



# The Lightning Flash

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The quarterly newsletter from Lightning Labels, the leaders in digital label printing

## From the Desk of Peter Renton

### Something to Talk About

It was Oscar Wilde who said "the only thing worse than being talked about is not being talked about." So I am delighted to report that Lightning Labels has been talked about recently.

You will notice enclosed with this newsletter a recent article from *Labels & Labeling* magazine, one of the world's leading label industry trade publications. We thought the journalist did such a great job with the article we ordered reprints so that you could all read it. You will learn about some of the history of Lightning Labels and how we have been able to grow so fast.

Speaking of growth, we have just finished up the third quarter here and we are proud to report our sixth consecutive quarter of record sales. On behalf of all of us here at Lightning Labels I would like to thank you for your continued business. We work hard to provide you with the highest quality custom labels and we appreciate you continuing to



choose us for your label needs.

I just want to mention briefly the feature article this issue, *Leveraging Digital Label Printing*, that begins below. There is a trend in the label and packaging industry that is just beginning; it is a trend towards more personalization. By using digital label printing you can be at the forefront of this new trend and be one of the leaders in your industry. I explain all

about it in the article below.

If you want to stay up to date with news from the label and packaging industry you should read the Lightning Labels blog. I update it quite regularly, just go to <http://blog.lightninglabels.com>.

Cheers,

Peter Renton  
Founder, Director of Business Development

### Cool Lightning Fact

The longest recorded lightning bolt in the US was 118 miles long horizontally in the Dallas, TX area.

### Leveraging Digital Label Printing

Digital printing has been around now for over 20 years. In that time commercial printers have used the power of digital printing extensively to create more personalized communications. We all have received personalized letters, postcards and catalogs in the mail. But in the label industry the usage of digital printing has lagged behind.

#### The Digital Label Printing Pioneers

There are companies however who are leveraging the power of digital label printing to enhance their brand. Jones Soda is one of the pioneers of this concept. They have been producing their famous colorful soda with custom labels for over 10 years now. If you buy a bottle of Jones Soda there is always a photo on the label and these photos continually change. The photos have been submitted by fans of the soda, and for every print run of their bottle labels they use different photos.

So Jones Soda has made custom label printing an integral part of their brand. But they have gone one step further with the [www.myjones.com](http://www.myjones.com) service, which began in 1998. This is where you can upload your own color photo and order your own personalized 12-pack of soda. You can enter in photo captions as well as several lines of text to make your soda bottle truly your own.

Obviously, to print full color labels in quantities as small as 12, Jones Soda is leveraging digital label printing. They don't share any of their secrets, but my guess is that they gang run several (maybe even hundreds) of these custom label orders together and then print them on a digital press. The photos are in full color, but the quality of the printing is a little disappointing. It is low resolution, certainly not like the high quality print you get at Lightning Labels. But their target market is young people who may not care about the quality, they just want something inexpensive, and Jones Soda provides them that.

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# Leveraging Digital Label Printing

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## Custom Labels Means Heinz

This past summer Heinz jumped onto the digital label printing bandwagon. In celebration of the famous ketchup brand's 130th birthday Heinz is offering everyone the ability to create their very own ketchup label at [www.myheinz.com](http://www.myheinz.com). Now, you can't upload your photo here, you get just three black lines of type - 18 characters each, but it is a bold new concept from one of the largest food companies in the world. Best of all the minimum order is just one bottle of ketchup.



It is impressive that a company with such large volumes has undertaken this concept, but Heinz obviously sees the value in creating a more personalized experience for their customers. They are the first mass market consumer product to undertake this level of personalization, but you can be sure they won't be the last. The print quality of the text is excellent, and it is the same font as the regular Heinz ketchup. The photo at the left is the bottle we ordered here at Lightning Labels, we wanted to get a first hand look at what Heinz has done. No doubt they are printing their regular label blanks and then overprinting the customized part later with a digital label press.

## A New Label for Johnnie Walker

Johnnie Walker has taken a slightly different approach. You can customize your Johnnie Walker label in a similar way to Heinz, but there are a couple of big differences. First, the labels are actually free. Yes, they are giving away the labels in the hope that you will buy a bottle of Johnnie Walker at your local liquor store and affix the label yourself. You can create three lines of 20 characters each of black text, and your labels will arrive in 4-6 weeks.

The web site for ordering the personalized Johnnie Walker label is quite simple, and so it probably wasn't that expensive. There are just two screens - an order entry screen and a preview screen with just a few fields of data to enter. The whole ordering process took me about two minutes. Again with a minimum order of just one label, Johnnie Walker is leveraging the power of digital label printing.

Other products such as M&M's, Hershey's Chocolates, and Wheaties allow personalization as well, although these companies are not using labels for their personalization. But this all points to a trend that has been a long time coming to consumer products but it is quite likely a trend that is here to stay. One day you will most likely be able to personalize the packaging for many of the products you consume on a daily basis.

## How to Take Advantage of Digital Label Printing

I can hear you saying, I certainly don't have the budget of Heinz or Johnnie Walker, so what can I do? But the fact is you can create personalized labels for your customers quite easily and inexpensively. With Lightning Labels advanced digital label printing technology it will only cost a little more than you are paying now. Here are some ideas for you to take advantage of this new trend.

### 1. Allow your customers to personalize your product

Heinz, Jones Soda and Johnnie Walker have done just that. They have web sites where people can enter and order the personalized product, but you don't have to even start out that sophisticated. You could just offer this to your customers in an email, and then you just gather all the responses into an Excel spreadsheet. We could import all these names here and print your regular label design along with the personalized names as one job.

### 2. "Regionalize" your labels

You may not want to offer your customers such a high level of customization. A simpler way to get started is just to "regionalize" your products. By that I mean, have different designs for different regions of the country. It could be as simple as a beach scene for coastal California, a mountain scene for Colorado and Idaho, corn fields in Nebraska, a maple tree for Vermont. Again with digital printing we could take all these different designs and combine them into one run of labels.

### 3. Holiday Gifts

We have had personalized gifts for decades now - you can get monogrammed shirts or bath towels from dozens of places. But you could also do a personalized holiday gift for all your customers. We could print labels for your company



# Customer Focus

## Vick Asmerian The Klinky Company North Hollywood, CA



The light bulb went off for Vick Asmerian, founder of the Klinky Company when he was driving with his father one day. He noticed a decorative key that his father had on his keychain, and when he asked whether it was a house or office key, his father explained that it was just a decorative key, it didn't open anything. That started Vick thinking. Keys are so much a part of our everyday lives, but no thought has gone into personalizing them with unique designs.

So Vick got to work. After 6 months of experimenting in his kitchen he developed a unique domed label that could be adhered to the top of a key. After securing some funding from family and friends he hit the streets of LA going door-to-door selling his idea to hardware stores and locksmiths. The keys were a hit.

Soon he was looking for national distribution and today, just four years after the car ride with his father; his domed label keys are available in all 50 states and sales are booming. And he has secured worldwide patents to protect his unique idea.

When Vick started out he did the entire manufacturing process in-house. As volume has risen he realized he could

no longer justify printing the designs on his desktop printer. So he found Lightning Labels when searching for label printers online, and we have been printing his labels ever since. Klinky is the perfect fit for digital label printing because they have hundreds of designs and typically order small quantities of each design. The first order we received had 145 different designs, and now their library of designs totals over 300, with many more on the way according to Vick.

Vick likes using Lightning Labels "because of the great service I receive." He appreciates the fact that he can order over 100 different designs at a time and get a great price. The fast turnaround time is also something he appreciates because his customers like most people are always in a hurry.

Vick's story is a great one - a story of ingenuity and passion as well as follow through. He has built a growing and successful business in a short time period, and you get the feeling that this story is only just beginning.

Here are some of the Klinky keys with the domed labels.



## Leveraging Digital Label Printing

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that personally wishes all your customers a happy Holiday Season, and you could affix these labels to your own product for a truly personal holiday gift.

### 4. Partner with a Winery for a Truly Unique Gift

Take a look at the "wine label" opposite. You will notice that it has a personalized holiday message just for you. Like our labels, this newsletter has been printed on a digital press so we can demonstrate what we are talking about here. Sure you can give your customers a bottle of wine this holiday season, but it would be a much more powerful gift with a personalized holiday message on the label. It is quite easy to do, many wineries will be able to help you out here - and of course, we would be happy to print your personalized holiday wine labels.

### The Personalization Generation

We are entering a new world of personalization. With new technology everyone can express themselves in their own unique way - in fact the younger generation is growing up with this expectation. The companies that take advantage

of this early will have a huge advantage. With advanced digital label printing technology we now have the power to create a different label for every product we sell. Like Heinz, Jones Soda and Johnnie Walker your company can personalize your product labels for your customers. And of course, you will need a high quality digital label printer to help you.

The teenagers of today have never known a world without the Internet, cell phones, and home PC's. If you look at the popularity of social networking sites such as MySpace and Facebook, this speaks to the growing trend of mass personalization. These people expect to be able to create a unique look that is truly their own. When the teenagers of today become affluent consumers in a few years time, the retail world will change.

The beautiful thing is that this trend is only just beginning. You can differentiate yourselves from your competition by being an early adopter of this mass personalization. You can leverage the power of digital label printing and create a unique package for all your customers. Forward thinking companies such as Heinz and Jones Soda have paved the way for everyone else. But with only a small handful of companies offering this to their customers, the opportunity is certainly knocking.



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## Learning About Labels

### Explaining the Lamination Options

Labels generally look better and are more durable with a laminate. A laminate can give your label a gloss or matte finish and it provides a protective layer between the ink on your label and the outside world.

Here at Lightning Labels, we almost always laminate the labels we print. It costs very little extra and it ensures that light scuffing will not damage the label in any way. What you may not realize is that we offer a number of laminates:

**1. High Gloss** - our most popular laminate. It is the least expensive option and provides protection for the label and a high gloss shiny finish.

**2. Matte (Imprintable)** - provides your label with a qual-

ity matte finish. This is also the best laminate to choose if you want to handwrite information on your labels.

**3. Thermal Transfer** - a gloss laminate that is designed to work with most over-printing thermal transfer printers. We do recommend you get samples first to test through your own printer before placing an order with this laminate.

**4. UV Outdoor Gloss** - best used for labels that will be used outdoors. It has a high gloss finish with excellent UV resistance. It is best paired with our vinyl material for the most durable outdoor label.

The price for these laminates are all slightly different. You can use our Instant Online Label Quoter to find a price for your labels with any of these different laminates. There is one material that we offer without a laminate - it is a textured material (called Estate #9) that looks great on its own. It is very popular in the wine industry.

## A Touch of Humor

### Wacky Warning Labels

The winners from the ninth annual Wacky Warning Label contest have recently been announced. This is a contest run by the Michigan Lawsuit Abuse Watch (M-LAW) and it features the strangest and funniest product warning labels. Here are the winners from this year's contest:

F On a heat gun and paint remover that produces temperatures of 1,000 degrees: "Do not use as a hairdryer."

F Label from a kitchen knife: "Never try to catch a falling knife."

F On a cocktail napkin that has a map of the waterways

around Hilton Head, SC: "Caution: Not to be used for navigation."

F From a bottle of dried bobcat urine made to keep rodents and other pests away from garden plants: "Not for human consumption."

F From an oven baking pan: "Ovenware will get hot when used in oven."

Here are some of the best entries from previous contests:

F Baby stroller label warns: "Remove child before folding."

F A popular scooter for children warns: "This product moves when used."

F A warning on a pair of shin guards manufactured for bicyclists says: "Shin pads cannot protect any part of the body they do not cover."

*"The Constitution only gives people the right to pursue happiness.*

*You have to catch it yourself." ~ Benjamin Franklin*