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Reducing Waste in 2012

By Danika Manchester

Holiday Festivities take operational planning. There is list-making (planning), shopping (sourcing), wrapping (packaging), cooking (expense items), and traveling (logistics). There is even a strategy to gift-opening—gathering in a circle perhaps, with assigned seating, gift distribution, and a designated investigator to identify the intended recipient of gifts without tags.

Afterwards - Waste Management! All the wrapping paper, packaging, tags, labels, receipts, bows, ribbons, and envelopes that were required just minutes ago to make sense in the madness are now obsolete, and must be quickly discarded to ensure that no gifts or money envelopes accidentally go missing in the fray.

The high-volume of holiday purchases brings into focus the amount of paper and packaging materials used year-round to process merchandise throughout the supply chain, ending up in consumers' homes and trash cans.

As Retailers and Brands, you can reduce waste by integrating more information onto fewer forms.

Integrated Brand Tags

- Add Style, Fit, and Material descriptions to Pocket Flashers, Joker tags or Size Strips to reduce the number of paper trim items applied to apparel.
- Integrate Retailer price, barcode, and SKU information into manufacturer's brand tags to eliminate the need for a separate price tag.
 - Technology now allows for pre-cut unique shape brand tags to be variably imprinted on demand, allowing for more versatility to include variable information on branding collateral.
- Utilize integrated forms to print Safety Message tags and labels at the same time and on the same form as the Price or Brand Tag.

Retailer Price Tags

- Print Special Value Messaging on price tags and labels—"Compare At", "You Save", "Price Guarantee", Multiples Pricing, Return Policies, etc.—so that the Value Message gets carried out of the store by the customer without additional printed literature.
- Decrease the tag or label size: improved print technologies allow for sharper printing of smaller font sizes, allowing for more data on to be included in a smaller area.
- Perforate price areas on tickets and labels to allow for the removal of price (rather than the entire tag) at gift giving, increasing the speed of return and re-ticketing.

- Integrate POP/ Return Label barcodes onto the original price ticket, to eliminate store level printing of a separate item while maintaining the same level of security.
- Vary the price tag and label materials used on merchandise to reduce store-level re-ticketing —specialty adhesives are now available that are tamper-evident to reduce price swapping, but cleanly remove from the product for customer satisfaction. Specialty tag materials are available that are more durable than paper to reduce lost tickets.
- Use liner-less for markdowns and re-ticketing in stores to reduce liner waste.

At the Distribution Center

- Utilize integrated forms for e-commerce order fulfillment—the packing list, gift message, invoice, return language, shipping label, and even return labels can be printed at one time on one form, and the form can be constructed of both bond paper and label materials.
- Utilize integrated forms for shelf-marked items—print the shelf mark labels with the carton label in one printing operation. The shelf mark labels tuck under the carton label to prevent missing labels.
- Utilize integrated forms for store-level individual item price marking- print the individual item price labels with the carton label in one printing operation. The individual item labels tuck under the carton label to prevent missing labels.

Reducing waste—both material and processing time—benefits everyone by decreasing the cost across the supply chain while maintaining high quality Brand and Value messages to the consumer.

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