



WESTFOUR

The Customer

West Four Group is a family owned multi-industry business hailing from the northern reaches of Canada.

Focused on a number of industries including door manufacturing, building security supplies, and even creative services, West Four serves hundreds of customers across Western Canada. With offices in Calgary, Saskatoon, Winnipeg, and Regina, West Four's properties include four diverse brands. Madero Distribution is a manufacturer of residential and commercial doors and hardware. Penner Doors and Hardware provides customers with a full line of architectural hardware, doors, frames and building specialties, to general contractors and institutional projects. Security Building Supplies has been supplying lumber and building materials to home builders, general contractors, renovators and the public since 1968. And, Two Six Creative, West Four's creative agency, provides a wide range of graphic design solutions for its customers.

West Four's portfolio of brands have been markedly successful in their respective industries, and Jay Fafard, Executive VP at West Four, says it's due to their commitment to staying ahead of the technological curve. "You can run a good business with pen and paper, but good isn't good enough anymore," according to Fafard. "We need to be great. That's what our customers demand.

It's what they expect. For us, everything has to be automated. We've got to have everything printed, and labels applied to the product.



It's got to be UPC-coded, it has to work within our customers' systems, and often, beyond the label with electronic data interfaces and data exchange. For us, we need the best looking package, and the best branding so we can speak to the customer – that's through a color label."

The Challenge

West Four wanted to improve its product packaging. "Black and white just won't cut it anymore," says Fafard. "We need to be able to speak to the customer." Adding color to product labels is a popular and effective way for brands to improve their brand image and customer loyalty. Brand recognition, product appeal, and competitive advantages have direct correlations to how items are packaged and designed. In fact, color used on products and in marketing communications enhances brand recognition by up to 80 percent.¹ But improving a brand's outward appearance isn't the only reason to use color labels and packaging. Color labels can help highlight important information such as instructions and safety information. In instances of safety, color labels are often a requirement. GHS labels, for example, are required to be colorized in order to be OSHA compliant. It also helps in production. Color is a great way to distinguish tasks as well as basic vital information. Brands can reduce order picking and shipping errors by employing color labeling.

¹ Lam, Shun Yin (2001). The Effects of Store Environment on Shopping Behaviors: A Critical Review. Advances in Consumer Research, Vol. 28, Issue 1, 190.

However, as West Four discovered, implementing color label printing into their supply chain would take a little more work than they thought. “We asked a software partner to create a label for us for the thousands of products that are pulled live from our database that contain a 300dpi full resolution image,” says Fafard. “We just assumed it was commonplace in that industry, and we found really quickly that it wasn’t.”

The Solution

As a long time customer of CYBRA’s Bar Code Labels, RFID Tags and Forms Software, West Four reached out to CYBRA to help solve their color labeling conundrum. They approached the CYBRA team to see how to best deploy color label printing. CYBRA’s first task was to find the right printer to get the job done. CYBRA’s MarkMagic supports over 450 different printer types, but only one printer could meet this challenge: Epson ColorWorks® color inkjet label printers. “We knew West Four needed printers that had the combination of print quality and output speed,” says Chuck Roskow, VP of Operation at CYBRA. “We contacted Epson, and they were in our office almost the next day telling us more about the printer. We partnered with them immediately, and added native printer support within MarkMagic to support the Epson ColorWorks C7500G printer.

As soon as the Epson ColorWorks printers were supported by MarkMagic, West Four bought a printer and were immediately pleased with its quality and speed. “Oh man, is that printer fast,” says Fafard. West Four quickly deployed the color printing capabilities in order to add color labels to their packaged doors which are sold at retail stores. With MarkMagic, the Epson Colorworks printers handle West Four Group’s needs in stride.

For the doors sold at the retail level, West Four prints a 3×18 inch color label that includes variable data that’s pulled live from their system. The printing is automated, and prints right on the manufacturing line, so the labels are conveniently applied as the product leaves the building. This process ensures all items are properly packaged without error, while not slowing down West Four’s shipping operations.

The Benefits

“Having color available on a label printer like the Epson ColorWorks printer is a game-changer,” says Roskow. If not deployed properly, adding color label printing to a brand’s supply chain can be cumbersome and costly. Epson’s color label printing capabilities eliminates much of the cost associated with color labels. West Four doesn’t need to maintain multiple printers or purchase pre-printed stock or specialized paper. Instead, and unlike most label printers, West Four can use plain stock paper and print out labels dynamically. This not only brings down the cost of color label printing, but also reduces the potential headache of color printing by reducing overhead.

By adding color labels to their products, along with using MarkMagic, West Four can create attractive labels that are also helpful to consumers. MarkMagic allows West Four to design labels in order to maximize space, and make sure customer information is easy to find and comprehend. And, of course, Epson’s printers help West Four churn out their color labels quickly. “Customers are demanding more; they want more information on the products they buy. And, so the visual process is a big component of a customers purchasing decision,” says Fafard.

According to CYBRA’s Chuck Roskow, “Why wouldn’t a customer use color to make their brand more visible in the warehouse for picking of products, and of course to enhance the brand in the retail environment as well.” By finding a simple, cost-effective way to add color labels to their products, West Four can now make their already high-quality products look even more attractive to customers, and sell at an even higher volume.