

Making the business case for digitally transforming labelling

By Ken Moir, VP marketing, NiceLabel.

With the latest wave of digitisation, there are very few areas of our lives and businesses that haven't been digitally transformed. We see evidence of digitisation in the prototype smart cities, in our automobiles, and even in our homes. Yet despite the ubiquitousness of digital technology, we still see some companies hesitate when it comes to digitally transforming their labelling.

For those of us who have worked with enterprise-level labelling for the past decade, the decision is a no-brainer. Yet a recent experience with one of our customers drove the point home and made the business case for digitally transforming labelling even clearer for us.

Siemens: leading the way in digitising manufacturing

Everyone knows Siemens. Chances are you own or have at one point owned a product manufactured by them. Siemens has fully embraced digitisation and are frequently on the lookout for platforms that can help them digitise manual processes and standardise their way of working.

From fragmentation to centralisation

Prior to implementing our label management system, Siemens' label production environment was fragmented. Each factory had operated as master of its own IT domain, meaning there were a variety of systems, printers and integration methods. To help them achieve their internal goals of standardisation and increased efficiency, Siemens decided to implement a centralised

platform for label production and printing and roll this out across their factories.

Seamless integration improves label consistency and minimises costs

Siemens has connected labelling to its ERP system (SAP) and various Manufacturing Execution Systems (MES) at the factory level. Although Siemens factories use different solutions for their MES, universal label templates can be printed from any of the business systems. As a result of these flexible label templates, factories have to maintain fewer template variations, process fewer change requests and enjoy improved label consistency and compliance.

The level of integration with Siemens' other business systems has also enhanced productivity. Whereas under the legacy integration methods labels could take eight seconds to print, that time has been reduced to an average of 300 milliseconds to print each label. Siemens has also been able to reduce the overall complexity of its internal business applications. In the past, the business applications had to support multiple printers, whereas now they can handle business rules and logic. Siemens has also been able to maximise the speed of implementation, while minimising deployment costs.

Empowered business users

Labels are designed by business users from scratch using the NiceLabel label designer. The label designer's intuitive interface means that business users can create and change labels without IT assistance. They can easily create labels and deploy these label templates across Siemens' factories.



Ken Moir: "End-to-end operational efficiency."

Return on Investment (ROI) in 2-6 months

Fast forward a couple of years, and Siemens has rolled out their own internal version of the NiceLabel label management system. Centralising labelling has reduced their IT infrastructure and support costs. It has given them a global, scalable solution that is easy to implement. And more than that, they have experienced an ROI of 2-6 months at the factories where they have rolled out this global label management solution.

End-to-end operational efficiency

The use cases pouring in from their factories are compelling. They can re-use label data and templates already in

existence, saving time and minimising duplication of effort. They can design labels once and print them via a variety of devices, including portable wireless printers. They can connect different applications to their label printing using standard interfaces, again saving the IT department valuable time and resources. And they can print to a wide variety of media, such as labels, foils, textile material and RFID smart labels. All with one, centralised labelling solution. The result is end-to-end operational efficiency.

Scalability makes it all possible

Siemens has gone from one site and 20 printers as part of a pilot to twenty-two sites and 1200 printers today with continued rollout. The largest site prints 150,000 labels a week on 200 printers. This scalability means that Siemens can offer different levels of service to different business units within the organisation. Being able to adapt the solution to the

needs of the various business units and factories is a clear benefit for Siemens and one of the main reasons for digital transformation within the organisation.

This is what digital transformation can do for your labelling. If you are interested in

more details about the cost savings that Siemens experienced, see the AIM award-winning case study at NiceLabel website, where you will also find information about how your business can benefit from digitally transforming labelling: www.nicelabel.com



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The cost of labeling is greater than you think

Turn hidden costs into visible savings

