

Quick Guide

Best practices to SIMPLIFY your barcode labeling

Barcode labeling is a mission-critical operation for manufacturing and distribution companies. Yet, most companies don't employ dedicated staff that would approach labeling strategically. Hence, labeling offers a substantial opportunity for operational efficiency gains.

This guide will introduce best practices that help companies simplify their labeling, minimize risk of errors and increase productivity.



Introduction

A typical labeling system consists of three main areas:

- **Design** - Label template design
- **Printing** - Label printing
- **Management** - Design, print, device, and user management

How well you manage these areas will determine the quality, complexity and costs of the entire label printing process in the company.

Companies that use first-generation label design software programs do not achieve the level of operational efficiency required to remain competitive in today's economy. Lack of management and integration capabilities in these legacy systems increase the risk of errors and mislabeling. This results in ongoing direct operational costs; while errors, recalls and customer dissatisfaction often add to hidden indirect costs.

This e-book will outline several best practices you can use to improve your company's labelling process, quality, efficiency and accuracy. Once implemented, these process improvements reduce costs and lead to a competitive advantage.

Common challenges:

DESIGN	PRINT	MANAGE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many static label templates • Requires help from IT • Designing new labels takes weeks • Software from multiple vendors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual data-entry errors • Operators accidentally change label designs • No integration with master data • Cumbersome and error-prone printing user interface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No document management • No user/role-based access control • No centralized print history • No device management



DIRECT COSTS	INDIRECT COSTS	AGILITY
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labor intensive, manual and stand-alone printing process • High support, maintenance and dependency on IT 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Product recalls and customer dissatisfaction • Inconsistencies in design and branding • Unplanned downtime 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow responsiveness for new product launches and customer change requests • Limited flexibility, scalability and growth

By following the best practices for Design, Print and Manage solutions your company will benefit in the following ways.

Streamline label template design

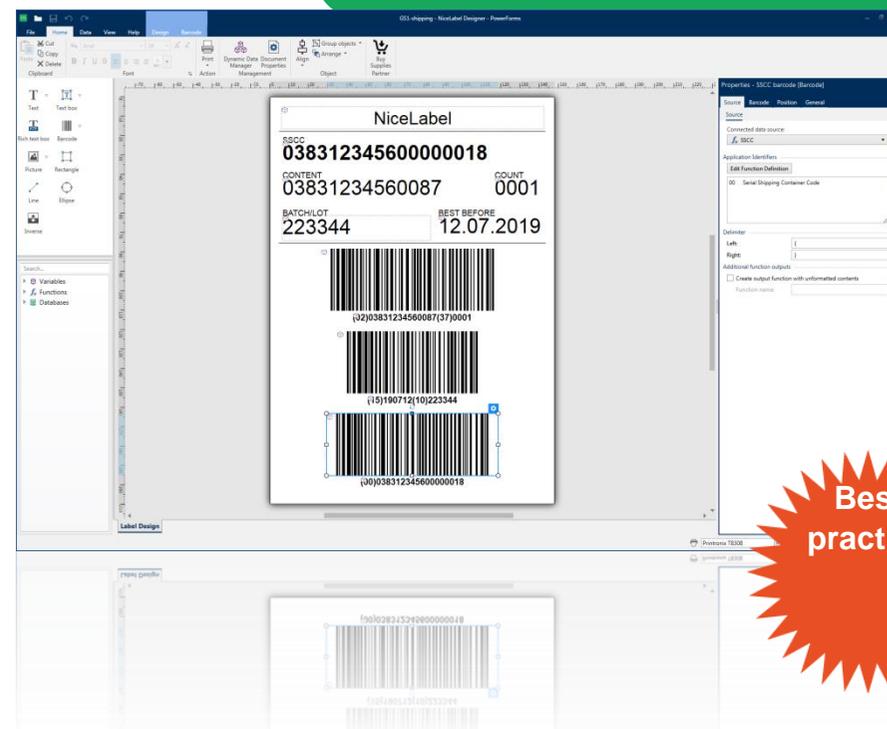
There are a number of approaches to designing barcode labels:

- Existing word processor or graphic design software
- Printer language coding
- Professional label design software

Professional label design software is the only option that allows you to rapidly design quality label templates. These applications support the capabilities of barcode label printers, enable accurate positioning of objects and support a wide range of barcode symbologies. All these features are required to produce quality labels.

Professional labelling software can connect to your existing software and hardware systems. Product descriptions, expiry dates, serial numbers, package weight and other product data should all be populated without operator intervention.

A professional label designer helps you quickly design regulatory and customer compliant templates.



Best practice



Watch this video to learn how to design your first label in one minute



Download the NiceLabel free trial

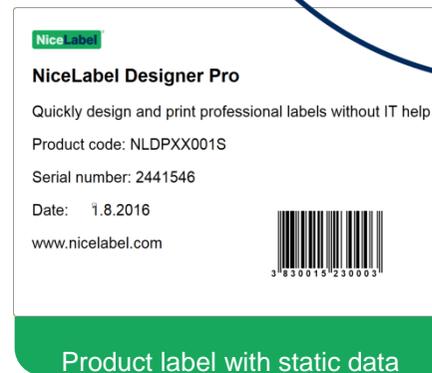
Minimize the number of label templates

Labelling is rarely a stand-alone process isolated from other systems. Most likely, label data already exists in one of your existing applications; be it an Excel file, a database system or your ERP, WMS or other systems.

The most common mistake companies make is designing a different static label for each product. With such an approach they end up with hundreds, even thousands of label files that are difficult to amend in event that a change needs to be made. Each label file also increases the risk of the print operator selecting the wrong template and mislabelling the product.

A better approach is to separate the label template from the label data and to connect it to existing systems. The simplest solution is to use an Excel spreadsheet for all label data. When you create a new product, you just add another row to the spreadsheet instead of creating a new static label. If you need to change the label layout you only change one template instead of hundreds.

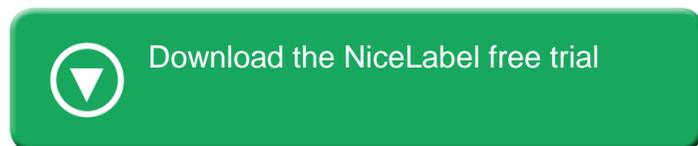
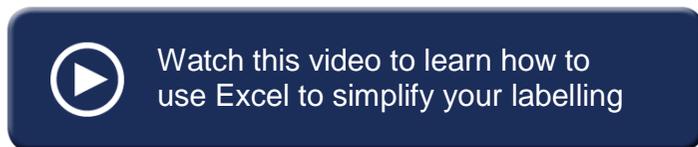
Product code	Product name	Product Group	EAN13
NLDPXX001S	Designer Pro	Design and Print	383001523700
NLDEXX001S	Designer Express	Design and Print	383001523702
NLDPXX003S	Designer Pro 3 printers	Design and Print	383001523703
NLDPXX005S	Designer Pro 5 printers	Design and Print	383001523701
NLPDXX001S	PowerForms	Design and Controlled Print	383001523704
NLPSXX003S	PowerForms Suite 3 printers	Design and Controlled Print	383001523705
NLPSXX005S	PowerForms Suite 5 printers	Design and Controlled Print	383001523706
NLPPXX005S	LMS Pro 5 printers	Managed Design and Controlled Print	383001523707
NLPPXX010S	LMS Pro 10 printers	Managed Design and Controlled Print	383001523708
NLPPXX020S	LMS Pro 20 printers	Managed Design and Controlled Print	383001523709
NLLEXX005S	LMS Enterprise 5 printers	Managed Design and Controlled Print	383001523710
NLLEXX010S	LMS Enterprise 10 printers	Managed Design and Controlled Print	383001523711
NLLEXX020S	LMS Enterprise 20 printers	Managed Design and Controlled Print	383001523712
NLLEXX050S	LMS Enterprise 50 printers	Managed Design and Controlled Print	383001523713



Product label with static data



Best practice "variable data" label



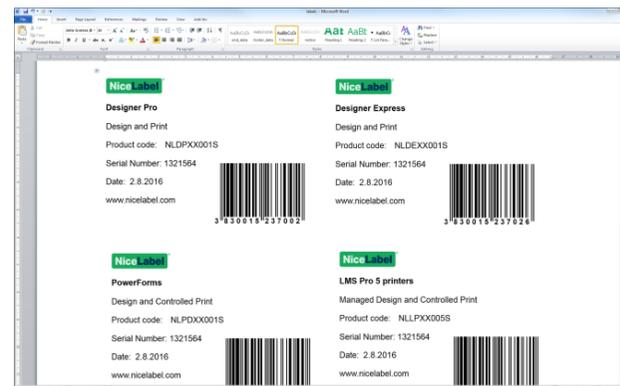
The best practice approach for label consolidation and management is to create label templates with variable data fields that take data from Excel files, databases or ERP solutions.

Print with fewer errors

Companies do not want the operator to accidentally change label designs. The operator needs a simple print interface to be accurate and efficient. Best practice is to make the label printing operation as simple and intuitive as possible, where even seasonal or untrained operators can quickly learn the printing process. This is achieved using printing forms. Whenever print operators enter the data manually, you risk a mislabelling error, risk product recalls and lose valuable production time.

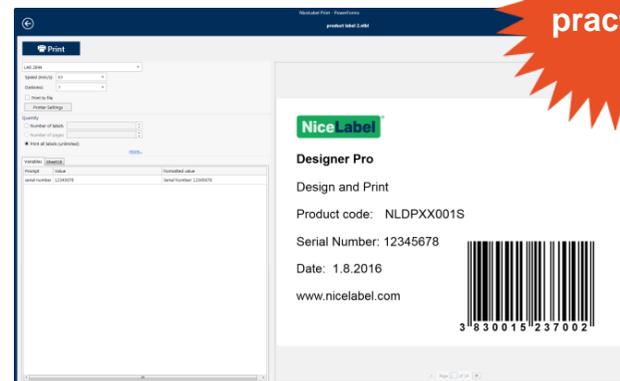
Increase efficiency and decrease errors

Printing forms enable users to print faster, reduce the risk of errors and minimize the time required for training. Combining forms with touch screens can also eliminate the need for a mouse and keyboard. Using forms with graphic images can also allow non-native language speakers to operate with fewer errors and less training.



Higher risk of user errors when printing from the label design program or word processor

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Simple and intuitive printing forms improve operator accuracy and efficiency

Centrally manage labelling to reduce risks

In most companies there are multiple individuals involved in the labelling process: one or more designers, system administrators, quality assurance and print operators.

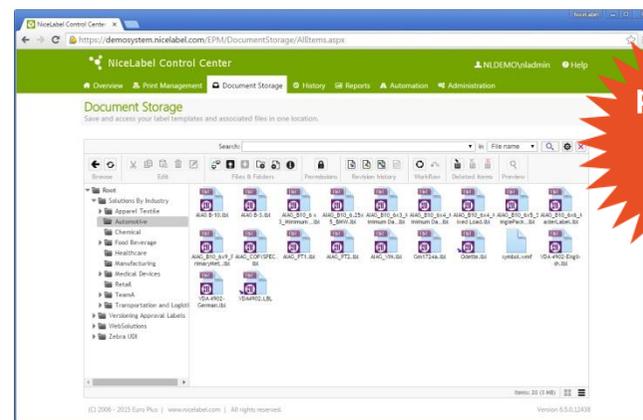
To manage the process, companies usually do any of the following:

- Store label templates in a shared folder
- Password-protect files to prevent unauthorized changes
- Use print-only licenses for print operators

Role-based access control

You wouldn't let ALL employees have access to your key financial applications or production systems. So why let them access your labelling system which is critical for efficiency and accuracy in your production and logistics operations?

Label management solutions are not just for large companies with many users or companies needing to comply with industry regulations. Any company that has multiple users who touch labelling can benefit from a label management solution.



A centralized label management solution

Label management solutions provide a complete system for designing, printing and managing an efficient labelling process in any multi-user environment.

A complete label management solution consists of:

- Central template storage in a database
- Role-based access control
- A label designer with versioning and approvals
- Centralized logging of print history
- Printer management and alerts
- User and system reporting



Learn more about
Label Management Systems

Gain a competitive advantage

A complete, label management solution is necessary for any company that wants to ensure label accuracy, increase agility and optimize processes.

NiceLabel provides all the tools necessary to create such a system and to adapt it to your company's specific needs without custom coding.

Learn how a label management system can increase your productivity.



Contact IBCS Hungary today to help you build an efficient label management system.

