

Chinese Brewery Becomes a Clear Leader with its Draft Label

Clear pressure-sensitive labels helps Kingway glow in the national spotlight



Striving to offer the leading beer among mid-to-high-end consumers in the Chinese market, Kingway Brewery knew it had to deliver a superior product with a quality brand image to prove itself in the eyes of the target audience.

Beer production at Kingway started in 1990 as a regional brand in southern China. While many Chinese brands were producing beer of questionable quality and safety, Kingway took a stand to become the first brewery in China to produce beer free of impurities. The brewer boasts the most advanced beer producing technology and equipment in the country.

Over the next two decades, the brewer continued to grow by adding seven breweries, forming a strategic alliance with the Dutch brewing company, Heineken, and setting aggressive production goals. It laid out a blueprint that will help the brewery reach an annual production rate of 3 million tons, making Kingway the leading beer in China.

Kingway wanted a look that represented its new beer as a quality, progressive brand because the product was targeted to mid-level and high-end customers who make up the bar and club market in China. In a bold move for the Chinese beer market, Kingway marketers decided to forgo the traditional paper label in favor of a clear pressure-sensitive film material.

“We wanted something different from a traditional paper label that would help differentiate Kingway Draft. We chose a clear pressure-sensitive film for our bottles and it was a first in the Chinese beer market.”

Qu Haoyu, package manager with Kingway Brewery



A demanding application

A beer label has to endure many demands. It must be suitable for a high-speed bottling line, resist water, and be unaffected by refrigeration and being submerged in ice. Above all, the label has to carry the brand message and always look good so it attracts the consumer's eye.

The chosen pressure-sensitive film was so new to China at the time of the Kingway Draft launch, the converter had little experience with the material, including how to print and apply it. During trials of other manufacturers' labeling materials, the converter was unable to meet Kingway's specifications.

"That's when the Avery Dennison team stepped in," Haoyu said. "They looked closely at how labels are applied on our high-speed production lines right at our factory. Then they learned how the converter made the labels. They used this knowledge to identify and resolve any issues we experienced."

"Clear pressure-sensitive film demonstrated our leadership in the industry and projected an upscale image for the beer. The no-label look gives the bottles a fresh, modern appearance. They really stand out in the clubs because they shine and flash in the bar lights."

Qu Haoyu, package manager with Kingway Brewery

After determining Kingway's requirements and performing material tests for printing quality, adhesion stick and labeling process, Avery Dennison recommended a clear Fasson® face stock for a no-label look. The biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP) film is printed in four colors using both flexo and silkscreen printing.

"As a global company, Avery Dennison was able to source the Fasson film locally through Roll Materials Asia Pacific," said Jason Lu, marketing manager beer and beverage Asia Pacific, Avery Dennison. "This helped save Kingway time and money compared to sourcing the product from overseas as they had planned originally."

The film had all the required physical properties. The adhesive performed well in ice and water, the high-quality print on the label remained attractive. And during the application, the strength of the PET liner meant there were no line breaks, even at high speed running 36,000 bottles an hour.

A new way of thinking

"At first we didn't mind what material our supplier used, but after all the information the Avery Dennison people gave us, we realized that they weren't just selling products," Haoyu said. "They delivered a complete package that included a reliable supply of consistently high-quality product, along with technical support and advice. They also gave a fast response to any issues."

Consumers have taken notice of the contemporary packaging for Kingway Draft beer and like what they see. While specific figures are guarded, Haoyu noted the first three years of using the new label saw sales increase by at least 50 percent.

Once known as a regional brand, Kingway Brewery now holds a position of national prominence. Its products are distributed in more than 20 Chinese cities and provinces, as well as to overseas markets such as Southeast Asia, Canada and the Republic of Panama.

"Kingway Draft will be the leading brand in the China beer market," Haoyu said. "Our aim is to make our draft beer the best-tasting beer in China. And with that, the introduction of Fasson pressure-sensitive labeling to the China beer market has given the brewing industry a whole new direction in packaging."



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