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Label Systems resource library

# Label & Packaging Glossary

Plain-language definitions for the materials, adhesives, print methods, and finishes behind the pressure-sensitive labels, shrink sleeves, flexible packaging, decals, nameplates, overlays, and promotional products we make. Use it to compare options, read a quote, or brief your team.

**192 terms in 12 categories**


- Materials (21)
- Adhesives (14)
- Printing methods (14)
- Ink & color (14)
- Finishing & converting (29)
- Artwork & prepress (15)
- Barcodes & data (7)
- Performance (15)
- Nameplates & overlays (10)
- Packaging (14)
- Promotional products (28)
- General (11)


Jump to a letter


A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z



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# A

### Abrasion resistance Performance
How well a printed surface, ink, or coating holds up against rubbing, scuffing, and scratching. Laminates and topcoats are the usual ways to improve it.
See also: Laminate, Topcoat

### Acrylic adhesive Adhesives
A pressure-sensitive adhesive chemistry known for clarity, UV and aging resistance, and long-term durability. It builds bond strength over time rather than grabbing instantly.
See also: Rubber-based adhesive, Permanent adhesive

### Adhesive Adhesives
The sticky layer that bonds a label to a surface. Adhesives are formulated for specific surfaces, temperatures, and removal needs, so choosing the right one matters as much as choosing the face stock.
See also: Permanent adhesive, Removable adhesive, Tack

### Advertising specialty Promotional products
An older industry name for a promotional product: a useful item imprinted with a company's name or logo and given away to build awareness.
See also: Promotional product

### Aggressive adhesive Adhesives
A high-tack, high-strength adhesive used on rough, textured, dusty, or hard-to-stick surfaces such as corrugated boxes, powder-coated metal, or some plastics.
See also: Tack

### All-temperature adhesive Adhesives
An adhesive designed to perform across a wide service range, from cold storage to warm conditions, for products that move between environments.
See also: Freezer-grade adhesive, Service temperature

### Anilox roll Printing methods
An engraved metal or ceramic roller on a flexographic press that meters a precise, even film of ink onto the printing plate. Its cell count and volume affect ink density and detail.
See also: Flexographic printing, Plate

### Anodized aluminum Nameplates & overlays
Aluminum treated with an electrochemical process that builds a hard, corrosion-resistant oxide layer. The porous layer can hold dyes, making it a common base for durable nameplates.
See also: Nameplate

### Application temperature Adhesives
The temperature of the surface and label at the moment the label is applied. Applying below an adhesive's rated minimum can keep it from wetting out and bonding properly.
See also: Minimum application temperature, Service temperature

### Artwork Artwork & prepress
The final graphic files used to produce a label, including images, text, logos, and die lines. Print-ready artwork has correct size, bleed, resolution, and color setup.
See also: Print-ready file, Proof, Die line

# B

### Backlighting Nameplates & overlays
Lighting placed behind a graphic overlay or nameplate so selected areas glow. Translucent inks and windows control where light passes through.
See also: Window

### Backslit Finishing & converting
A cut in the liner on the back of a label that splits it into sections, so the liner can be peeled away easily, often by hand.
See also: Liner

### Barcode Barcodes & data
A machine-readable pattern of bars and spaces (or squares, for 2D codes) that encodes data such as a product number, lot, or serial number.
See also: QR code, Quiet zone, Barcode verification

### Barcode verification Barcodes & data
Measuring a printed barcode against industry standards (such as ISO/IEC 15416 and 15415) and assigning a quality grade, so it scans reliably across different scanners and supply chains.
See also: Barcode, Quiet zone

### Barrier film Packaging
A packaging film or laminated structure that blocks oxygen, moisture, light, or aroma to protect the contents and extend shelf life.
See also: Flexible packaging, Stand-up pouch

### Blank goods Promotional products
Products supplied without any decoration, ready to be imprinted or labeled.
See also: Decoration method

**Bleed** Artwork & prepress
Extending artwork 1/8 inch past the label's cut line so small shifts in cutting don't leave an unprinted sliver at the edge. A 1/8-inch bleed is the Label Systems standard.
See also: Die line, Safe zone

**Booklet label** Packaging
A multi-page label that folds or peels open to reveal extra content, such as instructions, multiple languages, or regulatory text. Also called an extended content label.
See also: Piggyback label

**BOPP** Materials
Biaxially oriented polypropylene: a polypropylene film stretched in two directions for strength and clarity. It resists moisture, oils, and many chemicals, making it a workhorse for food, beverage, and personal care labels.
See also: Polypropylene (PP), Film

**Branded merchandise** Promotional products
Products carrying a company's logo or brand, used for marketing, employee gifts, events, or resale. Often used interchangeably with promotional products.
See also: Promotional product, Swag

**Brushed finish** Nameplates & overlays
A fine, directional grain on metal created by abrasion. It gives nameplates a premium look and helps hide fingerprints and light scratches.
See also: Nameplate, Anodized aluminum

**Bumper sticker** Promotional products
A long, rectangular outdoor sticker made to stick to vehicle bumpers. It needs durable, weather-resistant vinyl and inks.
See also: Vinyl, Weatherability

**Butt cut** Finishing & converting
Labels separated by a single straight cut across the web with no gap between them, rather than a die-cut shape with waste around it.
See also: Die cutting, Matrix

# C

**CMYK** Ink & color
Cyan, magenta, yellow, and black: the four process inks combined in dots to reproduce full-color images. Artwork should be supplied in CMYK (not RGB) to avoid unexpected color shifts.
See also: Four-color process, Spot color, RGB

**Coated paper** Materials
Paper with a surface coating that improves smoothness, ink holdout, and print sharpness. Available in gloss, semi-gloss, and matte.
See also: Uncoated paper, Gloss, Matte

**Cold foil** Finishing & converting
A metallic effect applied inline on press using an adhesive printed in the desired pattern, then transferring foil to it. The foil can be printed over to create many metallic colors.
See also: Foil stamping, Metallized film

**Color matching** Ink & color
Mixing or adjusting inks so printed color matches a target, such as a brand color, Pantone reference, or physical sample.
See also: Pantone Matching System (PMS), Delta E, Spot color

**Color separation** Artwork & prepress
Breaking artwork into the individual ink layers (such as C, M, Y, K, and any spot colors) that will each be printed separately.
See also: CMYK, Spot color, Plate

**Company store** Promotional products
An online store where a company's employees, members, or customers can order branded merchandise, often with stock held and shipped by a fulfillment provider.
See also: Fulfillment, Branded merchandise

**Conformability** Performance
How easily a label bends and stretches to follow curves, ribs, or irregular surfaces without wrinkling or lifting.
See also: Edge lift, Memory, Squeeze bottle

**Core** Finishing & converting
The cardboard or plastic tube a roll of labels is wound on. Core diameter (commonly 1 or 3 inches) must match the printer, dispenser, or applicator being used.
See also: Outside diameter (OD), Roll label

**Corona treatment** Materials
An electrical surface treatment that raises a film's surface energy so inks, coatings, and adhesives bond better.
See also: Topcoat

**Crazing** Performance
A network of fine cracks in a coating, varnish, or plastic surface, often caused by stress, solvents, or aging.
See also: Solvent resistance

**Crop marks** Artwork & prepress
Small lines outside the artwork that show where the finished piece will be trimmed.
See also: Bleed, Die line

**Cut singles** Finishing & converting
Individual labels each on their own piece of liner, rather than on a continuous roll or sheet.
See also: Roll label, Sheeted labels

**Cut-and-stack labels** Packaging
Labels printed on sheets, cut to size, and stacked in bundles, usually without adhesive. They're applied with glue on high-speed bottling and canning lines.
See also: Wrap-around label

# D

**Debossing** Finishing & converting
Pressing a design into the label so it sits below the surface, adding texture and a tactile, upscale feel.
See also: Embossing

**Decal** General
A printed graphic made to transfer or adhere to a surface, often for vehicles, equipment, windows, or signage. Decals are typically made from durable vinyl or polyester.
See also: Vinyl, Weatherability

**Decoration method** Promotional products
The process used to put a logo onto a product, such as screen printing, pad printing, embroidery, laser engraving, heat transfer, or a printed label. The right method depends on the item's material and shape.
See also: Imprint area, Pad printing, Embroidery

**Delta E** Ink & color
A number describing how different two colors are. Lower is closer; differences below about 2 are generally hard for most viewers to see. It's often used to set color tolerances.
See also: Color matching, Tolerance

**Die** Finishing & converting
A cutting tool shaped to the outline of a label. Dies can cut through the face stock only, through both face and liner, or create holes and windows inside a label.
See also: Rotary die, Flatbed die, Tooling

**Die cutting** Finishing & converting
Cutting labels to their final shape using a die. Labels can be any shape, from standard rectangles to custom contours.
See also: Die, Matrix

**Die line** Artwork & prepress
An outline in the artwork file showing exactly where the label will be cut. It sits on its own layer and doesn't print.
See also: Bleed, Safe zone

**Digital printing** Printing methods
Printing directly from a digital file with no plates. It's well suited to short runs, many versions, and variable data, since each label can be different. Label Systems runs Xeikon digital equipment for high-resolution color work.
See also: Variable data printing, Flexographic printing

**Digitizing** Promotional products
Converting artwork into a stitch file that tells an embroidery machine where and how to sew. Usually a one-time charge per design.
See also: Embroidery, Stitch count

**Direct food contact** Performance
Labels whose materials and adhesives are approved to touch food, such as produce stickers. They must meet applicable FDA requirements.
See also: Adhesive

**Direct thermal** Printing methods
A printing method that uses heat to darken a chemically coated label, with no ribbon or ink. It's common for shipping and short-life labels but can fade with heat and light over time.
See also: Thermal transfer

**Direct-to-film (DTF)** Promotional products
Printing a design onto a special film, coating it with adhesive powder, and heat-pressing it onto fabric. It handles full color on many fabric types.
See also: Heat transfer, Dye sublimation

**Doming** Finishing & converting
Applying a clear, raised polyurethane coating over a label to create a glossy 3D lens effect that also adds durability.
See also: Topcoat

**DPI** Printing methods
Dots per inch: a measure of print or image resolution. For labels, artwork images should generally be at least 300 dpi at final size.
See also: Raster image, Vector artwork

**Drop ship** Promotional products
Shipping an order directly from the manufacturer to its final destination, rather than routing it through a warehouse or reseller first.
See also: Split shipment, Fulfillment

**Dye sublimation** Promotional products
Using heat to turn special inks into a gas that bonds into polyester fabric or polymer-coated items. The image becomes part of the material, so it won't crack or peel.
See also: Heat transfer, Direct-to-film (DTF)

# E

**Edge lift** Performance
When a label's edges peel up from the surface, most often on tight curves or with stiff materials. Better conformability, adhesive choice, and application technique help prevent it.
See also: Conformability, Memory, Flagging

**Embossing** Finishing & converting
Raising a design above the label surface with matched dies, adding a tactile, premium dimension. Often paired with foil.
See also: Debossing, Foil stamping

**Embroidery** Promotional products
Stitching a logo into fabric with thread. It's durable and upscale, and cost is typically based on stitch count.
See also: Stitch count, Digitizing

**Etch and fill** Nameplates & overlays
Chemically etching a design into metal, then filling the recessed areas with paint. Because the graphic sits below the surface, it holds up in harsh, abrasive conditions.
See also: Nameplate

**Extended gamut** Ink & color
Printing with additional process colors, often orange, green, and violet, alongside CMYK to reach more colors without mixing spot inks.
See also: CMYK, Spot color

# F

**Face stock** Materials
The top layer of a label that receives the print: paper, film, foil, or fabric. It's carried on a liner with adhesive in between.
See also: Liner, Label stock, Substrate

**Fanfold** Finishing & converting
Continuous labels folded back and forth into a flat stack, rather than wound on a roll. Common for high-volume printers. Also called zigzag fold.
See also: Roll label

**Film** Materials
A synthetic plastic material used as a face stock or liner, such as polypropylene, polyester, polyethylene, or vinyl. Films resist moisture and tearing better than paper.
See also: BOPP, Polyester (PET), Vinyl

**Flagging** Performance
A form of label failure where one end of a label wrapped around a narrow cylinder lifts off and sticks out like a flag.
See also: Edge lift, Memory

**Flatbed die** Finishing & converting
A flat steel-rule cutting tool pressed straight down onto the material. It's economical for short runs, thicker materials, and nameplates.
See also: Rotary die, Die

**Flexible packaging** Packaging
Packaging made from films, foils, or papers that bend and change shape, such as pouches, bags, sachets, and wraps. It's lighter than rigid packaging and can be printed edge to edge.
See also: Stand-up pouch, Rollstock, Barrier film

**Flexographic printing** Printing methods
A roll-fed printing process using flexible relief plates and fast-drying inks. It's efficient for medium to long runs and can combine printing, varnishing, laminating, and die cutting in one pass.
See also: Plate, Anilox roll, Digital printing

**Flood coat** Ink & color
A layer of ink or coating applied across the entire surface rather than in a pattern.
See also: Spot varnish, Varnish

**Foil stamping** Finishing & converting
Using heat and pressure to transfer metallic or pigmented foil onto a label. Also called hot stamping. It produces bright, reflective accents.
See also: Cold foil, Embossing

**Four-color process** Ink & color
Reproducing full-color images by overlapping tiny dots of cyan, magenta, yellow, and black ink. Also called process printing.
See also: CMYK

**Freezer-grade adhesive** Adhesives
An adhesive that stays tacky and bonds at low temperatures, used on frozen and refrigerated products.
See also: All-temperature adhesive, Minimum application temperature

**Fulfillment** Promotional products
Storing inventory and picking, packing, and shipping orders as they come in, often to many recipients or locations.
See also: Kitting, Company store, Drop ship

# G

**GHS label** General
A chemical hazard label following the UN's Globally Harmonized System, with standard pictograms, signal words, and hazard statements. GHS labels often require durable, chemical-resistant materials.
See also: Solvent resistance

**Gloss** Materials
How shiny a surface is. Gloss finishes make colors look vibrant; lower-gloss finishes reduce glare and fingerprints.
See also: Matte, Laminate, Varnish

**Graphic overlay** Nameplates & overlays
A printed, usually back-printed sheet of polycarbonate or polyester that forms the front face of a control panel, keypad, or device, often with windows, textures, and an adhesive back.
See also: Polycarbonate

**Gusset** Packaging
A fold in the side or bottom of a pouch or bag that lets it expand and, for a bottom gusset, stand upright.
See also: Stand-up pouch

# H

**Hang hole** Packaging
A punched hole, often a round or sombrero shape, that lets a pouch or tag hang from a retail peg.
See also: Hang tag, Stand-up pouch

**Hang tag** General
A tag attached by string, loop, or fastener rather than adhesive, often used on apparel and retail goods.

**Hard coat** Nameplates & overlays
A scratch- and chemical-resistant coating applied to the top of an overlay or film to protect it from wear and cleaning.
See also: Graphic overlay, Abrasion resistance

**Heat seal** Packaging
Bonding layers of packaging film together using heat and pressure, as when sealing a pouch.
See also: Flexible packaging

**Heat transfer** Promotional products
A design printed onto a carrier sheet and then applied to a product with heat and pressure.
See also: Direct-to-film (DTF), Dye sublimation

**High-temperature label** Performance
A label built to stay attached and legible on hot surfaces or through processes like reflow soldering, powder coating, or engine-compartment exposure.
See also: Service temperature

**Holographic film** Finishing & converting
A face stock or laminate with a diffraction pattern that creates shifting rainbow effects. Used for eye-catching packaging and anti-counterfeiting.
See also: Security label

**Hue** Ink & color
The attribute that names a color family, such as red, green, or blue, separate from how light or saturated it is.
See also: Color matching

# I

**Imprint area** Promotional products
The maximum space on a product where a logo or design can be decorated, given as width by height.
See also: Decoration method, Imprint location

**Imprint location** Promotional products
Where on a product a decoration is placed, such as the front, back, sleeve, or lid. Adding locations usually adds cost.
See also: Imprint area

**Imprinting** Printing methods
Adding information to a pre-printed label afterward, often with a thermal or laser printer, such as dates, lot numbers, or prices.
See also: Thermal transfer, Variable data printing

**In-hands date** Promotional products
The date the customer needs the finished products delivered. Production and shipping are scheduled back from it.
See also: Production time, Rush service

**Ink** Ink & color
A colorant (pigment or dye) carried in a vehicle that dries or cures on the surface. Label inks are formulated for specific presses, materials, and durability needs.
See also: UV curing, Pigment

**Inkjet** Printing methods
A digital printing method that sprays tiny ink droplets directly onto the material. Used for short-run color and for adding variable data.
See also: Digital printing

**Instant redeemable coupon (IRC)** Promotional products
A coupon label applied to a product package that shoppers can peel off and redeem at checkout.
See also: Peel-and-reveal label

# K

**Kitting** General
Grouping related items, such as labels, decals, and nameplates for a product, into a single packaged set ready for assembly or shipment.

**Knockout** Artwork & prepress
Removing one color where another sits on top of it, for example leaving white text unprinted inside a solid color.
See also: Reverse printing, Trapping

**Kraft paper** Materials
An unbleached brown paper with a natural, earthy look, popular for craft, organic, and eco-minded brands.
See also: Uncoated paper

# L

**Label stock** Materials
The combination of face stock, adhesive, and liner from which labels are made. Also called pressure-sensitive laminate.
See also: Face stock, Liner, Adhesive

**Laminate** Finishing & converting
A thin clear film applied over a printed label to protect it from moisture, chemicals, abrasion, and UV. Available in gloss, matte, and specialty finishes.
See also: Varnish, Topcoat, Abrasion resistance

**Laser engraving** Nameplates & overlays
Using a laser to remove, darken, or alter material to create a permanent mark. Common for serial numbers and fine detail on metal and plastic.
See also: Nameplate, Serialization

**Liner** Materials
The backing sheet that carries the label and adhesive until application, usually paper or film coated with silicone so labels release cleanly. Also called release liner.
See also: Face stock, Backslit

# M

**Make-ready** Printing methods
The setup work done before a press run: mounting plates, setting colors and registration, and test printing until the job is right.
See also: Plate, Registration

**Matrix** Finishing & converting
The waste material left after die cutting, which is stripped away to leave the labels on the liner.
See also: Die cutting

**Matte** Materials
A flat, low-gloss finish that reduces glare and gives a soft, understated look.
See also: Gloss, Soft-touch

**Memory** Performance
A material's tendency to return to its original flat shape. High-memory labels can lift on curved surfaces, so thinner or more conformable materials may be needed.
See also: Conformability, Flagging

**Metallized film** Materials
A film with a thin vaporized metal layer that gives a mirror-like silver look at lower cost than foil. Colored inks over it create metallic colors.
See also: Cold foil, Foil stamping

**Minimum application temperature** Adhesives
The lowest temperature at which a label can be applied and still bond properly. It's often higher than the temperature the label can survive once applied.
See also: Application temperature, Service temperature

**Minimum order quantity (MOQ)** General
The smallest number of units that can be produced economically for a given job.
See also: Overrun

# N

**Nameplate** Nameplates & overlays
A durable identification plate, typically metal or plastic, that carries brand, model, serial, rating, or safety information on equipment. Made by methods such as etch and fill, screen printing, and embossing.
See also: Anodized aluminum, Etch and fill

# O

**Offset printing** Printing methods
A process in which ink moves from a plate to a rubber blanket and then onto the material. It produces sharp, consistent images, particularly on sheets.
See also: Flexographic printing

**Opacity** Materials
How much a material blocks light and what's behind it. High opacity keeps a container's color or print from showing through.
See also: White underprint

**Outside diameter (OD)** Finishing & converting
The total diameter of a finished roll of labels. Applicators and printers have a maximum OD they can hold.
See also: Core, Roll label

**Overrun** General
Quantity produced above the amount ordered (an underrun is below). Industry practice commonly allows a variance of about plus or minus 10%.
See also: Minimum order quantity (MOQ)

# P

**Pad printing** Promotional products
Transferring ink from an etched plate to a product using a soft silicone pad. The pad wraps around curves, which makes it well suited to pens, drinkware, and other irregular shapes.
See also: Decoration method, Screen printing

**Pantone Matching System (PMS)** Ink & color
A standardized color system that assigns numbers to specific ink formulas, so a brand color can be specified and reproduced consistently.
See also: Spot color, Color matching

**Peel-and-reveal label** Promotional products
A label with a top layer that peels back to show a hidden message, coupon, or prize underneath. Used for promotions and contests.
See also: Scratch-off label, Instant redeemable coupon (IRC)

**Perforation** Finishing & converting
A line of small cuts that lets part of a label or tag be torn off cleanly.
See also: Score

**Permanent adhesive** Adhesives
An adhesive designed so the label can't be removed without tearing or leaving residue.
See also: Removable adhesive

**Piggyback label** General
A two-layer construction in which a top label can be peeled off and reapplied elsewhere, while a base label stays on the original item.
See also: Booklet label

**Pigment** Ink & color
Fine solid particles that give ink or coating its color. Pigments generally resist fading better than dyes.
See also: Ink

**Plate** Printing methods
The image carrier on a press. In flexography it's a flexible relief plate, usually one per color.
See also: Flexographic printing, Make-ready

**Polycarbonate** Nameplates & overlays
A tough, clear plastic often used for graphic overlays. It prints well and can be formed or textured, though it has less chemical resistance than polyester.
See also: Polyester (PET), Graphic overlay

**Polyester (PET)** Materials
A strong, dimensionally stable film with good heat, chemical, and abrasion resistance. Common for durable, industrial, and asset labels, and for overlays with frequent flexing.
See also: Film, Polycarbonate

**Polyethylene (PE)** Materials
A soft, flexible film that conforms well to squeezable containers.
See also: Squeeze bottle

**Polypropylene (PP)** Materials
A durable, moisture- and chemical-resistant film. It's a common choice for products exposed to water, oils, or refrigeration.
See also: BOPP, Film

**Pressure-sensitive label** General
A self-adhesive label that bonds with light pressure, with no heat, water, or solvent needed to activate it.
See also: Label stock, Adhesive

**Prime label** General
The main branded label on a product, the one customers see on the shelf.
See also: Wrap-around label

**Print-ready file** Artwork & prepress
Artwork prepared for production: correct dimensions, bleed, CMYK or specified spot colors, embedded or outlined fonts, and high-resolution images, usually as a PDF.
See also: Artwork, Proof

**Production time** Promotional products
How long it takes to produce an order after proof approval, usually given in business days and not including shipping.
See also: In-hands date, Rush service

**Promotional product** Promotional products
A useful or decorative item imprinted with a logo or message and given away to promote a brand, event, or cause. Labels, stickers, and decals are among the most affordable.
See also: Branded merchandise, Advertising specialty

**Proof** Artwork & prepress
A preview of a job for customer approval before production. It may be a digital PDF or a physical printed sample.
See also: Artwork, Print-ready file

# Q

**QR code** Barcodes & data
A two-dimensional barcode that holds more data than a standard barcode and can be read by phone cameras, often linking to websites or product information.
See also: Barcode, Variable data printing

**Quiet zone** Barcodes & data
The blank margin required on each side of a barcode so scanners can tell where it starts and ends.
See also: Barcode, Barcode verification

# R

**Raster image** Artwork & prepress
An image made of pixels, such as a photo. It loses quality when enlarged, so it must be created at sufficient resolution for its printed size.
See also: Vector artwork, DPI

**Registration** Printing methods
How accurately different colors, cuts, and embellishments line up with one another.
See also: Make-ready, Tolerance

**Removable adhesive** Adhesives
An adhesive that lets a label be peeled off cleanly within its rated time and surface, without leaving residue.
See also: Repositionable adhesive, Permanent adhesive

**Repositionable adhesive** Adhesives
An adhesive that lets a label be lifted and reapplied, usually for a limited time after application.
See also: Removable adhesive

**Reverse printing** Artwork & prepress
A design where the text or image is left unprinted and the background is printed, so the design shows in the color of the material underneath.
See also: Knockout

**RFID label** Barcodes & data
A label with an embedded radio-frequency chip and antenna that can be read without line of sight, used for inventory, tracking, and authentication.
See also: Barcode, Serialization

**RGB** Artwork & prepress
Red, green, and blue: the light-based color model used on screens. RGB files must be converted to CMYK for printing, which can change how colors look.
See also: CMYK

**Roll label** Finishing & converting
Labels supplied on a continuous liner wound on a core, for use with hand dispensers, printers, or automatic applicators.
See also: Core, Unwind direction, Sheeted labels

**Rollstock** Packaging
Printed packaging film supplied on a roll to be formed, filled, and sealed into packages on the customer's machinery.
See also: Flexible packaging

**Rotary die** Finishing & converting
A cylindrical cutting tool that cuts labels continuously as the web passes through the press. Efficient for longer runs.
See also: Flatbed die, Die

**Rubber-based adhesive** Adhesives
An adhesive with strong initial grab, good for corrugated and harder-to-stick surfaces, though generally less resistant to UV and aging than acrylics.
See also: Acrylic adhesive, Tack

**Rush service** Promotional products
Production done faster than the standard production time, often for an added fee.
See also: Production time, In-hands date

# S

**Safe zone** Artwork & prepress
The area inside the cut line where important text and graphics should stay, so nothing critical gets trimmed. Typically about 1/16 inch in from the edge.
See also: Bleed, Die line

**Score** Finishing & converting
A partial cut or crease that lets material fold or tear in a controlled way.
See also: Perforation

**Scratch-off label** Promotional products
A label coated with a removable layer that's scratched away to reveal a code, prize, or message underneath.
See also: Peel-and-reveal label, Security label

**Screen printing** Printing methods
Pushing ink through a fine mesh stencil onto a surface. It lays down thick, opaque, durable ink layers, ideal for overlays, nameplates, and outdoor decals.
See also: Graphic overlay, Decal

**Security label** Performance
A label designed to deter tampering or counterfeiting, using features such as destructible materials, VOID patterns, holograms, or serialized codes.
See also: Tamper-evident label, Holographic film

**Serialization** Barcodes & data
Printing a unique number or code on each label for tracking, warranty, or authentication.
See also: Variable data printing, Barcode

**Service temperature** Adhesives
The temperature range a label can withstand after it's been applied and fully bonded.
See also: Application temperature, High-temperature label

**Sheeted labels** Finishing & converting
Labels supplied on flat sheets rather than rolls, often for office printers or hand application.
See also: Roll label

**Shrink ratio** Packaging
How much a sleeve film can shrink in a given direction, usually given as a percentage. The container's shape determines what ratio is needed.
See also: Shrink sleeve

**Shrink sleeve** Packaging
A printed film tube that's slipped over a container and shrunk with heat to fit its shape exactly, allowing 360-degree graphics on curved and contoured packages.
See also: Shrink ratio, Shrink tunnel

**Shrink tunnel** Packaging
Equipment that applies heat or steam to shrink sleeves tightly onto containers.
See also: Shrink sleeve

**Slitting** Finishing & converting
Cutting a wide roll of printed labels into narrower rolls of the finished width.
See also: Roll label

**Soft-touch** Finishing & converting
A coating or laminate with a velvety, rubbery feel that adds a premium tactile experience.
See also: Matte, Laminate

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YOUR BRAND HERE. THERE. EVERYWHERE.

**Solvent resistance** Performance
How well a label's ink, face stock, and adhesive hold up against oils, fuels, cleaners, alcohols, and other chemicals.
See also: GHS label, Laminate

**Spec sample** Promotional products
A sample made with the customer's actual logo before production, so they can approve the real product. A random sample shows the product with someone else's imprint.
See also: Proof, Virtual proof

**Split shipment** Promotional products
Dividing one order into deliveries to multiple addresses.
See also: Drop ship, Fulfillment

**Spot color** Ink & color
A single premixed ink printed in a defined area, rather than built from CMYK dots. Used for exact brand colors and specialty inks like metallics.
See also: Pantone Matching System (PMS), CMYK

**Spot varnish** Finishing & converting
A clear coating applied only to selected areas to make them glossier or more textured than the surrounding label.
See also: Varnish, Flood coat

**Squeeze bottle** Performance
A flexible container that deforms in use. Labels for squeeze bottles need conformable films like polyethylene so they flex without wrinkling or cracking.
See also: Polyethylene (PE), Conformability

**Stand-up pouch** Packaging
A flexible package with a bottom gusset that lets it stand on a shelf. Often includes a zipper, tear notch, or hang hole.
See also: Gusset, Zipper, Flexible packaging

**Static cling** Materials
A vinyl film that clings to smooth surfaces like glass through static rather than adhesive, so it can be removed and reused.
See also: Vinyl, Removable adhesive

**Stitch count** Promotional products
The number of stitches in an embroidered design. It's the main driver of embroidery pricing.
See also: Embroidery, Digitizing

**Substrate** Materials
The material something is printed on or applied to. In labels it may mean either the face stock or the surface the label goes on, so it helps to clarify which.
See also: Face stock

**Swag** Promotional products
Informal term for free branded items handed out at events, conferences, and trade shows.
See also: Branded merchandise, Promotional product

**Synthetic paper** Materials
A paper-like plastic film with the look and printability of paper but much better tear and water resistance.
See also: Film

# T

**Tack** Adhesives
An adhesive's initial stickiness, or how quickly it grabs a surface with light pressure and short contact.
See also: Adhesive

**Tamper-evident label** Performance
A label that visibly breaks apart, leaves a pattern, or otherwise shows if someone has tried to remove or open it.
See also: Security label, VOID label

**Tear notch** Packaging
A small cut at the edge of a pouch that makes it easy to tear open by hand.
See also: Stand-up pouch

**Thermal transfer** Printing methods
A printing method in which heat melts ink from a ribbon onto a label. It creates durable, long-lasting prints for barcodes and variable data.
See also: Thermal transfer ribbon, Direct thermal

**Thermal transfer ribbon** Printing methods
The ink-coated film used in thermal transfer printing. Wax, wax-resin, and resin formulas suit different materials and durability needs.
See also: Thermal transfer

**Through cut** Finishing & converting
A die cut that goes through the face stock and the liner, separating each label completely.
See also: Cut singles

**Tint** Ink & color
A lighter version of a color made by printing it at less than full strength.

**Tolerance** General
The acceptable range of variation in a finished product, such as size, cut position, or color.
See also: Delta E, Registration

**Tooling** Finishing & converting
The cutting dies, plates, and other custom tools needed to produce a specific label. Tooling is often a one-time cost that can be reused for reorders.
See also: Die, Plate

**Topcoat** Materials
A coating on the face stock that improves printability or receptivity to certain inks, such as thermal transfer.
See also: Corona treatment, Thermal transfer

**Transfer adhesive** Adhesives
An adhesive layer supplied on a liner without a face stock, used to make parts like nameplates, overlays, and gaskets self-adhesive.
See also: Nameplate, Graphic overlay

**Trapping** Artwork & prepress
Slightly overlapping adjacent colors so small shifts during printing don't leave white gaps between them.
See also: Registration, Knockout

# U

**Uncoated paper** Materials
Paper without a surface coating, giving a natural, textured feel. It absorbs ink more, so colors appear softer.
See also: Coated paper, Kraft paper

**Unwind direction** Finishing & converting
The orientation of labels on a roll as they come off it (such as top first, bottom first, right side first). It must match the applicator or printer. Also called rewind position.
See also: Roll label, Core

**UV curing** Ink & color
Instantly hardening inks and coatings with ultraviolet light. UV inks dry fast and resist scuffing and chemicals.
See also: Ink, Varnish

**UV resistance** Performance
How well a label resists fading, yellowing, or becoming brittle with sun exposure.
See also: Weatherability, Laminate

# V

**Variable data printing** Barcodes & data
Changing text, numbers, codes, or images from one label to the next within a single run, for serial numbers, barcodes, names, or versions.
See also: Digital printing, Serialization

**Varnish** Finishing & converting
A clear liquid coating printed over a label to protect it and add gloss, matte, or textured effects.
See also: Laminate, Spot varnish, UV curing

**Vector artwork** Artwork & prepress
Graphics defined by mathematical paths rather than pixels, so they scale to any size without losing sharpness. Logos and text should be vector.
See also: Raster image

**Vignette** Artwork & prepress
A gradient or fade that blends smoothly from one tone to another, or into the unprinted background.

**Vinyl** Materials
A flexible, conformable, durable film widely used for outdoor decals, vehicle graphics, and labels on curved surfaces.
See also: Decal, Static cling

**Virtual proof** Promotional products
A digital mockup that shows a logo on the actual product, used for approval before production.
See also: Proof, Spec sample

**VOID label** Performance
A security label that leaves a VOID pattern behind on the surface, or in the label itself, when it's removed.
See also: Tamper-evident label

# W

**Weatherability** Performance
A label's ability to withstand sun, rain, temperature swings, humidity, and time outdoors.
See also: UV resistance, Decal

**White underprint** Ink & color
A layer of opaque white ink printed beneath colors on clear or metallic materials, so the colors appear bright and solid instead of see-through.
See also: Opacity

**Window** Nameplates & overlays

A clear, unprinted area in an overlay that lets a display, LED, or screen show through.

See also: Graphic overlay

**Wrap-around label** General

A label that wraps fully around a container, sometimes overlapping itself at the seam.

See also: Prime label, Shrink sleeve

# Z

**Zipper** Packaging

A press-to-close strip built into a pouch so it can be resealed after opening.

See also: Stand-up pouch

## Not sure which material or finish fits your product?

Tell us where your label will live, what it needs to survive, and how it gets applied. Our team and in-house art department will recommend a construction and help you get your artwork press-ready.

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