

PROFILE

NAME: Dura Plastics
LOCATION: Beaumont, Calif.
FOUNDED: 1962
WEBSITE: www.duraplastics.com

CHALLENGE

Black-and-white labels were no longer economically sufficient for meeting the new color style guidelines and added SKUs outlined by valued customers.

SOLUTION

Integrating ColorWorks® on-demand color label printers into existing warehouse workflow delivered fast speeds, reliability and high-quality color output.

Adding Color to the Manufacturing Facility to Augment Automation and Meet Color Style Guide Needs

Dura Plastics Upgrades to Epson ColorWorks On-Demand Color Label Printers for Better Automation and Decreased Waste

Supplier to some of the country's largest home improvement retailers, [Dura Plastics](http://www.duraplastics.com) manufactures and distributes roughly 3,000 different types of PVC piping components.

Dura Plastics was founded by Will and Ursula Rost in 1962 and now, day-to-day operations are overseen by their two sons. John Akamine, plant manager, began working in the Dura Plastics packaging department early in his career and today manages the California manufacturing facility.

"Our manufacturing plants are fully equipped with start-to-finish technology, so we control the entire process from inception to build and delivery, making repairs on the spot and advancing the technology here at our own facilities," noted Akamine. "Automation is what we're trying to gear up for. Because everything we do here is based on technology and being able to merge technologies is the best way to go."

From a water feature in Las Vegas, Nevada, to an elephant watering hole in South Africa and a sports park in China, Dura Plastics has supplied PVC piping components to countries around the world. "In total, we have about 3000 SKUs. Day-in and day-out, there's a lot of product flow and product movement going on," said Akamine.

The Need for a Color Label Solution Arises

Long relying on black-and-white labels, Dura Plastics was met with the need for a color label solution when one of their large retail customers came out with a new color style guide.

"When the color demand came in from a big-box retail partner, we began searching for a new color label printing



solution," said Akamine. "In our initial search, we found the choices were either a small little desktop printer that could not handle the volume we needed or a full-blown printing press nearly the size of a room. There was no middle market printer."

"It was very difficult because there were very few choices," added Arnold Ancheta, plant supervisor, Dura Plastics. "We came across many other printers that just didn't seem to fit what we were looking for in a printer."

Akamine and Ancheta were in search of an on-demand color label solution that could produce any quantity of customized labels, containing specified text, color and variable data, at the precise moment needed. With the number of SKUs they work with day-in and day-out, the time constraints and inflexibility of their existing two-step printing process would no longer suffice. Managing an inventory of pre-printed stock turned out to be expensive. Plus, any change in a product or process could render their pre-printed labels obsolete and unusable, resulting in wasted inventory.

"When we integrated the printers, the workflow just went so smoothly. Speed is everything to us, as is reliability, and this printer offers both."

— JOHN AKAMINE, PLANT MANAGER, DURA PLASTICS



“Our previous label printers were horrible in terms of speed and waste. There was a lot of wasted paper in the beginning of the run and at the end of the run. Plus, toner would get everywhere,” said Akamine.

“We have to print on the fly, so everything we do is based on technology,” Akamine continued. The team began the search for an on-demand color label printer that could integrate into the existing warehouse workflow, as well as deliver fast speeds, reliability and high-quality output, and most importantly, help them meet the color style requirements outlined by some of their valued customers.



Forging New Relationships and Finding a Color Solution

The Dura Plastics team first saw the Epson ColorWorks on-demand label printers at Pack Expo. “We were just about to leave when I saw the Epson booth in the corner of the hall. I said, well let’s go over there and check it out,” said Akamine.

Akamine and Ancheta were almost immediately sold on the Epson ColorWorks C7500 on-demand color label printers. “They had beautiful printers printing in color with fast speeds and no waste at the beginning or end of a run. It was perfect,” said Akamine.

“I mean, this thing wasn’t just printing – it was flying!” added Ancheta.

Because seamless integration was paramount for Dura Plastics, Ancheta and Akamine appreciated that the ColorWorks are equipped with built-in ESC/Label language to easily merge with existing automated workflow.

To bring on the ColorWorks, Akamine contacted trusted technology partner, Fred Braun, senior account manager with Dynamic Services, a local label printing technology provider and custom label print shop.

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Adding Color to the Manufacturing Facility and Fabricating Growth

“When we integrated the printers, the workflow just went so smoothly. Speed is everything to us, as is reliability, and this printer offers both,” noted Ancheta.

Ancheta expressed that having the ability to print on demand has provided a new level of convenience and time-savings, as they no longer spend time ordering and managing multiple SKUs of pre-printed stock.

Akamine confirmed the new color printing setup exceeds expectations to deliver on fast, high-quality color output, as well as to meet customer’s color style requirements. He added, “The setup is surely working, and will allow us to expand to meet the needs of other labeling style guides in the future.”

Dura Plastics is constantly improving the efficiency, automation, product quality, and delivery of the products they manufacture. “We have a great team that ensures quality of our products and makes sure that over 3,000 SKUs get to their destination on time,” notes Akamine. “As Dura Plastics continues to grow, so will our technology. And that’s one of the reasons why the Epson ColorWorks models are here.”

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