



From Production Halt to Strategic Partnership

How Sumo Tech modernised Bridgestone's manufacturing
printing infrastructure with Zebra Technologies



OVERVIEW

When One Printer Failure Threatened Production

Manufacturing environments depend on speed, precision, and reliability —

- a single hardware failure can halt production and impact operational efficiency.

When a mission-critical industrial label printer at Bridgestone South

- Africa failed after more than 15 years of service, production came to an immediate standstill.

Sumo Tech delivered a modern Zebra printing solution that integrated

- seamlessly with Bridgestone's legacy application — restoring production without redesigning existing systems.



THE OUTCOME

A single emergency repair grew into a full-scale manufacturing modernisation and a lasting technology partnership.

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Zebra ZT411 Industrial Printers
deployed facility-wide

38

Zebra barcode scanners
standardised across production

1

Long-term strategic technology
partnership

KEY TAKEAWAYS

What This Project Delivered



Restored production

Following a critical printer failure that halted manufacturing



Seamless integration

Modern Zebra hardware integrated with legacy manufacturing software.



Investment protected

Eliminated the need to redevelop existing production applications.



Standardised infrastructure

Unified printing and barcode scanning across the manufacturing floor.



Built to scale

A scalable hardware platform established for future operational growth.



Trusted partnership

A long-term technology relationship between Bridgestone and Sumo Tech.

Customer Background

Bridgestone is one of the world's leading tyre manufacturers, producing high-quality tyres for passenger vehicles, commercial transport, mining, agricultural equipment, and industrial applications.

Its manufacturing operations rely heavily on barcode labels for accurate product identification, inventory control, production tracking, warehouse management, and logistics — labels critical to maintaining operational continuity.

Recognising the urgency and complexity of the failure, Bridgestone engaged Sumo Tech; specialists in industrial printing, barcode solutions, and enterprise mobility technologies.

MANUFACTURING SEGMENTS SERVED



Passenger Vehicles



Commercial Transport



Mining Equipment



Agricultural Equipment



Industrial Applications

THE CHALLENGE

An Operational Emergency With Layers of Risk

A production-critical industrial printer in continuous service for over 15 years failed unexpectedly — preventing labels from being printed and bringing manufacturing to a halt. Replacing it looked simple; the underlying environment was not.

End-of-Life Hardware

The failed printer had exceeded its supported lifespan — no replacement parts, no vendor support, no longer economically repairable.

Legacy Software Compatibility

Bridgestone's proprietary label application had never been tested with modern Zebra printers, risking a full software redevelopment.

Production Downtime

Every hour without label printing halted batches, disrupted inventory tracking, and slowed warehouse operations.

Long-Term Infrastructure Goals

Although the immediate goal was restoring production, Bridgestone also recognised its printing infrastructure needed long-term modernisation.

1. Standardise hardware across production lines
2. Improve barcode quality
3. Increase printer reliability
4. Reduce future maintenance costs
5. Build a scalable platform for expansion

EVALUATING THE ENVIRONMENT

Rather than immediately replacing the printer, Sumo Tech conducted a comprehensive technical assessment first:

1. Diagnosing the failed printer
2. Reviewing the manufacturing workflow
3. Assessing software compatibility
4. Analysing barcode label formats
5. Understanding production requirements
6. Consulting Bridgestone's IT Business Partner

THE SOLUTION

The Zebra ZT610 Industrial Printer

Sumo Tech recommended the Zebra ZT610 for the durability, performance, and print precision Bridgestone's manufacturing operations demanded—but the solution extended far beyond new hardware.



Zebra ZT610 Industrial Printer

High-performance industrial barcode printing built for continuous manufacturing operations.



Legacy Application Integration

The printer was configured to communicate seamlessly with Bridgestone's existing label software — no redevelopment required.



Barcode Validation

Every barcode format and label output was tested for production compliance and scanning accuracy before deployment.

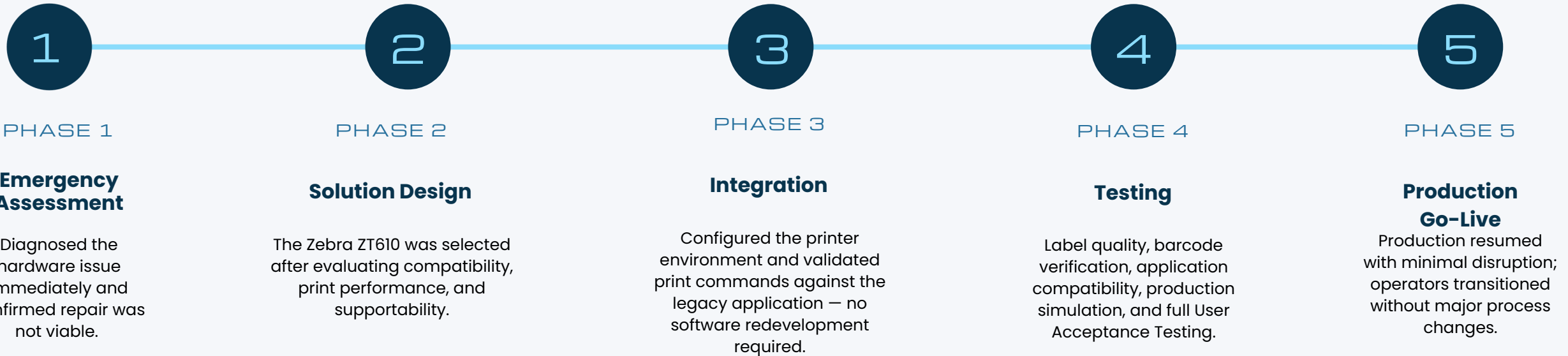


Production Support

Implementation was carefully managed to minimise disruption while ensuring production resumed safely.

IMPLEMENTATION

A Structured, Phased Approach



RESULTS

Immediate Impact, Lasting Value



Production Successfully Restored

Manufacturing resumed rapidly, significantly reducing operational downtime.



Legacy Investment Preserved

Integration avoided the cost and complexity of redeveloping legacy software.



Improved Barcode Quality

Consistent, higher-quality labels suitable for demanding industrial environments.



Increased Reliability

Unsupported hardware replaced with a fully supportable printing platform.

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**Zebra ZT411 Industrial
Printers deployed**

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**Zebra Barcode Scanners
standardised facility-wide**

*Standardised Manufacturing
Infrastructure*

A Strategic Technology Partnership

Perhaps the most significant outcome was the trusted relationship established between Bridgestone and Sumo Tech. Following the successful recovery project, Sumo Tech continued supporting Bridgestone through ongoing consultation, solution design, and infrastructure planning – evolving into a broader partnership focused on continuous improvement.

Ongoing collaboration with Bridgestone's IT department to enhance the manufacturing environment.

CURRENT INITIATIVES



Planning future label rollout strategies



Standardising label formats across production



Improving operational efficiency



Supporting evolving manufacturing requirements



Designing scalable solutions for future expansion

CONCLUSION

From Emergency Response to Long-Term Modernisation

What began as an emergency response to a critical production failure became the catalyst for a complete modernisation of Bridgestone's barcode printing infrastructure.

By combining deep technical expertise with a practical understanding of manufacturing operations, Sumo Tech delivered a solution that restored production quickly, preserved Bridgestone's existing software investment, and positioned the business for future growth.

Dream Big. Hustle Hard.

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