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Creative Labels Grows by Leaps and Bounds

New label applications and MCS equipment fuel growth

Gilroy, CA - In the heart of produce country and the garlic capital of the world, Creative Labels of Gilroy CA is growing by leaps and bounds, thanks to new label requirements from the growers. Once a regional company, Creative Labels now has national clients, as well as international clients in Costa Rica, Peru, Mexico and Ecuador. To support this growth, they have added several thousand square feet to their facility.

"We had been seeing growth for variable information on labels, and for one large client we did runs with several hundred SKU's of header tags for each order. We had been changing plates out for each copy, but with so many SKUs, the job would require up to three weeks to complete. Also, the waste factor on those runs was probably well over 50%," recalls Chris Martin, Vice President of Operations. "For this variable application, we initially purchased a digital solution, but found that it still had some limitations. So when MCS introduced the Eagle UV inkjet, we were pretty excited. We found that the Eagle with dual print heads could increase our capacity, improve our quality, and allow us to achieve higher press speeds. It was also capable of printing much higher resolution," says Martin.

"At about the same time, MCS introduced us to HarvestMark, the genesis of our new offering, PTI labeling," recalls Sandy Franzen, President. "We realized though that this market was going to require a wider range of materials and higher press speeds in order to be competitive. The Eagle UV Inkjet was the answer, and it made a huge impact on our business," says Franzen.

The Produce Traceability Initiative (PTI) is an industry-led effort to enhance traceability throughout the entire produce supply chain. Having become a HarvestMark certified company, Creative Labels is equipped to handle the most technical and advanced label applications required, and can produce a wide variety of custom printed products with variable data.

About Food Traceability Labeling

There are various types of food traceability labeling. All consist of an alpha numeric code that can be printed on labels for individual items, cases or even pallets. According to HarvestMark, more than 2.3 billion produce packages have been enabled with its codes to speed response to suspected recall events and deliver on-demand product information throughout the supply chain. HarvestMark's website (www.harvestmark.com) is set up to let consumers type in the numbers from a barcode or one they've scanned with a smartphone to research where their food originated.

"It might take you to a web page that shows the product is from the Jones family farm and was picked on Tuesday. The farm can also have messages on its page, giving the consumers a more personalized experience," Martin explains.

On the Horizon for the Labeling Market

"We're seeing labels go wider in general. For instance, the HarvestMark code has been steadily moving to the wider top label. We need the MCS Eagle with dual print heads to run this larger top label. As you know, in the label industry substrates are important - the label materials

are coated. With the MCS Eagle, we can run the glossy labels at higher speeds. We're getting output of 250 feet-per-minute," Martin explains.

Martin pontificates on the future of the business: "While we can attribute most of our growth to the HarvestMark business, we believe this application will be transferable to nutraceutical companies, including herbal supplements. This opens up a whole new market for us. These labels typically require a small font size. The Eagle's good control over ink helps us use the smaller fonts. This is so important, because for these customers, the label is their brand."

About Creative Labels

Founded in 1980, the company is primarily a flexo shop with five presses of various widths and color capabilities. The company prints labels for produce suppliers, fresh pasta and pasta sauces, medical devices, health and beauty products as well as tags and coupons. They also have a full prepress department that includes platemaking and several kinds of digital printing devices and a full finishing department. Contact: Creative Labels, Inc. Sandy Franzen or Chris Martin, toll free: 866-552-2357. Or visit www.creativelabels.com

About MCS

MCS is a leading provider of inkjet printing equipment for tag, label and forms printing in-line with flexo or offset presses. The new MCS Eagle is the widest in its class with 4.25" or 8.5" width (per head) and 600 DPI resolution printing - for unmatched flexibility with printing barcodes, HarvestMark codes, text and numbering - at speeds over 300 feet/minute. UV-Curable inks give the system wide substrate flexibility and a green footprint. The wide format of the Eagle allows barcodes and graphics to be oriented in any direction without concern for crossing multiple print heads.

Headquartered in Gaithersburg, Maryland, MCS has been in business for 20 years and has placed over 2,000 systems in the label and direct-mail industries.

More information

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