Supplier Quality Management: Labels

JOHN FRANKHUISEN  
Production Manager, Collotype Labels Pty Ltd

Collotype produces and supplies high quality wine and spirit labels to the wine industry, and it is absolutely critical for our success to guarantee the quality of our product. This quality is not only based on how the label looks but also how it applies and how well it transports.

Collotype’s quality guarantee operates along the following lines:

Leadership – setting direction
Management – following the direction, doing things right the first time (chasing the dream).

Once leadership (direction) is in place emphasis must be placed on the following areas.

1. Customer focus
2. Continual improvement
3. Collocare (employee involvement)
4. Quality systems

The trends in these areas must be measured.

A plan setting up the context under which quality systems operate, there are a number of other components required to help ensure the system has as much support as possible to assist in a total quality system.

Quality design

S.N.A.P. (Special New Artwork and Production) consists of the Production Manager, Reproduction Manager, Design Manager, Services Manager, and Sales Representative. The job is evaluated for best possible print method (for the customer and for Collotype) and possible problem areas where slight design changes may help.

Quality planning

Right resources in the right quantities at the right time for today and for the future.

Quality improvement

Collocare Improvement Teams
Collotype is committed to continued improvement and this can only be achieved through employee participation. Staff are trained using external consultants so that they are all skilled in team building, problem solving and implementing new improvements.

Quality assurance

We achieved AS 3901/ISO 9001 in June 1993

Standard operating procedures

From the moment an order is placed to the time the labels are despatched, each process has a standard operating procedure and all staff are aware of the consequences if any deviation occurs. It is now a condition of employment that these procedures are strictly followed.

Quality control - inspection of incoming goods
In order for Collotype to guarantee the final product, the same guarantees are required from our suppliers. All incoming goods are checked against order and specifications before being released for use. All suppliers are rated according to performance.

Ink mixes

Almost 90% of our work requires precise colour matching; our ink supplier provides the services of an ink technician.

QC checks

Each operator is responsible for removing 1 sheet every 2,000 for the QC Department. A full time QC Officer inspects every sheet for any variation of colour, print register, print quality, etc.

Any variation is reported and documented by the Production Manager daily. Because the majority of jobs printed by Collotype generally require 3 to 5 machine passes, a comprehensive history is compiled keeping in mind that as every new process is being checked, previous passes are once again re-checked.

Once the job has reached the Finishing Department for cutting and banding, the operators have a full quality history, and process the job accordingly.

How can we be sure the operators have fulfilled their responsibility by giving a true indication of the quality of their work? The answer is simple: every sheet printed at Collotype is coded with the operator’s name and date printed.

Quarantine system

Any material with possible quality problems is removed immediately from the job. These sheets are again coded so that no mix up with good sheets is possible, and they are stored in a specially marked quarantine area in the factory. It is the operator’s responsibility to separate these sheets; after all, his/her name is on them.

Scuff testing

All labels must pass a transportation test before dispatch. This test or proof is supplied to the customer with the labels.

Random sampling

This is much the same as our machine QC checks, however this is done by taking finished labels at random from finished label bundles. The finished label is checked for the final time to make sure the product meets all quality specifications.

Quality assurance report

After the random sampling has been completed, a detailed QA report is compiled. Despatch is not possible without this report or the approval of the QC Supervisor. The QA report is always sent to the customer.

Monthly management review meeting

This meeting is attended by the Production Manager, Services Manager, QC Supervisor and Finance Director. Any internal nonconformances or customer complaints are discussed and acted on. This would normally consist of improving standard operating procedure, staff counselling, supplier non-conformances, etc. This meeting is minuted, problems recorded and actioned.