

Building an Antioxidant Business

Digital Printing Facilitates Private Label Growth

Alternative medicine worked so well for Lorraine St. John that it inspired her to found HerbaSway® Laboratories 10 years ago. The company (www.herbasway.com), headquartered in Wallingford, CT, now specializes in developing and producing natural therapeutic products and dietary supplements. Recently, HerbaSway found that digitally printed labels for their bottles was an attractive printing alternative that offered numerous benefits.

“Since we have our own laboratory, we also do private label work,” St. John explains. “We couldn’t afford to pass up digital. There are too many pluses. We can get samples for presentations and we can produce the designs these companies send us to their specifications. For our own labels, it provides the exact colors we specify, we can order smaller quantities, and changes to the labels are easier.”

Avenues for Growth

HerbaSway Laboratories produces three concentrated liquid product lines: natural herbal teas, therapeutic dietary supplements, and traditional Chinese herbal medicines. St. John notes that while private labeling wasn’t part of their original plan, they are now actively seeking to grow this side of the business.

Randy Duhaime, general manager at Dion Label Printing Inc. in Westfield, MA, says that his company is transitioning all of HerbaSway’s labels to its two HP Indigo narrow web label presses because digital printing is clearly a perfect fit for these jobs, especially the private label work where the proof comes off the same press. “HerbaSway uses this capability to print mockups for presentations to prospects,” Duhaime says. “The clients



feel secure because they are seeing the actual label.”

HerbaSway’s direct business is growing organically as well, especially the green tea concentrate. “Green tea is such a hot item today, so we now offer it in eight flavors,” St. John says. “When we added the flavors and with our move to digital printing, we also changed our design from two colors to four or more color labels that complement the flavor.”

The HP Indigo narrow web label press at Dion Label Printing can print up to seven colors, including spot colors and white, and is able to reproduce exact color on every label. “We are very sensitive to variations in color on our labels,” St. John explains. “If the color on the labels on the bottles on a shelf is not the same, people will either immediately perceive the product as inferior quality or get the subliminal message that it is not first class.”

Meeting Every Challenge

Duhaime also points out that HerbaSway’s label designs are rather complex for the category. For example, some designs specify six-point type

reversed out of four-color process. “These labels require dead register that’s not always achievable with flexography,” he says. “With digital it is—there are no traps and registration is perfect.”

Customers like HerbaSway who choose digital printing usually like that they can order the actual label quantities they need. Duhaime says that HerbaSway’s runs vary from 200,000 labels at a time for the original green tea (Herbagreen® Tea) to between 10,000 and 75,000 for other products. Frequent changes on the labels was another consideration for HerbaSway. While brand image building precludes arbitrary design changes, St. John explains that the FDA dictates the required information—and its format—in the supplement facts box on the label.

“We’re pleased and happy about the reduced costs we’re achieving with digital printing,” she concludes. “Not only can we order the amounts we need, but we are also achieving substantial savings in charges for plate changes that are frequently needed to meet FDA requirements.”