

Convenience Stores reduce costs and increases customer convenience via faster service with Brother QL-650TD thermal label printer

Traditional C-Store Profile:

Recently, a trend began in the C-store industry with some C-stores overhauling the look and feel of a number of their company owned and operated convenience stores. A key initiative of this trend was to increase in store traffic by elevating the perception of specific food service categories (i.e. Hot Food Offering, QSR or Edible Grocery). These stores attempted to increase revenue and profits by raising awareness (and traffic) resulting from this new look and feel. They also seized an opportunity to differentiate their brand, remaining price competitive, without sacrificing food safety or quality.

For some stores, meeting this goal meant re-energizing the store's brand by, integrating more convenience type foods (e.g. pizza, hot sandwiches, cheese burgers) into the food service category and moving away from traditional roller grill or hot dog rotisserie.

The goal was to create a more customer friendly type of hot food presentation (e.g. clear Plexiglas hot holding unit.) that would enable the convenience food product to be both attractive and easily visible by customers. The hot food products in these types of units also needed to have labeling on the outside of the food packaging with item description and pricing information easily identifiable by the customer and bar code information for quick scanning and purchasing in the lane.



Brother International Corp. helps C-stores reduce price look ups and increase transaction accuracy and ultimately customer convenience by creating bar coded labels when using the Brother QL-650TD (pictured above) thermal label printers.

OPPORTUNITY:

While attending the 2005, 2006, and 2007 National Association of Convenience Store (NACS) trade shows, various category managers saw the Brother QL-650TD thermal label printer, and realized the labels could be an effective way to help customers easily identify packaged and partially wrapped hot food products (e.g., soups, hot dogs, pizza, corn dogs, cheese burgers) on display in the hot holding units. These thermal label printers by Brother would also help stores achieve a uniform labeling look from one store to the next. Some of the convenience stores also realized the following benefits by labeling their hot food offering with Brother QL-650TD thermal labels:

- Cashiers could **increase accuracy** when ringing up sales
- **Cashiers could decrease checkout time by reducing price look up's (PLU's)** on products with no bar code or pricing
- **Storage space would become less of an issue** by standardizing on label sizes (e.g. some stores were using as many as 16 different label dot styles with minimum orders of 500 per label)
- **Waste would become less of an issue**, versus current labeling dots, due to lost or damaged stock
- **Less time spent searching** for particular round colored dots

Also, since these products e.g. nachos, and other hot meal or snack foods, would be presented to customers packaged and unwrapped, they would require a stock keeping unit (sku) number, or bar code for accurate pricing and faster customer checkout.

In learning the Brother QL-650TD thermal label printer could provide on-demand printing of labels that include bar-codes, price and product descriptions without being connected to a PC, Some C-Stores are beginning to place a Brother QL-650TD trial unit in their stores.



SOLUTION DESCRIPTION:

The Brother QL-650TD label printer is a direct thermal label printer which prints up to 55 labels per minute. The Brother QL-650TD has on-board memory, and can store up to 36 pre-designed templates for on-demand printing. The labels are designed in the Brother P-Touch Editor software (free with unit). This Windows-based software enables layout of the label with the specific design including barcode, product description and price.

Once saved, the templates are easily downloaded to each Brother QL-650TD via the P-Touch Editor Transfer Manager. Food services managers can then scroll through the labels via the arrow keys on the printer and print the desired quantities of the selected label on-demand. The Brother QL-650TD can also incorporate product freshness date and time stamps as an integral part of the label with its on board clock. Another benefit is that the Brother QL-650TD could be located anywhere, even near the hot holding unit, so labels would be printed at the location the food is prepared and wrapped.

C-Stores discovered using the Brother QL-650TD thermal label printer, for **labeling food items in the hot holding unit**, was the best solution for their store's hot food labeling needs. By having the capability to place the Brother QL-650TD label either directly onto the food carrier/container or onto the wire racks in the hot holding unit, store managers were able to create product name and/or price changes, quickly and easily, ultimately increasing customer convenience and satisfaction. This also increased the level of convenience for the customer by providing a clearly identifiable item, enabling a quick purchase decision.



Store managers noticed steady **weekly improvements in the convenience food category sales mix**, (as product mix-ups from use of manual label dots decreased, thereby reducing waste and/or lost sales.) Store owners started noticing the little (revenue) arrow going up as a result, and everybody was happy.

Benefits to C-Stores:

1. **Reduced incidences of price look up's** (PLU's) results in increased customer service also reduced pricing errors, via **quicker service at the lane.**
2. **Label held container flap down on some hot food products (e.g. hot dogs).**
3. Using the Brother QL-650TD thermal label printer assisted C-Stores in its efforts to create a more professional looking space around their convenience food area.
4. The **Brother QL650TD has a small footprint** (5.7" X 7.7" X 6.0).
5. Brother QL-650TD thermal label printer gave stores a systematic and **standardized way of printing pricing** (via barcode or sku #) at the lane for unwrapped convenience foods.
6. Brother QL-650TD thermal label printer **helped reduce opportunity costs** by increasing lift with quick turnover of convenience food product.
7. Brother QL-650TD thermal label printer may **help create lift by making traditionally wrapped food items clearly visible.** People eat with their eyes, not their hands.

Benefits to the customer

1. Hot convenience food **products labeled by Brother QL-650TD were more clearly identifiable** making it easier to make a decision.
2. **Customers spent less time in the lane, increasing convenience** via faster checkout.
3. Brother QL-650TD C-stores in their effort to maintain their **professional looking labeling** strategy.



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About Brother International Corporation

Brother's retail solutions provide one of the easiest ways for retail environments to improve efficiencies, day after day, year after year. Our award-winning Multi Function Center® models, laser printers, fax machines, and P-touch® labeling systems are ideal for on demand, fast-paced retail environments where speed, reliability and consistency are critical.

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