Natasha's Law : Dill's centralised solution for schools

The introduction of Natasha's Law is an important step in protecting allergy sufferers and giving them confidence that the food they consume is safe, but it has presented some challenges for food service businesses.

Among them is Dill, a software provider that streamlines catering services in the education sector, working with schools, local authorities, universities and colleges across the UK. The new legislation means that all pre-packaged food or drink products for direct sale must have a full ingredient list with all allergens highlighted for clarity. Dill's systems are used for food ordering, recipe management and food labelling. With the advent of Natasha's Law, it needed a solution that its catering outlets could use to print compliant product labels on-demand.

That meant developing a centralised platform that administrators could use to create and distribute recipes with accurate ingredient information from their wholesalers and suppliers across multiple sites, allowing on-site staff to print the labels they need.

> "Dill Print helped us become compliant with the new regulations. Over 500 items are labelled daily using the solution which improves our day to day operations."
>
> Cheryl Davies (Head Chef at Ysgol Gyfun Gŵyr)

Stay connected in the kitchen

The result was Dill Print, an intuitive, highly customisable application where administrators use a centralised, cloud-based portal to create and distribute recipes to multiple sites, where information is then updated in real-time.

Dill's customers' kitchens were supplied with an integrated labelling solution featuring either the QL-820NWB network label printer or the TD-4550DNWB professional desktop label printer, depending on the specific requirements of the site.

The kitchens also have access to the accompanying software platform, allowing staff to easily locate and print the label for any specific product being packaged.

One challenge to overcome was the poor internet connectivity at many of Dill's customers' kitchens.

The platform was initially designed to work wirelessly and both printer models have Bluetooth and WiFi as standard, as well as USB and wired LAN capability. But, where wireless connectivity was not possible, adaptations were easily made by offering different types of connectivity, including Ethernet cables.

Another key challenge was the durability of labels, as Pre-packed for Direct Sale (PPDS) food products had to be stored in hot cabinets at temperatures of around 100 degrees Celsius.

Overview

The challenge
- Create an integrated solution that makes compliance with Natasha's Law labelling requirements easy and efficient
- Allow one-touch label creation, with the option of printers acting as stand-alone units to avoid clutter in busy food-prep areas

The solution
- Integrated labelling solutions built around the robust QL-820NWB and TD-4550DNWB label printers, with DK-22255 continuous rolls and 58/110mm heat proof labels
- An easy-to-use, all-in-one solution to PPDS labelling
- In-built efficiency, as recipes created once and centrally distributed to multiple locations

The results
- Scalable, efficient and reliable compliance with Natasha's Law
- Ability to tailor bespoke labels for specific applications
- Over 1.5 million labels printed ensuring compliance, end user safety and allergen awareness
- Central recipe distribution to each site and real-time recipe updates increasing time management efficiency

However, Certified by Brother UK Supplies' heat proof labels have been proven to be equal to this challenge, having been independently tested to ensure they can stand up to the temperature extremes found in commercial kitchens.

Straightforward and safe

Director Alex-Ioan Coldea said: "Through Brother's recommendations and versatility in terms of printer connectivity, we were able to implement an integration with our software which became an all-in-one solution that's suitable for any environment, whether a wired, wireless or Bluetooth connection is needed."

After an initial trial across 13 schools in Swansea, the solution is now part of Dill's core suite of applications and has been rolled out across the UK.

At each site, staff can view recipes and print accurate allergen and ingredient labels for all the items that they sell throughout the day, no matter the connectivity status at their location.

It's a safe, straightforward and secure solution for staff and the customers they serve every day.

Beyond ingredient labelling

As well as helping kitchens stay on top of ingredient labelling, the Dill solution provides a host of other food-safety functionality. It can also help kitchens manage shelf lives, frozen and thawed cycles with an automated system that minimises the need for user input.

Users can also print calorie information, QR codes or shelf pricing labels for visibility.

Plus, Dill's system integrates with Erudus, the market leading source of accurate allergy, nutritional and technical product data. This means recipes are updated in real time, ensuring every site is up to date with the latest food supplier modifications.

Product focus

TD-4550DNWB professional Bluetooth, wireless desktop label printer

User-friendly backlit LCD screen
Professional quality up to 300dpi print resolution
Fast print speeds up to 6 inches per second
Easy set-up with automatic media configuration
Ready to integrate with iOS and Android apps via Brother's software development kits (SDKs)

Product focus

QL-820NWB network label printer

USB, ethernet, Wi-Fi and Bluetooth connectivity
Choose from pre-sized labels or Brother's continuous roll options
Professional quality up to 300dpi print resolution
Large backlit LCD
Print without needing ink or toner. Red printing is available with special paper DK-22251
Built-in cutter to create custom length labels

To find out more about Brother's labelling solutions visit:
www.brother.co.uk/food-labelling