

A Sweet, Digital Solution to Consistent Label Color

Family-owned, artisan food maker **GrownUp KidStuff** (www.grownupkidstuff.com), Evanston, IL, blends six types of sweet sauces, and sells them at a number of regional grocers, specialty food shops and through its website. The company offers four varieties of chocolate sauces, plus butterscotch and caramel.

Like many other small businesses, GrownUp KidStuff must compete for shelf space and sales with long-established, national brands. As a result, the job of standing apart from these mega-brands often relies on attractive labeling.

GrownUp KidStuff co-owners Connie Wastcoat and Don Strandell have their six sauces packaged in 11-oz. glass jars. Strandell, a graphic designer and typographer, designed labels for the sauces that underscore the playfulness of the company name while also incorporating important product and nutritional information along with serving suggestions and warming instructions.

However, even though the graphic design of the labels was very appealing, Wastcoat and Strandell were unhappy with the color consistency among their six different labels. They felt that inconsistent labeling did not reflect the type of extreme care they took in blending and packaging their brand of sauces.

To address the problem, the pair paid a visit to nearby Weber Packaging Solutions (www.weberpackaging.com), a prominent pressure-sensitive label manufacturing company. There they met with members of the Weber's marketing and graphics team.

"Craft businesses like GrownUp KidStuff are looking for very high-quality labels to help elevate their brand," said Tom Michalsen, Weber marketing director. "In addition, they need to be able to order



Sweet Serendipity

So how was it that GrownUp KidStuff learned about Weber Packaging Solutions?

It began during a street fair in Chicago where GrownUp KidStuff was selling its line of sweet sauces and a passerby paused to examine one of its jars.

"It didn't look to me like he was reading the ingredients," said Connie Wastcoat, co-owner of GrownUp KidStuff. "He seemed to be interested in the label itself."

The curious visitor turned out to be Glenn Gilly, president and CEO of Weber Packaging Solutions. And Wastcoat was right; he was most intrigued by the pressure-sensitive labels used to decorate the jars of sauces.

"We got to talking," Wastcoat recalls, "and I mentioned that we were unhappy with the color consistency of the labels we had purchased for our variety sauces. He said Weber had a solution for us."

As far as Gilly's sole interest in the labels themselves goes, he did end up buying two jars of sauce. And he reports that they were delicious.

relatively small volumes of those labels at an affordable price. That's where the economic advantages of our digital label printing capability come into play."

Michalsen pointed out that traditional label printing methods like flexography can be costly for short runs, as there are fixed costs associated with film preparation, printing plates and press setup costs – no matter the length of the label print run.

"Digital printing provides cost-efficiencies for shorter runs and runs of multiple SKU's due to the nature of the technology," Michalsen continued. "And it also enables our customers to order smaller minimum quantities to prevent an unwanted build-up of label inventory."

To ensure that the GrownUp KidStuff label colors would perfectly match expectations, Weber printed out a custom palette of 343 different hues of brown color PMS 462 using its HP Indigo WS6000 digital label press.

Wastcoat and Strandell selected one of those hues to be the important background color on all four of the company's chocolate sauces, and chose another to be used on the logo and product name portion of all six of its labels. The use of Weber's digital label printing capability is critical to maintaining precise color matching among each print run of the labels.

The GrownUp KidStuff labels are digitally printed in four-color process. The pressure-sensitive paper labels also are coated with a special gloss over-laminate to help resist environmental elements and abrasion.

Sweet Secrets, Too

And it's not just color consistency that GrownUp KidStuff considers with its labels. Every label on a jar of GrownUp KidStuff sauce also contains a charming sentence or two about the product inside.

To those perceptive enough to notice, certain letters in that phrase are tinted a slightly different color. If one puts those tinted letters together, what emerges is a sort of secret message.

For example, the Hot! Chocolate Sauce conceals the message: I spy a cocoa fiend. It's another indication of how much GrownUp KidStuff cares about its brand – and its customers.

Today GrownUp KidStuff labels do exhibit the same consistency and care that the company demands of its sweet sauces.

