



# Case Study

When Reckitt Benckiser had to meet an immovable launch date for a vital new product and its associated manufacturing facilities it turned to Astec Solutions to ensure its systems were up to the task.



Partner  
Digital

Astec IT Solutions Ltd  
Edric House  
Towers Plaza  
Wheelhouse Road  
Rugeley  
WS15 1UW  
United Kingdom  
+44 (0) 1543 888134

[enquiries@astecsolutions.com](mailto:enquiries@astecsolutions.com)  
[www.astecsolutions.com](http://www.astecsolutions.com)

# Making The Date

## Background

Reckitt Benckiser Group plc is a British multinational consumer goods company headquartered in Slough, England. As a global manufacturer of health, hygiene and home products, it operates in a highly competitive field and is constantly striving to expand and develop its portfolio.

The company had previously engaged Astec Solutions to stabilise and upgrade its production facilities, and got in touch again when there was a requirement to build and put into operation a new processing suite for manufacture of a new product.

“The product was a new cough medicine that it was being launched in Australia,” said Chris Barlow, Technical Director, Astec Solutions. “The high-profile launch date was fixed; the logistics were booked and the marketing schedule was all in place.” With substantial resource and funding committed to the project, there was no room for error.

Although Astec had worked with the client previously on system upgrades and renewal, this project presented a different challenge as it involved an entirely new production area.

“We had to work alongside and collaborate with the mechanical engineering contractor,” Barlow explained. “The task involved developing systems for equipment that we had never seen before – and all within a very tight timeframe.”



## Collaboration and implementation

As Astec had renewed and upgraded the GE Batch Execution System that controlled production at the site, both Astec’s project team and Reckitt Benckiser were confident that the core Batch Execution System was up to the task. Astec worked with the installation and commissioning teams as the hardware arrived, to get it up and running reliably as soon as possible.

It wasn’t a case of simply plugging in the management control systems and firing things up, however. The company supplying the vessels had their own control system; warranties and guarantees were dependent on using the validated and tested system, so Astec had to work with it.

“We had to ensure the Batch Execution System would work with the software system provided by the mechanical process engineering company before the systems were developed. We designed and agreed the interface that would be compatible in both directions” Barlow explained.



“This work was done after the vessels were installed, but the process engineering company was commissioning and testing their equipment at the same time as we were. We worked closely alongside them, to schedule testing and to demonstrate that the system was working.

Astec installed a brand new Batch Execution System, specifically for the new cough medicine line, along with a new, standalone management system. It uses a Dell rack mounted batch server and two fully-functioned PC workstations.

“We connected and integrated the Batch Execution System to the existing site-wide reporting system, which meant that the laboratories and operators could use their familiar interface and existing reports templates with the new system,” he continued. But why not simply extend what was already there? The previously upgraded Batch Execution System had proved itself well capable of running the site effectively and efficiently.

“There were a number of reasons, including risk mitigation. If it became necessary to shutdown the Batch Execution System for maintenance etc, it wouldn’t take down the whole site with it,” Barlow said. Part of that risk was regulatory. The new cough medicine was purely for export and had been validated against an FDA standard; specifically, 21 CFR Part II.

The challenges and the short timescale of just 10 weeks were met and a flight took the first batch of the new cough medicine out to Australia in time for the scheduled major launch.



## Outcomes

Astec and the suppliers and installers of the new production equipment collaborated to develop systems that would work together seamlessly.

The interface, reports and other key functions are presented to operators, supervisors, laboratories and management in a familiar interface. No additional training was required.

The Batch Execution System for the new product line is isolated from the factory-wide system, which mitigates risk.

A very challenging timescale was achieved and Reckitt Benckiser was able to launch a completely new product line on time, into an important and growing overseas market.





## Background

Astec Solutions uses best in class industrial software to deliver Smart Manufacturing Solutions into manufacturing and other industrial sectors.

The core capabilities of the business include provision of Industrial IoT, MES/MOM, SCADA, Batch Execution, Workflow and reporting solutions, supplemented by a dedicated support desk and field service team. Astec works seamlessly with clients' Engineering and IT departments to ensure all monitoring, control, visualisation and analytical systems make best use of existing infrastructure investments – while providing simple, effective and highly available solutions which can be used for many years.

## Further Information

For further information relating to this case study please contact:-

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[enquiries@astecsolutions.com](mailto:enquiries@astecsolutions.com)

[www.astecsolutions.com](http://www.astecsolutions.com)

Edric House, Towers Plaza, Wheelhouse Road, Rugeley, WS15 1UW, United Kingdom  
Registered UK Company: 4062330 (VAT: GB754536318)