

Sticky Business...excerpt



Labels need to adhere, identify, impress and inform—and do so in a legal manner.

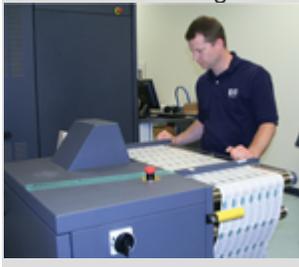
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Whether it helps to reinforce a product's luxury status or simply explain the formula's application process, labels are an essential component of the beauty business. A label identifies the brand for the consumer, informs her about the benefits of using the formulation and helps make a good impression on the shelf. And, it does all this under the careful eyes of regulatory agencies and consumer watchdog groups, not to mention within tight space constraints.

Today's consumers demand more information about the products they use, which has meant formulators must provide data and details. Couple that with the drive to reduce or eliminate unnecessary secondary packaging, and it's easy to see why label design has become an important part of the packaging process. In addition, the label needs to work well with the product's packaging and meet a manufacturer's cost expectations and environmental goals.

With so many variables, savvy companies enlist the expertise of label suppliers early in the process.

For smaller runs, digital label printing is a good choice. Photo courtesy of Dion Label Printing.



"Companies need to keep in mind the environment in which their labeled product will be in," advises Randy Duhaime, general manager of Dion Label Printing, Inc., Westfield, MA. Will the packaging get wet? Will the container be squeezed? According to Duhaime, the best label suppliers will ask detailed questions to ensure their customer's labels will stand up to the extreme conditions many beauty products undergo.

Label Solutions

Does your firm want a high-end look on a shoestring budget? Are you looking to make a splash or go green? Maybe you just need more space for copy. Luckily, there is a wide range of label substrates and printing options, at varying price points, that can help your company get the look it desires. Here are some solutions that could work for your next label project.

Green Sleeves are a completely biodegradable solution for shrink sleeve applications.



Luxury for Less

Dion Label Printing used digital printing technology to help one beauty client keep its costs in check. The company initially wanted a hot-stamp look on several short-run orders in 12 different shades of metallic. With flexographic printing, the client would have had to pay for 12 different shades of hot stamp foil, printing plates and multiple changeovers and setup costs. Instead, Dion Label created a high-end, hot-stamp look on a digital press “without the headaches of high prices for our customer,” says Duhaime.

All the Text That Fits

As companies look to reduce excess packaging, there is pressure to cram (even) more text on the primary package label. Topflight Corporation’s solution is a resealable, hinged design label that can deliver three times the usable area of a standard, similarly sized label. These multi-ply labels work well for extensive cautionary indications or multilingual translations in a variety of cosmetic and pharmaceutical applications, according to Topflight, which prints, hot stamps and die cuts labels for beauty giant Estée Lauder.

Get Complete Coverage

Another labeling option is shrink-sleeve technology, which gives a company 360° of “real estate” on a container for graphics, logos and necessary product information.

“Shelf presence is always a major concern for companies and shrink sleeves in metallic colors...can really make the product pop on shelves,” says Howard Millstein, president of shrink sleeve producer Ameri-Seal, Inc., which recently developed a new “pearl essence ink” process that creates a luminescent look and gives the sleeve a slight shimmer. Shrink sleeves can also be used for BOGO or on pack promotions as the sleeves can be applied to two or more containers or adhere another product to a package.

In addition to its unique look and bundling capabilities, shrink sleeve technology can also be a problem solver. When a hair care formulator found itself with several hundred thousand aluminum containers with incorrect ingredients silk screened on the bottle, Ameri-Seal produced a metallic shrink sleeve that allowed the customer to update the design and completely cover the inaccurate text, which “ultimately saved them many thousands of dollars,” according to Millstein.

Join the Environmental Revolution

Green technology is hot in packaging—and labels are no exception. Eco-friendly solutions, such as PLA films and labels and water-based adhesives, are available from many suppliers.

Labels and the Law

While engineering is essential, regulatory issues play a major role in the label design process. Through the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act and the Fair Packaging and Labeling Act, FDA spells out what needs to appear on a product's principal panel display and the information panel, as well as what can't appear. Complying with FDA regulations is essential to remaining on store shelves, and companies need to keep up with any changes the agency may implement.

For example, FDA is currently pouring through approximately 10,000 comments filed regarding proposed label changes to over-the-counter (OTC) sunscreen drug products with ultraviolet A (UVA) and ultraviolet B (UVB) protection. The proposed regulation would create a consumer-friendly rating system for UVA products designed to help consumers identify the level of UVA protection offered by a product.

The FDA proposal would rate UVA sunscreen products on a scale of one to four stars (one star for low UVA protection and four stars for the highest UVA protection available). If a sunscreen doesn't provide at least "one star" of protection, FDA may require the product to bear "no UVA protection" marking on the front label near the SPF value. Additionally, the FDA proposal calls for a warning statement to be included in the drug fact box on all sunscreen products. The warning will say: "UV exposure from the sun increases the risk of skin cancer, premature skin aging, and other skin damage. It is important to decrease UV exposure by limiting time in the sun, wearing protective clothing, and using a sunscreen."

Topflight Corp. has resealable, hinged design label that can deliver three times the usable area of a standard, similarly-sized label.



bottle.

An FDA spokesperson said there is no date set for when the proposed changes may be implemented, and if and when these changes are mandated, manufacturers would still have a one-year grace period to get their packaging in compliance.

Labels used by Luca Solar Protection, Charleston, SC, already provide this type of critical sun care information. The Charleston, SC—based sunscreen formulator contends it is the only sun protection producer in the U.S. to voluntarily print critical wavelength value — a more effective way to rate UVA protection than SPF — on the

Truth in Labeling

Like Luca Solar Protection, arming consumers with information has always been a goal of Tom's of Maine. The company, which was founded in 1970 and acquired by Colgate in 2006, has always adhered to a strict truth in labeling practice, listing all of its ingredients on the packaging long before others did — and before the International Nomenclature Identification (INCI) system for cosmetics was adopted.

Tom's of Maine created its own ingredient source grid to educate consumers about ingredients used in its products, each ingredient's purpose and from where the ingredients are sourced. "We wanted full transparency and disclosure," says Chris Chappell, director of consumer care with Tom's of Maine.

As natural-based products proved to be more than a niche, more companies entered the marketplace looking to score big by proclaiming their "natural" attributes on their labels. Some personal care companies say the proliferation of "natural" on labels and in marketing efforts has diluted the terminology, and the entire personal care natural sector.

Along these lines, Burt's Bees launched an initiative this summer to develop a universally recognized standard for all natural personal care products that would require companies to use a seal on all packaging to help consumers easily identify "truly" natural products. Additionally, leading natural cosmetic firms in Europe have established NaTrue, a new lobbying organization that will advocate for a clear regulatory definition of natural cosmetics and precise criteria for product labeling.

Some contend that developing a standard for "natural" will prove challenging, which means a natural seal may never come to fruition. Yet a logo strategy for the beauty market could help to educate consumers and keep companies on the straight and narrow about claims being made on labels. The debate over what's truly natural in the beauty business has become contentious, especially as more organic cosmetic and skin care products enter the marketplace.

"In the U.S., a beauty company can put organic in the name and really have no organic ingredients whatsoever," says Karen Behnke, CEO of Juice Beauty, a company that follows strict U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and California Organic Products Act guidelines and buys ingredients only from USDA certified organic farms. "Many beauty companies also label in a confusing manner—such as 'made with organic ingredients' — which could be one ingredient in an otherwise toxic base," contends Behnke.

Firms need to tread lightly when using "organic" on their labels. Misleading information about an organic formulation or organic ingredients will get a product pulled from the shelves, even though there are no specific standards for organic

beauty, skin and cosmetic products sold in the U.S. The industry instead must adhere to guidelines set forth by the USDA's National Organic Program, the federal body that regulates the standards for any farm, wild crop harvesting, or handling operation that wants to sell an agricultural product as organically produced.

Estée Lauder is looking to tap into the organic boom with its new Origins Organics collection. When the line launched in October, Origins became the first prestige brand to offer a full range of skin care, hair care and body care products certified under the USDA standards, according to Lynn Mazzella, vice president, Origins Global Product Development. Select products in the new line feature the "USDA Organic" seal on the label, a logo more commonly seen in the supermarket dairy aisle than at the cosmetics counter.

By incorporating the USDA organic seal, will Origins, a highly recognized and advertised brand, help educate consumers about organic skin care? Maybe. As consumers become schooled in organic food, they may transfer that knowledge to their personal care purchasing habits. Furthermore, Origins' efforts may persuade other companies that boast certified organic formulations to seek USDA NOP certification so they, too, can place USDA's label front and center on their packaging.

USDA Certification Is a Positive Step

"When we launched Juice Beauty, our major retailers were not concerned with the actual USDA seal, they were just happy that we buy all of our ingredients from USDA certified organic farms. However, now that Origins has gone through the government regulatory effort to put the seal on a few of their products, Juice Beauty will follow suit. Stay tuned," Behnke told Beauty Packaging.

Chappell of Tom's of Maine sees Origins' USDA certification and labeling as a positive step, and says he believes there is change coming in the language consumers will read on beauty and personal care labels.

"Trend wise, you will see a bit more responsibility," notes Chappell. "You will also see claims around cosmetic products that will be more realistic and responsible; more conservative. This is the position we have taken. And I think that it is a win for the consumer."