

ASTRO CHEMICALS, INC.

LABEL MATRIX helps Astro Chemicals control materials handling and shipping

Solution Overview

Industry

Chemical Distribution

Application

Shipping and safety labels

Teklynx Software Products

Label Design Software

LABEL MATRIX

Astro Chemicals, Inc. of Springfield, Mass. has been in business since 1970 as a distributor of commodity chemicals to other chemical distributors, municipal facilities and manufacturers throughout the Northeast. Over the years it has witnessed a revolution in the industry in terms of environmental and safety regulation affecting how Astro stores and handles all of its products. These regulatory changes had a direct effect on how the company labels containers and ships products. Additionally, Astro developed a quality management system that ensures lot tracking from manufacturer through to customer locations. This, along with a commitment to delivering clean, pure products, assures its customers the highest quality product.

Astro's products are sold in 55 gallon drums, 15 gallon dell drums, 5 gallon pails and IBC's (Intermediate Bulk Containers) and other bulk containers. Maintaining a supply of current labels was always a challenge. Not only does the company need to clearly identify the contents and lots, it also has to include information on hazards and storage, emergency actions, first aid and required protective equipment. Astro turned to LABEL MATRIX® from TEKLYNX® to meet their labeling challenges.

Astro Chemicals, Inc. is a major regional industrial chemical distributor serving all of New England and parts of upstate New York. It services companies in the electroplating, metal finishing, plating and waste treatment industries, as well as other industrial and municipal areas. Part of a heavily regulated industry, it is monitored by several Federal and State agencies, including the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), and the Department of Transportation (DOT). As a result, Astro must be meticulous in the handling and labeling of the over 1,000 products that it distributes from multiple suppliers.

Since Astro repackages from bulk into non-bulk containers, its labels need to be large, easy to read and durable. The company produces hundreds of different label designs for 5, 30, 55 and 350 gallon containers, as well as bulk storage containers. Because of the amount of information required and the size of the containers, the company has standardized primarily on 8½" X 14" color labels printed on a vinyl top-coated stock. The labels include the familiar DOT safety label symbols.

Each label must contain several required fields; content that varies by product, container size and/or lot number. Required information includes:

- DOT hazardous materials shipping description and hazard class label
- Emergency Response Guide Numbers and Reportable quantities
- Hazardous Materials Identification System (HMIS) Hazard Index for health, flammability, reactivity and personal protection
- Narrative instructions with information on hazards and storage, emergency actions (including the emergency response guide number), first aid and personal protective equipment
- Container quantity

Finally, a lot number is included that enables Astro and its customers to track the product back through the supply chain directly to the manufacturing batch.

In the past, Astro managed its labeling needs with pre-printed labels for each product and quantity. This was wasteful and inefficient. Hundreds of labels had to be stockpiled and administered. A clerk had to monitor label supplies to be sure an adequate supply would be on hand when they needed to ship a particular product.

Astro decided that taking a just-in-time approach to labeling would be much more efficient and cost effective. The company turned to LABEL MATRIX from StrandWare (now TEKLYNX). Now, Astro produces labels on demand. An operator uses LABEL MATRIX to generate labels from a list of label formats that draw data from an Access database for the particular requirements of the day.



LABEL MATRIX prints all of the black & white variable information on standard 8½" X 14" hazardous materials color labels purchased from Moore forms.

Astro stocks four base color label templates, but now they can buy them from any number of label suppliers providing additional cost savings. LABEL MATRIX prints all of the chemical specific information in black & white using a standard laser printer. LABEL MATRIX has given Astro the flexibility to generate labels on demand with the current

For More Information

For more information about Teklynx products or services, please visit our Web site or call us at (414) 535-6200 in the US or Canada. Outside the 50 United States and Canada, please contact Teklynx at +33 562-601-080. To access information via the World Wide Web, go to:
<http://www.teklynx.eu.com>

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regulatory information for every new configuration of container size. This flexibility has improved the appearance of the package with a professional- looking label every time the product is labeled and shipped.

LABEL MATRIX gives the operator the opportunity to key in variable information, such as Lot #, before the vinyl labels are printed locally on a Lexmark Optima S 1650 laser printer.

It's all on the label

Astro Chemicals has significantly streamlined its product labeling operation by moving to on-demand label printing using LABEL MATRIX. The company has reduced the administrative burden of managing a large stock of pre-printed labels and made it easier to quickly and accurately label its products.