

DYNAMIC LABELING SOLUTION STREAMLINES PROCESSES, IMPROVES EFFICIENCY AND REDUCES COSTS

CASE STUDY

ABOUT THE COMPANY

As part of its commitment to customers, Golden Artist Colors Inc. (GAC), a worldwide, employee-owned company dedicated to providing professional artists with high-quality paints, included a wealth of detailed health and safety information on every product label.

BUSINESS CHALLENGE

Every Golden Artist Colors product label housed pigment identification, chemical characteristics, general guidelines for safe use and corresponding graphics, in multiple languages. Every label listed the data in a unique sequence that was determined by chemical composition and government regulations. Additionally, the paragraphs were translated into 18 languages for the company's international customers.

"We have always believed that people have a right and need to know what chemicals they are working with," said Carol Diters, IT Manager.

Golden Artist Colors sells just under 10,000 SKUs, including acrylic paints, gels, pastes, gessos, grounds and varnishes, to professional art stores and directly to artists.

To create and print labels for a growing international product portfolio, Golden Artist Colors needed a comprehensive system to manage data; design labels with the correct paragraph sequence; and finally, print short-run, professional labels inhouse. The goal was to ensure that all labels were beautifully designed, technically correct, and looked as professional and as crisp as the preprinted labels typically used for high-volume printing.



INDUSTRY:

Paint/Acrylics

BUSINESS CHALLENGE:

State-of-the-art label printing software system and highquality printer

FEATURED SERVICES:

- Zebra ZM400 barcode/label printers
- BarTender barcode software

KEY BENEFITS:

- Reduced time spent managing label information by 50 percent
- Improved label-printing process security by eliminating access to label templates

It was important that the solution integrate with a state-of-the-art label printing software system and high-quality printing, so the end result – a professional label – would surpass Golden Artist Colors’ high standards and also differentiate the products from its competitors. The company turned to Peak Technologies for help.

THE SOLUTION

After evaluating off-the-shelf options, Peak recommended a custom, dynamic data management solution that integrated with Seagull Scientific’s BarTender software and high-quality Zebra printers.

It became clear almost immediately that Golden Artist Colors needed more than simply a new labeling software package. What the company really needed was a secure and centralized data/graphic repository that leveraged an industry-leading labeling software package to generate professional grade, on-demand printing of labels. The targeted solution needed to allow for the maintenance of data and product relationships in one centralized place, affecting changes to all product labels via that change, all while sharing a common label format template.

“As a systems integrator, the only logical choice was to implement a solution that included a custom application, centralized database, best-of-breed labeling software, thermal printers, media and service,” said Thomas Heitman, manager of solutions consulting at Peak.

MANAGEMENT OF LABEL DATA BECAME DYNAMIC

Besides assisting artists with product selection, the information arranged on every product label also must fulfill a myriad of regulatory requirements, domestic and international. “Our goal is to be as thorough as possible and follow the letter of the law,” Deters said. In addition, the label could contain any one of up to 60 graphics, including product logos, warnings that indicate a flammable or otherwise hazardous product, and other information that must be displayed in a precise way to meet government and industry standards.

Golden Artist Colors also created unique symbols for its products. For example, a playing marble symbol designates products that are safe to use but should still be handled carefully. In addition, a special part of the label – known as “the slider” – indicated where the product fell on a sliding scale from transparent to opaque.

Furthermore, after the label was printed, a sample of the product was applied by hand to the label, so the artist can determine the true color and texture of the product. “It’s the best way to represent the quality of artwork that’s possible with Golden Artist Colors,” said Todd Leinbach, senior designer/web designer.

Each label required its own separate template in a traditional publishing software program. When a paragraph had to be changed, the template was updated and a graphic designer merged the new copy with the existing text. Because many labels shared the same kind of information, multiple templates had to be opened and changed every time there was an update to a single paragraph. “Any unique information on the label would have to be changed in every single template in the old system, which was extremely time-consuming,” said Leinbach. Peak’s custom solution included a central repository for label information. Golden Artist Colors created the label data and dynamically associated the product labels with corresponding paragraphs, images and translations. With the new, centralized



As a systems integrator, the only logical choice was to implement a solution that included a custom application, centralized database, best-of-breed labeling software, thermal printers, media and service.

– Thomas Heitman,

Manager of

Solutions Consulting



database, changes only needed to be made once, and the most recent version was always used on the correct label, in the correct order. “Using the new system, I went into the database and made one change that was instantly applied to multiple labels,” said Leinbach. With Peak’s solution, Golden Artist Colors reduced the time spent managing label information by 50 percent. Now, one person can manage continual updates to label copy, streamlining the updating process. If the company had continued to use the previous system, two or three people would have been needed to update the labels due to their quantity and complexity.

STREAMLINED UPDATES SAVED TIME IN LABEL SELECTION

Golden Artist Color’s labels are printed on demand by workers in the warehouse. When it came time to select and print the labels, there wasn’t an easy way to determine which one contained the most current information. Additionally, when labels were updated with the new copy, they required graphic design to eliminate white space. Workers who printed the labels had to open the template in the software program to ensure an accurate design. However, a worker could unintentionally manipulate data before printing the label. Erroneous labels had to be reprinted, resulting in significant costs.

Before a final product was shipped, the product label was scrutinized at several different points throughout the factory to ensure the information was accurate and the label was designed correctly. “People on the filling floor would notice if a label was printed just slightly too low and would pull it,” said Diters. “If one drop of paint ended up in the wrong spot, it got pulled. If the label was not placed correctly on the jar, it got pulled and would not go out the door.” With Peak’s custom software solution, the correct label was chosen every time, just by selecting the product desired. The correct data was dynamically pulled from the database and the extra white space was eliminated—ensuring that the labels were accurate and flowed seamlessly.

Additionally, the BarTender software solution incorporated graphic design, allowing the company

to manage label appearance more efficiently. Workers opened one screen to print the labels, streamlining label selection and printing. The company also saved money because it did not have to reprint as many labels as it had before. The solution also made the label-printing process much more secure. “Since the workers who print the labels didn’t access the template, the risk for introducing inadvertent changes to templates was eliminated,” said Diters.

THERMAL PRINTERS PRODUCED IMPECCABLE RESULTS

Golden Artist Colors product labels had to be graphically appealing, reinforce the company’s brand and differentiate the products from competitors’. Therefore, labels needed to be printed at a high resolution, so all of the graphics and information were as clear and as precise as possible. Although Golden Artist Colors utilized pre-printed labels for high-volume products, the company also needed the ability to print labels on demand for smaller runs and product label shortages. If the company was not able to print labels on demand, then it would have to wait up to three weeks for an outside vendor to process, print and deliver the new labels.

Peak recommended high-performance, Zebra ZM400 barcode/label printers at 600 dpi that integrated seamlessly with the BarTender software. Besides outstanding print quality, the printers

“

Since the workers who print the labels didn’t access the template, the risk for introducing inadvertent changes to templates was eliminated.

— Carol Diters,
IT Manager

”

featured the speed (10 inches per second) critical for high-volume applications. Peak also provided labels, thermal ribbons and on-site repair service for the Zebra printers.

After implementing the solution, in-house labels looked virtually indistinguishable from those that were pre-printed, retaining Golden Artist Colors' brand appearance and ensuring consistency among all of the company's products.

BENEFITS AND RESULTS

PROVEN SOLUTION WITH PROVEN RESULTS

Peak's custom-engineered solution has been in place for five years, with minor enhancements and improvements completed every year. "We try to provide the best, most accurate labels possible for our customers," Diters said. "We want our customers to be successful in what they do, and it's our job to provide as much information to the artists as we can, in the best way we can."

After working closely with Peak, Golden Artist Colors created accurate, striking labels that set its products apart from others in the marketplace. "Peak has been wonderful to work with," said Diters. "They're very responsive to any changes or updates we have with the software, and have taken the time to help us learn the software and hardware."

Peak custom solution featured a dynamic data management system that seamlessly integrated with BarTender software and Zebra printers to provide high-quality, accurate labels. The dynamic database management program, which included graphic design software, simplified label updates. The solution also saved Golden Artist Colors significant costs by reducing the need to reprint erroneous labels and ensuring the company was in compliance with federal and international regulations.

"We're an employee-owned company, and we take pride in what we do," said Diters. "We have a corporate culture of responsibility and perfectionism. Peak has a similar culture in its dedication to its customers."

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS INCLUDED:

- Simplified label updates with the creation of a dynamic database management program
- Significantly reduced costs by virtually eliminating the need to reprint erroneous labels
- Enhanced compliance with federal and international regulations for chemical composition disclosures



We try to provide the best, most accurate labels possible for our customers. We want our customers to be successful in what they do, and it's our job to provide as much information to the artists as we can, in the best way we can.

— Carol Diters
IT Manager,

