

Digital's Impact On Pressure Sensitive Labels

The digital revolution is affecting the manufacturing of pressure sensitive labels just like it is other parts of our lives. Historically, pressure sensitive labels have been produced on flexographic presses that required lengthy set up times, complicated plates and custom dies. During the last several years various digital presses have been introduced and they are starting to gain market share in the industry.

The increase in digital options to produce labels has stemmed from the trend of end users placing smaller orders, more frequently and wanting the ability to change copy on their labels more easily. Digital presses remove most of the complicated set up required from flexographic presses. However, they are limited by the variety of materials that can be used (determined by the type of print engine; i.e. laser, ink jet, thermal transfer, etc.). Since most digital presses print everything in four-color process you may run into issues trying to match certain PMS colors. White inks and fluorescent colors can also be a problem.

These digital options are almost always a worth a look if you have a small quantity or a large number of lots that need to be produced. Flexographic presses are still, by far, the most economical option of production for medium and long run pressure sensitive labels.

Almost two years ago Superior installed a digital press to serve a customer with a particular piece of short run label business. Our press uses a laser print engine allowing us to print on papers (uncoated, matte or semi-gloss) and polyester films (white, clear or silver), including UL approved films. This press also has a programmable die cutter so no dies are necessary for production. If you have an end user customer with short run label needs we would love the opportunity to help you serve them.