PRESSURE-SENSITIVE LABEL SOLUTIONS
At Resource Label Group, we’re dedicated to providing quality label solutions. It’s our commitment, our promise. To take on the most complex problems and help you through the label process so you get the best solution possible. In this informational guide, we introduce you to the key factors affecting a label purchase. We show you the different decisions you’ll need to make. And we highlight different solutions for cost, design and the complexities of your label. This guide is focused on solutions for pressure-sensitive labels, one of the most versatile types of labels available today.
GETTING THE PERFECT LABEL: THE LABEL PROCESS
In this section, we show you the most important elements you must consider when procuring your product label. This is an introduction to the label process, the key decisions you’ll need to make and how to evaluate different label solutions.

The value your label should provide

Quality labels add visual appeal to your product, create a recognizable brand in stores, make a strong first impression with your customer and communicate key product information. Your purchase of a unique, eye-catching label is an investment in your product, made to drive sales and connect with your customer.

Factors affecting the label you select

Getting that perfect label means balancing a variety of elements to achieve your unique goals. Some of the primary factors include your budget, the quantity of labels you require and how quickly you need your labels. But other elements are just as important, including:

- The branded label design you want to achieve
- Your product and how your label is used on it
- How you want your customer to interact with your product
- Regulatory requirements and the information you need on your label
- Unique promotional, retailer or logistics requirements
One commonly disregarded element of label purchasing is the environment, your product must survive. From beverage freezers and hot summer days to car engines and household showers, every environment has its own hazards that impact the materials and printing processes used to create your label. Depending on your product, your label manufacturer will need to provide solutions for:

- Sunlight
- Outdoors
- Chemical exposure
- Temperature
- Moisture, condensation and humidity
- Any other environmental hazard

Later, we show you some strong solutions for tough environments.

Understanding the label choices you will need to make

Once you’ve determined and defined the factors that affect your label, you’ll have many decisions to make.

Pressure-sensitive labels: the basics

You can select labels in a variety of different types, including cut and stack glue labels, in-mold labels or shrink sleeve labels to name a few. In this guide, we focus on pressure-sensitive labels, as they make up more than 80 percent of all product labels.

Pressure-sensitive labels are a highly versatile label solution that can be seen on nearly any type of product. They’re essentially high-tech stickers that come in rolls or sheets. Pressure-sensitive labels can use paper, film or foil as primary label materials and work with many inks. Since they don’t require any heat, solvent or water to activate, you can apply them to your products with only light or moderate pressure. You’ll peel them off of the roll and press them onto your product using either a machine-applied technique or by hand-applying them.
Selecting a label die cut

A die cut is the shape of your label. You can choose from thousands of different die cuts, from different sized circles, ovals and squares to nearly any shape you can imagine. Your choice of die cut depends on your product, your packaging, the size of your label, the shape of your container and your label design, among other considerations. At Resource Label Group, we have nearly unlimited options for pre-made die cuts and can also create custom die cuts, which can help your label stand out.

Determine the roll direction you need

Pressure-sensitive labels come in rolls and are later applied to your product. If you hand-apply them, the roll direction doesn’t matter. But, if you machine-apply them, your label manufacturer must provide labels in a roll that works with your application machine. We can help you through this step.

Select your label materials

Your next decision involves the material makeup of your label. Pressure-sensitive labels are made of four primary parts:

• Topcoat
• Face stock with printed ink
• Adhesive
• Liner and release coating
The face stock is the base material with your printed design. It comes with an adhesive on the back that sticks to your product. The label peels off of a roll (or liner), that’s treated with a non-stick (release) coating. The topcoat is a finish applied to your label to protect it and add visual effects.

Your choice of face material heavily affects both the price and appearance of your label. You can use a variety of papers, films or metal foils. Generally, papers are traditional and less expensive, though there are premium options. Films are more durable solutions and can be treated to stand up to tough environments. Foils are the most premium options and are used for specialty products or by brands looking to stand out with a metallic look.

Your adhesive choice depends on your face stock material, your packaging material, how customers interact with your product and the environments your product must survive. There are permanent adhesives for tough uses, temporary adhesives for removable labels (or removable coupons) and specialty adhesives that stand up to certain hazards, such as exposure to moisture that could cause your label to peel.

Adding a finish (or topcoat) is one of the last steps in the label process. Not every label requires a specialty finish, but adding one can give your product shelf appeal. And finishes protect your label from harsh use and hazards, such as moisture, sunlight, temperature variations and chemicals. You can choose a matte, semi-gloss or gloss finish. While matte finishes add a muted, soft feel that creates a subtle, premium elegance, gloss adds attention-grabbing reflectiveness and is the brightest, most durable finish available. Semi-gloss is a great middle-ground solution. On the next page, we’ve included a chart that further explains the different types of label finishes (varnishes and laminates) and shows options for protecting your label and enhancing its design.
<table>
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<th>LABEL LAMINATE</th>
<th>PURPOSE</th>
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| Varnishes vs. Laminates | - Varnishes are a Liquid Coating  
- Laminates are Thin Layers of Film  
- Laminates Recommended for Labels Likely to Receive More Abrasion, Chemical Contents or Outdoor Exposure |
| UV Gloss Coating or Matte Varnish | - Indoor or Outdoor Use (Without Needing to be Waterproof)  
- UV Gloss Ideal for Sun Exposure  
- Matte Varnish is Glare-Free |
| High Gloss Coating or Matte Lamination | - Gloss or Matte Choice Depends on Desired End Result  
- High Gloss is Shinier With More Glare  
- Matte is Glare-Free  
- Both Gloss and Matte Protect Ink from Being Rubbed or Scratched Off  
- Both Feature Waterproof Layer  
- Better for Higher Intensity Products than UV Gloss or Matte Varnish |
| Imprintable Finishes | - Finish Provides Similar Sun Protection as UV Gloss / Matte Varnish  
- Better Option to UV Gloss / Matte Varnish if Labels Will Be Printed With Thermal Printer (Faster Printing Than Alternative)  
- Can Write on Surface With Pen or Marker |
| Polyester Lamination | - Imprintable with a Thermal Printer (Faster Printing Than Alternative)  
- Can Write on Surface With Pen or Marker  
- Durable for Indoor and Outdoor Use |
Basic label design requirements

Your label design affects every element of label printing, including:

- Materials
- Printing process
- How colors are added to your label

Depending on your design, we can use different materials, color processes or printing methods to make it a reality. But, certain designs can limit your options and increase the price of your label. It’s best to consult a label printer who can provide input on your design and help you select the process and material to achieve the look you want, as well as a look that works with your budget.

Whether you design your labels on your own, have us design and print them or work with a specialty label design firm, you’ll need to meet certain printing standards. Specific file types are required, such as Illustrator files or Photoshop files, that programs like Microsoft Word can’t produce. And printing standards call for specific label size requirements. At Resource Label Group, we have a specialized team that can create a label design or tweak a design to meet printing standards. And we can print designs created by other specialty label design firms.

Printing process

Once you’ve selected a type of label, the size and design of your label and a quantity of labels, you’ll select a label printing process. Your primary choices are digital and flexographic. In the next section, we explain each.

Key questions about your label

To better show you the key information you’ll need in order to procure the right label, we’ve included a brief questionnaire on the next page.
15 questions you’ll want to answer when purchasing labels

1. What is your budget?

2. What quantity of labels do you need to print?

3. When are labels needed in hand?

4. What are the size dimensions of your label? Is there a particular shape you would like?

5. How many colors?

6. How many different design versions of your label will you require?

7. Will you be ordering the same label in the future, if so, how often and in what quantities? This may affect your choice of printing method.

8. Do you need any variations from label to label within the same label design (for example, game codes, consecutive numbering or alternate text)

9. What environments will your label face? (Freezers, the outdoors, refrigerators, showers...etc.)

10. Think of the life span of your product and label. How will your products (and labels) be shipped, stored, displayed in retail settings and used by customers?

11. Are there any visual areas of your label you would like to call particular attention to, or highlight with custom decoration?

12. Are you looking for a particular substrate material (paper, film, foil)?

13. What regulatory information do you need to include on your label to comply with government bodies (FDA, OSHA, etc.)

14. Do you want to include lengthy, branded content or content for multilingual audiences on your label?

15. Will you be hand-applying or machine-applying your labels? If machine-applying them, which roll direction do you require?
UNDERSTANDING COSTS
6 Ways to save money on pressure-sensitive labels

The most cost-efficient label solutions vary from product to product. But follow these six guidelines, in partnership with your label supplier, and you can be confident you’ll get the best possible label at the best possible price.

1. Select the right label printing method

For nearly any pressure-sensitive label, you have two choices for your printing method: flexographic label printing and digital label printing. Four main factors affect which one is the most cost-efficient for you:

- The size of your order
- The quantity of labels you’ll need in the future and the regularity of your future orders
- Whether or not you need variations from label to label
- Your design requirements

Flexographic presses carry higher setup costs than digital presses but provide economies of scale because they use plates to create a set of consistent labels. Once a run is set up, flexographic presses print labels more quickly than digital presses. Digital presses require no setup costs but have a high per-label cost. In small quantities, digital printing saves money, but in large quantities, flexographic is the better choice. There’s no magic number for this cutoff, as it varies from label to label. Even when you only need a small quantity of a label right away, if you purchase one label in bulk over time, flexographic printing may save money in the long run.

From a design standpoint, digital printing provides a more crisp finish, clearer colors and sharper type. But both digital and flexographic printing methods provide professional quality labels and complete design flexibility to create nearly any visual effect. If you’re running a promotion where you need many label variations, digital printing (using variable data printing, or VDP) is the most cost-effective option. It allows you to change text or design elements on each label within one print run.
2. Use a static label design

If you sell a group of similar products, such as a food that comes in different flavors, you can save money with a static design that has interchangeable elements. The main components of your design (colors, fonts, patterns, spacing) can remain the same from label to label, with changes in elements like nutrition facts and flavor names. By condensing designs, you can reduce the cost of design time, eliminate setup plates and save money with larger runs of the same label.

3. Simplify label materials

Want to highlight a certain part of your label? Design customizations like foil stamping and label embossing can sometimes help accomplish this without using premium materials. Instead of starting with a costly face stock material, such as silver or golden foil, you may be able to use a less expensive paper stock and add special effects to specific areas. A less costly material can provide major savings on big orders.

4. Forecast your label needs

If you order 10,000 labels per month and you know you’ll need the same label for the next three months, you can save money by condensing that order into one run of 30,000 labels. Why? Because every print run requires setup time and has setup costs. By condensing print runs, you reduce setup costs and can get a better price point. A good label partner should inform you when you can combine orders.
5. Request label inventory management

You can save money by partnering with a label supplier that provides label inventory management. This means your vendor holds labels for a set period of time, until you are ready for your labels to ship. You can request cost-efficient large runs while protecting your cash flow, freeing up space in your warehouse and ensuring you always have labels ready when you need them.

6. Consider a partnership

If you partner with a label supplier in a multi-year agreement, your supplier can work with you to provide a good price point. The stability and quality you get by working with a dedicated partner adds value to your labels.
SOLUTIONS FOR DESIGN, ENVIRONMENT AND UNIQUE REQUIREMENTS
Now that you’ve got a framework for navigating the label process, we’ll provide you some label solutions. In this section, we discuss ways to enhance your label design, protect your label from different hazards and meet unique regulatory, retailer and promotional requirements.

Solutions for label design

Pressure-sensitive labels provide nearly limitless design customizations. Almost any look is possible using a combination of materials and on-press techniques, including:

- Label embossing
- Foil stamping
- Screen printing

Label embossing

One finish that adds depth, texture and shine to your label is embossing. It’s a premium-looking solution that’s pressed onto your label like a stamp to give your label raised lettering, textured decoration, pattern effects or bright highlights in a specific area. When used with different face stock materials, it creates varying effects.

Foil stamping

To add a glowing, metallic look and a top-of-the-line feel to your product, you can use foil stamping. This is a great alternative to using a metal foil face material, especially if you want to highlight specific areas of your label. Though often used to create a gold or silver look, foil stamping can use any color tint to make your label stand out.
Screen-printed labels

Screen printing allows you to add customizations to your label. In screen-printing, ink is printed onto your label through a screen that has openings in the shape of your design. Screen printing can provide a bold, no-label look and be used to create an engaging, textured feel. Commonly seen on premium wine bottles, screen-printed labels are a specialty solution used to give many products shelf appeal.
Label solutions for tough environments

When selecting solutions for the environments your label must survive, the most important thing is to provide your label manufacturer with complete product information. Extreme heat, cold, condensation and humidity affect your label. As does the process you use to apply it to your product and the wear it undergoes during shipping and handling. With a full understanding of your product and its environments, your label solutions provider can select the right label material, adhesives and inks so your label won’t wrinkle, run, smudge or tear — no matter what environment it must survive. Some common solutions include:

• Specialty permanent or removable adhesives
• Moisture-resistant labels
• Durable face stock materials, such as film
• Sun and UV-resistant face stocks and inks
• Finishes that stand up to chemicals
Solutions for promotional labels

On-brand, attention-grabbing labels are a key part of many product promotions, including:

- Seasonal goods
- Regional promotions
- New market testing
- Launches of multiple, unique product versions

Promotional labels can help drive sales, brand awareness and customer loyalty. But they can require specialty printing capabilities.

Variable data printing

Usually, you’ll purchase promotional labels in smaller quantities and sometimes with variation from label to label. For that reason, you may want variable data printing (VDP) using a digital press. This is a low-cost way to print small orders and customize each label.

Variable data printing on a digital press makes it possible to:

- Print unique images on each label in a print
- Add custom QR and coupon codes to every label
- Put different messaging on labels to speak to different audiences

Instant redeemable coupons

One of the most important solutions for promotional consumer package goods is the instant redeemable coupon (IRC) label. In recent studies, about 21 percent of all redeemed coupons were IRCs. Shoppers like to find and use coupons right in stores, so IRCs help drive sales.

They’re often made using:

- Removable, on-package coupons that use specialty temporary adhesives and labels that leave no residue
- Full fold-outs with peel-away coupons in the extended content section

Note that retailers often have specific sizing requirements for coupons. You will want your label manufacturer to test all coupon codes to ensure they’re scannable and correctly formatted.
Solutions for regulated labels

Products in regulated industries are subject to specific label compliance requirements. Some products require testing and a Certification Mark, the most popular of which is the UL Mark. You may need a label that demonstrates quality and authenticity, so you will need a label manufacturer certified to print UL labels. If you produce hazardous chemicals, you’ll need your chemical labels to meet GHS compliance standards.

For some FDA-regulated or OSHA-regulated products, you may need to pack extensive information onto your packaging. But that shouldn’t stop you from having a crisp, eye-catching label. Consider Extended Content Labels (ECLs). They’re a family of labels designed to convey in-depth information and maximize your branding real estate. Also great for adding lengthy promotional or multi-lingual information to your label, ECLs fold out, pop-out or unwrap from a bottle or package.
A BUYER’S GUIDE TO LABEL MANUFACTURERS
5 Key traits of a custom label manufacturer

No label decision is more important than choosing the supplier who will help you find the right solutions for your label. With years in collective label experience, we’ve compiled a list of the most important traits in a good label supplier.

1. Consultative solutions

A quality supplier has creative problem solvers who take the time to get to know your product. That includes elements like:

• Environments your product must survive
• Ways your product is used
• How your label will be applied to your product
• The positioning of your brand to your customer through label design
• Special design characteristics of your label

Your supplier should be thorough in asking you key questions beyond basic specifications. Then, based on complete information, provide you the best solutions for costs, design, turnaround times and any concerns you may have. A consultative supplier offers solutions that add value to your label and your brand.

2. Service from start to finish

The best labels are made with service from the moment your order is discussed to the time it’s shipped. One representative should be there to guide you through design, printing and logistics — the whole label process. It should be an easy process for you, with a label solutions provider coordinating all key parties to ensure you get a label that fits your product perfectly.
3. Timely delivery

A good supplier delivers on time and has systems in place to ensure every order is met. That means providing rapid turnarounds and accurate, real-time information so you always know the next step in the label process. Turnaround times should be transparent and clearly communicated.

4. Complete capabilities

You’ll save time, money and headaches by working with a supplier that has complete label capabilities, including:

- Custom design
- Full-scale printing with on-press customizations
- Logistics support
- And more

Your supplier should have label designers who can create your vision or take existing designs and make them feasible for printing. Good suppliers have all the necessary printing capabilities to make nearly any design possible. Beyond printing and design, your label company should provide logistics support and label inventory management. That means holding labels for you, shipping them on set time schedules and automatically printing more when you get low.

5. Quality control

Labels are an investment in your brand and your product. We believe good suppliers adhere to the highest quality standards to protect your investment. Look for certifications and approved vendor status.

All these traits are key to ensure you enjoy a quality label experience and a seamless process from concept to completion.
MORE ABOUT RESOURCE LABEL GROUP

At Resource Label Group, we provide more than labels. We’re committed to providing the right solutions to help you get to market on-time with a perfect label and a smooth experience. Tight budgets, short lead times and complex orders are challenges we’re here to solve. From locations throughout the U.S. and in Canada, we provide nationally scaled label services. And we deliver them with a local touch. Start to finish — concept to completion — we guide you through the label process.

You can learn more about us here. To request a label solution for your product, click here or call us at 1-800-253-9599 and talk with one of our label specialists.