



Vignola puts fresh information into consumers' hands with interactive packaging and app

Italy's Vignola Cherry Consortium partnered with Ghelfi Ondulati to create a direct line of communication with Vignola customers. As part of an experiment in combining digitally printed corrugated packaging with a mobile app, Vignola is enabling consumers to trace their products all the way to the farm – and even to contact the original farmers directly.

Industry sectors: Food and beverage

Brand name: Consorzio Cilegia di Vignola
(Vignola Cherry Consortium)

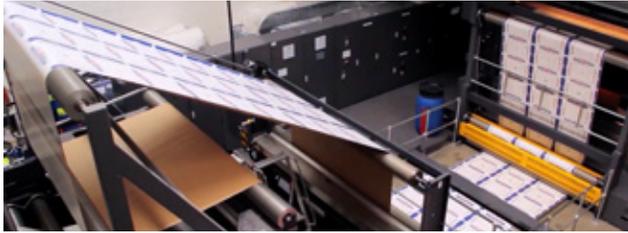
Print Service Provider: Ghelfi Ondulati

HP equipment: HP PageWide T1100S Press

Website: www.consorziocilegiadivignolaigp.it/
www.ghelfiondulati.com

YouTube: youtu.be/IUckdq07XZg





Challenge

“Consumers struggle to understand where the products they consume come from.”

– Roberto Redorici, cherry farmer

Bring information from farm to table in 24 hours

Cherries from Italy's Vignola region, near Modena, are known for their high quality. Grown by various farmers, the cherries are marketed by the Vignola Cherry Consortium.

Simply displaying the Vignola brand on the box was once sufficient for consumers to understand they were buying fresh fruit that would be delicious, perfect for eating, baking into pies or preserving. But today's consumers want to know more about where their food comes from. With local stores carrying an increasing variety of fresh fruits and vegetables from throughout Europe and beyond, Vignola decided to explore ways to help shoppers understand the source of their cherries, and how fresh they are.

To give consumers the needed visibility into the cherries' journey, the Vignola Cherry Consortium understood it would need a very agile solution that could integrate information from many sources and present it in a consistent way, all within a very tight timeframe.

“We have around 700 producers, all small businesses that produce cherries of the highest quality,” explains Valter Monari, from the Consorzio Cilegia di Vignola (Vignola Cherry Consortium). “The product is harvested in the morning, packaged during the day, and within 24 hours, the product can be on the consumer's table.”

For more information on HP's Corrugated Packaging Solutions:

hp.com/go/corrugatedpackaging

Solution

“The HP PageWide T1100S Press allows us to print a unique code on every single box for the Vignola Cherry Consortium. This means that every box can tell the consumer about itself and its contents.”

– Matteo Pilotto – Digital Innovation Manager, Ghelfi Ondulati

Exploring digital packaging and personalization possibilities for product transparency

Ghelfi Ondulati, a leading Italian corrugated converter specializing in digital innovation, raised the idea of combining digitally printed food cartons with a mobile application to allow food producers to communicate directly with consumers.

Looking to test its digital packaging and mobile app concept, Ghelfi approached its long-time customer, the Vignola Cherry Consortium. For Vignola, the timing was opportune, and so the consortium partnered with Ghelfi to integrate an interactive element into its cherry boxes.

The Vignola boxes are digitally printed using the HP PageWide T1100S Press, a high-speed color inkjet web press for corrugated packaging. The press uses HP's true water-based inks, which comply with food safety regulations for primary and secondary packaging, making it an ideal solution for Vignola's boxes, and almost any other corrugated packaging for food and beverages.

Taking advantage of variable printing capabilities only possible with digital printing, and the offset-substitutable quality of the T1100S press, a unique QR code is printed on each box as part of the printing process. Each QR code links to a dedicated web page with a mobile-optimized form.

The personalized printed boxes are sent to the Vignola Cherry Consortium farmers. As each box is filled with freshly harvested cherries, the producer scans the QR code using the smartphone application developed by Ghelfi. The scan activates the web page, and the producer quickly inserts the information about the cherries' origin: the producers' name, location, contact details, harvest date, and type of cherry.

Results

“This project by HP, Ghelfi and the Vignola Cherry Consortium is very important for traceability.”

– Simone Amidei, cherry farmer

Packaging that talks to consumers at the point of sale

When the boxes of cherries reach the stores, they are ready to “speak” to consumers.

Using any QR scanner application on their mobile phone, shoppers can scan the code printed on the box, opening a web page. The shopper can immediately see the information about the cherries in that exact box and can message the individual farmer who grew them, via Facebook or the WhatsApp messaging app.

In this initial testing phase of the application, Vignola relies on the grocery stores to let consumers know they can scan the QR code to get information on the cherries and contact the farmer. Moving forward, Vignola and Ghelfi will explore ways to better communicate this capability to shoppers.

Having started out as an experiment in new, digital ways for food producers to communicate and engage with consumers, this project has proved to Vignola that its packaging can do more than just hold and protect cherries.

“We are in a global market where there are products that are not traceable,” says Monari. “Those who want to consume a fresh, high-quality product must know what they are buying.” And now, Vignola's packaging tells consumers what they want to know.

