

Working smarter, not harder

How one electronics manufacturer realizes next-level growth with Brady automation

Overview

Building electronic boards is no small feat. Truth be told, it's a delicate balance of precise processes and quality control — all designed to meet customer needs. And that need is growing, thanks to the ballooning printed circuit board market. Considering all electronic products and electrical equipment need PCBs, how can manufacturers keep up with demand? The secret, as demonstrated by TouchPad Electronics, is automation.

Challenge

TouchPad Electronics, a Wisconsin-based business specializing in PCB design, NPI and low to mid-volume assembly, wanted to boost labeling efficiency. Their method of hand labeling PCBs was labor intensive and involved manual tracking. Serialized labels were applied post process, which made it more difficult to track parts once they became separated from a batch. This type of system didn't seem to fit TouchPad Electronics business model of better productivity, quality and customer satisfaction. A call to Brady soon led to a better solution.

Solution

Since every other workflow process at TouchPad Electronics was automated (except labeling), it was time for a targeted solution — Brady's ALF14-25. With razor-sharp precision, the ALF (automatic label feeder) is designed to keep up with pick-and-place equipment, saving both time and labor during the manufacturing process. Brady provided TouchPad Electronics with a unit for a trial period, which allowed them test it and compare its results to their original method of hand labeling.

At-a-glance

Company: TouchPad Electronics

Challenge: Mid-volume electronics manufacturer needed to increase labeling efficiency.

Solution: In order to eliminate the hand-labeling, TouchPad Electronics added Brady's ALF14-25 (an automatic label feeder) to their PCB assembly process. This device works with modern pick-and-place equipment and is designed to save both time and labor.

Result: After adding the ALF14-25, TouchPad Electronics increased their labeling efficiency. They now label nearly 8 times faster compared to their older method of hand labeling. In addition to saving time and labor, TouchPad Electronics now applies serialized labels pre-process, which has reduced handling and provided them with a better tracking system.

Results

Surpassing expectations, the ALF14-25 provided TouchPad Electronics with a solid solution for increasing labeling efficiency. Recent TouchPad projects with ALF:



**Saved 94 hours of labor
in just 3.5 weeks**



**13.5 hours of labeling with
ALF14-25 vs 107 hours using
hand labeling**



**Half of original dedicated
labeling personnel were
reassigned to other jobs**

Plus, TouchPad Electronics now applies labels pre-process. This led to better tracking by guaranteeing sequential information entered the line at their pick-and-place machines. Pre-process labeling also reduced the amount of handling each board received to ensure the sustained, high standard of quality for which TouchPad Electronics is known.

But that's not all. According to Justin Kernen, TouchPad Electronics Production Manager, the labor savings from the ALF14-25 during its first use was more than the cost of the device itself. To round out the solution, Justin commented how "It's an incredibly easy machine to use and set up. We never had to adjust it. We never had any problems. It was exactly how it was advertised." As TouchPad Electronics looks to the future, it also looks to add more Brady automatic label feeders as volume increases. "I can't express my appreciation for how willing you [Brady] were to work with us and really how great the unit has been for us," reported Justin. "The ALF14-25 is a perfect fit for where we are and how we sell ourselves. We are a very high-quality product and we can do it very quickly."

As the PCB market continues to grow due to consumer need for smartphones, laptops, remote controls and connected vehicles, more automation is needed to quickly handle increasing volumes. Automated labeling solutions, like Brady's, provide much-needed labor savings and better methods to track parts for quality control purposes. By using available technology, like automation, businesses can continue to grow by meeting the increased demand for the products they manufacture. It's just a smarter way to work.

USA
Customer Service: 1-888-272-3946
Inside Sales: 1-888-311-0775
BradyID.com

Canada
Customer Service: 1-800-263-6179
BradyCanada.ca

Mexico
Customer Service: 1-800-262-7777
Inside Sales: 1-800-262-7777 ext 177
BradyID.com.mx

