

Connecting the Online & the Offline Worlds



Industry

Consumer goods, Beverages

Company Size

More than 700,000 employees and over 200 brands worldwide

Location

Global, with headquarters in Atlanta, US.

Product(s)

- SmartLabel
- QR Codes
- Dynamic Links

How Coca-Cola Seamlessly Implemented SmartLabel QR Codes on Every Product in North America

Consumers demand detailed information about the products they purchase, and brands are working hard to keep up with their expectations.

In 2015, the Coca-Cola Company became one of the first brands in the US to implement SmartLabel QR codes on all its products.

BLINK's dynamic QR code solution was painlessly integrated with Coca-Cola's packaging system, allowing consumers to quickly access product information from their mobile devices.

About Our Customer

The Coca-Cola Company is an American multinational beverage icon founded in 1892.

It rose to fame as the producer of Coca-Cola and has expanded to more than 200 brands, including its sparkling, hydration, coffee and tea, juices, and alcoholic beverage lines.

Every day, more than 1.9 billion people in over 200 hundred countries enjoy one of their iconic beverages.

The Problem: Consumers Demand Increased Transparency

Consumers are increasingly demanding more information about the products they purchase. This is especially true for food and beverages but is also a reality for personal care, pets, and household cleaning products. As consumers, we want to know what we are putting in our bodies and in our homes.

The FDA first required labels on packaged foods in the early 1990s, but having a list of ingredients on the packaging is not the experience that consumers are demanding from brands today.

This is how the [SmartLabel](#) initiative came to life in 2015. A consortium of retailers in the major grocery categories created SmartLabel to "give consumers a way to digitally access more detailed product information than could ever fit on a product label!"

Coca-Cola was part of this pioneering group of companies.



Challenges

Consumers today are not satisfied by a list of ingredients on a product's packaging; they want detailed information about their purchases. The SmartLabel initiative came about as a way to provide customers with those additional insights.

When Coca-Cola decided to deploy SmartLabel QR codes on its products, it turned to BL.INK for implementation.



Approach

BL.INK proposed a customized SmartLabel solution that communicates with Coca-Cola's packaging software and generates an intelligent link to embed in a QR code on product packaging.

This QR code contains a branded short link that redirects the user to a third-party landing page that carries additional information about the product: ingredients, allergens, nutritional information, etc.



Results

- SmartLabel QR codes implemented on every Coca-Cola product in North America
- Easy integration with the existing packaging system
- Dynamic links allow Coca-Cola to easily change the destination URL when needed

What Exactly Is A SmartLabel?

SmartLabel QR codes are placed on product packaging, allowing consumers to scan a code with their mobile device and get redirected to a page containing additional product information.

Think nutrition, ingredients, allergens, features & benefits, and information about the brand and its sustainability efforts. SmartLabel can also include food provenance details and help monitor freshness by providing consumers with manufacturing and expiry dates.

Our customer, The Coca-Cola Company, was one of the first brands in the United States to implement SmartLabel QR codes. The group had been a BL.INK customer since 2009, so when they decided to deploy SmartLabel on their products, BL.INK was excited to take on a new challenge.

The Solution: Easy-to-integrate SmartLabel QR Codes

One of the main challenges was that whatever solution BL.INK proposed had to integrate seamlessly with Coca-Cola's packaging software. This mission-critical software had been in use long before SmartLabel became a thing, so it was not designed for this sort of integration.

“Coca-Cola needed a way to connect the dots between their product packaging and the SmartLabel program,” explains Andy Meadows, BL.INK's CEO. “There was the packaging and the landing page containing all of the product's information (managed by a third party). The QR code on the package was the way to connect both ends,”

ANDY

The QR SmartLabel acts as a custom bridge between the store shelf and the online world and provides an enhanced connection between the consumer and Coca-Cola. By scanning a QR code on a Coca-Cola product, customers can learn more about the product but also the mission of the company behind it.

“When Coca-Cola wants to roll out a new product, they say, ‘based on the packaging, promotion, and SKU, what link should we put in this QR code?’ BL.INK creates the perfect link, which redirects to a landing page with the target Smartlabel information. When the consumer scans the QR code, they land on the right page every time,” explains Andy.

BL.INK also identifies which keywords to include in the short link's URL. The packaging software sends the information about the product (including the UPC number, the flavor, the brand, the sub-brand, the internal tracking, etc.) and BL.INK determines what URL to create and embed within the QR code.

“So we are crafting what we think is the proper SEO URL based on the information that they send us. If they send us five different flavors, we know that that's a variety pack,” highlights Andy. “We also determine on our end whether it's an alcoholic product. If it's a Coca-Cola product, which sub-brand? Which domain name should we use? We implement all the logic within BL.INK in terms of where the QR code should be directed.”

Dynamic Link Routing

When Coca-Cola first implemented SmartLabel across its entire range of products in the US, all the links were redirecting to landing pages hosted on the same website.

Coca-Cola's business model has evolved, and they now partner with Molson Coors to produce their alcoholic beverage lines: Topo Chico Hard Seltzer and Simply Spiked. Instead of having all their links pointing to only one site, they now have products redirecting to landing pages on three different brand websites across multiple branded short domains.

"BL.INK was also able to programmatically change all the links for thousands of products that were already in the market as the publishing platform evolved, and we were able to do that in one fell swoop; we did it in a matter of minutes," says Andy. "BL.INK links provide that flexibility, which is super important to our customers."

Better & More Accurate Data

More accurate data was another essential advantage of the solution that BL.INK implemented for Coca-Cola.

"While Coca-Cola owns the website for their products, they don't own the websites for their alcoholic beverages' partners. They rely on Google Analytics for their own website, but they rely on their partners to provide insights into the other sites," explains Andy. "BL.INK sits between all these actors and is the link of record for how many actual scans they receive," he adds.

For example, Google Analytics could show that 1,000 users landed on a specific product page, but BL.INK's Analytics platform indicates that 1,200 people actually scanned the QR code for that product on a particular day. Google Analytics counts visitors based on multiple factors, but not all scans count as a session.

"Because of our analytics, they'll also know where geographically the scan came from, what product they were scanning, what's the frequency of scanning, etc. So they get all that insight for their and their partners' sites, and they get it in real-time,"

ANDY

The Takeaway: Connected Packaging That Powers A Deeper Customer-Brand Relationship

With consumers demanding more information about the products they choose to purchase, brands are increasingly looking for ways to provide more transparency and generate more trust.

As a beverage pioneer, Coca-Cola was at the forefront of the SmartLabel initiative. More than seven years later, more and more brands are implementing SmartLabel QR codes on their products

to bridge the information gap and create deeper connections with their customers.

BL.INK's QR SmartLabel solution continues to provide Coca-Cola with the flexibility and ease of use they need. It also gives the company complete insights into how, when, and where their customers scan their labels.

By scanning a QR code, consumers get easy access to the information they seek and, hopefully, establish a deeper connection with the brand.

BL.INK connects the world through managed, monitored, and measured branded links enabling marketers and technologists to connect with their audience via advanced routing technology. Since 2008, BL.INK has powered link management for many of the world's best brands as a critical infrastructure component. BL.INK unifies attribution strategies by connecting internal and external systems to enrich insights and visibility into global performance metrics.



Create a more meaningful connection with your customers

<https://www.bl.ink/features/>