STOP JUGGLING MULTIPLE LABELING SOLUTIONS

Standardize labeling across your enterprise to create new efficiencies

LOFTWARE™

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How many labeling solutions do you have across your business landscape? Most companies don't intend to set up and manage a range of disconnected, or home-grown labeling solutions across their enterprise—but it often happens anyway. If a company grows through acquisition, for example, it's easy enough to purchase a facility that uses one labeling solution, and then a second facility that uses a different labeling solution, and so on.

Alternatively, you might start with an IT or operations professional that prefers a specific labeling solution. They might be responsible for building a homegrown solution —then they retire and along with them all their knowledge of the system. This type of solution was designed to meet all of the company's needs initially, but it doesn't provide much flexibility to accommodate for growth or scalability. Also, these types of solutions are often customized with layer of third party applications, presenting a multitude of challenges and over time become difficult to maintain and are often a drain on IT resources. Ultimately, as a company evolves and expands so must their labeling solution.

From the increased cost of maintenance to the increased cost of licensing, companies will find that adding even a single different labeling solution will multiply the amount of effort and energy it takes to maintain these systems. So, no matter how your company ends up with multiple labeling solutions, the result is usually the same— add time and costs along with a number of operational inefficiencies.

Also, while concerns such as cost and scalability have always been at the forefront of industrial labeling, flexibility has also emerged as a critical priority. As a matter of fact, the ensuing coronavirus pandemic has highlighted the risks for companies that don't have flexible supply chains. As it turns out, having multiple labeling solutions reduces labeling flexibility and supply chain flexibility, making it nearly impossible to shift labeling to meet production.

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However, when labeling is standardized and centralized it's much easier to ensure business continuity and supply chain agility in the event of potential disruption. This is why, as businesses extend their reach across the global supply chain, it's critical they maintain labeling consistency across multiple markets and regions. By taking a standardized approach, companies can ensure that a common set of labels, centralized applications and data sources are used across the supply chain. Also, ensuring consistency helps support compliance with brand standards which can rely on labels to help businesses differentiate their products, build relationships, and maintain customer trust regardless of where in the world labels are printed.

Multiple Labeling Solutions Create Escalating Costs and Complexities

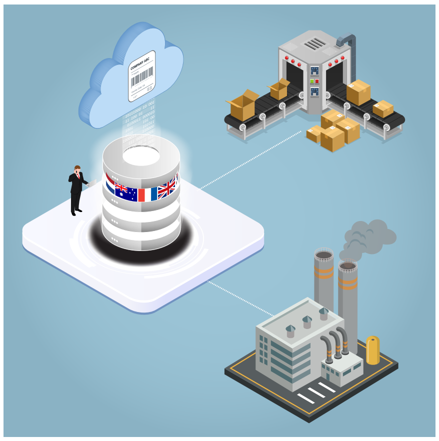
With multiple labeling solutions, companies undergo critical problems. Without consolidation - these problems compound one another, creating costs, delays and operational inefficiencies that cascade up and down the supply chain.

Multiplying Maintenance Expenses

When calculating the cost of maintenance, both time and effort are a factor. It may take a bit of time and effort to maintain one labeling system. How much more does it does to maintain three, five, or 200 different labeling systems? The more labeling systems you have, the more time and effort your IT and operations teams need to spend maintaining them—which means that they have less time to spend elsewhere.

Complex and Finicky Integrations

If multiple labeling solutions exist within the same company, then there's bound to be chaos. Some solutions are meant to integrate with business applications



such as ERP, CRM, and WMS. However, supporting these integrations can take as much time as supporting the different solutions themselves—especially because if someone patches one of the different labeling solutions, the integration is likely to break. There's also an incumbency problem here—if only one person knows how the integrations work, then all your labeling solutions are hamstrung once that person leaves.

Data Silos

If companies are using more than one labeling solution, they may not be accessing the same centralized data. Instead, each solution may have its own separate database. There's no single source of truth, which means that there may be incomplete or contain obsolete information. And, without proper integrations, managing redundant sets of data means separately updating multiple datasets which can result in errors and inconsistencies. To avoid labeling errors, IT needs to spend extra effort making sure that the different databases are reconciled.

Labeling Errors

When you're dealing with multiple solutions there's always a chance for labeling errors to creep in. When you have redundant systems that are difficult to reconcile, you are bound to have issues with maintaining consistency and accuracy, resulting in labeling errors. This means you'll get nonconforming labels that can't be applied to product. Ultimately, you end up wasting the cost of the labeling materials, plus the time it took to create the original label.

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Overlapping License Fees

We've already covered the cost of maintenance, the cost of creating integrations, and the cost of labeling errors. With that said, having two different labeling solutions means that you pay twice as much in licensing costs. This represents a non-trivial recurring expense. Without any visibility enterprise-wide, you could be paying multiple times over for the same labeling capabilities.

Difficulty Scaling

If you acquire a new facility or start working with a new contractor, which labeling system will be used? Any time you expand, you're going to need to ramp them up as quickly as possible with access to validated label templates to continue labeling for production and shipments. These inefficiencies aren't just inconveniences. Rather, they add significant time, effort, cost, and risk to your supply chain. These risks aren't trivial. They can make it that much harder to get your product out the door.

More than that,—this approach with multiple solutions can directly damage your ability to create a flexible supply chain. If unplanned events force you to furlough your workers in one location or provision a new facility somewhere else, you need to pivot and provision labeling solutions on the fly to ensure supply chain continue and continued revenue. Without standardized labeling, you simply won't be able to do this.

Lack of Standardized Labeling Invites Supply Chain Disruptions

The world is in the midst of mass disruption due to COVID-19 and the global spread of the Coronavirus pandemic. With that - supply chain, manufacturing and labeling have never been so widely recognized as critical to the global economy.

As the pandemic spreads and certain geographies are hit hardest, you may face the need to close down facilities or shift production and manufacturing. And, since a disruption in labeling can present a critical bottleneck, companies must be agile enough to shift their labeling efforts between facilities quickly and in a compliant and consistent manner to meet production demands. With multiple labeling solutions in play, it becomes that much more difficult to respond to the needs of a flexible supply chain.

For example, imagine that you need to provision a new manufacturing facility or contract manufacturer. Shifting production and labeling to a new facility can be critically difficult. Not only will you need to re-implement the custom integrations that you've developed already, you'll also need to reconfigure the labeling solution in order to work a unique mix of print servers and equipment. This must be done quickly to ensure continuous operations or at least minimize downtime.

By contrast, imagine using a single cloud-based, browser-based labeling solution. This allows users at new facilities to maintain the same level of printing quality and performance as experienced in the original locations. Also, the data and content they need is instantly available at their location for printing. New users can check accuracy by previewing labels and comparing label output from new locations to labels printed at the previous location(s).

Without a browser-based solution it's nearly impossible to quickly shift production from one facility to another, especially if the new facility has different technolo-

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gies and printer hardware. The same is true for label templates, configurations, and data services that are aren't typically accessible to other locations. When these aren't available by default, and in cases where a new facility has a different infrastructure, labeling processes may need to be recreated in order to ensure that the enterprise is compliant and consistent. Companies need to maintain their standards and labeling consistency even when they're faced with moving all or part of their operations. However, this may not be quick or easy unless your labeling solutions are standardized.

How to Standardize and Centralize Labeling for Consistency and Flexibility

Deploying a single labeling solution across your organization enables labeling consistency and dramatically improves oversight. Rather than managing multiple systems, a standardized approach enables you to support enterprise-wide labeling changes while streamlining maintenance. In addition to reducing cost and improving efficiency, having a single, scalable solution for labeling facilitates expansion to new global locations. Lastly, by taking a standardized approach, companies can ensure that a common set of labels, content, applications and data sources are used across the supply chain.

What is the criteria for an Enterprise Labeling solution that can replace multiple legacy labeling solutions with a single unified application?

If you're replacing your legacy labeling solutions, you may as well replace them by moving to the cloud. Many companies are moving their IT infrastructures to the cloud to streamline their on-demand provisioning of software, hardware, and data as a service. Companies are either looking to integrate labeling with existing cloud-based systems or for solutions that can be part of the adoption of this deployment model. The cloud model provides added flexibility to scale, removes much of the burden of maintenance, eliminates the need for extensive disaster

recovery plans and provides automatic software updates. This, of course can result in significant time and cost savings. Business users embracing this new technology will need labeling solutions to work with and potentially be deployed in the cloud.

Centralization is also mission-critical when it comes to choosing any replacement labeling solution. Offering the ability to standardize and deploy labeling solutions on a centralized basis provides great flexibility. This allows companies to govern how capabilities from design to print, and even integration, are deployed across their global landscape. Providing a standard for labeling allows businesses to maintain consistency and provide another level of scalability and reliability to support a global network of printers. The focus, even when deploying solutions in a distributed fashion, is to continue to maintain the ability to leverage common data sources, components and configurations across sites. This is essential to handle the rigors of global infrastructures, allowing users to manage outages and connectivity issues, while providing high availability, failover and disaster recovery capabilities.

Standardizing Labeling with Loftware Spectrum

Loftware Spectrum is the industry's leading Enterprise Labeling Solution that can be delivered completely via the browser. By delivering Loftware Spectrum through the cloud or on-premises, organizations can seamlessly implement, deploy, maintain and scale their labeling operations anywhere they're needed.

Also, only Loftware Spectrum Cloud offers Multi-Site capabilities, which enable you to standardize labeling across your global operations while reaping the bene-

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fits of both centralized and decentralized deployment models. Spectrum's Multi-Site capabilities ensure continuous operations while providing complete control over how Spectrum is deployed between headquarters and remote locations. These capabilities are essential to maintain continuous uptime and guarantee labeling consistency, as well as enable adherence to customer, regulatory and branding requirements across your global operations.

Business users at remote facilities including manufacturing plants, contract manufacturer sites, warehouses and distribution centers can manage labeling independently, while accessing standard and approved label data and templates from your company's central location. If connectivity to headquarters is disrupted, remote facilities failover to a local instance, synchronizing transactional data later when the connection is restored. Multi-Site empowers remote facilities to run without depending on a full-time connection to headquarters while ensuring that they comply and stay current with corporate labeling standards.

Loftware is the global market leader in Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management solutions with more than 5,000 customers in over 100 countries. Offering the industry's most comprehensive digital platform, with SaaS, cloud-based and on-premise solutions, Loftware redefines how enterprises create, manage and print complex labeling and packaging artwork and scale across their operations. Loftware solutions integrate with SAP®, Oracle® and other enterprise applications to produce mission-critical barcode labels, documents, RFID smart tags and packaging artwork. Our combined platform – whether for labeling, artwork management or both – enables customers to uniquely meet regulatory mandates, mitigate risk, reduce complexity, ensure traceability, improve time to market and optimize costs as they meet customer-specific, brand, regional and regulatory requirements with unprecedented speed and agility.

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