor with a spring-loaded bracket and horizontal/vertical adjustment function to accommodate orientation requirements.

Because MPERIA includes a set of generalized templates for marking specific export, domestic and customer data per carton, the operation is able to maintain a single, centralized data source within its production control room. Based on the product and shipment destination at hand, MPERIA automatically populates the appropriate template with production data from the master spreadsheet prior to initiating the marking cycle on each line. Although staff intervention in the marking function has been minimal, both operators and management appreciate MPERIA’s remote virtual network computing (VNC) connectivity for training and troubleshooting as needed. As a result, the company reduced overall costs by 50% and cut errors by 30%.