

BRAND DIFFERENTIATION

With Xeikon and Color-Logic

CS Labels



By Dennis Mason

CS Labels began as a small family-owned screen printer in 1976, in the West Midlands area of the United Kingdom. Today the company remains family owned, but has grown to become the largest European digital label printer to use the Xeikon technology. Says Simon Smith, managing director and principal shareholder of the company: “My background is in banking. The fact that I know little to nothing about printing has been the major contributor to our success.” Simon’s understanding of technology and his willingness to endure the risks of an early adopter have unquestionably led to the CS Labels success.

The transition of CS Labels from a marginally successful label printer to a regional powerhouse began in 2008, when Smith embraced the idea of printing labels digitally rather than using flexo presses.

Today, the company has four Xeikon presses; it abandoned the flexo process entirely in 2011. The company serves as a showplace for Xeikon, which uses the CS Labels facilities to demonstrate how labels can profitably be printed digitally, and in 2013 used the CS Labels operation to host printers from across Europe and demonstrate the Xeikon technology. CS Labels primarily serves the UK label market, but its reputation has reached to continental Europe as well. Annual sales in excess of £3 million by a staff of 30 employees are graphic testimony to the success of Simon’s digital strategy at CS Labels.

The CS Labels infatuation with technology extends beyond digital presses. The company was an early adopter of the Color-Logic technology, which enables printers to produce metallic special effects

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using virtually any print process. For many customers, CS Labels prints labels on metallic substrate using the Color-Logic Process Metallic Color System. The Color-Logic system automatically produces a white ink mask, permitting the Xeikon press to not only print process color images, but create as many as 250 different metallic hues plus myriad metallic special effects on labels prepared for a number of brands.

“The Xeikon/Color-Logic combination provides any number of opportunities to sell labels to brands both large and small,” says CS Labels Technical Sales Executive Andrew Mansfield. He continues: “Understanding what brands require is critical in our business. We find that brands wish to differentiate their products from their competition, and make their products stand out on the shelf. Color-Logic permits us to work with graphic designers developing brand concepts to create striking metallic labels. Moreover, our ability to produce short runs economically using the Xeikon digital presses means that designers can see precisely how their labels will look, before committing to actual production. We prepare color charts showing designers the many metallic colors we can produce. By simply calling out the desired hue,



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designers eliminate the need for the trial and error formerly associated with metallic printing.”

Mansfield also discussed how the Color-Logic process complements the foil stamping that CS Labels has offered customers for many years: “Designers have long used foil stamping to highlight portions of their labels, and that process has always been a specialty of CS

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Labels. For short runs, however, foil stamping becomes very expensive, so Color-Logic often presents the opportunity to get much the same effect at a significantly lower cost. But even more important, small type and complex designs tend to fill in when foil stamping is used. With Color-Logic, we can confidently hold virtually any kind of detail the designer wants.”

Some examples of Color-Logic labels produced on the Xeikon press by CS Labels:

Staffordshire Brewery—A contract brewer that also produces its own brands and sells brewing supplies to home brewers and the trade, Staffordshire Brewery relies on CS Labels for a striking look on its own bottles. Staffordshire beer labels are printed on a silver-backed paper that resists the dampness that goes with beer. The Staffordshire logo has a rope which Color-Logic produces exactly. With foil stamping, the rope effect was lost.



Quest Excellence—for this Dubai manufacturer of nutraceuticals and vitamin supplements, CS Labels receives basic designs from the company, and then uses the Color-Logic Design Suite to prepare the white ink masks required to run their labels on metallic substrate. According to Mansfield, “White ink masks were a pain until we became a Color-Logic licensee. Now we can cut even complex masks in just minutes.” The Quest Excellence products are seeing 20 percent sales growth year-on-year with their colorful labels.



Natural Spa Factor—This UK manufacturer of oils, scrubs and other spa supplies chose metallic labels printed by CS Labels for an entire new line of products introduced in 2014.



Complete Pool Controls—The new CPC Gold Horizon line of professional pool chemicals uses a striking black label with gold text printed by CS Labels. A wave of color, done variously in dark blue, purple, or green, utilizes the Color-Logic special effects capability.

Farecla—This manufacturer of car wash products uses silver metallic labels printed by CS Labels for a new line called G3 Professional. Plans are underway to put



metallic labels on the entire Farecla product line.

Wraxall Vineyards—To compete with French wines, Wraxall Vineyards sought a luxury look for its labels. And because wine buyers want to know the vintage year, CS



Labels can easily change the year on Wraxall labels. The Wraxall logo includes a stylized metallic X which formerly was produced using foil stamping. The new digital Wraxall label, complete with metallic type, is delivered with no blocking, no fill-in, and at less cost than those produced with conventional methods.

The CS Labels success story is based on many factors. The company pioneered in the use of technology by Xeikon and Color-Logic, and thereby is able to offer customers products and services unavailable from suppliers that use more conventional processes.



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