

How to Create the Perfect Label

The 5 most important questions to ask.



“I purchased labels for my refrigerated products and they fell off a day later.”

“We created colorful labels, but the color faded. Now they’re practically unreadable.”

“I spent hours designing the perfect label, only to have it curl and peel after application.”

This label was manufactured using the wrong face stock and adhesive for its intended environment. It wasn't long before it had to be replaced.



Introduction

Do any of these label fails sound familiar?

When a label fails, the wrong product has been chosen for the application. **Period.**

All too often, it's tempting to go with the least expensive option, but if the least expensive option means the label is doomed to failure, you're not doing yourself any favors. If your label is going to fall off, fade, or become unreadable, you'll end up spending more money in the long run to fix it.

Let's get your label done right the first time.

Here are the 5 most important factors to consider to get the perfect label every time:

1. Label use
2. Label environment
3. Label size
4. Label design
5. Label application method

1. What will the label be applied to?

The type of label material and adhesive we use to craft your label will vary based on the specific material you're adhering your label to. Labels can be successfully applied to nearly any surface: fabrics, film, vinyl, paper, plastics, glass, and more — but without the right label for the job, your label won't stick.

There are also a variety of adhesives available on the market today, but it's important to know that ***not everything will stick to anything***. Other important factors: the abrasiveness of your surface, how long the label needs to stick to that surface (removable, semi-permanent or permanent), and the environmental factors your label will need to withstand.

2. What environment will the label need to withstand?

Environmental factors and label materials go hand-in-hand. For example, if your product needs to withstand a hot environment, you'll need a different solution than if your product needs to withstand a cold environment.

Moisture is label enemy #1. Moisture comes in to play in all sorts of environments, causing labels to peel, fall off, fade and smear. Cheap labels are not designed to withstand moisture.

Food Product Labels

In the case of food products, certain labels and adhesive must be used to ensure the label remains intact in refrigerated and moist environments, as well as in hot environments (while shelf-stable products are shipped from warehouse to distributor), and finally during regular wear and tear in the consumer's home. Food labels may also need to be waterproof, and/or microwave-safe and dishwasher-safe.

Furniture Labels

In the furniture industry, labels are applied to various fabrics. Most furniture labels have very specific legal requirements: they must be made of specific materials, and they cannot come off or wear over time with use.



Medical and Pharmaceutical Labels

Medical and pharmaceutical labels must be created to adhere correctly to withstand today's fast-paced modern medical environments. High quality medical labels can be designed to be tamper-resistant and/or fluid-resistant, as well as laminated and sealed to withstand a wide variety of medical environments.

Industrial, Shipping and Logistics Labels

Warehouse productivity is increased when logistics teams aren't worried about malfunctioning labels. Industrial, shipping and logistics labels must be easily scannable and readable for streamlined processes and effective inventory control. Plus, you'll need labels tough enough to withstand being handled and tossed around.

Other Labels

Chemicals in lotions, hand sanitizers, and other everyday products can cause reactions with the color and adhesiveness of a label. It's important for your label to be able to stand up to these chemicals, as well as other environmental factors, especially if permanence is required.

If your product will be subject to sun exposure, you may want a UV label coating to seal and protect the print. As an added bonus, it will help the colors pop and draw more attention to the label.

If your label application requires extra security measures, thermochromatic inks and labels are another option. These labels change color when touched to ensure sensitive materials are never tampered with.

These are just a few examples. ***Every label is unique!***

3. How big is the label?

The size of your label must match your product's size and application requirements. Sounds simple, but it's easily overlooked. For example, for a thin test tube label, you'll need a smaller label that matches this tiny diameter without overlapping. On the other hand, if you're labeling a soda bottle, you'll need a wider, longer label. Precise measuring up front ensures you will avoid potential issues later.

Choose a label manufacturer skilled in producing labels of any size and shape.

4. What's on the label?

You'll need to consider two key elements here: your design, and any legal requirements for your industry. Be sure all nutrition facts, warnings, directions, etc. are included on your label design.

For best results, create your label design native to Adobe Illustrator, Adobe InDesign, or Adobe Photoshop. If using Photoshop, take care to provide the layered .psd file. For black and white or multicolor print jobs, provide a vector or BITMAP based file with a resolution between 600 and 1200 dots per inch (DPI) at 100% of the final project size. Be sure to convert all typefaces to curves, paths, or strokes, or supply the original font files along with your art files.

5. How will the label be applied?

Will you be using an auto-applicator or applying your labels by hand? How you plan to apply your labels affects the appropriate choice for label liners. Finished labels can typically be provided in rolls, in sheets, or fan-folded.

Is someone else applying your labels? Be sure your label manufacturer can add application instructions, additional product or label use information to the back of your labels. These are referred to as “back-printed labels.”

Conclusion

The right label comes down to five basics: the material, what it's being applied to, the adhesive, the conditions it must withstand, and the design. Planning your label in advance and addressing all these details ensures a better overall experience with your label provider. Get the right label the first time and you'll save a great deal of money and hassle, long term.

If you're not sure what to do, get a professional label consultation. Contact T&L to get started on your perfect label today.

We're different because we go beyond stock labels to help our customers craft the perfect label for any application and environment. We've been in business since 1984 and we're proud to maintain a 99% customer satisfaction rate.

At T&L Graphic Systems, we bring your label to life!





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