

Your recipe for success

4 steps to transforming your packaging artwork process

Learn how food and beverage companies are digitizing their packaging artwork processes to improve efficiency and time to market.



Digitizing the Artwork Management

helps food and beverage companies get to market faster, eliminate costly product labeling mistakes and improve collaboration across all internal and external stakeholders.

Operating in a fast-paced industry that's heavily regulated, very competitive and evolving at a rapid pace, food and beverage companies have to keep up with changing consumer behaviors, leverage new opportunities and respond quickly. This level of agility is getting harder and harder to reach using manual processes and legacy solutions that were put in place years—or even decades—ago.

Product labeling is one process that's ripe for change at the typical food and beverage company. Especially those looking to optimize man hours, improve throughput and reduce time to market. Unfortunately, even though “digital transformation” is all the rage these days, many companies are still using outdated, time-consuming manual processes when it comes to Artwork Management. These companies are emailing PDFs, doing FTP file drops and using other hands-on means of designing and updating their product labels.



This is a major oversight in an industry where consumer demand for a wider variety of food and beverage options—gluten-free, low-fat, no added sugar, etc.—leads to high levels of stock keeping unit (SKU) proliferation and product labeling variability. The right packaging artwork also helps companies communicate their brand, adhere to regulatory requirements and influence buying decisions.

This white paper explores the recipe for success and the four steps you'll want to consider when you digitize your artwork management process.

The Recipe for Success

For food and beverage consumers, the artwork surrounding the product is just as valuable and important as the product itself. Delays in delivering accurate and approved packaging artwork have an increasing impact on time to market and the food and beverage company's bottom line.

The problem is that when files and folders are the only option for managing review and approval of packaging artwork it can present a range of complex challenges. In order to consistently bring new products to market ahead of the competition, manage emerging packaging and artwork design requirements and comply with regulations, companies need a configurable Artwork Management solution that will:

- Take control of workflow
- Effectively plan and manage packaging artwork
- Support the proofing of high-resolution artwork
- Enable the centralized management of digital assets
- Simplify global translation management
- Sustain regulatory compliance
- Deploy faster and offer easy user adoption
- Provide high visibility over the Artwork Management process from content brief to printing

With new marketing trends, growing competition and an ever-increasing flow of information forcing food and beverage companies to move and react faster, implementing a cloud-based, digitized Artwork Management platform provides significant value.



How one food and beverage company turbo-charged their artwork process

Operating in a dynamic industry where the rules and requirements are constantly changing, food companies need robust technology solutions that help them improve time to market for product releases, sustain compliance, improve traceability, and reduce costs. Getting bogged down by time-consuming processes, spreadsheets, and paper files isn't an option for organizations like Lakeview Farms, as they look to maintain a competitive edge.

The Company is constantly working to develop new products that appeal to the “foodie” in everyone, with on-trend and timely innovation across its portfolio of brands and product lines. Once managed using Excel spreadsheets and paper files stored in cabinets, Lakeview Farms’ Artwork Management was turbo-charged when the company began using a digitized Artwork Management solution.

By creating automated workflows and digitizing the Artwork Management process from content brief to printing, Lakeview Farms gave its team members better visibility over the complete process, freed up resources for value-added processes and gets its product to market faster. The company has also reduced its artwork cycles by 50% and its marketing services team no longer has to manage hard copy files; generate multiple project spreadsheets; or send out multiple reminder emails to team members, designers, printers, and others – which is a big, time saver.

“I run a report on the artwork portion of the workflow each month and give a percentage of how many tasks were assigned and how many were done on time,” says Kalie Sutton, Marketing Services Manager. “That gives us a clear idea of how often we’re delivering packaging projects to plan and allows us to quickly and easily identify areas for further process improvement.”

Step 1 – Digitize Custom Workflows

In this tight labor market, food and beverage companies aren't able to just hire more employees to manage the SKU proliferation, product variability, growing volume of private label work and other forces that are impacting their operations. Although, by adopting a digital and configurable Artwork Management solution, organizations can eliminate the pain that comes with managing volumes of spreadsheets, excessive review cycles and input from dozens of stakeholders.



Without an Artwork Management system, companies must use multiple communication channels—from emails to phone calls to messaging. “This becomes very difficult and error-prone once you start introducing hundreds of changes per year,” said Troy Walker, Smartflow account executive at Loftware. Smartflow is Loftware’s Artwork Management solution which is used by some of the food and beverage industry’s leading manufacturers to streamline their packaging artwork processes and reduce time to market. Walker continued by saying, “Using customizable workflows, a digitized Artwork Management system helps manage the complexity, effort and time out of the process for food and beverage manufacturers.”

Step 2

- Improve visibility & fast track approvals

Packaging artwork needs to be circulated to many key stakeholders for approval throughout the product lifecycle. However, manual solutions which may even involve circulating artwork PDFs via email don’t provide the type of collaborative platform needed for efficiently managing the process. Stakeholders end up at different stages of the review process and don’t have visibility into additional changes that co-workers might have already made. Because they aren’t able to view and compare in real time, they often end up going back and forth for some time before final sign off on each piece of artwork. And, if someone happens to miss an email in their inbox or even end up out of office for a few days, the project stalls. Add to that, there’s no way to encourage accountability with this manual process.

By digitizing its product labeling and Artwork Management processes, one beverage company was able to bring everyone on the same platform and working from the same playbook. Now, all the stakeholders involved understood their required tasks and deadlines and could review, compare and annotate in real time to reduce turnaround and improve speed to market. This improved both the accuracy and reliability of the proofing process.

Step 3

- Improve collaboration with version control

With its collaborative capabilities, a digitized Artwork Management platform helps on-site employees, remote team members and external stakeholders log in and manage their part of the project without someone having to “babysit” the process. It also provides an accurate version



history to ensure that those team members are working on the right version of the artwork—a benefit that eliminates the hours that graphics departments spend—often up to 33% of their time when using manual processes—searching for the assets they need to be able to start their work.

“Version control and version tracking also greatly speeds up the approval process and reduces the management overhead and labor that goes into coordinating, collecting, making, reviewing, approving and printing artwork,” said Walker. “This speeds up time to market for food and beverage companies and helps them stay out in front of their competitors.”

Step 4

- Take Control of your Content

When you digitize your Artwork Management, food and beverage companies also naturally begin storing all their master content in a central repository for future use by designers, marketing departments, printers, and others. That means no more going back and searching through Microsoft Office files to find the resources needed to add information to a nutrition panel, add text to a label or change the address of a manufacturing site. Instead, all that master content is stored and available on a single platform.

“This drives even more time and effort out of the revision process,” Walker said, “where the smallest change takes the work of multiple stakeholders when the files are stored on paper, PDFs or employees’ desktop computers.”

Transforming artwork into a competitive advantage

Nearly every business process in the food and beverage sector has experienced massive transformation over recent years. Business environments have changed significantly while technical advancements impact business processes everywhere, offering competitive advantage for organizations that embrace this transformation.

To manage product artwork efficiently, food and beverage companies need a digitized artwork approval process that can be incorporated into their product lifecycles and managed across global enterprises. For companies still using antiquated manual processes for Artwork Management, issues like inconsistent data, limited access to digital assets, poor visibility, reactive communications, organizational silos, and errors aren’t going to go away; they’re going to get worse.



“Many food and beverage companies have reached a point where they can either continue to hire more people or use digitization to become more efficient and effective with their Artwork Management and product labeling,” said Walker, who urges companies not to wait until the machine is broken down and out of control. “At the end of the day, digitization of Artwork Management removes labor from the process, breaks down the silos, reduces overhead and makes sure product labels get to the right place at the right time—error free.”

With a configurable, digitized solution in place, food and beverage companies can

easily manage packaging artwork and the related end-to-end business processes with complete access and full transparency. They can also streamline the packaging concept-to-shelf process, lower their costs, improve control and regulatory compliance, significantly decrease complexity, and reduce time to market in today’s competitive business world. To learn more about Lofware’s Artwork Management Solutions, visit our website.



Loftware and NiceLabel combined under the Loftware umbrella to offer customers and partners an expanded choice of Enterprise Labeling & Artwork Management solutions, providing enhanced labeling capabilities and the benefits of greater investment in cloud-based solutions for companies of all sizes. Loftware maintains a global presence with offices in the US, UK, Germany, Slovenia, China, Japan, and Singapore. The union combines 60 years of expertise in solving labeling challenges, helping companies improve the quality, speed, and efficiency of their labeling while reducing cost. Together, as the leading global provider of Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management solutions, Loftware enables supply chain agility, supports evolving regulations, and optimizes business operations for a wide range of industries including life sciences, manufacturing, food & beverage, retail, automotive, consumer products and apparel.

For more information, please visit www.loftware.com and www.nicelabel.com.