

AT THE **THE LABEL COMPANY**

In early 2003, The Label Company in Anaheim, California—a profitable and reliable producer of prime labels serving the western United States—changed ownership. Like many label producers, The Label Company had been a successful family business, opening its doors in 1979 and nurtured by its founder. As in many similar companies, requests for quotation came in on the fax machine, and bids were prepared by hand. A prime label producer, The Label Company serves the personal health care, consumer goods, home improvement and entertainment industries. Since ownership changed, however, sales have more than doubled, and business is growing exponentially in a largely flat industry. This is the story of how the change occurred.

When Eric Jones joined The Label Company as its new general manager in 2003, one of the first things he noticed was a line of employees waiting their turn to use the one computer in



One of two Nilpeter presses running multiple shifts

the business that had Email access. Determined to move the company solidly into the 21st century, Jones immediately began investigating the software available for managing label manufacturing businesses. After thoroughly vetting the available programs, he installed the Label Traxx software package offered by Tailored Solutions of Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Like most print business management software offerings, Label Traxx has

separate modules for estimating, job costing, and various accounting functions. Some label printers take a piecemeal approach to automating their businesses, installing the modules one or two at a time, and occasionally never fully implementing all available modules. But Jones made the conversion all at once. He says: “Moving from a manual system to an automated is painful at best, and doing so in small steps only extends



Eric Jones runs Label Traxx™ in his office and from home

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Rewind and Inspection at The Label Company

the pain. We found it best to simply make the change and move ahead as quickly and deliberately as possible.”

Jones found, however, that installing a print business management system had to be done on a number of levels. Not only was it necessary to change the flow of information and work through the business, but individual employees needed to change how they did their jobs. Says Jones: “Today, most employees have personal computers at home and are familiar with Email and the Internet, so depriving them of those conveniences at work simply makes no sense. Because most people have computer skills they have developed at home, we found they made the change far easier than we feared.”

But perhaps the most important business change which occurred at The Label Company was in the customer interface, Jones says. Today, The Label Company encourages customers to use a Label Traxx feature which

enables them to log on to a password-protected website and monitor the progress of their jobs through the plant. According to Jones: “The customers who use the feature use it constantly. We also modified the Label Traxx system to display UPS and FedEx tracking numbers, and dramatically reduced the number of telephone calls to our customer service desks. Customers simply log on, check the status of their jobs, and only call us if they see a potential problem.”

Another area where The Label Company differs from many label producers is in how work is scheduled. Both the art department and the pressroom use the scheduling feature in the Label Traxx Order Processing module. According to Jones: “Some companies make the mistake of using different software for different parts of their business, or doing some things with software and other things manually. We believe in taking full advantage of the power of the software.”

Today The Label Company has computers throughout the operation, and every employee has an individual Email address. Says Jones: “Acceptance of the system by employees has been great. We believe in trusting people and giving them the tools they need to make them efficient.”

Looking to the future, The Label Company is moving toward high end flexo, and expects to add silk screen capability. “But our key capability,” says Jones, “lies in The Label Company employees. Label Traxx has changed the way people do their jobs—and in the process, the people made us a significantly better company.”



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