# Delivering digital labelling solutions through the channel

**Paul Vogt, Channel Marketing Director at NiceLabel explores digital transformation in the labelling market, the channel's role in this process, and how a transformed label management system can deliver tremendous benefit and revolutionise customers' operations**



**Certain technologies such as the inkjet printer and barcodes have revolutionised label management. However, maintaining accurate, up-to-date labels can still be a time-consuming, costly and complex process. Each industry has its own particular challenges, but maintaining compliance, quality and accuracy is a vast undertaking for any organisation. Managing the huge amount of data generated, ensuring the correct procedures are followed for label updates, and ensuring that the technology works can be hugely resource-intensive.**

For example, fashion retailers need to get merchandise onto the shop floor as quickly as possible, often this will include items that have been previously purchased and then returned to store. Having the means to produce and re-ticket labels quickly and accurately is critical. The longer garments remain in the warehouse, the bigger the risk they will be 'out of fashion' by the time they reach stores. However, stores often find themselves in a situation where their existing technology comprises of standalone label printers which may not be connected to a central database and

could be very different from the printers in another store. These issues can result in inconsistencies as well as slower turnaround times all leading to increased costs and reduced competitiveness.

The food and beverage industry faces some unique challenges of its own where failing to produce accurate labels can have dire consequences, in terms of health and wellbeing. Additionally, consumer expectations are changing as are regulations and legislation. Increasingly, today's consumers want to know information about any additives and how the product has been manufactured, bred or transported to satisfy their sustainability responsibilities. This results in the industry needing to manage huge amounts of information on the label as well as having the ability to quickly and easily adapt as legislation and compliance rules change.

The pharmaceutical industry is also hugely regulated and one where safety standards are essential. Errors due to inaccurate labelling can cost billions of dollars and thousands of lives. Increased compliance in recent years has resulted in a 65 per cent increase in drug recalls – half of pharmaceutical recalls are due to errors in product labelling or

packaging artwork. Maintaining accuracy and accountability are hugely important when the impact of getting it wrong is so costly.

In manufacturing, labelling is frequently considered a background process that doesn't get any attention until it causes a problem. As a result, barcode and RFID labelling practices and software have become dated and many enterprises are failing to keep pace with changing business needs. Also, it is common for each distribution centre, factory, or other facility within an enterprise to produce its own labels for shipments, inventory control and other processes. Maintaining a system that supports a multitude of label templates increases inconsistencies and as a result, this can lead to customer dissatisfaction and confusion.

By no means do the above examples address all the challenges across all industries. However, they will share many of the same issues and with every challenge, the bottom line is always affected.

## Challenges in the channel

Many label management solutions are sold through a channel model, but this also poses challenges for resellers, VARs, integrators and distributors. For many years, partners have been faced with falling margins on both hardware and

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software platforms. In terms of label management solutions, investing in the required expertise to both sell and support these solutions doesn't always make sense when they are based on proprietary and niche technology. Often partners are not compensated for their expertise and with no guarantees of repeat business, it may not represent a viable sales channel for some partners.

However, when there is an opportunity to add value to customers' businesses and aid them to achieve agility and cost reductions within their labelling process, the channel can play an essential and integral part. Digitising the labelling process is one of these opportunities.

### Digitising the labelling process

Digital transformation is a term which the channel hears all the time. But, it can mean different things to different people depending on the industry being addressed and the solutions being implemented. However, the core principles remain the same regardless of the situation, it's about digitising processes and infrastructure and using technology to optimise productivity and efficiency.

In terms of label management, it essentially means moving all the processes to the cloud so that data can be stored, changed and approved in a central location. This makes it easier to share label designs across all areas of a business, regardless of location, while ensuring that all changes to the label are tracked and saved in a central place.

Having a standardised and controlled method for producing labels throughout the entire organisation automates the quality assurance process which leads to higher quality labels and makes the design and printing process much quicker. Human error is also removed, and every label has an audit trail which details changes made, by whom and when. This ensures both traceability and compliance.

Legacy labelling systems can be complex and the whole process often falls to the remit of IT. A digitised or in the cloud label management system makes the user interface more intuitive, meaning that those who need to can access the system in a more timely manner, saving costs and eliminating downtime.

Additionally, the most intelligent systems can integrate with a variety of hardware and applications. For instance, the software can work with a variety of printers, regardless of manufacturer, reducing costs and leading to a more seamless implementation.

### Realising the benefits with a channel model

Specifying and implementing a cloud based as-a-service label management system is an ideal way for the channel to introduce the benefits of reduced label errors, reduced costs, improved agility and less downtime, to name a few, to its customer base.

In addition, a cloud based system can be sold as a subscription service meaning that customers do not have to find funds from capex, and partners are also protected from the contracts and negotiations involved around any large upfront costs. In addition, the channel is also assured of recurring revenue. Having an as-a-service model has additional benefits of a lower cost of ownership and the customer can be ensured that the solution is scalable and future proofed, reducing the burden on partners without compromising on customer satisfaction.

The benefits of digitally transforming the labelling process are very clear to the end-user. However, it is important that the channel partners with the right provider who shares the same goals of achieving incremental and profitable business and delivering this in a professional and effective manner.

The reseller landscape is very competitive but partnering with a provider who respects the channel value-add and has a partner programme to support and reward its accredited partners is the way to go.
**www.nicelabel.com**

## NiceLabel launches global partner programme

**NiceLabel has designed its new global partner programme to help channel partners meet customer demand for the digital transformation of on-demand label printing.**

The programme brings together a large community of new and existing partners across the globe in a structured and more collaborative way. Members gain access to high levels of technical and marketing support to assist them in generating sales opportunities and position themselves as trusted advisors to their customers. Programme members also enjoy wider benefits such as product discounts, access to NiceLabel sales teams and the use of demo and trial licenses.

The new programme is three-tiered NiceLabel Integrator, NiceLabel Partner and NiceLabel Reseller. The top two tiers, Integrators and Partners, are differentiated by their investment in technical competence. They have skills to configure, manage and deploy advanced NiceLabel-based solutions.
**www.nicelabel.com/partners/partner-program**