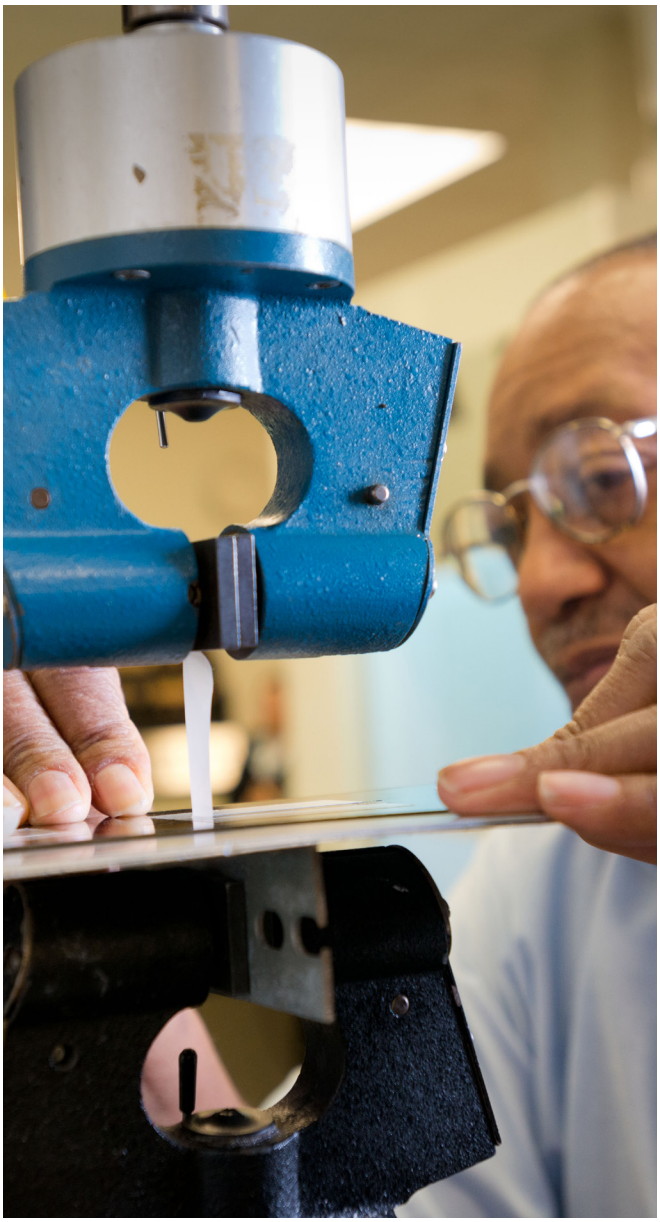
Streamlining the UL® approval process through file adoption



The UL approval process for durable goods labels can be a resource-intensive process for converters from a time and money perspective. But instead of going through the entire process for each material and each application, converters can simply adopt a UL-recognized file of preapproved label systems, such as the Customer-Ready™ Durables Portfolio (CRP) from Avery Dennison to streamline the process and reduce the resources required to gain UL approval.

Approval process (without CRP)

When converters work directly with Underwriters Laboratories, the testing process for UL 969 Standards, which certifies the durability of label materials, can be lengthy. It begins when converters contact UL to open a project to receive a list of testing requirements, along with a quote, which may run $2,000 or more, depending on the size of the project.

Converters must run the presses to print a series of specified sample labels, then wait for UL to conduct thorough testing and evaluation of the base materials, printing processes, adhesives, lamination and other components used. This evaluation may take 12 weeks or longer, depending on the availability of UL testing equipment and staff.

After the wait, if any component of a label fails UL testing, converters must start from scratch to repeat the evaluation process, adding extra time, cost and printing resources. Meanwhile, end-user customers may abandon the wait to find a converter already prepared with labels that meet industry standards of durability.

Adoption process (with CRP)

Avery Dennison has already gained UL recognition for a variety of substrates and printing processes contained in the Customer-Ready Durables Portfolio. Rather than going through the entire

process again, converters can readily adopt a specification from Avery Dennison's file and use the portfolio's UL-recognized system to drastically simplify and shorten the process.

The process still begins by contacting UL to open a project, but converters simply specify their desire to adopt from the Avery Dennison file (Category PGJI / File Number MH 17205) of preapproved label systems that have already passed inspection. File adoption can reduce the cost of the process up to 75 percent and eliminate the question of whether labels will meet the specifications.

In as little as two weeks, the converter will receive the UL recognition of Avery Dennison's construction in its own file to begin using for a variety of applications across the durables market.

What does UL test?

The UL 969 Marking and Labeling Systems Standard requires that a label will adhere to the surface of a durable product and remain legible for the life of the product, enduring the extreme conditions it may face. Both the raw materials (such as facestocks and overlaminates) and the printing processes (including inks and thermal transfer ribbons) used must be approved by UL.

The tests include:

Legibility, to ensure the safety information and product details included on the label are readable

Defacement, to verify permanence of label when subjected to frictional deformation

Adhesion, to ensure the adhesive that fixes the label to the product cannot easily be peeled off

Conditioning, to ensure the label can withstand the environment of its intended application, whether indoors or outdoors, through a series of tests to simulate humidity, water immersion, accelerated weathering and exposure to chemicals and solvents

After passing the appropriate tests, UL-recognized label materials, inks, thermal ribbons and other components are added to an approved file. UL continues to retest recognized materials monthly to validate approval on an ongoing basis.

Instead of going through the entire process for each material and each application, converters can simply adopt a UL-recognized file of preapproved label systems.

Benefits of file adoption

By adopting the preapproved label printing systems included in the Avery Dennison Customer-Ready Durables Portfolio, converters can simplify the approval process while gaining these additional benefits.

Reduced complexity. The streamlined portfolio covers a wide range of preapproved materials and printing processes suited for more than 70 percent of applications in the durables market. Rather than evaluating an endless combination of materials, converters simply select preapproved materials from the Customer-Ready Durables Portfolio, slimming their inventory and shortening the qualification process.

Reduced cost. By adopting a file of preapproved materials through the Customer-Ready Durables Portfolio, converters skip the step of producing sample labels for UL testing, which lowers the overall project cost, as well as the testing quote.

Reduced waste. Preapproved materials in the Customer-Ready Durables Portfolio are available in exact quantities and low-volume orders, allowing precise estimating while eliminating scrap.

Reduced wait time. Without having to wait for full UL evaluation of label samples, converters increase their speed to market to deliver certified materials to end-users sooner.

Reduced risk. Because the base materials, inks and thermal ribbons included in the Customer-Ready Durables Portfolio have already received UL approval, converters can adopt them without worrying about the testing results. The Customer-Ready Durables Portfolio lowers the barriers of transitioning to new materials by ensuring that label systems are already certified for converters to use. >

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