

Why Transition to Linerless Labels



New adhesive and siliconizing technologies make linerless labels grocers' choice for sustainability, ease of use, and productivity.

Linerless labels offer greater sustainability than the traditional labels used with weigh scale and other variable information (VI) print applications. Now, recent innovations have made them even easier and more reliable to use. Modern linerless labels are a step above the technology introduced over a decade ago.

Today's linerless labels include state-of-the-art adhesives allowing greater application flexibility. Their advanced siliconizing technology makes them extremely easy to work with. Linerless labels are poised to help grocers improve sustainability, productivity, and perhaps much more.

Many grocers realize that the time has come to transition to linerless labels.

Sustainable solutions can be visible or invisible to the consumer

The grocery industry has made significant strides in responding to consumer demand for greater sustainability. We've seen major chains commit to net-zero emissions, reduce or eliminate single-use plastics, ban plastic grocery bags, find innovative ways to decrease food waste, promote recycling and composting, and more.

Many of these efforts combine innovative technology with thoughtful design. Some efforts, such as introducing new packaging made with less plastic, are very visible to consumers. Other efforts are often happening beyond consumers' line of sight, but they nevertheless significantly impact sustainability. One such beyond-sight effort is the adoption of linerless labels.

Eliminating label liners could have a significant effect on waste reduction

A traditional label construction consists of at least three layers: a facestock, an adhesive, and a protective release liner that is peeled off before application.

Most grocery shoppers probably don't think about those liners. But liners account for about a third of the material that goes into a traditional label construction, and much of it ends up as waste. According to a 2017 study by Alexander Watson and Associates, only about one-third of the 273 kilotons of paper and 31 kilotons of plastic-film liner waste makes it into the recycling stream. The rest goes to landfills.

As the grocery industry seeks more sustainable products, linerless labels can help them make an impact on waste reduction.

Linerless labels have a variety of applications

Linerless labels feature a silicon-based coating applied to the label facestock. This coating allows each adhesive layer to peel easily and cleanly off the underlying layer in a self-wound roll. The employee simply prints the label and can move directly and swiftly to place it on a package. There's no hassle of removing and discarding a liner.

The bottom line? No liner, and no liner waste.

Introduced more than a decade ago, linerless labels have been adopted for applications in multiple industries. These include prime label applications where intricate die-cut shapes are not needed (such as sleeves for fresh foods and meats and postage stamps), VI print labeling where high-speed dispensing is not required, mobile printing, retail/weigh-scale labels, and fast-food outlets. VI Linerless labels also offer varying lengths to fit longer nutritional facts or product information all in one label.

North American linerless growth is expected to outpace that of the total label market in the coming years. The former is forecast to grow at a 15.4% CAGR from 2021 through 2024, and the latter at a 2.4% CAGR in that period. Within grocery, linerless labels are being used virtually anywhere direct thermal (DT) printing is commonplace:

- Deli
- Meat and seafood
- Bakery
- Hot foods
- Weigh scale
- Click and pick

Grocers that have adopted linerless labels enjoy multiple benefits:

Sustainability – Linerless technology eliminates one-third of the material in a traditional label construction. This means grocers create less waste and discard less material that typically ends up in a landfill.

Employee safety – Siliconized liner waste inadvertently dropped on hard-surface floors is a significant slip-and-fall risk. A little added moisture amplifies the danger. With linerless labels, there's no liner waste on the floor. This helps enhance workplace safety for employees.

Productivity – Linerless technology offers up to 50% more labels per roll than a traditional product. This means grocery employees spend less time changing out rolls, increasing printer uptime. Additionally, many printers can now print variable lengths, meaning one label solution can fulfill a wide range of communication needs.

More DT weigh scale/print manufacturers are updating their systems to be compatible with linerless label materials. This includes the development of special cutting devices that allow customers to produce their own labels for self-service applications. Many manufacturers expect the vast majority of their future equipment sales to be used for linerless applications. And with the current generation of linerless label products being easier than ever to use, there's never been a better time for grocers to make the switch.

An established technology made even better

With robust image and background stability for barcode scanning and readability, Avery Dennison's linerless label solutions for DT printers are already a proven option for deli, meat and seafood, bakery, and hot foods applications.

These label constructions are now available with the company's industry leading emulsion semi-permanent and removable adhesive technology. The adhesives have been purpose built to deliver consistent adhesive and silicone coating no matter the application.

When combined with Avery Dennison's siliconizing technology, these adhesives reduce the "gumming up" of equipment that sometimes happens with other products. This further enhances employee productivity.

A blank canvas for greater customer engagement

What if sustainability, safety, and productivity only scratched the surface of what linerless labels could mean to the grocery industry?

According to a recent story in Grocery Dive, personalization and value messaging are among the most significant trends shaping the industry in 2023. The gist: with consumers concerned about continuing inflation, grocers have an opportunity to better communicate their efforts to hold down costs while adding value. They can also work to deliver personalized messaging based on specific shopper preferences.

Linerless labels do more with less: Contact Avery Dennison to learn more

Linerless labels have come a long way, with today's technology offering even greater reliability and flexibility than ever before. And while linerless labels have some established applications, they'll likely be utilized for countless more as grocers think of new ways to sustainably connect with and engage shoppers.

Avery Dennison welcomes the opportunity to help you understand how your business can benefit from the transition to linerless labels. To learn more, contact your Avery Dennison representative, or visit label.averydennison.com/linerless.

label.averydennison.com

All Avery Dennison statements, technical information and recommendations are based on tests believed to be reliable but do not constitute a guarantee or warranty. All Avery Dennison products are sold with the understanding that purchaser has independently determined the suitability of such products for its purposes. All Avery Dennison products are sold subject to Avery Dennison's general terms and conditions of sale found at label.averydennison.com/en/home/terms-and-conditions.html.

© 2025 Avery Dennison Corporation. All rights reserved. The "Making Possible" tagline, Avery Dennison and all other Avery Dennison brands, product names and codes are trademarks of Avery Dennison Corporation. All other brands or product names are trademarks of their respective owners. Fortune 500® is a trademark of Time, Inc. Branding and other information on any samples depicted are fictitious. Any resemblance to actual names is purely coincidental.



MAKING POSSIBLE™