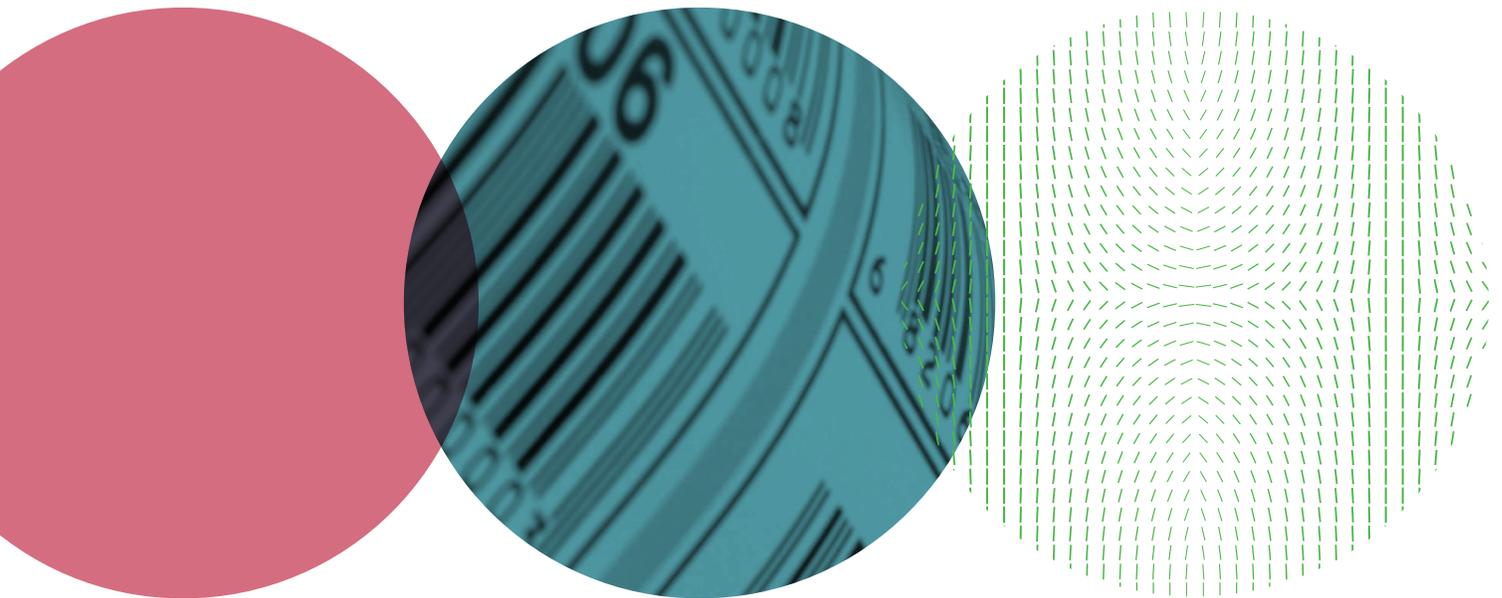


Is print and apply label automation right for you?

4 KEY QUESTIONS YOU MUST ASK



COMPUTYPE

Whether you need to keep your lab running smoothly to ensure accurate research or increase efficiency at your plant to deliver high-quality products on time, the right labeling automation system helps you reach your goals. You have important work to do beyond label application, such as meeting customer demands and core objectives. That's why automating your labeling processes is a smart strategic move. However, you may not know what to expect when you switch to print-and-apply labeling. Making a major change to your internal processes can seem daunting, but the benefits outweigh the challenges. All you need is an expert's guidance. Learn the answers to four key questions you must ask your label supplier before transitioning to a labeling automation system.

1. What does print and apply label automation look like?

While barcode automation processes vary widely depending on your industry and your company's specific needs, read the following examples to understand what print-and-apply label automation looks like in action:

TIRE AND RUBBER

Some businesses begin production by applying a small barcode label to track the piece of rubber throughout its manufacturing life. A barcode applicator automatically applies a bead label at this stage. However, some manufacturers wait until after the tire is formed to apply the bead label.

Durable, wear-resistant labels can withstand the manufacturing process, and the right labeling system is flexible enough to suit your current processes no matter what stage you choose to apply a tracking label.

A label application machine applies a tread label used for marketing the product's name and brand at the final stage of manufacturing. These labels are created in either color or black and white and must be applied absolutely straight so they appear professional to customers. Automating the labeling process helps manufacturers reduce scrap, reruns, human error and labor costs with more precise, efficient labeling.

HEALTHCARE

In many cases, a researcher needs an entire batch of tubes or vials labeled and ready to use before beginning a research task. A print-and-apply labeling automation system allows researchers to load up to 2,000 containers into a machine that sorts and orients them. The containers move down a conveyor belt where labels are printed and applied precisely.

From there, the automated machine feeds containers to a picker, or a robotic arm that picks up the labeled containers and organizes them into a rack, ensuring a ready-to-use solution.

Lab work incorporates a variety of processes, so print-and-apply labeling will look different for each lab. This is just one example of an automated labeling process – many more examples exist.

2. How much flexibility does label automation offer?

No matter your industry, a flexible labeling automation system is essential. For example, tire production lines may need to run a series of multiple different brands of different sizes. Scan bridges help identify what type of label is required for each tire so that further down the line, labeling equipment can print and apply the correct tire label. However, the equipment must adapt to different tire sizes. A label applicator that moves up or down to adjust to the height of each tire accomplishes the task.

In healthcare too, print-and-apply systems accommodate multiple container sizes with easy changeover and no tools required. Experts at your label solutions company can help you design a standard, flexible label that works well for all size lab containers when possible. This helps you condense your labeling processes and is the most efficient way to reduce inventory and improve cost savings.

Similarly, your label supplier should offer flexible service options pre- and post-implementation. The right supplier customizes your support based on the following needs:

- Getting your barcode automation system up and running
- Implementing new processes
- Integrating your system with current processes
- Addressing problems if your system stops working correctly



Labeling automation drives efficiency and cost savings at your organization, giving you the tools you need to grow.



3. How will label automation increase my efficiency?

When you're considering barcode automation, you may wonder if a new system is truly worth the investment from an efficiency standpoint.

Automated labeling equipment is considerably faster than manual processes. Lab researchers are able to label up to 900 containers per hour with a print-and-apply system, while tire manufacturers can apply a tread label every 2.5 seconds.

At the same time, you have the option to completely remove employees from labeling processes when you switch to barcode automation. You may have multiple skilled employees working for hours every week printing and applying labels.

Not only is this an inefficient strategy when you think about how much skilled employees are being paid, but you must consider the opportunity costs. Imagine what objectives and priorities your employees could work toward with their extra time if labeling was automated.

When you switch to automated labeling, your organization also achieves the following benefits:

- Reduced downtime
- Less waste
- Fewer repetitive strain injuries

What's more, managing inventory is much more efficient with print-and-apply automation.

If you work at a manufacturing plant, you may have large racking areas full of labels that must be used before they go out of date. After all, a label has a shelf life. Storing labels in such a way is not a lean or efficient approach.

Instead, you can print labels as needed to better manage your inventory. You must react quickly to shifting demand. For example, you may need to increase production on a specific tire or component part and use the correct accompanying labels.

You don't have to buy large stocks of pre-printed labels when you automate labeling. Plus, you no longer have to worry about stocking labels you may need sometime in the future – everything is printed and applied on-demand.



4. Does automation guarantee accurate label placement?

A piece of automated labeling equipment is more consistent than any human hand. Even at very specific tolerances, such as those required in healthcare, a print-and-apply system places labels at precisely the correct location every time.

If you were to use automated labeling equipment to repeatedly apply multiple labels to a microwell plate, the placement would be so accurate that the barcodes would appear as a single, thick label.

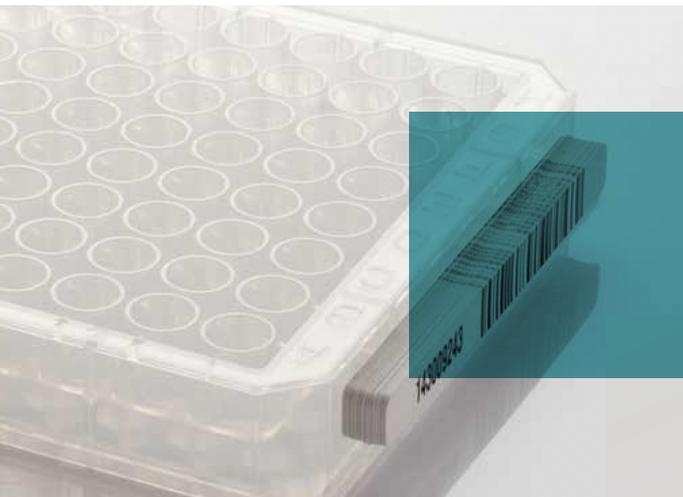
Accurate placement increases the likelihood that labels will be scanned when they move further down an automation process. If an employee misplaces a label, an automatic scanner later in the workflow may not be able to read it.

This can stop an entire process. For example, in the lab you may put a batch of samples in a machine to be processed overnight, expecting them to be finished by the next morning. If the scanner can't read a label, the process comes to a grinding halt, leaving you with backlogged work the next day.

Precisely placed labels are necessary to ensure a smooth workflow. Barcode automation significantly reduces misreads.

Automation allows you to accurately track tires and rubber from start to finish, collecting data and looking at trends in your production process. As a result, you're equipped to implement changes that reduce scrap rates and improve tire quality.

Customers also see the labels applied to tire treads in the store. Many factors contribute to perceived brand quality, including a label's color, brightness and ability to resist wear and tear. Accurate label placement is a component of brand quality. When you automate barcoding, your label placement is uniform and looks more professional on the shelf.



Automating the labeling process helps manufacturers reduce scrap, reruns, human error and labor costs with more precise, efficient labeling.

Implement a labeling system tailored to your objectives.

The right label supplier makes sure that whatever labeling equipment you invest in is compatible with your existing systems and workflows. If you can't find an off-the-shelf solution, your supplier should help you customize one with the exact label configuration and integration your processes demand.

Labeling automation drives efficiency and cost savings at your organization, giving you the tools you need to grow. With extra time, energy and fuel for your budget, your team can focus on strategic goals that move you forward.



Contact Computype today or call us
at 1-800-328-0852 to learn how you
can improve labeling at your organization.

ABOUT COMPUTYPE

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