TEKLYNX
Barcode Better

CASE STUDY

Cannabis Retailer Labels Cannabis Products 5x Faster With Automatic Labeling

Solution: CODESOFT
Industry: Cannabis, Manufacturing, Retail

Background

This national cannabis consumer packaged goods company and retailer manufactures and distributes a portfolio of branded medicinal and recreational cannabis products and also owns and operates rapidly growing national retail cannabis stores around the United States (US).

They have over 15 manufacturing facilities, more than 75 retail locations, operations across 15 US markets, and serves millions of patients and customers each year.

Previously, they were purchasing pre-printed labels for their retail sale products and printing various compliance labels in-house from an industry platform that did not allow for easy adjustments or alterations in designs. Pre-printed labels also added inventory and tied up funds on shelves full of labels for every SKU (stock keeping unit), strain (Indica, Sativa or Hybrid, Brownie Scout, Kosher Kush or Sour Diesel, etc.), and state of origin. Any changes to pre-printed label art due to updated state regulations meant wasted label stock and money.
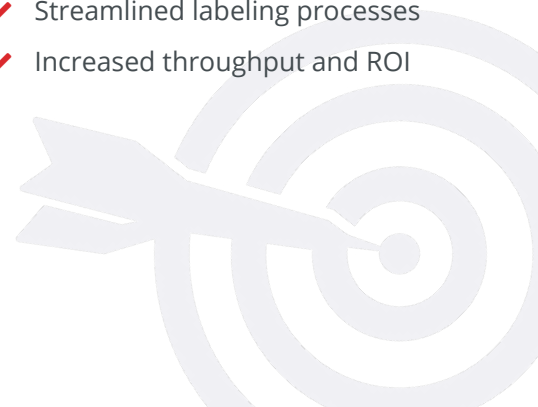
The company's staff was also manually labeling every cannabis product container one by one with a brand label, safety seal, strain label, drug analysis label, and a dispensary label. By the time they were done labeling one product, it would have four or five different looking labels on it. This resulted in an extremely slow labeling process against a rapidly growing cannabis market and demanding retail sales.

Challenges

- ✔ Upwards of 57 label files to manage
- ✔ Manually labeling products with 4-5 labels for 6 brands
- ✔ Excessive inventory of pre-printed label stock
- ✔ Specific data and printing requirements at different sites
- ✔ Disparate labeling processes across over 15 manufacturing sites

Results

- ✔ Consolidated label files into 4 label templates
- ✔ Increased speed of labeling by 5x
- ✔ Reduced waste of pre-printed label stock
- ✔ Streamlined labeling processes
- ✔ Increased throughput and ROI

Solution

TEKLYNX value-added reseller, Chicago Coding Systems, worked with the cannabis company to deploy print-and-apply labeling systems—leveraging TEKLYNX CODESOFT barcode label design software and Zebra label printers—through most of their sites across the US. This moved the printing point directly onto the production floor, consolidated required label information onto a common label, and optimized label printer performance with TEKLYNX native printer drivers for Zebra printers.

Chicago Coding Systems redesigned the cannabis company's marketing label in CODESOFT to include the tamper-evident feature (safety seal) plus an area of the label dedicated to printing variable data. This enabled them to print the product strain and drug analysis information all on the same label and on demand. This alone combined four previously separate product labels into one label.

Cannabis software for custom seed-to-sale labeling. Easily and efficiently create cannabis barcode labels to streamline operations.

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With national distribution and state-by-state labeling regulations, the cannabis company has very complex label design requirements and leverages 35 – 45 variable fields connecting CODESOFT to multiple data sources:

- ✔ In Illinois, the company integrates CODESOFT with BioTrack, a seed-to-sale cannabis software and the state's official cannabis traceability system. Their staff can simply call up a product SKU and batch number by seed serial number to print drug analysis information for the entire batch they are packaging.

- ✔ In states partnered with Metrc, another seed-to-sale cannabis software solution, the cannabis company exports data from Metrc to Excel and connects that database to CODESOFT. This database connection allows their staff to select a key data element and all other data is automatically populated on the label.

- ✔ For other data required to be printed on labels depending on the manufacturing facility or state, some CODESOFT labels pull data from local databases or business systems, others collect data from AWS (Amazon Web Services), and others require print users to manually input additional data through When Printed fields or a simple form that is presented at print time.

To eliminate hand labeling, Chicago Coding Systems helped the cannabis company deploy two types of print-and-apply labeling systems, customized to meet the labeling needs of each cannabis manufacturing site:

- ✔ LabelMill is a semi-automatic tabletop print-and-apply labeling system
- ✔ Tronics is a fully automatic high-speed inline labeling system

Results

Using CODESOFT, upwards of 57 individual label files were consolidated into four robust label templates, eliminating the need to manage countless individual label files or waste pre-printed labels, streamlining operations, and fostering sustainable manufacturing processes.

With the LabelMill tabletop and Tronics inline print-and-apply labeling systems deployed by Chicago Coding Systems, pieces per minute on all products increased and throughputs for cannabis company's staff have improved dramatically. Hand labeling varied from 3-8 pieces per minute. Now, their semi-automatic tabletop solutions range from 15-25 pieces per minute and their fully automatic inline solutions range from 15-40 pieces per minute depending on package and label size—five times faster.

"There's ROI all over the place because CODESOFT allows [the cannabis company] to print from a single label file for every different cannabis product they have," said Rob Wienhoff, Chicago Coding Systems President.

Now, almost every product only requires two labels, the marketing label with variable fields and a dispensary label, which is added when the product is pulled from the warehouse for delivery. They have over 70 CODESOFT licenses, 25 LabelMill systems, and 14 Tronics systems running with Zebra printers daily around the US at all their manufacturing sites and the packaging lines within them. No matter where the facility is located, they use the same labels designed in CODESOFT label design software with different label data sources depending on the manufacturing site and state.

Plus, after 12 months of Chicago Coding Systems deploying these reliable labeling solutions at the cannabis company's manufacturing facilities across the US, the need for technical support is almost non-existent because each site has internal resources proficient in CODESOFT and the LabelMill or Tronics labeling systems.

"Chicago Coding Systems is a true solutions provider that finds ways to create efficiencies in their customer's manufacturing environments," explained Nick Recht, Sales Manager at TEKLYNX Americas. "They tailor-make labeling systems that work perfectly in the cannabis industry, seamlessly install these custom systems into production lines, and empower their customers to confidently use our software."

"TEKLYNX is the only software we carry because we love working with them," said Wienhoff. "It's the support—if we have an issue or technical problem, we call TEKLYNX, and they answer it. If the TEKLYNX representative doesn't know the answer—which is rare—they find the answer quickly. TEKLYNX makes it easy to do business. It comes down to the people—TEKLYNX team members make the difference, they are committed, love their jobs, and care."