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## Shrink-Wrap benefits make a compelling case for Molson Coors

iC3D delivers superfast job turnaround and versatility with hands-on support for leading UK drinks brands

### SUMMARY

Handling more than 100 different packaging and POS jobs per month, the Design Studio at the Molson Coors facility in Burton-on-Trent, UK, needed a software solution that would improve the control and immediacy of packaging design for core brands such as Carling, Coors Light, Doom Bar, Cobra and Grolsch.

In the busy Design Studio at the Molson Coors facility in Burton-on-Trent, creatives are well accustomed to managing a wide array of artwork requests under pressure. Handling more than 100 different packaging and POS jobs per month, the team is tasked with creating standout, innovative designs for UK and Ireland leading brands, such as Carling, Coors Light, Doom Bar, Cobra and Grolsch, as well as for a vast array of speciality, craft and partner beers and ciders. Requirements might be anything from incorporating new regulatory descriptors to designing a time-dependant promotional pack or an entire brand refresh. Whether driven by seasonal events, local promotional opportunities or brand health indicators from the marketplace, the Studio has to react with speed and efficiency to ensure best impact and results.

Molson Coors came into being through the joining of two family-oriented North-American brewing companies in 2005 and with it came a burgeoning portfolio of market-leading brands as well as some lesser-known names poised for success through an expanded distribution network. With a brewing legacy of more than 350 years, the company proudly extols beer as its *raison d'être* while acknowledging its purpose as simply "to delight the world's beer drinkers".

It's with this focus on its brands that Molson Coors UK & Ireland launched an in-house Design Studio back in 1995 to work alongside external specialist agencies and improve the control and immediacy of packaging design for its core brands. Today the studio is 27 strong and its drive for quality and expediency is every inch as important as at the outset, but, in early 2015, the pace of progress was under pressure. The team needed to investigate alternative software solutions, with a change of supplier in mind.

Doggedly exploring alternative solutions, Neil Gould, Artworker with Molson Coors, researched and identified an entirely new solution, one with a growing reputation. The team at Molson Coors invited the new kid on the block – iC3D from Creative Edge Software (CES) – to run a trial. The question was whether its broad claims of multi-functionality, ease-of-use and a competitive price could match Molson Coors' existing requirements.

### The shrink test

"One of our key ambitions was to speed up the render process and improve control over shrink-wrap lighting," continues Neil. "It was very time-consuming to produce a realistic

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**NEIL GOULD**  
Artworker



mock-up as larger packs could take up to half a day to render before you would know for sure whether everything was aligned correctly. We decided to use a shrink design as the test for both iC3D and the latest software version from our existing supplier.

"Both systems were tasked with visualising a shrink-wrap pack of 24 cans of our best-selling brand, Carling. The updated version of our existing software did show an improvement on rendering time. However, iC3D handled the shrink with ease, and produced a good 3D render, with accurate lighting effects in just 19 minutes."

On the basis of the trial, discussions with CES gained momentum. The creative team at Molson Coors soon discovered that this early success was further bolstered by iC3D's unique all-in-one versatility across the spectrum of packaging applications, as well as its ease-of-use and high-quality of visualisation. But perhaps even more significantly for this people-focused company, the level of responsiveness from CES was a refreshing benefit highly valued by Molson Coors. With a constantly expanding portfolio of brands and a strong emphasis on design innovation, over time this has proved to be a central differentiator of the iC3D proposition.

"Having direct access to the software developers has been extraordinary," comments Derek Phillips, Lead Packaging Artworker at Molson Coors UK and Ireland. "The CES developers seem to thrive on problem-solving. On occasions when I have struggled with how to do something new, my help requests have been answered comprehensively, almost by return, and often with a step-by-step video tutorial showing my own job as the example to guide me."

### From hours to minutes

Asked how the transition to iC3D has changed the working procedures of the Design Studio at Molson Coors over the last year, team members mention radical improvement in job turnaround first and foremost – to the delight of the [internal] clients. Of course, this productivity advantage has quickly become absorbed by raised expectations of the speed of output.

For Neil, the past year has brought about another big improvement for his day-to-day: "Shrink film used to be one of the most time-consuming jobs to do," he says. "Now with iC3D it's much quicker and easier."

Design Manager, Jules Alexander has noticed a significant benefit in designing for cans. "We used to use our existing 3D software and then bring the artwork into Photoshop to get a reliable visualisation quickly, we also used to print out the artwork and manually wrap it around the can," she explains. "We haven't done that once since we've been using iC3D."

According to Jules, working on glassware has also been very challenging and time-consuming in the past. Rendering speed with iC3D has already provided a big leap forward in this respect, and the team looks forward to trying out the new Ray Tracing and Light-Mapping capabilities of the recently launched iC3D version 4.

### Challenges on the horizon

Looking ahead to future design requirements, high on the agenda for Molson Coors is the increasing use of special substrates, consumables such as metallic inks and new production processes. The fact that the developers at Creative Edge Software maintain continual dialogue with its customers means that iC3D research and development on emerging trends is underway as soon as they are identified so that clients can be assured of timely solutions.

As Head of Graphics for Molson Coors UK & Ireland, Mark Atherton summarises: "The approach has been completely different from the outset. Creative Edge listened to our concerns and issues, and then face-to-face took us through the way we could use iC3D to meet our precise needs. The accessibility of the software developers and support team has been invaluable in helping us get to grips with this new software and deal with any issues or questions as they arise. We're very happy both with the solution and the ongoing relationship we have with our new supplier. Based on our experience, iC3D deserves to be a great success story."

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SOFTWARE

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