



DONT GET DESPERATE and try to sell tape, there's plenty of innovation in the labelling sector

Get stuck IN

Bryony Taylor looks into the innovations that are making the label sector stick.

With the growth of electronic mail and telephone communications in the last five years it has been difficult for an industry based primarily on snail mail usage to survive. However, labeling has done. As a sector it is currently growing, and still holds a vast market share – there are 6.7 million address label users in the UK. So what innovations have kept this market buoyant?

Avery Dennison says that 62% of that 6.7 million have used their labels in the last 12 months. This is due to a loyalty among label users toward their products, which the company claims is based on performance and innovation.

Innovations such as QuickPEEL have allowed faster application and easier peeling for users. Amy Collins, marketing manager at Avery Dennison said, “We are launching QuickPEEL technology throughout our portfolio after research revealed office users notably preferred the labels, which save labeling time by up to 25%.”

The importance of software in their brand strength cannot be underestimated. Since becoming a Microsoft Gold Partner with their Avery Wizard software, they have seen label sales grow by 14%.

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Collins continues: “A second technological innovation to have an impact is the growth of colour laser printers. Colour laser printers have very sensitive components and operate at much higher temperatures than inkjets, and as such, demand stationery which is specifically designed

to be compatible with it if you’re going to get the best results from the investment. This is a great link-selling opportunity.”

Brother’s UK general manager for label printing, Mike Kelly, agrees. “There are now a variety of desktop and portable machines available to suit a range of needs and a range of labels.

“Our research development team is also expanding the use of our TZ tape technology by developing a P-touch printer that uses RFID. Businesses can’t afford for stock to go missing. RFID was hailed as the solution for keeping track of stock, but the tags can so easily be damaged by abrasion. Our new label printer will produce labels that have an RFID antenna encased in our TZ tape to give retailers and manufacturers peace of mind.”

The versatility of labels and their audience is key to keeping the market afloat and relevant. In this vein Brother realized the potential of markets not often linked with labeling, such as, those involving gardeners and electricians.

“Throughout the home, consumers are using labels to organize their finances and files or for scrapbooking and labeling photographs,” continues Kelly. “Brother’s P-tough range includes a number of fun devices that are not expensive.”

Similarly Collins continues: “An interesting development helping to counteract the decline in mailed items is the enormous growth from the shipment of items being bought online, and via eBay which has opened up the marketplace to small companies and individuals. Using labels means that undelivered items are returned to the sender, not destroyed.”

It is clear then that the glue making the sector stick is innovation. The introduction of new types of labels has allowed the reseller to approach different audiences as well as their regular customers. This has kept the market buoyant and continues to do so. ●