

Print Label - Market Share Analysis, Industry Trends & Statistics, Growth Forecasts (2026 - 2031)

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Report description:

Print Label Market Analysis

Print label market size in 2026 is estimated at USD 57.05 billion, growing from 2025 value of USD 55.24 billion with 2031 projections showing USD 67.02 billion, growing at 3.28% CAGR over 2026-2031. Steady expansion reflects the sector's shift from purely analog processes to digitally enabled, sustainability-focused production frameworks that lower minimum order quantities, compress lead times, and cut material waste. Flexography still controls the largest share of installed capacity, yet inkjet systems are scaling rapidly as converters look to satisfy proliferating SKUs and e-commerce labeling needs. Brand owners' preference for linerless formats and intelligent identifiers, plus mandated pharmaceutical serialization and food traceability, is reshaping converter investment priorities. Cost pressure from substrate and adhesive volatility continues, but margin resilience hinges on hybrid digital-flexo workflows, supply-chain integration, and circular-economy compliant materials.

Global Print Label Market Trends and Insights

Accelerated Adoption of High-Speed Digital Presses for Short-Run Production

Digital inkjet platforms enable profitable runs as low as 500 pieces, contrasting with flexography's historical 10,000-unit threshold, thereby unlocking new SKU strategies for consumer brands. Capital outlays, such as R.R. Donnelley's USD 25 million Georgia upgrade, illustrate the scale converters commit to gain throughput and variable-data flexibility. Hybrid lines integrating inkjet and flexo towers streamline changeovers yet create operator-skill gaps that industry groups like the Flexographic Technical

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Association address through FIRST 5.0 curricula. As high-speed digital productivity converges with analog economics, the print label market will migrate toward mixed-technology production cells that compress lead times and inventory.

Brand-Owner Shift Toward Linerless Labels for Waste Reduction

Eliminating release liners cuts label waste up to 30% and boosts roll density, generating logistics savings that resonate with sustainability scorecards. Market leaders report double-digit linerless revenue growth, especially within food retail, where Extended Producer Responsibility fees spur adoption. Transition barriers include specialized applicators and adhesive formulations that must perform across humidity swings, but suppliers are scaling capacity. UPM Raflatac reported 13% quarter-on-quarter growth in Q1 2025, partly on European linerless demand. Converter competitiveness hinges on mastering new coating and slitting techniques that diverge from conventional pressure-sensitive workflows.

Raw Material Price Volatility Pressuring Converter Margins

Paper pulp, PET, and acrylic adhesive indices have swung by double digits since 2024, leaving converters exposed because materials account for up to 75% of cost of sales. While global players leverage hedging and scale, Avery Dennison reported a 0.1% sales dip yet preserved EBIT via cost controls, SME converters struggle to pass surcharges to brand owners under annual contracts. Consolidators such as Sonoco channel USD 30 million into adhesive capacity expansions to secure supply and dilute input swings. Until substrate markets stabilize, margin compression will temper investment appetite among smaller firms in the print label market.

Other drivers and restraints analyzed in the detailed report include:

E-Commerce Expansion Driving Variable-Data Printing Demand
Regulatory Traceability Requirements Accelerating Smart-Label Adoption
Technical Skill Gaps in Hybrid Digital-Flexo Operations

For complete list of drivers and restraints, kindly check the Table Of Contents.

Segment Analysis

Inkjet technology's 5.3% CAGR underscores its role in reshaping the print label market. Flexography still produces the bulk of long-run SKUs thanks to mature platemaking ecosystems, but inkjet's substrate versatility and 1-click changeovers let converters secure high-margin micro-runs for promotional campaigns. The print label market size associated with inkjet presses is forecast to grow steadily as equipment costs fall and white ink opacity rivals screen-print quality. Across converters, hybrid architectures that bolt inkjet bars onto flexo lines dominate capex roadmaps, enabling variable data without abandoning proven analog die-cutting workflows.

AstroNova's TrojanLabel platform, launched at Drupa 2024, typifies the mid-web category aimed at craft beverage and cosmetics converters seeking near-offset registration with minimal setup. Gravure's niche in ultra-long runs remains secure for large beverage co-packers, yet offset lithography's footprint narrows as UV-inkjet delivers comparable Pantone coverage. Screen technology survives in electronics durables where film thickness is critical, but its share within the print label market will continue to erode.

The Print Label Market Report is Segmented by Print Process (Offset Lithography, Gravure, Flexography, Screen, Letterpress, Electrophotography, and Inkjet), Label Format (Wet-Glue, Pressure-Sensitive, Linerless, Multi-Part Tracking, In-Mold, and Shrink and Stretch Sleeves), End-User Industry (Food, Beverage, Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals, and More), and Geography. The Market Forecasts are Provided in Terms of Value (USD).

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Geography Analysis

Asia-Pacific dominated the print label market in 2025 with a 35.86% share and is projected to post the highest 4.63% CAGR to 2031. China's extensive manufacturing base and India's packaging expansion valued at USD 204.81 billion for 2025 underpin regional momentum. Local converters invest in mid-web digital presses to handle proliferating consumer brands, while government recycling mandates in Japan and South Korea encourage adoption of recyclable facestock and wash-off inks. Southeast Asian nations pivot toward e-commerce fulfillment hubs, stimulating demand for thermal shipping labels and QR-based return tags.

North America remains a technology bellwether, with rapid uptake of cloud-connected RFID labels driven by big-box retail mandates. Margin pressures from resin deflation challenged revenue in 2024, yet converters offset headwinds via automation and high-value applications. The region's pharma serialization deadline of November 2024 spurred hardware upgrades across U.S. plants, reinforcing smart-label penetration within the print label market.

Europe combines mature demand with stringent circular-economy rules. Extended Producer Responsibility fees in France and Germany favor linerless and mono-material constructions. The UK's Essential Requirements Regulations guide downgauging and recyclability, stimulating R&D into solvent-free adhesives. Eastern European converters attract contract manufacturing for pan-EU brands seeking cost efficiency without sacrificing regulatory compliance.

Latin America, the Middle East, and Africa account for smaller but rising contributions. Brazil and Mexico scale capacity for beverage shrink sleeves, while Gulf Cooperation Council members diversify into packaged foods, importing technical know-how alongside capital equipment. African markets grapple with trade barriers and infrastructure constraints, yet mobile commerce growth signals long-term potential for variable-data label solutions.

List of Companies Covered in this Report:

CCL Industries Inc. Avery Dennison Corporation Multi-Color Corporation Fuji Seal International, Inc. Mondi plc Huhtamaki Oyj 3M Company Brady Corporation Ahlstrom-Munksjo Oyj Autajon Group Taghleef Industries LLC Ravenwood Packaging Ltd. SATO Holdings Corporation Taylor Corporation Weber Packaging Solutions, Inc. Resource Label Group, LLC Advanced Labelworx, Inc. Alliance Prints USA, Inc. Clarion Safety Systems, LLC

Additional Benefits:

The market estimate (ME) sheet in Excel format
3 months of analyst support

Table of Contents:

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Study Assumptions and Market Definition

1.2 Scope of the Study

2 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

4 MARKET LANDSCAPE

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- 4.1 Market Overview
- 4.2 Market Drivers
 - 4.2.1 Accelerated adoption of high-speed digital (inkjet) presses for short-run, SKU-proliferated label jobs
 - 4.2.2 Brand-owner shift toward linerless pressure-sensitive labels to cut waste and logistics costs
 - 4.2.3 E-commerce boom driving demand for variable-data shipping and return labels
 - 4.2.4 Regulatory push for smart/barcode labels enabling end-to-end traceability (e.g., EU FMD, U.S. DSCSA)
 - 4.2.5 Growth of craft beverage and gourmet foods requiring premium, embellishment-rich labels
 - 4.2.6 Emerging antimicrobial label coatings for food safety in cold-chain logistics
- 4.3 Market Restraints
 - 4.3.1 Volatile paper, film and adhesive prices squeezing converter margins
 - 4.3.2 Skill-gap in operating hybrid digital-flexo presses among SME converters
 - 4.3.3 Rising brand-owner preference for direct-to-package digital printing (no label)
 - 4.3.4 Difficult recycling of multi-layer shrink and in-mold labels in circular-economy markets
- 4.4 Industry Value Chain Analysis
- 4.5 Regulatory Landscape
- 4.6 Technological Outlook
- 4.7 Porter's Five Forces Analysis
 - 4.7.1 Bargaining Power of Suppliers
 - 4.7.2 Bargaining Power of Buyers
 - 4.7.3 Threat of New Entrants
 - 4.7.4 Threat of Substitutes
 - 4.7.5 Intensity of Competitive Rivalry

5 MARKET SIZE AND GROWTH FORECASTS (VALUE)

- 5.1 By Print Process
 - 5.1.1 Offset Lithography
 - 5.1.2 Gravure
 - 5.1.3 Flexography
 - 5.1.4 Screen
 - 5.1.5 Letterpress
 - 5.1.6 Electrophotography
 - 5.1.7 Inkjet
- 5.2 By Label Format
 - 5.2.1 Wet-Glue Labels
 - 5.2.2 Pressure-Sensitive Labels
 - 5.2.3 Linerless Labels
 - 5.2.4 Multi-Part Tracking Labels
 - 5.2.5 In-Mold Labels
 - 5.2.6 Shrink and Stretch Sleeves
- 5.3 By End-User Industry
 - 5.3.1 Food
 - 5.3.2 Beverage
 - 5.3.3 Healthcare and Pharmaceuticals
 - 5.3.4 Cosmetics and Personal Care
 - 5.3.5 Household Cleaning
 - 5.3.6 Industrial and Automotive
 - 5.3.7 Logistics and E-commerce

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5.3.8 Electronics and Appliances

5.4 By Geography

5.4.1 North America

5.4.1.1 United States

5.4.1.2 Canada

5.4.1.3 Mexico

5.4.2 South America

5.4.2.1 Brazil

5.4.2.2 Argentina

5.4.2.3 Rest of South America

5.4.3 Europe

5.4.3.1 United Kingdom

5.4.3.2 Germany

5.4.3.3 France

5.4.3.4 Italy

5.4.3.5 Spain

5.4.3.6 Russia

5.4.3.7 Rest of Europe

5.4.4 Asia Pacific

5.4.4.1 China

5.4.4.2 Japan

5.4.4.3 India

5.4.4.4 South Korea

5.4.4.5 Australia

5.4.4.6 Rest of Asia Pacific

5.4.5 Middle East and Africa

5.4.5.1 Middle East

5.4.5.1.1 United Arab Emirates

5.4.5.1.2 Saudi Arabia

5.4.5.1.3 Turkey

5.4.5.1.4 Rest of Middle East

5.4.5.2 Africa

5.4.5.2.1 South Africa

5.4.5.2.2 Nigeria

5.4.5.2.3 Rest of Africa

6 COMPETITIVE LANDSCAPE

6.1 Market Concentration

6.2 Strategic Moves

6.3 Market Share Analysis

6.4 Company Profiles (includes Global level Overview, Market level Overview, Core Segments, Financials as available, Strategic Information, Market Rank/Share, Products and Services, Recent Developments)

6.4.1 CCL Industries Inc.

6.4.2 Avery Dennison Corporation

6.4.3 Multi-Color Corporation

6.4.4 Fuji Seal International, Inc.

6.4.5 Mondi plc

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- 6.4.6 Huhtamaki Oyj
- 6.4.7 3M Company
- 6.4.8 Brady Corporation
- 6.4.9 Ahlstrom-Munksjo Oyj
- 6.4.10 Autajon Group
- 6.4.11 Taghleef Industries LLC
- 6.4.12 Ravenwood Packaging Ltd.
- 6.4.13 SATO Holdings Corporation
- 6.4.14 Taylor Corporation
- 6.4.15 Weber Packaging Solutions, Inc.
- 6.4.16 Resource Label Group, LLC
- 6.4.17 Advanced Labelworx, Inc.
- 6.4.18 Alliance Prints USA, Inc.
- 6.4.19 Clarion Safety Systems, LLC

7 MARKET OPPORTUNITIES AND FUTURE OUTLOOK

7.1 White-space and Unmet-Need Assessment

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