

Brought to you by



Artwork Management

for
dummies[®]
A Wiley Brand

Throw away
spreadsheets

Streamline the packaging
artwork process

Reduce time
to market



Steve Kaelble

Loftware Special Edition

About Loftware

Loftware is the world's largest cloud-based Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management provider, offering an end-to-end labeling solution platform for companies of all sizes. Maintaining a global presence with offices in US, UK, Germany, Slovenia, China, and Singapore, Loftware boasts over 35 years of expertise in solving labeling challenges and helping companies improve the quality, speed, and efficiency of their labeling, while reducing cost. 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, electronics, chemicals, food & beverage, retail, automotive, consumer products and apparel.



Artwork Management

Loftware Special Edition

by Steve Kaelble

**for
dummies®**
A Wiley Brand

Artwork Management For Dummies®, Loftware Special Edition

Published by
John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
111 River St.
Hoboken, NJ 07030-5774
www.wiley.com

Copyright © 2019 by John Wiley & Sons, Inc., Hoboken, New Jersey

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning or otherwise, except as permitted under Sections 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the Publisher. Requests to the Publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, (201) 748-6011, fax (201) 748-6008, or online at <http://www.wiley.com/go/permissions>.

Trademarks: Wiley, For Dummies, the Dummies Man logo, Dummies.com, and related trade dress are trademarks or registered trademarks of John Wiley & Sons, Inc. and/or its affiliates in the United States and other countries, and may not be used without written permission. Loftware and the Loftware logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Loftware Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective owners. John Wiley & Sons, Inc., is not associated with any product or vendor mentioned in this book.

LIMIT OF LIABILITY/DISCLAIMER OF WARRANTY: THE PUBLISHER AND THE AUTHOR MAKE NO REPRESENTATIONS OR WARRANTIES WITH RESPECT TO THE ACCURACY OR COMPLETENESS OF THE CONTENTS OF THIS WORK AND SPECIFICALLY DISCLAIM ALL WARRANTIES, INCLUDING WITHOUT LIMITATION WARRANTIES OF FITNESS FOR A PARTICULAR PURPOSE. NO WARRANTY MAY BE CREATED OR EXTENDED BY SALES OR PROMOTIONAL MATERIALS. THE ADVICE AND STRATEGIES CONTAINED HEREIN MAY NOT BE SUITABLE FOR EVERY SITUATION. THIS WORK IS SOLD WITH THE UNDERSTANDING THAT THE PUBLISHER IS NOT ENGAGED IN RENDERING LEGAL, ACCOUNTING, OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL SERVICES. IF PROFESSIONAL ASSISTANCE IS REQUIRED, THE SERVICES OF A COMPETENT PROFESSIONAL PERSON SHOULD BE SOUGHT. NEITHER THE PUBLISHER NOR THE AUTHOR SHALL BE LIABLE FOR DAMAGES ARISING HEREFROM. THE FACT THAT AN ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE IS REFERRED TO IN THIS WORK AS A CITATION AND/OR A POTENTIAL SOURCE OF FURTHER INFORMATION DOES NOT MEAN THAT THE AUTHOR OR THE PUBLISHER ENDORSES THE INFORMATION THE ORGANIZATION OR WEBSITE MAY PROVIDE OR RECOMMENDATIONS IT MAY MAKE. FURTHER, READERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT INTERNET WEBSITES LISTED IN THIS WORK MAY HAVE CHANGED OR DISAPPEARED BETWEEN WHEN THIS WORK WAS WRITTEN AND WHEN IT IS READ.

For general information on our other products and services, or how to create a custom *For Dummies* book for your business or organization, please contact our Business Development Department in the U.S. at 877-409-4177, contact info@dummies.biz, or visit www.wiley.com/go/custompub. For information about licensing the *For Dummies* brand for products or services, contact BrandedRights&Licenses@Wiley.com.

ISBN 978-1-119-55615-2 (pbk); ISBN 978-1-119-55614-5 (ebk)

Manufactured in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Publisher's Acknowledgments

We're proud of this book and of the people who worked on it. For details on how to create a custom *For Dummies* book for your business or organization, contact info@dummies.biz or visit www.wiley.com/go/custompub. For details on licensing the *For Dummies* brand for products or services, contact BrandedRights&Licenses@Wiley.com.

Some of the people who helped bring this book to market include the following:

Project Editor: Martin V. Minner

Production Editor: Magesh Elangovan

Editorial Manager: Rev Mingle

Loftware Contributors: Ken Allen,
Maureen Perroni, Josh Roffman

Associate Publisher: Katie Mohr

Business Development Representative:
Sue Blessing

Introduction

Whatever business you're in — consumer products, food and beverage, pharmaceuticals, or something else — you're likely dealing with increasing pressure to get new or improved products to market. Getting what's inside the package just right is challenging, but the artwork on the outside of the package presents just as many hurdles.

A whole lot goes into that packaging artwork: content from multiple sources; photos, logos or other images; ingredient lists, warnings and pack copy text; and physical specifications such as die-line details. Collecting the latest versions of all of those things is difficult enough, and then you have to get signoff from a whole host of different people.

That's why you need to streamline your Artwork Management process. You need a system that gives everyone involved access to the content and status information they need — a system that guides the process through your critical path and lets reviewers and approvers know what's needed of them, and when. When changes are made to any element, you need to ensure that they get made everywhere, efficiently. If you're in a highly regulated business, you need to gather a lot of details and meet a lot of regulatory requirements. The efficiency you need extends beyond packaging artwork to include the labeling that goes on many of those packages.

About This Book

Artwork Management For Dummies, Software Special Edition, is your guide to making your Artwork Management process much more effective and efficient. It spells out all of the places where things can go wrong with traditional processes and outlines how tried-and-true methods just don't work well anymore.

Most important, this book proposes solutions to those woes. It details how a unified, standardized Artwork Management solution can speed up time to market, reduce errors, minimize risk and, in general, relieve headaches. It explains how labeling fits into the big picture, too. Read on to learn how a configurable, cloud-based system can streamline your processes and optimize your costs.

Foolish Assumptions

As I've prepared this book, I've made some assumptions about you, the reader:

- » You're one of many people in your organization with a hand in creating, reviewing, or approving packaging artwork or product labeling.
- » You know the bottlenecks and glitches all too well and feel certain there's a better way to manage the processes.
- » As an executive, you hear all the time about the time-consuming process and expense around Artwork Management. You need to know the basics and would appreciate an introduction to a better, more efficient way to manage packaging artwork.

Icons Used in This Book

Take a look in the left margins of this book and you'll spot some clever little drawings. These are icons, there to let you know something about the paragraph to the right.



REMEMBER

There aren't that many words in this book, but if you have to read sparingly, please don't miss this paragraph.



TIP

The whole point of this book is to offer ideas for doing things better. Here's one of those ideas.



WARNING

A whole lot can go wrong in the packaging and labeling processes. Here's something to watch out for.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Most of us like things to be simple, but if you're into the technical details, you might appreciate this paragraph.

- » Defining Artwork Management
- » Moving packaging out of the box
- » Navigating the stakeholders
- » Juggling too many artworks

Chapter 1

Mastering Artwork Management and Beyond

Most successful organizations spend a lot of time trying to improve processes, from product design to manufacturing to hiring to grooming new leaders. However, in many organizations, there's still plenty of room to build a better process for creating your product's packaging.

This chapter delves into that process of packaging Artwork Management, outlines why it's so essential, spotlights some of the latest trends that are changing the business, and discusses why Artwork Management seems to be getting more challenging all the time.

Defining Artwork Management

What if all of the packages on the grocery store shelf were plain cardboard, printed in black-and-white with words describing in only very basic terms what's inside? It would certainly make

the package design process easier, but what would it do for your sales? Nothing positive, to be sure.



REMEMBER

That highly unimaginable scenario puts into focus just how important packaging is for marketing your product. It's a key factor in consumer decision making. It drives purchases, and it communicates — not just about the product inside the package, but about the image of your company. It ramps up brand recognition and helps you increase market share.

Depending on what business you're in, that packaging may be heavily regulated. For example, lots of laws govern food and beverage labeling, as well as the packaging that wraps up pharmaceuticals and medical devices.

The all-important design of your package has equally vital roles in marketing and legal compliance. That's a lot to ask of a box. Your organization puts a lot of effort into creating and producing the product inside the package. The artwork on the outside — as well as leaflets, instruction manuals, and other packaging elements — deserves just as much attention and care.



WARNING

You need an airtight and well-designed process for managing artwork throughout the complete product lifecycle. Just as quality control issues or delays in the arrival of components and ingredients can stall your manufacturing, glitches in Artwork Management can create costly roadblocks. If accurate and approved package artwork isn't available where and when it's required, your company's top and bottom line will suffer.

Efficiency is more important than ever as you strive to bring new products to market ahead of the competition. That competitive drive is nothing new. Especially concerning are new competitors who are not encumbered by legacy processes and are emerging as threats to established players. The landscape is getting trickier, with ever-changing regulatory compliance needs, new packaging materials, brand globalization, additional internal and external stakeholders, and emerging requirements for packaging and artwork. Odds are, you're managing not just one or two projects with specific artwork needs, but dozens or even hundreds all at once.

Moving Packaging Out of the Box



REMEMBER

Gone are the days when products arrived in basic boxes or bottles adorned with simple packaging. To get the attention of today's buyers, you need more bells, whistles, and pizzazz. Digitalization is opening all sorts of intriguing new doors.

Take *connected packaging* as an example. Options are getting more sophisticated all the time for leading potential buyers from the package to their smartphones for supplemental content. It's a great way to engage customers and test new messaging in real time. The latest advances are going beyond the bounds of what is typically on a package, providing incremental information and opportunities to customize or even personalize each package coming off the line.

Smaller print runs that weren't economically feasible before are a trend today. Soft drink bottles with personalized names are all over the stores these days, to cite just one example. Vendors are looking to automate artwork and integrate with enterprise resource planning (ERP) data for further customization possibilities, so they can deal with the ever-increasing amount of artwork variations.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

Intelligent packaging takes the interactivity a giant step forward, using radio-frequency identification (RFID) or near-field communication (NFC) technology to allow the package to transmit information. That information can be directed at the consumer, or perhaps receivers along the supply chain — think about how temperatures might be tracked for food shipments.

Navigating Through a Sea of Stakeholders

Look carefully at a product package and think about how many stakeholders had a hand in creating that artwork. Yes, a talented graphic designer put the pieces into place and created the right look, but that designer is at the end of a long chain of content — or, to be more accurate, *multiple* chains.



REMEMBER

Numerous internal departments and stakeholders must weigh in upstream before artwork is developed. That includes those providing the descriptive language or images and photography, those with an accurate ingredient list, the provider of the nutrition information, members of the legal team, and the creator of the logo and other branding elements. Then there's the compliance department, ensuring that all the *i*'s are dotted and *t*'s are crossed.

Multiple external stakeholders are part of the process as well, including design shops, graphic houses, and printers. The packaging fabricator weighs in with the die-line information. Other players in the supply chain may offer input about the information that the artwork should include to make sure products reach their destinations.

That's a lot of cooks in the kitchen, and every one of them is vitally important. You must tightly manage how the pieces of content are collected and how material is routed for review and approval. A lackluster process increases the chance of errors or slowdowns.



REMEMBER

It isn't just a single packaging project that must navigate this journey through a maze of stakeholders. It's multiple projects, perhaps even hundreds, each at a different place in the journey. You need an efficient way to manage packaging artwork so you can easily keep tabs on volumes of complex artwork while going about your regular responsibilities.

Juggling Too Many Products

Truth be told, the vastness of the task goes beyond the sheer number of Artwork Management projects. These projects may represent a new look for a longtime product or a new indication for a pharmaceutical. They may be tied to brand new products, or at least, new ways of packaging existing products.

That's why your Artwork Management system must tie into the overall big picture of the product lifecycle and the new product development process. A system that integrates with critical content and brings better organization and higher levels of efficiency into Artwork Management can force greater discipline into the broader product lifecycle. In a sense, best practices can be contagious.

- » Eliminating bottlenecks
- » Maintaining many versions
- » Coping with artwork overload

Chapter 2

Feeling the Chaos

It definitely isn't getting any easier to move your packaging artwork from creation through approval to finished artwork and product launch. There's increasing globalization, market changes, and customer demands along with the pressure to get to market more quickly, lots of cooks in the kitchen, confusing review cycles, and all sorts of factors add to a chaotic environment.

This chapter spells out some of the challenges creating the chaos. It outlines the difficulty of producing artwork without all of the pieces in place, dealing with excessive revisions, getting collaborators onto the same page, sorting through multiple versions, reaching the market without dragging your feet, and dealing with artwork overload. Don't despair, though, because the solutions to these woes can be found later in this book.

Getting Your Ducks In a Row

It's happened to just about every cook, from beginner to master chef. You get three or four steps into a recipe, with the first ingredients already stirred in, when you realize you're missing a critical ingredient. Or just as bad, you pour the cream into the measuring cup and realize it's gone sour. Guests are due in an

hour, and you have to put the cooking process on hold, hop in the car, and run to the grocery store to pick up a vital ingredient.

Similar issues can hobble the management of packaging artwork. There's a long list of ingredients that you need — everything from words and phrases to regulatory info to pack copy to deadlines. You can't get very far without accurate die-line information from the supplier, which means if that's late in arriving, you're late out of the starting gate. In addition, do you have what you need from legal? Do you have complete guidance from marketing? Are you meeting regulatory compliance? Is all of your information up to date?



REMEMBER

That's the first challenge of Artwork Management: lining up the right information and data before you begin. Sure, you could get going without everything in hand, and you likely have done so in the past. However, that puts the timeliness and success of your project at risk. You need to have all the correct information upstream in place at the outset to limit review cycles and ensure smooth workflow. Otherwise, you'll be sent back to the drawing board for revision and rework.

Handling Revision After Revision

Those revisions that come from inadequate initial preparation can be painful in numerous ways. For starters, they cause delays. Every day you spend revising your work is one more day before a review can be completed and signed off. What happens when you finally get through that one review and the project moves on to the next, and that review turns up another glitch? That's another delay.



WARNING

Slowdowns are costly, particularly if they delay your delivery to market and put you at a competitive disadvantage. Unnecessary revision cycles are frustrating as well. They consume scarce resources, because if your talented people are busy making and reviewing revisions, that's time they aren't spending on moving another project forward.

Seeing Is Believing

Bottlenecks in managing artwork can be caused by any number of things, especially when that process involves multiple facilities, some of them in other parts of the world. One of those pain points has to do with capacity planning.

With an unplugged, disjointed process — without good visibility and meticulous data collection — it's hard to ensure that you have the resources to tackle each task at the right time. You're just as likely to find that the players are idle at times and overloaded at others.



REMEMBER

The problem is managing the process and having real-time access to accurate and current data that enables you to adjust processes for efficiency. But you can't achieve visibility of the whole end-to-end product lifecycle without access to these details. That's how you spot the potential bottlenecks, resolve the issues, and create better processes. It's vital no matter what business you're in, but the inefficiencies are especially problematic in highly regulated industries.

Playing Nicely With Others

Before packaging artwork is finalized and the product hits the marketplace, it must get signoff from many stakeholders throughout the product lifecycle. If you've been around for a while, you may recall the days of sending printed artwork around for editing and approval — by fax, or even by mail or overnight courier.

In today's world, email is not a very good way for stakeholders to work together efficiently. You can't excel in a competitive environment if your collaborative process involves emailing PDFs around. With an email-based approach, stakeholders can't view and mark up digital media simultaneously or compare revisions efficiently. They're sitting in their own silos, and it's hard to tell who's accountable for what.

Beyond that, it's difficult to scale a manual artwork process globally. It's all the more challenging to locate consistent artwork that has been approved for use in the specific circumstance.



TIP

With all of the disparate partners involved in that scenario, who owns the process? Who has control over the assets if the process isn't integrated? All of the assets that go into packaging artwork should be centralized and accessible to all of the internal and external stakeholders involved.

If you've ever had to change printers or design vendors, you know that maintaining control of the assets can be troublesome. If parts of your work reside in your printer's digital front end, how hard will it be to get those components back and establish a new process when you switch printers?

The problem isn't just that the process isn't standardized. It's that a manual process, by definition, isn't automated. You have no way to either make access easier when it needs to be, or control it when it should be reined in.

Picking the Right Version

Even in the best of circumstances, getting a handle on packaging artwork projects is incredibly complicated. Many pieces of content go into that final product, and they come from many different places. Your packaging will include images, marketing pack copy, phrases, barcodes, and logos. It may contain legal language, regulatory information, and often translations.

It takes an efficient and sophisticated workflow to ensure that you have all the elements you need, but how can you be certain you have the latest version of the various elements? This is more difficult than it may seem. Some companies have been known to buy their own product just to be sure they're working with the latest version of the artwork elements.



REMEMBER

A central repository that manages important content and digital assets is vital, especially for global enterprises, but you need much more than just having this content accessible. Your system must manage changes — tracking what was changed when and by whom — and give all appropriate parties access to final, approved content.



WARNING

On top of that, multiple revision cycles can cause version confusion. If you're moving an artwork project through a complicated approval process, it's pretty easy to lose track of which version is the current one, and that situation is an error waiting to happen. There's also the potential for confusion as to where the project should go next for comment, because revisions can get the approval process all out of sorts.

Calculating the Risks

Lack of an adequate Artwork Management process isn't just a matter of missing opportunities to be a little bit better. It can be downright risky to your organization, especially if you're operating in a highly regulated environment.



WARNING

There are a number of industries where packaging for products can be strictly regulated. If you aren't in compliance, your organization might land in serious trouble and face fines or other sanctions. There are potential safety risks if artwork and labeling are not handled properly. This will most definitely have a significant negative impact on your brand.

In this regard, having inadequate control of your packaging artwork process can jeopardize your ability to maintain compliance. You're at risk for missing compliance deadlines or details if you don't have an efficient and standardized process. If there's no easily accessible, up-to-date source of truth for your content, you don't have the control you need to reduce the risk of error and non-compliance.

Delaying Time to Market

In many industries, competition has never been greater than it is right now. Your organization is under intense pressure to get more products to market and get them there faster than your competitors can. Inefficient project management and a poorly managed packaging lifecycle process can stand in the way of that aim.

If your process isn't streamlined and standardized, you have a potential problem. If stakeholders don't have clear visibility into

the elements that need their attention, you're at risk for delay. If there's no good way to be sure that all of the critical path tasks get done at the right time, something is bound to slip through the cracks. The result is that your Artwork Management process has created an impediment that will delay your product's arrival in a competitive marketplace.

Coping with Artwork Overload

Global expansion can be great for your business, and so can growth in the variety of product offerings. However, that kind of growth can cause complexities and headaches for the teams that must create the artwork for that ever-expanding list of items.



REMEMBER

Each variation creates the need for a different version of the artwork. What's inside the box may be identical to what you produced before, but the packaging may have different language or legal requirements or other variations. With all of those variations in circulation, each of them changing more frequently than ever, managing the artworks becomes a serious challenge. The consequences can be severe if you happen to use the wrong content in your artwork.

- » Mounting manual mayhem
- » Wedging a square peg into a round hole
- » Getting stuck in the mud

Chapter 3

Drowning in Spreadsheets

It's not like you have no process for managing your packaging artwork process, but is it the most effective process? If your organization is like many, there is a pressing need for improvement.

This chapter describes the spreadsheet-based systems that many organizations have been using for years. It discusses the drawbacks of relying on Excel and other less-than-optimal software products that are simply not designed for handling the nuances of Artwork Management.

Mounting Manual Mayhem

Spreadsheets are amazing productivity tools, no doubt about it. They are sophisticated at collecting, organizing, manipulating, calculating, transforming, and presenting all kinds of different data. In addition, even though sophisticated spreadsheet users may find these spreadsheets meet some specific needs, they are still inefficient and error-prone when it comes to collaboration.

Nothing against spreadsheets, but they're just not the right tool. It's like trying to open a locked door with a ball-peen

hammer — with some time and some sweat and a lot of mess, you'll get the door open, but a key would have been so much easier.

Additionally, routing spreadsheets through email is riddled with potential risk — especially with the volume of email you get every day. What do you think the chances are that you might miss that important email? What are the chances of making an error when manually entering new data? How do you know where your comments fall in the routing cycle? How do you track existing changes from the many stakeholders?

The process is inefficient because it's a one-step-at-a-time process with delivery time between the steps. There's no way to trace where this document has traveled and who has seen it. Most important, there's no way to lock down the data. Almost anyone involved in the process can make any change at any time and there's simply no way to know who did what when, so no one is accountable. What's more, how do you know you have the most current document? With this type of manual approach, it becomes increasingly difficult to ensure that you're dealing with the right version.

Then there's the issue of consistency. On one occasion you may have a horizontal spreadsheet filled with rows of data, and next time you get a vertical one. You never quite know what you're going to get and you have to deal with the time-consuming task of rebuilding your spreadsheet at the start of each new project. Ultimately, you may attempt to use Excel to manage the critical path, but Excel is a passive tool. It requires that everyone involved knows what needs doing and when.

Wedging a Square Peg Into a Round Hole

Excel, collaboration solutions, and product lifecycle management (PLM) systems can give you digital alternatives for Artwork Management, but as the preceding section explains, they're still far from ideal.



REMEMBER

Data entry is time-consuming, and entry errors are not uncommon. The more content elements and stakeholders that are involved in a particular project, the more complicated the spreadsheet will be. Someone who's a whiz at Excel may be able to navigate that kind of complex document, but for a lot of people, maneuvering around a spreadsheet is difficult.

Even though the information is being stored digitally, this approach doesn't take advantage of all of the interactivity that the digital world makes possible. Your team has no way to leave real-time comments, engage in side-by-side collaboration, or even know who provided the latest edits. Tracking down historical data is challenging, if not impossible.

Other solutions may offer some potential for collaboration, which can help in terms of gathering pertinent documents in an accessible place and allowing interaction among stakeholders. That said, generic collaboration solutions aren't for Artwork Management. You'll be adapting its capabilities to try to meet your Artwork Management needs. The fit is far from perfect.

What about a traditional PLM solution? Certainly, that's another option but it's geared toward creation and development of a product and managing its evolution. These solutions can be quite pricey and complex, and even so, capabilities for managing the specific requirements of the artwork process are not built in. Although PLM can be a valuable source of content that can be integrated into artwork management solutions, as a standalone it's a square peg for the round hole of Artwork Management.

Getting Stuck in the Mud

So you may be using a physical system of passing around folders with printed proofs and approval sheets. Or you've moved to a digital alternative using software such as Excel, a collaboration solution, or a PLM solution. In any case, you're adding time and risk to your product lifecycle.

How? For starters, the system quite possibly doesn't offer any means for validation. It may be difficult or impossible to see who has done what, and when. If there's an issue, it becomes hard to track and resolve, so accountability is a problem.



REMEMBER

The more teams that are involved, the more of an issue it is when you can't see if individuals on those teams are completing their tasks on time. A global project that involves pack copy translation makes the problem even worse. Getting reviews and approvals from people around the world is bound to cause delay.

These solutions can be so cumbersome that you may need a project manager just to keep the system updated and capture all of the changes. Such recordkeeping is vital, not just for efficiency but also for compliance in regulated industries. Verbal approval won't do in such cases because you need audit data to document compliance.

To put a bow on it, here's a roundup of the drawbacks that go hand-in-hand with a manual approach to Artwork Management that's based on spreadsheets and other solutions that don't address the nuances of managing packaging artwork:

- » You're dealing with lots of unstructured data.
- » Version control is likely to give you fits.
- » Your manual process isn't a reliable way to get speedy approvals.
- » Effective collaboration is a pipe dream.
- » A general lack of control means compliance is hard to achieve.
- » Poor visibility and metrics leave you unable to spot problems and make improvements.
- » The processes are labor-intensive and ripe for errors.
- » Usually there is no central repository, which makes materials hard to access and results in less consistency.
- » Because of all of these factors, your time to market will increase.

- » Finding the round peg
- » Making your process perfect
- » Putting content in its place
- » Complying without headaches

Chapter 4

Transforming Chaos to Calm

As promised in Chapter 2, there is a solution to the chaotic environment many companies experience when they manage packaging artwork. What you need is an automated, configurable, integrated solution that handles the processes from end to end.

This chapter spells out what that solution can look like and how your organization will benefit. It explains how a system designed just for Artwork Management is better for this purpose than a generic project management solution. It demonstrates how the right solution can streamline processes, simplify approvals, make it easier to manage assets, relieve compliance headaches, make translation less tricky, enable better analysis, and be deployed more easily than you could dream.

Finding the Round Peg

Odds are that your organization already makes good use of some type of project management tool or product lifecycle management (PLM) system. Each has a purpose, and which one you chose in the past likely depended on what kind of work you do and your budget.

There is a broad menu, in fact, of project management solutions, PLM systems, software for managing new product development, new packaging design solutions, and collaboration platforms. These tools are very different from one another, but they have one thing in common: They were not designed specifically for managing artwork throughout the product lifecycle. They aren't well equipped for the unique demands of getting your packaging ready for prime time.



REMEMBER

A comprehensive and configurable Artwork Management solution, on the other hand, is made precisely to meet this need. Its purpose in life is to create efficient workflows, task management and approvals. It provides complete visibility into your project, defines roles and responsibilities, and makes it crystal-clear who is supposed to review what, using which criteria, by what deadline. A system of this type manages the workflow and proofing for both internal and external stakeholders. It indicates the current status and allows approvals to be submitted remotely from anywhere on the planet.

For regulated industries, the right Artwork Management solution can help track printed artwork and packaging materials all the way from conception to launch. It can even remind you to conduct those post-launch product reviews that often get forgotten. That's the kind of capability you need to ensure compliance and auditability.

That level of functionality can be a godsend to your operations, but that's only the beginning. The right solution can also help you drive continuous improvement and proactively anticipate delays and issues. You can evaluate each project to understand its complexity, profitability, risks, goals, and resource needs. All stakeholders gain new superpowers, from product managers to marketing and brand teams to legal and compliance specialists.

Making Your Process Perfect

It doesn't matter what industry you're in. The right Artwork Management solution integrates with consistent and accurate content. It helps to automate and streamline your processes to boost your efficiency and cut time for updating product packaging and introducing new products.

How? Your projects will be streamlined with digital workflows and configurable task controls. You and other stakeholders will be able to see the status of each project, as well as what's up with each task within the project or workflow. That means those responsible for new product development will be up to speed, as will everyone involved in the product lifecycle and approval of artwork.

You'll find that your workflow picks up speed at every critical step, from the moment the project is created through the last of the many approvals.

Proofing the Point



REMEMBER

Your organization will feel the efficiency when you're sharing artwork elements and considering the entire lifecycle of packaging artwork. Results are at their best when your Artwork Management system is designed to guide the artwork from conception through development and approvals all the way to product launch. It's especially helpful when artwork can flow easily from one approval stage to another, and all parties can view and proof high-resolution artwork simultaneously, in real time. Internal and external reviewers can see packaging artwork, labeling, video content, web copy, or whatever you need to share. With the right system, they can do so efficiently, regardless of the reliability of their connection.

An exceptional system allows reviewers to make annotations right on the document so that other stakeholders can see those notes instantly. The result is instant collaboration across the approval community. Your system should record all changes and annotations, along with all approvals and rejections, and all should be identified by user and with a timestamp. You should be able to have the ability to compare versions and spotlight the differences.

With a system like this in place, keeping versions straight is far simpler. You'll rest more easily knowing that the final artwork uses the correct and most up-to-date copy and images. You'll have a more reliable way to localize versions for markets across the country or around the world. Errors and delays will disappear.



TIP

One more key point: The right system will work with your people and your workflows by being highly configurable. It should replicate how you work, not force everyone into uncomfortable changes that don't add value. Remember, this is about making things better, not messier or more aggravating.

Putting Content in its Place

How much time have you wasted searching internally or externally for content, or a particular asset, artwork, or bit of data? That's time you'll never get back, and you gained nothing from it. Your Artwork Management solution should give you the power to stop wasting that time by centrally storing and managing all digital assets. It should also allow you to leverage integrated data from your other sources of truth to incorporate other necessary content.



REMEMBER

A digital asset manager catalogs all artwork and supporting documentation, including cutter guides, imagery, and product information, no matter what the file type is. By tracking revision history, the system allows you to zero in on the most recent asset or find an earlier version for comparison. Every asset can be attached to any or all of the projects that have made use of it, so that if you ever need to make a wholesale change in content, you can easily find the items that you need to revise.

Complying Without Headaches

Depending on your industry, you may have to jump through a lot of hoops to ensure that your packaging complies with local regulations. That hoop-jumping is generally something you want to keep to a minimum, but it's vital that you get it right.

Your Artwork Management system meticulously tracks all approval points, statuses, dates, and users, providing a complete audit trail. Those tasked with compliance can monitor performance across all internal departments as well as with supply chain partners. Once a particular asset has been approved and is in compliance, that makes its use the next time much easier.

Speaking Your Languages

Translation is a significant challenge if your organization does business globally. Your packaging must speak the language of the country in which you're selling; however, quality translations cost money and take time.



TIP

That's where your Artwork Management system comes in handy. When your pack copy text has been translated once, you can create a library to store common phrases and passages, so that the next time you need them, you don't have to translate them again.

A phrase library ensures consistency because internal and external stakeholders can access common, agreed-upon, and approved translations. It's also a powerful compliance tool, helping your packaging abide by the regulations in whatever country you're targeting. Once you have compliance-related language that is translated well and approved, the content is ready to reuse as needed.

Defining, Measuring, Analyzing

No matter how good your processes are, there's almost always room for improvement. That's why companies establish and track key performance indicators (KPIs) and rely on analytics to measure results and develop change.



TIP

By applying business intelligence to the Artwork Management process, your system can help you track those KPIs, find opportunities for improvement, remove bottlenecks, anticipate peaks and valleys, and plan your resources appropriately. Instant visibility across all campaigns helps you manage the ways their schedules intersect so that they don't interfere with one another.

Deploying It Your Way

Never forget that an Artwork Management system exists to make your life easier, your work more efficient, and your headaches much less frequent. You don't want the system itself to cause you hassles.



TECHNICAL
STUFF

That's a good reason to deploy your system through the cloud with a *software-as-a-service* (SaaS) model. That means the provider of the system is the one maintaining the software installation, as well as all updates and upgrades. All you need is an Internet connection. You don't need servers on your end, and you have no IT infrastructure, no painful and costly and lengthy installation, and no pesky upgrades of hardware or software to worry about.



REMEMBER

That simplicity is only the beginning of the benefits. Because the system lives in the cloud, your data and assets have a safe home, too. It's all held under high security and backed up constantly across a data center infrastructure. Access is tightly controlled, and you have the power to determine who gets in and who doesn't.

A cloud-based deployment also tends to make it easier for users to get up to speed. You work through a familiar web browser in a simple workspace that eliminates navigating among multiple screens and windows. The better the buy-in, the more effective your deployment — and indeed, many software implementations fail because of employee resistance. Your solution must feel like an improvement from the get-go.

Collaboration becomes simplified when the system lives in the cloud. It doesn't matter if you're a small company or a major global enterprise — your users don't have any trouble accessing the system, whether they're internal or external, across town, or on the other side of the world. You can work across multiple suppliers, and because the system handles all projects, you can easily determine priorities with the help of an easy-to-read dashboard.



TIP

It's worth saying one more time . . . the right system must be highly configurable. You must have the ability to make the system your own, functioning your way. The right system can even integrate with other solutions serving your organization, such as ERP and other business applications. Having that capability along with a centralized resource for content helps maintain consistency, eliminate errors, and simplify operations.

- » Understanding Enterprise Labeling
- » Recognizing the pressures on artwork and labeling
- » Creating new efficiencies
- » Seeing the value of convergence

Chapter 5

Converging: Artwork Management and Enterprise Labeling

Packaging artwork doesn't stop at the outside of the box or container that your product is in. Related items include instruction manuals, patient information leaflets, blister foil packs, and other materials. What other elements are part of the package? Labels on the product, box, carton, and pallet that get that box safely and efficiently to wherever it needs to go. However, until recently, the processes of managing artwork and labeling were two mostly separate things.

This chapter explores the benefits of converging the packaging artwork and labeling processes. It outlines the concept known as *Enterprise Labeling*, which standardizes labeling across the organization, and spotlights an example of how Enterprise Labeling can work hand-in-hand with packaging Artwork Management.

Understanding the Evolution of Enterprise Labeling

You have lots of different kinds of customers, and they may be all over the world. They have many different needs, but one common thread: Whatever they want, they want it yesterday.

Your supply chain must be optimized to thrive amid evolving demands and changing times. Market demands are ever-changing, lead times are shorter, business environments are leaner, and manufacturing is more globalized.

A key to this optimization is error-free labeling. Almost everything flowing up and down the supply chain has a barcode label that provides the information needed to get that item where it's going on time (see Figure 5-1). An error on that label can bring manufacturing to a halt or stall the movement of product in the supply chain. You'll face unhappy customers at a minimum, potentially fines, and probably losses in revenue.

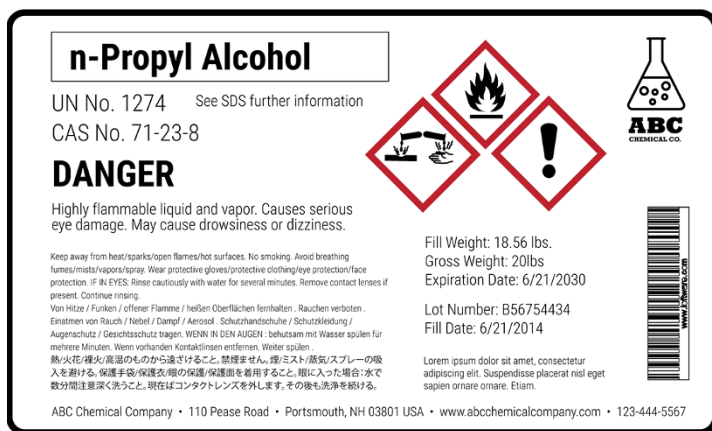


FIGURE 5-1: A chemical label with regulatory information.



REMEMBER

Enterprise Labeling standardizes and automates this vital function across the enterprise. It's much more efficient, consistent, and reliable, significantly reducing the chance of errors and bottlenecks throughout the supply chain.

An Enterprise Labeling solution links with other business applications, again allowing greater consistency. A central system allows for much more efficient changes when regulatory and compliance guidelines evolve (and you know they do, frequently). An enterprise-wide solution helps ensure business continuity when issues arise across the global manufacturing and distribution supply chain. It can connect the supply chain partners, wherever they are.

Mounting Business Pressures



REMEMBER

Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management address common challenges. Packaging artwork often includes the same kinds of images, warnings, translations, and phrases (see Figure 5-2) as the label that gets applied to that package. Both face complex content review and approval processes. The more regulated the industry, the greater the level of challenge, both for labeling and for artwork.

Hmm . . . sounds like an integrated, unified approach could make a lot of sense. Your Artwork Management approach is all about controlling complicated artwork processes across the product lifecycle. An Enterprise Labeling system produces mission-critical barcode labels and documents, again across the supply chain. Adopt a unified approach and you can achieve significant efficiencies and cost savings.

What has been standing in the way of this grand idea? That darned four-letter word: *silos*. In the past, Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management have lived in their own worlds, different silos that have not been well integrated. The result is inefficiencies and redundancies, inaccuracies that are tough to track down and correct, multiple costly systems, and roadblocks to collaboration.



FIGURE 5-2: Packaging artwork.

Creating New Efficiencies



REMEMBER

The good news is that companies are beginning to recognize how interconnected Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management are. They are figuring out that deploying these solutions together can help products get to market more quickly, improve consistency and accuracy, reduce risk and complexity, and get a better handle on regulatory issues. Oh, and it can optimize costs, too.

By combining these formerly separate activities, companies can improve collaboration significantly. They can rely on one integrated digital platform that streamlines creation of both artwork and labeling and simplifies review and approval. They can

ensure that changes in regulatory or customer requirements are made efficiently and effectively. They can reduce cycle times. They can prevent mistakes.

Who wouldn't want that kind of synergy as the world becomes more complex? Why not deploy just one highly configurable set of solutions?

Transforming the Label and Artwork Management Space

Today's savvy customers understand the parallels and are looking for a combined solution. That's why forward thinking providers are combining Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management solutions to offer a single cloud-based digital platform that can create, manage and print labels and packaging artwork across a global enterprise.



TIP

With two solutions combined, companies can tap into a range of capabilities including label and artwork design, advanced workflow, content management, certified integration, business rules, proofing, printing, and analytics. The combined system can be used for labeling, packaging artwork, or both, and it's highly configurable and plugged right into existing business processes.

Here are some of the ways companies such as yours can benefit from combining Enterprise Labeling with Artwork Management:

- » Integrate your labeling and Artwork Management with existing business processes.
- » Centrally manage content for both labeling and packaging — including images, artworks, warnings, translations, and phrases.
- » Manage variability with dynamic, data-driven label printing for greater consistency and accuracy.
- » Build easy-to-use workflows that support the creation of both labels and artworks.
- » Shrink the once-lengthy review and approval cycles to improve time-to-market.

- » Gain visibility and the ability to dynamically address regulatory requirements and changes, mitigating risk.
- » Keep up with industry-specific requirements overseen by marketing, regulatory, quality, operations, manufacturing, and supply chain teams.
- » Increase consistency while reducing complexity.
- » Ensure traceability.
- » Optimize cost.

- » Evolving your Artwork Management
- » Keeping up with changing regulations
- » Experiencing digital transformation
- » Personalizing your packaging
- » Integrating your processes and applications

Chapter 6

Five Trends in Artwork Management

This chapter offers details on five trends that are behind today's changing times, as well as tomorrow's:

- » **Evolving the business of Artwork Management:** Artwork Management is more than just the process of mastering the creation of packaging artwork. It is part of an evolving product lifecycle that is being transformed by automated and configurable solutions that are designed to address packaging artwork across the entire product lifecycle. Forward-thinking solution providers are expanding workflow to manage artwork across the entire product lifecycle. The scope can now encompass everything from concept or idea all the way to launch.
- » **Driving change through regulations:** Evolving regulations are having an ever-increasing impact on product packaging and Artwork Management, regardless of industry. Whatever sector you're in, you no doubt are finding that in today's global marketplace, there are more regulations now than there used to be.

The typical regulation brings with it lots of requirements and variants. That's what makes it so vitally important that your

Artwork Management solution is designed for validated environments and that your provider has the expertise to assist you during your validation process.

- » **Keeping up with digital transformation:** Across most industries, nearly every business process has experienced massive transformation. Behind these business transformations are increased automation and the convergence of software applications written for enterprise-based operations with global aspirations.

The Internet has triggered more collaboration than ever, bringing more and more stakeholders into various business processes. That's why companies are beginning to toss out Excel as an option and are moving to more efficient digital platforms. These digital platforms offer comprehensive and fully integrated capabilities ranging from workflow and task management to asset management, proofing, and much more.

- » **Delivering personalized products:** Digital printing is becoming more cost-effective and powerful, and as a result, more prevalent. You have many new opportunities for personalization in product packaging — indeed, in a digital environment, every unit can be personalized.

Of course, with more personalization you have more product variations and SKUs. As a result, the task of managing artwork for each product variant becomes even more daunting. That's why companies are looking to simplify the process by automatically generating artwork to account for personalized products without requiring the management and review of countless specialized versions.

- » **Leveraging the power of integration:** Integration means you can scrap the need for manual processes and can stop storing your data in Excel spreadsheets. That old-school approach is labor-intensive and error-prone, provides little visibility, leaves you wanting more control, and creates compliance risks.

That's not to say integration is easy, given the challenge of linking multiple systems. But connecting your packaging artwork processes directly into the rest of the product lifecycle and business operation is a must-have, not a nice-to-have. Do you enjoy re-keying annotations or replicating data, with all of the hassle and potential for trouble? Didn't think so.



www.loftware.com



Chaos to calm

Don't let unreliable artwork management processes threaten your product launch

Loftware Smartflow streamlines packaging design and workflow by bringing accountability and structure to your process. Our configurable, automated solution controls complex packaging artwork throughout the product lifecycle to reduce your time to market.

Find out more about Loftware Smartflow at our website.

Artwork Management: Transform chaos to calm

Artwork Management is a whole lot more than managing packaging artwork. Whatever business you're in, you're likely facing pressure to get new or improved products out the door quickly. This book is your guide to effectively and efficiently managing artwork throughout the product lifecycle. It details challenges you might be grappling with in managing packaging artwork and outlines how a configurable, automated Artwork Management solution can speed time to market, reduce errors, minimize risk, and relieve headaches.

Inside...

- Move packaging artwork out of the box
- Eliminate unreliable manual processes
- Collaborate internally and externally
- Avoid endless revision cycles
- Take control of your digital assets
- Proof high-resolution artwork
- Ensure compliance with regulations



Steve Kaelble is an author and corporate communications specialist who enjoys bringing complicated subjects to life in easy-to-understand ways.

Go to **Dummies.com**®
for videos, step-by-step photos,
how-to articles, or to shop!

ISBN: 978-1-119-55615-2

Not For Resale



**for
dummies**®
A Wiley Brand

WILEY END USER LICENSE AGREEMENT

Go to www.wiley.com/go/eula to access Wiley's ebook EULA.