



# 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

### We are Celebrating 5 Years

Sometimes it feels to me that the past five years have gone by in the blink of an eye. But it was five years ago in May that we started doing business at Lightning Labels. It took six months of preparation, but in May, 2002 we were shipping out custom label orders from our facility here in southeast Denver.

Things have changed a great deal since that time. We have grown from four employees to 17. We have expanded from the original 3,000 square feet to now over 12,000 square feet. Luckily we have not had to move, we have twice taken over vacant space in the unit next door. We have upgraded our printing capacity several times and now we have one of the largest digital label printing operations in the country. Managing this fast growth would not have been possible without the support of the great team we have here.



But enough about us - let's talk about you. We want to celebrate this milestone with all Lightning Labels customers. This is why we are having our first ever sale. For the entire month of May you will receive a 15% discount on all your label orders. So stock up on your labels in May, this sale will definitely come to an end on May 31st.

If you want to stay up to date with news from Lightning Labels and 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 average flash of lightning could turn on a 100-watt light bulb for more than 3 months.

### 10 Innovative Packaging Ideas

Your packaging can make or break your product. Whether you like it or not, if your product sits on a retail shelf, it will be judged by its packaging. Your packaging is the final marketing message your customers will see before purchasing your product. It needs to reflect the essence of your product, but it also needs to stand out from the crowd.

Today, to break through the clutter of the hundreds of other competing products out there you have to be different. Look at what your competition is doing, and make sure you have a different and innovative look. Innovation in packaging will get your product noticed, it will help build your brand, and it will give your product some personality.

So, how do you create innovative packaging? You can pay a packaging design firm thousands of dollars to come up with some ideas or you can create the ideas yourself. So save yourself some money and read this article. Here are ten ideas that will help stimulate some packaging innovations for your own products.

#### 1. Create a Reusable Package

The boutique beverage market is mature and extremely competitive, so you might think there are few really new ideas when it comes to packaging. You would be wrong. POM Tea has created something truly different. For a start the product itself is different - it is tea infused with pomegranate juice. But it is the packaging that is remarkable; the drink is packaged in a regular tall drinking glass with a lid and a clear shrink wrap label. It says on the label: Remove the label, keep the glass. In our local Wild Oats it retails for \$2.79, not that expensive for a bottled tea, and you get a free glass. No need to worry about recycling here - you get to reuse the packaging.

#### 2. Make Design the Focus of Your Packaging

Most people think about the product first and the packaging second, but Method Products turned that equation around. They focused on packaging from the very beginning - they wanted to create packaging that was beautiful, that you didn't have to hide in the cupboard. They created a premium line of cleaning products with

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# 10 Innovative Packaging Ideas

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packaging that you could display in the kitchen or bathroom like a home accessory. Just stroll down the aisles of any Kmart or Target and you will see this focus on design really makes Method Products stand out.

### 3. Add a Little Extra to Your Packaging



Sometimes you can have very standard packaging, but stand out from the crowd by just adding a little twist to it. Amy's Kitchen has done just that with their line of pasta sauces. They have a standard size jar with a standard color label that really blends in with all the other pasta sauce offerings. What sets them apart is the paper and gold bow over the lid of the jar. It looks like the way your grandmother would package it, and you can't go down the aisle of pasta sauces without noticing it.

### 4. Create Fun Packaging

Fun packaging doesn't just have to be for kids, after all adults like to have fun, too. The bright colors and unusual shapes that dominate kids' products can work in adult products, but usually a more subtle approach is better. One industry that has started to embrace a little more fun in their packaging is the wine industry. Just take a trip to the local liquor store and look at all the fun animals on wine labels these days. We have penguins, kangaroos, frogs, horses, swans and many more critters appearing on wine labels. We may not be ready for a penguin shaped wine bottle, but a colorful penguin label can add an element of fun and really stand out from the more conservative wine labels.

### 5. Let Your True Colors Shine Through

Candle-Lite is the goliath of the candle industry with over 160 years of continuous candle making operations. Their packaging is nothing fancy, just a candle in a clear jar, but the colors they choose are striking. They use bright colors, often with multi-layered candles and they let these colors shine through with simple clear jars. And a simple label on a white background accentuates the colors in the jar. On my local supermarket shelf their candles really stood out from the dozens of other brands.

### 6. Extend Your Labels with Sandwich Printing

If you are selling a clear liquid in a clear bottle then you can use something called sandwich printing to extend your labels. I am talking about printing on the back of your labels. You can't put regulatory information on the back of your labels, but you can run contests, tell a story about your

company, or give ideas about how best to use your product. It is a simple way to give your customers more information and not detract from the presentation of your package. An excellent example of sandwich printing is Fiji Water.

### 7. Try the Metallic Look

Most labels are printed on white or clear material, but there are many other options available to you. One look you can consider is using a metallic foil for your labels or packaging. With a good design the metallic look can be very striking when compared to the same design on white, and really isn't that much more expensive.

### 8. Focus Your Packaging on a Specific Target

The Axe line of products from Unilever has a very specific target audience – young men aged between 18 and 35. So they built their packaging to appeal to that target. The package for the Axe Shower Gel looks like it could just as easily contain motor oil as shower gel. Just take a look at this container to the right. It is a thick, molded black plastic container that has a rugged appearance. It brings to mind the image of a big, tough football player. Here is a product that has tailored not just the contents but also the packaging to their specific target market.



### 9. Merge Two Packaging Concepts

Another very competitive industry is the beer business, with the big players there always looking for an edge on their competitors. Recently Anheuser Busch came out with a completely new concept in packaging that ended up winning several packaging awards. The concept was so simple it is amazing no one had done it before. We all know beer comes in glass bottles and aluminum cans. What Anheuser Busch decided to do was combine these two concepts, creating the aluminum bottle. It was different, it looked classy and eye-catching, and it was 100% recyclable.

### 10. Look to Nature for Inspiration

Nature has some amazing examples of "innovative packaging." Consider the banana, the pea-pod, the kangaroo pouch, the pine cone – these are all examples of nature creating efficient packaging. Nature's packaging is usually elegant and beautiful as well as efficient. There are shapes, colors and even packaging concepts that you can borrow from nature's example. So next time you go for a walk in the woods, look at the innovative packaging created by nature.

Spend some time thinking about your packaging. If you focus on your packaging and create something that is attractive and unique you will be more successful. Remember, your packaging not only has to contain your product, it is your final marketing message to your customers.

# Customer Focus

## Michelle Cortese Sarah's Garden Dover, NJ



Michelle Cortese has been in pursuit of family friendly products since the birth of her first child six years ago. Frustrated with the frequency and duration of skin rashes that her children began to develop, Michelle determined to eliminate the rashes with natural alternatives. After much investigation and experimentation with natural ingredients, Michelle talked it over with her husband, Christopher, and suddenly a light went on. They should make their own body and home care products - products that use only all natural ingredients that will not be harmful to the sensitive skin of infants and children. So Sarah's Garden was born.

That was a couple of years ago. Since then Michelle has worked tirelessly coming up with effective products while her husband worked on the marketing and sales side of the business. Even Sarah, their eldest child who is now 6 years old, helps out in the business - testing new products and also doing some of the packaging. Michelle and Christopher have three other children - Thomas, 4, Grace, 2, and Daniel who is 10 months. It is Michelle's dream to build a successful business that will allow the entire family to be actively involved in the business.

Michelle is a busy lady. In addition to getting this business off the ground she is home schooling all their children. But Michelle makes sure that she does something positive in her business every day no matter how busy she is. It might be pouring lip balm, researching new formulas, or reading about her industry. She is currently working on developing

a new line of products.

Early on, Michelle realized that labels were going to be very important for her products. She enlisted the design services of her sister, Sharon Mulhern, and she created some beautiful label designs. Michelle investigated label printing for a long time. She realized that printing them herself was not a long term option, as the print faded over time. So she enlisted the services of a local printer - but the results were terrible. The labels peeled off the lip balm tubes, and the print quality was no better than the labels she printed at home.

So that was when Michelle decided she needed a professional label printer, and she found Lightning Labels online. She appreciated the large numbers of dies available and the fact that we had a special material designed just for lip balm labels. Michelle also "loved the personal and friendly service and the fact that the customer service people really care." She also appreciates the little things, like getting a few extra labels free of charge every time she orders.

Thanks for talking with us Michelle. You certainly have your hands full with a young family and a growing business. We wish you all the best as you continue on your exciting journey.



## Introducing The Lightning Fast Digital Label Printing System™

In March we launched the Lightning Fast Digital Label Printing System™. Now what is this I hear you ask? Basically we have streamlined our processes and created a system where we can turn virtually all custom label orders (unless it is horrendously complex) around in 3 days once the job is approved. This system uses a 10 step process that leverages digital technology at every step:

1. Customer obtains label quotation through the Lightning Labels Instant Online Quoter.
2. Artwork is submitted via email, FTP or through the Instant Online Quoter.
3. Order is entered into the LLSYSTEM, Lightning Labels proprietary job tracking software.
4. Artwork is run through pre-flighting where all art

components are checked.

5. An electronic proof or high resolution press proof is produced and sent to the customer.
6. Upon proof approval, a press-ready graphic file is created and sent to one of the digital label presses.
7. Labels are printed on one of the high resolution HP-Indigo digital label presses – the WS4500 or WS2000.
8. Label job is loaded into the die-cutting press and the labels are cut to shape.
9. Labels are digitally counted and inspected in the rewind department.
10. Labels are packed and entered into the UPS System and the customer is emailed the tracking number.

The Lightning Fast Digital Label Printing System™ utilizes all the advantages of digital technology to turnaround high quality custom labels quickly and efficiently. And the end result is your orders are shipped in just 3 days.



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## *Learning About Labels*

### *What is the Best Size for my Labels?*

Of course, the short answer to this question is, it depends. However, there are some guidelines for label size that we can give you. We use 12" wide material on our digital label printing presses here at Lightning Labels, and the maximum printable area on this material is 10.75". We need to use some of the material for marks that assist in the die-cutting process. As far as length goes we can print up to 17" long. So that leaves a 10.75" x 17" print area that you have to work with. Keep in mind that we do need a gap between labels, and the standard gap is 0.125".

For smaller sized labels you will not notice much difference in pricing with slightly different sizes, but for the larger labels the difference can be significant. Let's take an

example that will demonstrate this. A 5" circle fits nicely 2 across and 3 down on what we call a frame (the 10.75" x 17" print area). The cost for 500 5" circles on our standard white BOPP with a gloss laminate is \$362.86. Now, let's consider a 6" circle. We can only fit one across and two down - this does not fit very well on our press at all. This is reflected in the pricing - 500 labels cost \$528.23 - this is almost 50% more than the 5" circle.

So the answer to the original question is twofold - the best size is the size that will work best on your product and fits well on our press. When you play around with our Online Instant Quoter, you will often notice jumps in price for similar sized labels. This is always because certain sizes fit well on our press and others do not. If you want to get the best value for your labels always choose a size that fits well within the 10.75" x 17" frame, keeping in mind that the smaller the label the less expensive it will always be.

## *A Touch of Humor*

### *A Truck Full of Penguins Went to the Zoo...*

A police officer sees a man driving around with a pickup truck full of penguins. He pulls the guy over and says, "You can't drive around with penguins in this town! Take them to the zoo immediately."

The guy says okay, and drives away. The next day, the officer sees the guy still driving around with the truck full of penguins -- and they're all wearing sunglasses. He pulls the guy over and demands, "I thought I told you to take these penguins to the zoo yesterday?"

The guy replies, "I did. Today I'm taking them to the beach!"

## *5 Year Anniversary Sale*

### *Every Order in May is Discounted by 15%*

It was in May, 2002 that we took our first order for custom labels here at Lightning Labels. So this May marks our five year anniversary in business. It is a significant milestone because according to the Small Business Administration the majority of small businesses don't make it this far. So we figure it is time to celebrate.

And you get to celebrate with us. Every order you place in the month of May will be invoiced at 15% off our regular prices. We are not changing our quoted pricing - but every order that is placed and approved in May will receive a 15% discount on the final invoice.

*"The probability that we may fail in the struggle ought not to deter us from the support of a cause we believe to be just." ~ Abraham Lincoln*