

Checklist: Better labels

Your roadmap to labelling!

21 checkpoints within:
Communication, Sustainability,
Technology, Design,
Production & Function.

Skanem



Here at Skanem, we've been working with product labelling and packaging solutions since 1905.

Sustainability and innovation are second nature in everything we do. For us, it's all about creating the most optimal solution for our clients – allowing them to never having to settle for less. Creativity shouldn't have to give way to function, and the material shouldn't mess up your brand's sustainability efforts.

In this checklist, we'll share some of the key steps and check-points we use to optimise orders from our clients. After all; Your trust and insight into our expertise is important to us.

The checklist can be read chronologically, or you can click on the sections you want to read more about in the table of contents.

If a checkpoint is difficult for you to answer, that in itself is a good indication that this particular point should be clarified with your label manufacturer before you design your next packaging and labels. This way, you can be sure that the design is feasible and optimal for your specific product.

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1

Communicating to your market through your labels

When a new product is first launched, its label acts as a window of communication to the world. That's why the label's visual expression is vital and require you to make critical choices regarding colour, material, and size.

But the label should also represent your brand, your values and reach your target audience with the right type of communication. Lastly, all of this must be communicated in a way that allows the customer to perceive and understand the message within a matter of seconds.

□ 1.1 Does the design reflect your brand?

One of the first things you need to do when creating new labels is to ensure that the design matches your brand's identity.

Should your product appear as a megabrand that appeals to the masses or come accross as more of a niche product? Should it be perceived as a budget-friendly option or a luxury product?

For any product sold in an environment where it's competing with other similar products, the label's appearance – along with the packaging – will determine whether the product is selected or not.

3 essential questions you should be able to answer before designing the label:

1. *What* kind of product is it?
2. *Who* should the product appeal to?
3. *Which* price range does the product belong in?



I.e., If your product has a vintage or retro vibe, the labelling will have a different look than products that market themselves to be homemade or organic, for example.

Examples:

- Paper labels come in a variety of qualities that could give the label a natural or crafted look.
- Foil can give both the label and the product a more premium look.
- Transparent plastic materials make it possible to tempt the buyer with the product itself.

□ 1.2 Does the label help place your product in the correct price range?

The label's design should not only make sure that the consumer recognises your brand, but it should also reflect the price range of your product.

Think of the label as a sales pitch for your product. If your product's competitive advantage is that it's budget-friendly, then the label should visualise this. Similarly, the label of an expensive luxury product should reflect the quality one would expect from a premium quality product.

The goal is for the consumer to be able to make correct assessments about price and quality at first glance.

2

Sustainable and eco-friendly choices

Naturally, you're concerned about the way your product and packaging impacts the environment. As you should be. According to NielsenIQ, as many as 81% – across generations and borders – believe that companies should contribute in the fight against climate change.

□ 2.1 Should you be a part of an environmental programme?

Measures to reduce waste, enable recycling, and lower the waste of resources is simply expected in the twentieth century. But how do you achieve that if positive measures in one step – subsequently has a negative impact in the next?

The answer is complex, but overall, a circular economy is required. It's about the final sum of the overall product's environmental impact on, among other things:

- Production
- Packaging
- Storage
- Transportation
- Sales and use
- The amount and quantity of waste within your company
- The amount and quantity of waste at your suppliers
- The amount and handling of waste by your end customer

However complicated, these are significant issues that we, as a label manufacturer, can assist you in mapping.

Whether it's one label or a full-scale environmental programme for your brand, here at Skanem India we can calculate how much your measures reduce greenhouse gas emissions, save energy, and minimise water usage during production.

□ 2.2 Does the label make it possible (or impossible) to recycle the packaging/product?

It's important to regard the finished product when thinking about sustainable solutions. If you have a container (bottle, cup, bag, etc.), that isn't recyclable but a label that can be recycled, the whole product probably won't get recycled. For environmental optimisation, we consider the material and composition of all components of the product, such as:

- The content
- The container
- The packaging
- The label
- The adhesive
- The colour ink
- The effects

Note! In 2022, the Indian Ministry of Environment (MoE) published the new Extended Producer Responsibility (ERP) program. It sets recycling targets for plastic producers, importers, and brand owners, that begin at 25% and progressively get stricter.

A traditional paper label attached to a PET bottle is an excellent example of how two components, which are recyclable separately, destroy circular economic goals. This is because the combination of the two pollutes the recycling process. Among several options is to switch to a synthetic substrate with washable glue to make it possible to recycle the PET bottle.

Environmental materials

One could argue that a material is environmentally friendly when it can be recycled, or originates from a renewable source. Materials that require less resources and energy during production will also be more environmentally friendly, but are not considered circular in themselves.

Therefore, it's mainly the recyclable and renewable materials in plastic, paper and biomass that are most recognised for being environmental materials.

Plastic extracted from petroleum is not a renewable or degradable source, but is excellent in reuse and can be recycled almost indefinitely. As long as it's made possible.

That is why it is so important to use the correct type of plastic – in both the packaging and the label, to make sure that the packaging can be recycled in the end.

□ 2.3 Should the label communicate your brand values?

Knowing what a brand stand for affects the consumer's decision making – in many cases, more than price.

A recent research report from Bain & Company explored how the sustainability trend amongst consumers in India has changed in the last two years. Key results from the report show that **94%** are willing to pay more for sustainable products, **52%** plan to spend more in the future on sustainable products, and **49%** started buying sustainable products in the past two years.

The brand's values must therefore be genuine and communicated in such a way that they are immediately understood by your target audience.

For example, many consumers will actively search for sustainable brands, brands that are locally and nationally produced, or brands that are organic. Therefore, both label and packaging should reflect your business's values. There are several ways to do this:



Communicate engagement - Show AND tell

Don't be afraid to market (or even brag) about the measures you take to ensure that your products and packaging become more sustainable. For example, the Norwegian supermarket chain, REMA 1000, shows how they work with a more environmentally friendly plastic consumption by labelling products with "we have reduced the plastic" on the label, or "recycled plastic" on their carrier bags.

Tell a story

You can also use label and packaging to indirectly communicate values, which are strategically important to your brand, via classic storytelling.

In the food industry, this could be executed by introducing the manufacturer, cultivation techniques, animal welfare or the product's areas of origin on the label og packaging.

If you sell agricultural products and run organic, the label can typically convey the story of the farmer who grows the raw materials or how the animals are doing, space conditions, feed and so on.

Our Peel and Read labels for poltry producer Nortura's Prior represent the farmer in an informative and engaging way.



□ 2.4 Smart labels for a greener future

How about adding a digital code, by using smart labels, that also helps make the world a little better?

Many consumers struggle to assess which items can be recycled when sorting the trash in their home.

Machines at sorting facilities may have the same problem. This prevents many countries from achieving the recycling rate they want.

With new technology, you can cover your entire product with invisible codes that the sorting machines can read. This will help ensure that more materials are sorted correctly, which in turn leads to more reuse and less plastic in the ocean. The project is called the HolyGrail, and is a collaboration between the biggest brand names in the world trying to do something about waste and recycling issues. Skanem is a part of the HolyGrail Project 2.0, as an associated member and we plan to be an active part of the organisation.

Note! New, stricter national standards for recycled plastic for food packaging, were issued by The Food Safety and Standards Authority India (FSSAI) in 2022.





3 Technology

An interactive label should entice the buyer, increasing the potential of them picking up the product while they're in the store.

□ 3.1 Should the label be a Smart Label?

Skaneem's Smart Labels are readable via smartphone technology, and can lead the consumer to a digital universe that enriches the customer journey. At the same time, you as a company can obtain useful information about the consumer. Smart Labels can be used for:

- Competitions
- Social content
- Challenges
- Loyalty programs
- Apps
- Quizzes
- Customer questionnaire
- Manuals
- Recipes
- Tutorials
- DIY projects

With insights to the digital spaces that your Smart Labels lead to and the data collected, you can continuously leverage and adjust the content according to how your campaign evolves.



□ 3.2 Should you use engaging technology?

Modern technology can be a powerful tool for marketing campaigns. Both to engage customers, and to understand them better.

The information provided on traditional labels and packaging can be quite conventional and linear. This doesn't have to be a bad thing, but by using the label for some games and fun you will also add more value to your product in the eyes of the customer. This can be solved in different ways, and with different technologies. Including QR codes, NFC, or Magic Codes. There are three features in particular that are popular right now:

- **Gameification** is all about turning the label into a game that benefits the customer. Whether in the form of physical prizes, digital scores or rewarding challenges. This is not a new concept or feature but Gameification is constantly evolving. For over 15 years, McDonald's has had great success with its label hatches containing analog premium codes, while products with interactive labels (Smart Labels) can send the customer to a landing page or an app on their own smartphone.
- **Video** is a relatively easy way to connect your customers to the brand's digital surfaces. Instead of telling stories with just text or images on your label and packaging, you can tell your story through video. Scanning a QR code or a Magic Code with your phone

allows your customer to discover new layers in your brand with a film that shows, for example, how or where the product is made, the story behind the manufacturer or a video tutorial with guiding tips and tricks. This helps build your brand and gives your customers a valuable insight into your brand.

- **Augmented Reality (AR)** features on the label and packaging allow the consumer to interact with your products while they are still in the store or when using the product after purchase. By turning on the camera in their smartphone, and pointing it at your product, it will be able to pop up digital aspects, such as an ingredient list, statistics or animation associated with that particular product. And the consumer sees all this – via the camera feature and connected app. Yes, just like in the Pokemon Go app. Want to know more about AR on your products? [Send us a message!](#)

The QR codes of Finnish Shell St1, which operates Shell petrol stations in Finland, engaged customers using thermal QR codes on their disposable coffee cups. The QR code would become visible after the cup had been filled with hot liquid. The customer could scan the code, winning gifts like a free coffee or a trip for four to Monte Carlo to watch the Monaco Formula 1 Grand Prix. The cup, also known as The Monaco Cup, was designed by Finnish generexon and made by Huhtamaki.





4

Colours, textures, and effects

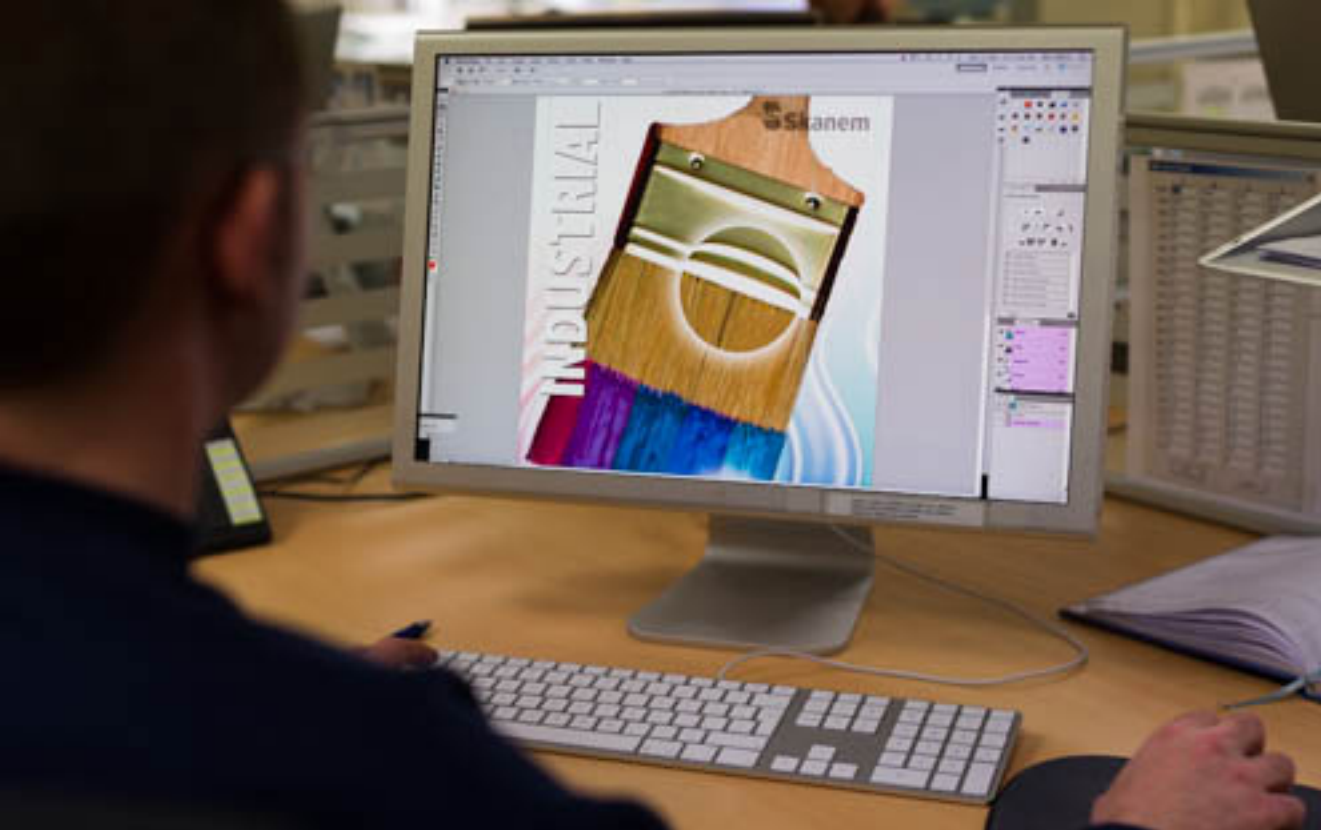
Once you've made a good assessment of your brand's identity and context, it's time to consider colours, textures, and effects. These are elements which – when used correctly – make the label stand out, trigger curiosity and provide your customers with highly desired associations.

□ 4.1 What kind of visual impression should the colours convey?

Many factors come into play when colour schemes are involved. First and foremost the colours should align with the brand's profile. But you should also be aware that colours can change the customer's perception of the product, either in a positive or in a negative way.

You may want to map the following — for yourself or together with a label manufacturer:

- Should the colours contrast or complement the logo?
- What associations should the customer get from the colours you choose?
- Should the colours contrast or complement competitors on the store shelf?
- Should the colours match the content of the product using colour matching? (Especially important for cosmetics and paints)
- Which colours should be used? CMYK or unique colours, or maybe a combination?
- What kind of quality is right for your product? For example, paper appears more “homemade”, while Foil has a more premium look.
- With a transparent design, the customer can see the product through the label and be tempted.
- Information on the back of the label may engage customer while drinking a product, for example.



4.2 What about special effects or additional functionality on the labels?

Examples include.

- Glue page printing
- Back pressure
- Coldfoil
- Embossing
- Debossing
- Adhesive page printing
- Reverse print - visual through the label
- Hotfoil/Coldfoil
- Adhesive deadener
- High build textured varnishes
- Tactile varnish

4.3 Does your label need a varnish or not?

Varnish can be used as a protective layer, or to prepare for impressions of date marking or batch numbers. Varnishes can also create effect and contrast on the labels. To achieve the desired effect, there are a number of different varnishes to choose from:

- Matte or gloss
- Soft touch
- Textured
- Printable
- Scent release
- Scratchable (lottery)

5

Production and application

Although packaging developers and designers do a thorough and creative job, it won't help much if the label falls off or fades when storing, transporting or using. As a label manufacturer, we take a thorough approach to mapping the label's function, production and application — in addition to expected use, of course.

The following are checkpoints which a manufacturer or filler should know in order to optimise the production of the labels. Of course, many of our clients prefer our assistance as a label manufacturer to answer these, but it never hurts to be informed into the production process.

5.1 Should the label have practical functions?

Perhaps the user experience of your product might be improved with a label that can be opened and closed? Should the label also act as a carrier? Or perhaps the product is most functional if it can be hung up by the label?

5.2 What sizes should the labels have?

The shape and size of the label are controlled by the product to which it will be attached. What width, height and shape best fits the product?

5.3 What will the label be attached to?

Is the surface smooth, curved or rough? Should the label fit into a specific area on the product?

5.4 What type of environment will the label be exposed to – from application to end of use?

Have you thought about how well the label would withstand frost, moisture, changing temperatures, sunlight or dirt in general? This is important for the application process, but even more so for transportation and usage.

5.5 How will the label be applied to the product?

Machine applied or hand applied?

5.6 Which label material should you choose?

There are many different materials to choose from. Paper and plastic are two main categories, but there are hundreds of different varieties within each of these.



5.7 Which adhesive best suits your needs?

There are a number of different adhesives to choose from with different properties. **First of all, we must consider how wide the glue should usually be within one of the following categories:**

- Permanent
- Removable
- Temperature tolerant
- Wash-off

5.8 Should each label have variables such as unique numbers or codes?

Within the pharmaceutical industry, unique numbers or codes are printed on the labels in order to guarantee the origin of the product and distinguish between different batches. This can be done both on the front and back of the label as well as on the web.



6

OptforalabelsupplierwhocanadviseyoufromA-Z

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Unfortunately, there is no “one-size fits all” on how to create a label that can withstand use, is sustainable, functional, engages the customer group and guarantees that sales skyrocket. **But your label manufacturer should be able to map and explain the optimal solutions for your particular labels.**

As a label manufacturer, our biggest driving force is to develop and tailor the very best solutions for our customers, and their unique products. We hope and

believe that this is one of the reasons why we are delivering product labeling solutions around the world today.

We hope that this check-list has given you a solid overview of some of the possibilities of your labels, but keep in mind; Ultimately, it's our job to advise you on how to make sure your labels are optimal for your product.

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