



What's new in product label materials?

No brand wants their product packaging to blend in on the shelf, allowing their competition to steal the spotlight of consumer attention.

But to stand out, you have to do something unexpected with your packaging. So it stands to reason that many of the brand owners we work with often ask, "What's new?" at the outset of any product launch or rebrand.

Here, we'll answer exactly that: What *is* new in label materials?

And we'll dig deeper than the classic materials — BOPP, estate paper, foil, semi-gloss — to give you some truly out-of-the-box ideas.

Making sense of the vast landscape of material options

As a label printer, we're somewhat of a bridge between label materials suppliers and brands. Brands lean on our expertise to help them wade through the sea of materials, narrowing in on the one that will steal the shelf spotlight. And, ultimately, we're the ones that will source the material from the supplier, recommend the right embellishments to bring your design to life and print your label.

Below, we've distilled the vast landscape of label materials and resources into a shortlist we believe will inspire brands and designers alike. As always, if you have any questions about materials (or want to achieve a very specific packaging vision), our team is on standby to help.

Get an all-natural look with these wood veneer labels

If your brand is looking for a striking, yet stripped down and natural label appearance, look no further than birch and cherry wood veneer label materials. They're made with real wood — a thin veneer of wood is shaved off a log and attached to a PET liner to form the label material. And facestocks can easily be embossed or foil stamped to add extra flair to your label design.

If you'd like a truly unique label material, ask your label converter ...

- Beyond “standard” material options (e.g., paper, film, felt, etc.), what options do you have?
- What out-of-the-box materials would perform well in my product's end-use environment?
- If you have a particular texture in mind, let them know. They should be able to make recommendations that match your vision.

Reduce, reuse & recycle with these revolutionary materials

Many brands have already begun to factor sustainability into everything they do, or are getting serious about launching a sustainability initiative.

And your labels are the face of your product in the marketplace. If your labels don't tell a convincing sustainability story, you're missing a key opportunity to communicate your brand's commitment to consumers.

Of course, “[sustainable label materials](#)” is an impossibly broad category.

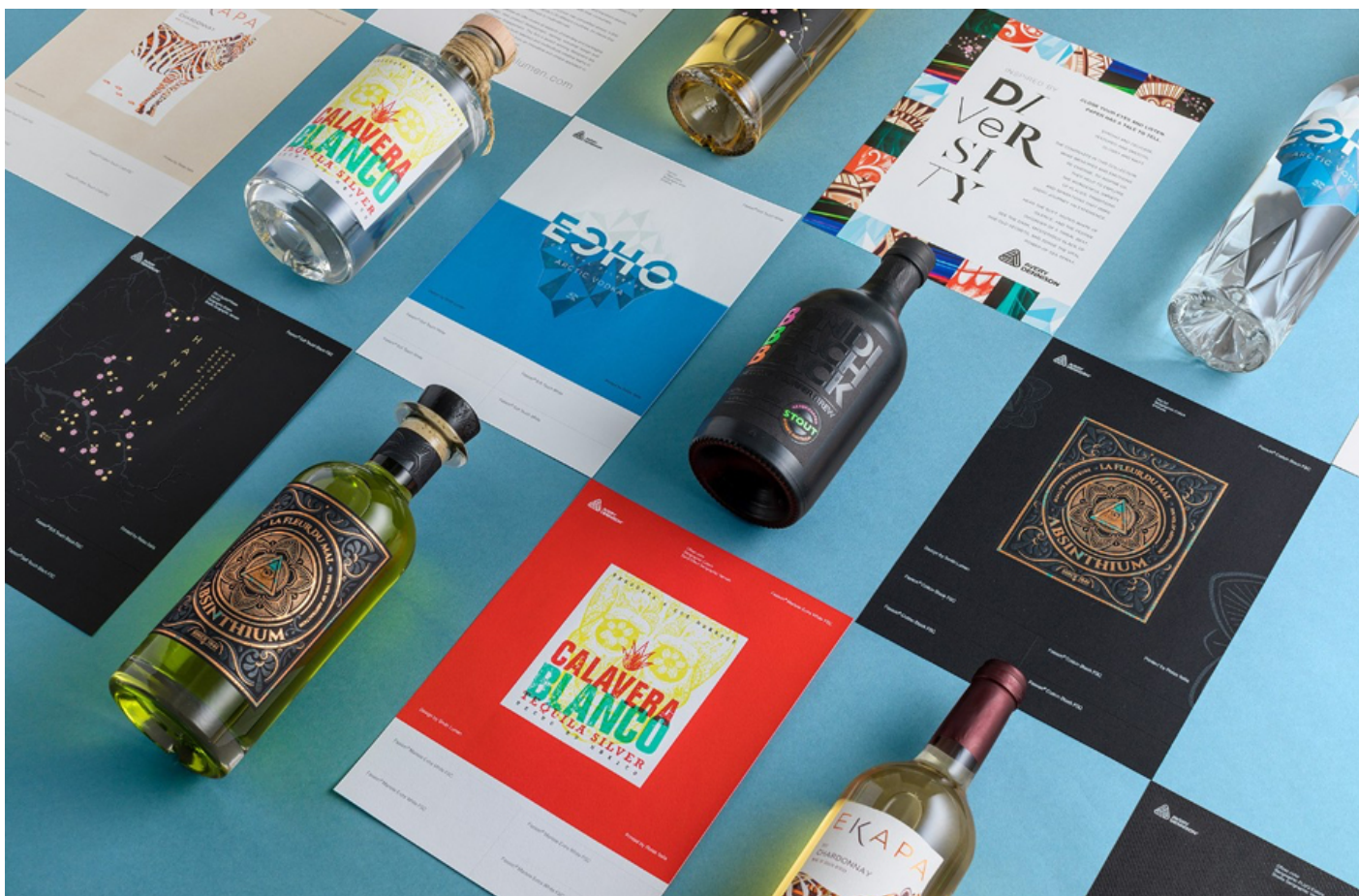
To be truly sustainable, your label materials to add a very specific environmental benefit to your packaging:

- **Recycled labels reduce reliance on virgin materials.** When you think of recycled materials, paper and plastic likely come to mind. And, yes, there are plenty of recycled paper and film facestocks. But there are also a wide variety of unconventional recycled facestocks made from grapes, barley, citrus and cotton.
- **Recyclable labels divert packaging waste from landfills.** There are a wide variety of paper and film facestocks that, when paired with special adhesive technologies, improve the recyclability of PET containers.
- **Responsibly sourced labels reduce reliance on non-renewable resources.** There's a wealth of Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)®-certified paper facestocks, which are sourced from responsibly managed forests.
- **Lightweight label materials use less materials and require less fuel to ship.** Thinner label films consume less material, result in less waste and, overall, reduce the carbon footprint of your packaging.
- **Biodegradable label materials transform into valuable compost.** Compostable labels, or labels that biodegrade during the industrial composting process, can be useful in applications where labels are attached to compostable packaging or produce.

If you'd like to explore more sustainable label materials, ask your label converter ...

- Can we have a discussion about which label eco-friendly label materials best align with my brand's sustainability goals?
- What is the smallest, lowest cost thing I could start doing that would have a noticeable impact on the sustainability of my labels?

Sometimes, label material selection *is* black and white



Occasionally, label designs begin with the material, and move outward — with all design, embellishment and creative decisions guided by the touch, feel and weight of the facestock.

This was the case for the label designs (pictured above) that took home the top prize at the Brand Identity Grand Prix in the Literature Design category a few years ago.

It began with a portfolio of three black materials, and their white counterparts. Rich cottons, velvety soft-touch papers and luxurious textured FSC® facestocks.

The contrasts between the bright, airy white, and dark, mysterious black materials served as the launching off point for the six design concepts in the “Inspired by Diversity” collection. You can read more about [all the designs in the collection here](#), each on one of the six materials in the black and white material portfolio.

The image above comes from M_use; more information can be found [here](#).

If you like the materials pictured above, ask your label converter ...

- What premium black and white materials are available to me? Of these options, which will stand up to my product's end-use environment?
- What embellishments might you recommend that would complement these materials?

Why choose just one material?



You can create some really compelling visual effects by mixing, matching and combining materials.

Like the Beach Badge Vodka label (pictured above). The back label is a two-material construction on the back label. [Graphics are printed on both sides of this label](#) — and the inward-facing graphics to project through to the front of the product, serving as a backdrop for the front label. For an example of how another brand used double-sided back labels, [check out the Still Master Vodka bottle](#).

If you'd like to incorporate multiple materials into your label

Tell your label converter your vision. They should be able to make material recommendations — and complementary embellishment suggestions — that will take it to the next level.

Need help walking through your material options?

This article barely scratches the surface of what's out there. As one of the largest label printers in North America, we're continually chatting with label materials suppliers about what's out there. And then we help brands incorporate unusual materials in some pretty spectacular ways.

[Feel free to loop us into your label design process](#), and we'll offer material and embellishment recommendations to take your branding to the next level.

Or, if you'd like to keep reading about what's new, [check out this guide to recent label trends](#). It'll walk through storytelling, sustainability, texture, smart label technology — and all the other label trends your brand needs to know ahead of your next launch or rebrand.