



Streamlining Labeling and Printing at Renowned Window and Door Manufacturer

Manufacturer migrates to new labeling solution to support 2D barcodes, maximize efficiency and enhance productivity



CHALLENGE

- Outdated labeling software didn't have an upgrade or support path
- Required new label application to work with Zebra industrial printers
- Maintain output of up to 20,000 labels a day

SOLUTION

- Zebra Industrial Printers
- Eclipse DocOrigin software solution

RESULTS

- Seamlessly integrates with Pella's ERP system
- Maintains high-volume output without incident
- Works flawlessly with all vintages of Zebra printers

SITUATION/CHALLENGE

Pella Windows and Doors are known the world over for their beautifully designed products. In 2015, the company learned their existing labeling software application was outdated and there wasn't an upgrade path. With labels serving as an integral part of their business, Pella needed an alternative solution that would deliver enterprise reliability, fidelity, and performance, and easily integrate with their existing fleet of Zebra printers without compromising productivity.

SOLUTION

Pella selected Eclipse Corporation's DocOrigin enterprise-software solution to replace their aging Adobe software. Eclipse DocOrigin is a Zebra Validated Solution that provides robust software to design, present and deliver dynamic data-driven labels as well as forms, checks and documents. DocOrigin merged the raw data from Pella's business software to produce high-volume interactive and batch generation high-fidelity labels. And importantly, DocOrigin supports Zebra's ZPL print driver which enabled Pella Corporation to continue counting on its existing fleet of high-performance Zebra printers.

RESULT

Most of the products that leave Pella's factories carry a label that was produced on a Zebra printer. On a peak day, Pella generates up to 20,000 labels on hundreds of individual Zebra printers. DocOrigin easily integrated with Pella's ERP system, and the custom Zebra driver enables the company to take advantage of every print feature while maximizing print performance. Results are outstanding.



Finely-Crafted Windows and Doors

Pella designs and manufactures made-to-order custom windows and doors and behind-the-glass blinds and shades for a myriad of homes and businesses. Founded in 1925 in Pella, Iowa, the company employs over 6,000 workers at 14 manufacturing locations across the United States. The company has received nine ENERGY STAR Partner of the Year Awards and five distinctions for sustained excellence.



MISSION - CRITICAL LABELS

Printing labels is a mission-critical operation across Pella's plant floors. The company creates labels that are as custom as the products they produce, so they needed to have the ability to design a label of any dimension at any time.

"We print all kind of labels for shipping, product identification, and more," says Brad Postma, development manager of information technology at Pella Corporation. "The labels contain vital information, and it is essential that we produce them quickly and accurately. In addition to internal and regulatory requirements," Postma adds, "customers must be able to easily identify important product information, such as window and door industry information."

Streamlining the Printing Process

The Eclipse DocOrigin enterprise software application is an innovative and intuitive software solution for designing and generating dynamic business documents, forms and labels. The software makes use of open technology to produce high-fidelity, high-performance labels and works seamlessly with Pella's line of business software.

Not only was DocOrigin able to handle Pella's existing needs, but it also turned out to be more efficient and easier to customize. Pella's previous solution required the company to compile multiple IFDs (a propriety Adobe Central input format) for all of the different printers to establish the print files. With DocOrigin, Pella modifies a single PRT file to set up all of the printer parameters, instead of compiling multiple form templates as previously required, to accomplish the same task.

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DocOrigin also supports multiple file formats that help ensure it will be able to grow alongside the company's needs. The Eclipse team also built a custom Matrix 2D barcode specifically to address Pella's requirements.

Backward Compatibility

Pella has hundreds of Zebra printers installed throughout their factories and replacing those models was not an option. "As far as I can remember back, we've had Zebra printers at Pella," says Postma.

The fact that there is a dedicated Zebra ZPL print driver available within DocOrigin meant Pella Corporation could keep using their existing printers. "The driver in DocOrigin drives the Zebra printers at full speed, which is crucial for a company that labels everything coming off an assembly line," explains Steve Brown, account manager at Eclipse Corporation.

Pella Corporation can also use DocOrigin to design and generate the Zebra labels, so if Pella's needs expand beyond labeling, they can use the software solution across their entire enterprise – from the corporate office to the plant floor.

Seamless Integration

At the heart of the DocOrigin system is the Merge engine that sits beside the existing ERP application. The Merge engine takes data coming out of the ERP system, interprets it, merges the data into the suitable label and then sends it to the appropriate printer. While the printer is preloaded with labels, the Merge engine ensures the right data gets to the correct label.

"We're an independent application, and we have something that's called Integration Without Modification which means we can take the data stream coming out of the ERP system and handle it without the ERP application needing to be modified – which is a big deal," notes Eclipse's Brown.

This also meant that migration to the new system wouldn't adversely affect productivity. Instead, since DocOrigin can support so many different file formats and provides one environment for designing and distributing labels, it's much more efficient. The configuration also translates into savings since Pella won't have to request modifications or changes.

"We liked the development tool to build the label template on a desktop and publish it up to the server. In that regard, we're excited to switch to DocOrigin and use its desktop solution to build a template," adds Pella's Postma. "It provides a lot of flexibility to work with our existing fleet of printers."

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