

## PROFILE

**Name:** Hunger Mountain Coop

**Location:** Montpelier, VT

**Type:** Business

## CHALLENGE

Finding the best-fit printing solution to maintain an efficient labeling process for a robust Point of Sale System.

## SOLUTION

Epson's ColorWorks<sup>®</sup> C3500 operates with fast precision for detailed data and spot color labeling and is user-friendly for varying departments of an organization.

## Coop Finds Flexibility with On-Demand Color Label Printer

Located in Montpelier, VT, Hunger Mountain Coop is supported by over 8,000 member-owners and 160 employees. The Coop began as a pre-order service in the late 1960's when a group of neighbors joined together to buy bulk groceries. Since then, its mission has been to provide healthy and nutritious food to its member-owners and the surrounding community, and give back thousands of dollars each year to local organizations, non-profits, schools and other groups.

The information technology team at Hunger Mountain Coop oversees the creation of the Price Look Up (PLU) stickers used with products such as individual apples, as well as shelf tags and sale tags. The shelf tags and sale tags use spot color to showcase a product's unit price and current sale price respectively. Since the sale tags change on a regular basis, the Coop decided to bring production of the tags in-house as a means to better manage costs.

Hunger Mountain Coop initially purchased a color laser printer to handle the task, but it quickly realized the decision led to increased production time since the tags still needed to be cut and laminated after printing. An inexpensive inkjet printer was purchased as a replacement, but the Hunger Mountain Coop team regularly experienced technical issues with it that required production to be halted and the batch restarted. After wasting many labels, Hunger Mountain Coop upgraded to another inkjet printer brand. This printer offered greater speed than the previous model, but became defective after only a year of use. To provide a backup while the first one was out for repair, a second printer of the same make and model was



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purchased, but even the newer one continued having issues and wasting more labels. One reason was that the manufacturer did not invest in updated drivers for Windows.

When Hunger Mountain Coop implemented a new Point of Sale (POS) system in June 2015, they began looking for a better label solution that could be used by buyers as well as the Scanning Coordinator. After many poor experiences with printers, the Coop enlisted the help of tag manufacturer DuraFast<sup>™</sup> Label Company, a division of Sector Nine Distribution Limited. After reviewing the challenges that Hunger Mountain Coop had with its label printers, DuraFast immediately recommended the Epson ColorWorks<sup>®</sup> C3500 printer. Since the new POS vendor also recommended the same printer, it was the obvious best choice for a replacement.

"The Epson ColorWorks C3500 has been amazing," said Ravi Nielsen, IT manager, Hunger Mountain Coop. "Ever since we deployed the printer, our buyers have been able to use it to put

their products on sale at any time without needing help from the IT team. In addition to being easy to use, the Epson printer runs a lot faster and produces much crisper colors than the other models we have had. The Epson produces sale signs at about 1.5 seconds each, while the previous printer took about eight seconds each, making the Epson over five times faster.”

Still wary after its series of negative experiences with other printers, Hunger Mountain Coop invested in Epson’s Spare-In-The-Air Plan, which is part of the company’s ExpressCareSM Service Program as a precaution. This quick, overnight replacement program bridges the gap between the turnaround time required for depot repair and the higher cost of on-site service. Should anything happen to the ColorWorks C3500, Epson will overnight a replacement and the Hunger Mountain Coop would send the damaged unit back to Epson. All shipping costs are paid for by Epson.

“This program gives me peace of mind that if we have any issues, we’ll have an immediate solution and can avoid downtime and label waste. That’s really important to a business like ours and makes me confident that we made the right choice with the Epson color label printer,” added Nielsen.



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