

**QUICK LABEL SYSTEMS**

The Labels You Want When You Need Them™

WHITE PAPER

# 7 TIPS

For Evaluating a Color Label Printer

If you plan to begin printing your own labels in-house, it pays to put your label printer through its paces before making a purchase decision. These 7 Tips will help you to evaluate any color label printer.

February 2015



## ***Observe as a Full Roll of Labels is Printed***

***Get an in-person demonstration and ask to watch while your labels are printed.***

This is the most critical tip, and all others follow from it. Actually watch as a roll of labels is printed. Don't just rely on "canned" printed label samples or a canned video from the manufacturer. Watching as labels are printed before your eyes will expose any technical shortcomings in the printer.

You are the expert on your own labels, and you know what they should look like. If print quality and color-matching to existing labels is important to you, you will never see a better demonstration of what a printer can do than watching as your own label artwork is printed.

## ***Ask to See Your Own Label Format Printed***

To make sure that you see the best the printer can do, provide digital label artwork to your printer salesperson in advance of the demonstration – if your artwork was designed for a different output device, whether it's your office inkjet or a commercial flexographic press, your salesperson may need to adjust the colors to match your expectations.

*You can evaluate your own labels better than a sample label.*

#2



# #3

*Time the print job  
while you watch.*

## Compare “How Long it Takes to Print,” Not Just “Print Speed”

When evaluating “print speed,” it is natural to assume that you are evaluating “how fast it takes to produce a print job.” However, there are many technical reasons why this is not the case. Factors such as pauses for maintenance procedures, processing time delays, and the time it takes to load a printer with blank labels and inks all have a significant impact on throughput – and that is what your production department needs to measure in order to evaluate the label printer!





# Compare “Print Quality,” Not Just “Print Resolution”

All label printers list a specification for “resolution,” but this does not necessarily imply “print quality.” “What resolution should I be looking for?” is a notoriously difficult question to answer, since there is often some trade-off between print quality and print speed. In addition to the physical dot size produced by the label printer, the halftone printing algorithm, substrate material, and ink set each have a tremendous bearing on the appearance and color gamut of the printed label. When comparing 1200 dpi to 1600 dpi to 2400 dpi, your own perception of quality is much more accurate than the technical specification.

*Judge for  
yourself  
how it  
looks.*



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## *Ask How Much it Costs To Print Your Roll of Labels*

*Get the actual price you would pay for the labels you just saw printed.*

Importantly, after the full roll of your own label designs are printed, ask the salesperson to calculate the cost of the printed label roll, including the costs of the ink and the blank material. This will give you an idea of your own finished cost per label, and you can extrapolate how much you'd be paying each time you print your own labels.

# Determine Where You Will Buy Your Labels

If you have a special performance or print quality requirement, the odds are that you will want to “spec in” a particular label material that works well with your printer. Determine who offers labels created from that material, and whether the delivery timeframe and cost of the die-cut label is in line with your expectations. A good label solution provider should be able to offer a variety of compatible materials at range of different price points.

*Select a substrate and a provider.*

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## *Find Out Who Will Maintain and Repair YOUR Printer*

*Ask who will service and fix any problems.*

Regular on-site maintenance of a printing system is necessary to prevent breakdowns due to wear. Ask who will be available to provide on-site maintenance service (or whether you are expected to do this yourself!). Because a label printer is a critical part of the packaging process, it is also important to find out whether on-site repair service and 24 hour telephone support are available, and whether this is included as part of the warranty or offered at an additional cost.





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Put QuickLabel To the Test. Challenge us to bring a QuickLabel printer to your office or factory and print your own label format before your eyes. We'd love to! [QuickLabel.com/demo](http://QuickLabel.com/demo).

## QuickLabel Systems' Kiaro! Label Printer Family



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