



Paving the Way for a GHS-Compliant Label Process

On Demand Color Labeling Delivers Increased Flexibility, Cuts Label Production Time in Half

As a distributor of industrial dyes and custom blended chemicals, maintaining a safe production process is always top priority. This focus became even sharper under the Globally Harmonized System of Classification and Labeling of Chemicals (GHS) guidelines under which all distributed products must align with specific safety standards and labels must include color graphics to communicate hazard warnings.

Our portfolio of products includes specialty chemicals and dyes for industrial or wood coatings. Our custom blends are used for many different applications, including laundry detergents targeting specific fabrics like denim. We take pride in the fact that every product we make takes safety and sustainability into account. Labeling has always been an integral part of our approach to safety and sustainability as well as a linchpin in our production process. For example, clarity and color are critical elements of our product labels, which include information like proper names, lot numbers, shipping numbers, Hazardous Materials Identification System (HMIS) rating numbers and GHS warnings. Color also helps differentiate the hazardous chemicals being used in our custom blends. Corrosives for example, have a different colored label than flammables. This easy to understand visual system helps safeguard our process as well as the end-user.

While order fulfillment times vary, we are prepared for same day production and delivery for those occasions when our customers need it. Historically, we relied on an in-house manual production process that involved feeding pre-printed color labels into a laser printer for the addition of variable data. While this approach got the job done, it was time consuming and inefficient from both a labor and cost perspective, and the label quality proved unreliable. Our team would spend an inordinate amount of time formatting and resizing labels and on overall maintenance. It was not uncommon for printer jams to back up production. It would sometimes take over an hour just to print 30 labels. We were spending over \$0.50 for each pre-printed label, and when inventory would run low – sometimes unexpectedly – those costs would further increase due to rush charges.

Label life was another challenge that we encountered with our legacy two-step process. When the labels came into contact with water, toner or certain solvents, they were subject to smearing and tearing, making content illegible – a risk not worth taking, especially in light of heightened GHS regulations. The laser printers also hindered our ability to include unique branding on customer labels, a request we were seeing with greater frequency.

We knew the time had come to implement a new color labeling solution that would add flexibility to our process, deliver consistent quality, enhance cost efficiencies for our business and maintain the high level of safety we have always been committed to as a company. Rather than simply identifying another pre-printed label provider, we started researching alternative, one-step label printing solutions that would give us complete control over the process. We contacted [Color Label Solutions](#), a consultancy that has helped many companies like ours make the move to on demand color printing.

Color Label Solutions arranged for a demo of [Epson's ColorWorks™ C831 Inkjet Label Printer](#) and we immediately saw that the system would help us comply with GHS requirements. It can produce labels up to 8.5" wide, ideal for large format drum labels. The label printer also eliminated the difficulty we had in perfectly marrying the pre-printed red-bordered pictograms with the variable data that we printed in house. This was a common issue with the two-step process we relied on previously.

The ColorWorks C831 also helped us resolve our label smudging and tearing issues. The system uses specific pigment inks from Epson that firmly bind to media fibers for outstanding resistance to chemicals and water. When combined with specific label media, the printer is certified to meet the stringent BS5609 standards for durability. That level of durability was a perfect match for our high safety standards.

To meet the rest of our labeling needs, Color Labeling Solutions also recommended Epson's [ColorWorks C7500 Inkjet Label Printer](#). The printer is fast, consumes ink efficiently and produces sharp images. It also allows us to leverage bright, durable label media, which lends a professional, premium look to branded products. The on demand nature of the printer allows us to customize label size and information as needed – and produce as many labels as we need right when we need them.

That capability alone has introduced a new level of efficiency into our production process. With our previous two-step process, labels were produced on regular paper then cut to the needed size and glued on to boxes prior to shipping. On average, we've cut label production time in half. Total label costs have also been dramatically reduced, thanks to reductions in waste, errors and overhead costs since we do not need to inventory high numbers of pre-printed labels.

Moving to on demand color label printing has been extremely beneficial for our business. It has allowed us to maintain our commitment to safety, sustainability and compliance while also giving us the flexibility to adapt to new industry mandates and the evolving needs of our customers.

Author Attribution

Michael Garcia is Supply Chain Manager at Smark Company (smarkcompany.com), a manufacturer of industrial chemicals and dyeing auxiliaries. Smark received consideration from Epson for providing this testimonial.

About Epson

Epson is a global technology leader dedicated to driving innovations and exceeding customer expectations in printing, visual communications, quality of life and manufacturing. Epson's lineup ranges from inkjet printers, printing systems and 3LCD projectors to industrial robots, smart glasses and sensing systems and is based on original compact, energy-saving, and high-precision technologies.

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About Color Label Solutions

Color Label Solutions (www.colorlabel.solutions and www.ghs.solutions) is the premier provider of print on-demand color and GHS label systems. In addition to its websites, the company blog site is www.colorlabelsondemand.blogspot.com. After selling, installing, and supporting hundreds of companies' move to print on-demand color and GHS labels, Color Label Solutions is the best choice for a partner to print labels on demand.

About Smark Company

Smark Company prides itself on its longstanding reputation of providing customers with superior industrial chemical and dyeing auxiliaries distribution services. The Smark Company portfolio of solutions includes specialty chemicals for textiles, industrial chemicals and wood coatings. To learn more about Smark Company, please visit www.smarkcompany.com.