

Advantage **Digital**



Three ways digital printing can help you build your craft business

Digital printing has grown dramatically since its introduction almost four decades ago. Now, it's well positioned to help converters tap growth opportunities in the craft segment.

The technology offers three separate but related advantages that bear on the craft phenomenon. Let's look at each, and explore how converters might position them to meet a craft brand owner's needs.

Advantage: Digital



Advantage 1: Inventory control

Digital allows the economical printing of smaller quantities more so than the traditional flexographic print runs.

A craft operation typically happens at a much smaller scale than that of a mass-market brand. This means smaller production runs, faster product turnover, and the frequent production of limited editions. It likely has less storage space than the larger manufacturer.

Because of these dynamics, a typical 5,000 or 10,000-foot label run needed to break even on a flexo press potentially puts the craft owner in a bind. First, he or she needs to store the labels not put to immediate use. Then, he or she has the knowledge (maybe it's a sinking feeling) that any change to the product is going to render some of that inventory as scrap.

With digital—depending on the OEM—a converter can offer smaller quantities at a price that works for a craft owner. Yes, the cost of materials is generally higher compared to those used in the flexo process. But, that may be irrelevant if that craft owner can print a quantity that ensures unused labels won't be tossed in the recycling bin at some point.

Advantage 2: Design flexibility

Digital offers high quality, and an unparalleled ability to customize.

Customization and personalization are increasingly sought after—even expected. Digital printing offers the craft brand owner an opportunity to add a high degree of those qualities to packaging.

Case in point: During the 2016 professional football season, one of the leading mass-market beer brands offered cans with a design customized to each of the 32 teams. They sold the same beer across the country. But the packaging was customized with each team's colors and logo, then sold in each team's market.

With digital printing, there's no reason a converter couldn't offer a craft owner the same sort of customization. Even operating at a smaller scale, a craft owner could produce a special edition for each town where the product is sold (imagine labels

customized with images of local landmarks). Multiple label designs could be created and printed on pressure-sensitive or shrink sleeve materials, and applied to cans, bottles, or a variety of other packaging types.

Advantage 3: Speed and turnaround time

Digital printing enables going from concept to production very quickly.

Digital offers something often critically important in the 21st century business environment: speed. This is thanks to less labor-intensive setup, production, and cleanup, combined with the ability to stop and make design changes on the fly.

One of the many marketing approaches in the craft owner's toolkit is the ability to be nimble; to capitalize on current, local events, or quickly change products to meet consumers' need for experimentation. This means responding while the market is still buzzing.

With digital, a design submitted on Tuesday could reasonably be printed (pressure-sensitive or shrink sleeve) on Wednesday ... applied to packaging on Thursday ... and on shelves by Friday. Again, this could be done economically, at the smaller quantities craft owners typically need.

Grow your craft business with digital and Avery Dennison

Avery Dennison offers a broad and growing portfolio of label and packaging materials optimized for electrophotographic, UV Inkjet, and water-based Inkjet technologies. The materials are offered with short lead times and low minimum order quantities. And, they're backed by technical service that simplifies the many choices associated with digital technology, OEMs, ink systems, and print heads.

Let us help you use digital technology to grow your business with the craft segment. To learn more, visit us online at label.averydennison.com, or contact your Avery Dennison sales representative.