



How Freudenberg slashed its time to complete label changes

Narrowing turnaround for label changes from three months to one hour



Introduction

Freudenberg Sealing Technologies (FST) – the largest division of Freudenberg Group – needed to centralize and standardize their labeling. With more than 70 locations around the world, they wanted to accomplish this on a global scale to reduce time and costs spent producing and changing labels for their customers and supply chain partners. A leading supplier of advanced materials and products for customers in automotive, industrial, and alternate drivetrain applications, FST also wanted to avoid hefty fines for labels that did not comply with customers' requirements.

FST had more than 400 unique templates to manage. Completing label updates could take up to three months and depended on scarce development resources, limiting FST's ability to respond quickly to changes in customer requirements. Long printing times combined with the inability to print labels simultaneously from their SAP ERP and EWM systems also resulted in significant productivity losses. As a result, the company decided to implement a global enterprise labeling solution project that provided certified SAP Integration and scaled to meet their global requirements.



Challenges

Standardize on a single, centralized enterprise-wide labeling solution with certified integration with SAP

Before deploying Loftware Spectrum, FST had different labeling systems in different locations, including SAP Smartforms. But, making even small changes to layouts required limited development resources and could take several months. Meanwhile, customers charged high fees for labels that didn't conform to their standards. With multiple labeling systems and duplicate templates, it was difficult to manage updates and maintain consistency over labels.

Remove dependencies on limited technical resources to manage label updates

With many different SAP Smartforms for different labels, FST's process to make changes was highly complex. Each change required technical resources and had to be managed through four different SAP environments (Dev/QA/Integration/Production). They often waited up to three months for changes to make it through the development, testing and approval process – even for minor layout changes. And because the developers were working on other priorities in their SAP systems, label changes were sometimes treated as lower priority.

Speed label printing to eliminate delays in shipping

In both Europe and the US, FST's previous labeling solutions took a long time to spool and print. Resources in the factory and warehouse often had to stand by waiting for labels to be printed. This wasted up to 33 hours per day and cost the company more than \$128,000 in lost productivity annually.

Provide ability to print from SAP EWM and ERP simultaneously

Also contributing to costly delays was FST's inability to print directly from their SAP EWM and ECC systems simultaneously. Printing labels from both SAP systems at the same time caused conflicts in the spooling process, further delaying label printing and wasting resources.



Labeling our products is critical for customer satisfaction, as is compliance to world-wide standards.

- Marcello Cambellotti,
Global IT Manager
Freudenberg FST Italy

Prevent occurrence of charge-back fees from customers for labels that do not comply with requirements

FST's customers had specific and often unique labeling requirements which required limited development resources to make any changes. And, they charged high fees if labels did not comply with their standards. Because of the complexity of the process to update labels, it could be difficult to respond to changes in a timely manner, risking both fines and customer satisfaction.

Challenges Summary

- Standardize on a single, centralized enterprise-wide labeling solution with certified integration with SAP
- Remove dependencies on limited technical resources to manage label updates
- Speed label printing to eliminate delays in shipping
- Provide ability to print from SAP EWM and ERP simultaneously
- Prevent occurrence of charge-back fees from customers for labels that do not comply with requirements



Solution

Centralized, enterprise-wide labeling solution with certified integration with SAP to drive label printing from both their SAP ECC and EWM applications

FST deployed Loftware Spectrum as their Enterprise Labeling Solution to serve multiple distribution centers and facilities in Europe, with plans to expand to sites in North America. Currently, Spectrum is integrated with their warehouse management solution, SAP EWM, to print labels automatically based on actions users take in their EWM system. This allows users to perform their regular tasks in SAP, which trigger label printing without requiring additional action on the users' part. Because Spectrum can support multiple integrations at the same time, FST also integrates smaller sites that don't use EWM directly with their SAP ECC system to enable label printing.

User-friendly label design empowering business users to complete label updates

Before Spectrum, FST struggled with bottlenecks in making changes to label layouts, which could take as long as three months to complete. Spectrum's user-friendly label design makes it possible for the non-technical users in the business units to take ownership of label layouts and data, allowing IT to focus on system-wide requirements like new data fields, business rule changes and system integrations.

Native print drivers that speed label printing and require no additional software

Loftware Spectrum's native print drivers communicate in printers' native language, speeding label printing and eliminating the need to load and maintain additional software drivers. Spectrum's broad portfolio of native print drivers allow FST to continue using existing devices from Zebra and Kyocera for label printing. Leveraging Spectrum's native drivers significantly reduce label print times and simplify system management.



One of the great features of Loftware Spectrum is that it enables business users to manage the design of the labels autonomously. With Spectrum's user interface, anybody can create labels.

- Marcello Cambellotti,
Global IT Manager
Freudenberg FST Italy

Ability to print from SAP EWM and ERP at the same time

Integrations with their warehouse management systems allow FST to print labels automatically based on actions taken in the EWM system. Because Spectrum can support multiple integrations at the same time, FST also integrates directly to their SAP ERP system for smaller facilities that do not have EWM in place.

High Reliability with support for cloud landscape

Loftware Spectrum is a cloud-based Enterprise Labeling Solution that can be deployed on premise or in the cloud. While FST has currently implemented Spectrum on site, they value the option to move labeling to the cloud in conjunction with corporate initiatives.

Solution Summary

- Centralized, enterprise-wide labeling solution with certified integration with SAP to drive label printing from both their SAP ECC and EWM applications
- User-friendly label design empowering business users to complete label updates
- Native print drivers that speed label printing and require no additional software
- Ability to print from SAP EWM and ERP at the same time
- High reliability with support for cloud landscape



Results

Labeling integrated with SAP applications resulting in high volume label printing with 100% accuracy

One of FST's goals to eliminate waste was to shrink the time needed to print a label to two seconds, reducing the time spent waiting for labels to print. Spectrum's native print drivers allowed FST to exceed this requirement, printing labels in well under the required time and speeding the labeling process. Using SAP as the source of truth for integrated label printing also dramatically increased the accuracy of printed labels. Because Spectrum pulls master data and transaction data directly from FST's SAP systems, labels contain the most current and accurate information.

Reduction in turnaround time for label changes from three months to one hour

Prior to their selection of Loftware Spectrum, business users at FST had to wait for development resources to make, test and release label updates. The process could take up to three months to complete. With Spectrum's user-friendly label design, business users now own the process of making updates to layouts and content required, reducing the time required to complete label changes to one hour.

Automated approval workflow to streamline label updates and ensure use of correct label

Spectrum's version control capabilities made it easier to ensure use of only the current, approved version of the label, further increasing accuracy and reducing the risk of mislabeling. FST also leveraged configurable workflows to establish a robust process to review and approve label changes and move them into production.



We print 50,000 labels every day and they are all correct.

- Marcello Cambellotti,
Global IT Manager
Freudenberg FST Italy

Reduction in label maintenance and elimination of duplicate templates

Another of FST's goals to save costs was to reduce the number of templates to manage. Leveraging Spectrum's configurable business rules that automate formatting and content selection and universal template that prints to any make or model printer, FST eliminated duplicate labels, cutting the number of templates in half.

Cloud-based architecture that scales to support new sites and eases budgeting and planning process

Having a reliable labeling solution that scales to serve their global sites is critical to FST. They valued Spectrum's ability to meet the label printing needs at all their distribution centers and facilities worldwide with a single deployment. Loftware's 24 x 7 global support also ensures the quick resolution of any issues that occur. With Spectrum, FST can add new sites or shift resources among sites quickly and easily, as needed. Spectrum's per print seat licensing also simplifies the process to plan and budget for expansion.

Loftware Spectrum's benefits to the user

Moving to Loftware Spectrum allowed FST to transfer ownership of label management to the appropriate stakeholders. With Spectrum's user-friendly label design, business users could now make label updates to address customers' changing requirements, eliminating their dependence on IT for format changes and removing the "IT Bottleneck." Automated workflows to manage approval processes and promote new labels to the production environment further strengthened users' control over labels and ensured accuracy. Spectrum's certified integration with SAP also streamlined label printing, driving label printing directly from users' actions in their SAP EWM application. In fact, many did not realize that they were using Spectrum to print labels.

Loftware Spectrum's benefits to the company

FST set about their plan to deploy an enterprise-wide labeling solution to eliminate waste and be more responsive to customers' requirements.



With Spectrum, they were able to reduce costs by eliminating printing delays and halving the number of templates required. With business users now able to make label format changes, they cut the time to make label updates from three months to one hour. In addition to improving their responsiveness to customer requirements, FST found the accuracy of their labels, driven by data in their SAP systems, neared 100% accuracy. Spectrum's cloud-based architecture supported greater agility and scalability as they expanded their implementation to serve more locations. It made it easier to plan and budget for future growth, as well.

FST's long term goal is for Loftware Spectrum to serve as its global label printing solution for all locations worldwide with either SAP ERP or EWM systems. They also plan to deploy Spectrum to the cloud in the future.

Results Summary

- Labeling integrated with SAP applications resulting in high volume label printing with 100% accuracy
- Reduction in turnaround time for label changes from three months to one hour
- Automated approval workflow to streamline label updates and ensure use of correct label
- Reduction in label maintenance and elimination of duplicate templates
- Scalable architecture that easily expands to support

About Loftware Spectrum

The only all-in-one labeling solution to be delivered completely via browser-based interface, Loftware Spectrum® redefines how enterprises create, manage and print labels, enabling organizations of all sizes to seamlessly implement, deploy, maintain and scale their labeling operations across their entire global network. Available in the cloud or on-premise, Spectrum is the most robust solution in the industry; offering incomparable WYSIWYG label design, true enterprise integration, a powerful business rules engine, sophisticated device management, intelligent on-demand printing and high performance native printing in a single software solution.



The world's largest cloud-based **Enterprise Labeling**
and **Artwork Management** provider



Case Study

Loftware is the world's largest cloud-based Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management provider, offering an end-to-end labeling solution platform for companies of all sizes. Maintaining a global presence with offices in the US, UK, Germany, Slovenia, China, and Singapore, Loftware boasts over 35 years of expertise in solving labeling challenges. We help companies improve accuracy, traceability and compliance while improving the quality, speed, and efficiency of their labeling. As the leading global provider of Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management, along with Clinical Trials Labeling and Content Management, Loftware enables supply chain agility, supports evolving regulations, and optimizes business operations for a wide range of industries. These include automotive, chemicals, consumer products, electronics, food & beverage, manufacturing, medical device, pharmaceuticals, retail, and apparel.