

Sheltered Workshop Improves Productivity by 75%



Torbay Industrial Services is one of four sheltered workshops operating under the umbrella of Devon Industrial Services, providing employment for people with a wide range of disabilities. Competitive pricing and responsiveness is critical to securing packaging work for the organization.

The workshop packages desiccant packets for British Telecom. It is imperative that they remain productive and competitive. This requires simple to operate yet highly productive equipment that could be easily and safely used by its disabled workforce.

Automated Packaging Systems provided the solution by installing seven Autobag systems, four of which are "print-n-pack" units. These units combine the packaging speed and flexibility of the Excel™ autobagger with the capabilities of the Precision™ thermal-transfer printer, overprinting barcodes and variable text directly onto the bag.

Risk assessments were carried out and due to the simplicity of the system, all employees were able to master the operation of the machinery safely. Due to the nature of the varied operator disabilities, reliability of the systems was extremely important. APS also provided maintenance training to reduce disruptions from potential downtime supported by a telephone service help-line. Larger rolls of bags were also designed to meet the requirement for minimum changeovers, specific to this type of sheltered workshop operation.

By using Autobag machines and cost-effective bags-on-a-roll, there was an immediate saving on downtime and material scrap. Further, there was an increase in throughput thereby exceeding the needs of the customer.

The workshop manager, Kev Turner, stated: "We completed all the necessary risk assessments to ensure total operational safety. The ease of the Autobag system allows all our staff to master the machinery operation with peace of mind. By using Autobag, production has surged to 30,000 bags per shift, a staggering improvement of 75% over previous rates."

