

# Pressure-Sensitive Label Helps Grow Brand Equity for Heineken



Can a label transcend the container, or move beyond ink and graphics to showcase a design palette? It can when the label material is clear pressure-sensitive film.

Heineken N.V. (Netherlands), wanted to highlight a more contemporary, cosmopolitan character through its core pack type – its signature green bottle. The brewer initially pulled back the curtains on this brand icon about six years ago when it elected to make the switch from wet-glue paper labels to clear-on-clear pressure-sensitive film.

The brewer launched its first pressure-sensitive label in Italy in 2004 and followed that success in 2006 when it introduced the new Heineken® Premium Light brand in the United States.

“We saw a substantial surge in sales with Heineken Regular during the introductory months of the new label,” said Mr. Jelle Hess, Sr. Packaging Design Manager, Global Commerce, Heineken Brand. “And considering that we have sold over 1 billion bottles since the introduction, you can imagine we do not regret that choice!”

“Our famous green Heineken bottle has gone through a great rejuvenation with the clear label, whilst maintaining the core quality and heritage cues, and the consumer loves it.”

Mr. Jelle Hess, Sr. Packaging Design Manager,  
Global Commerce, Heineken Brand

Avery Dennison Corporation, through its Roll Materials division, developed a custom engineered Fasson® clear film for the Heineken front, back and neck labels.



## Increasing Shelf Appeal

Graphically, Heineken wanted to maintain the integrity of the signature silver accent line on the prime label for its flagship brand. The brewer also wanted to ensure the print quality remained unaffected by transportation and the handling at point-of-sale and point-of-use.

“Clear-on-clear pressure-sensitive labeling is viewed as contemporary product positioning and allows additional graphic attributes to be added to the label, such as metallics,” said Dan Muenzer, Vice President of Marketing, Spear Systems, Heineken’s printed labels supplier. “In addition, the clear label application allows the label to become part of the package and not just a last-minute add-on. Bottle and liquid color can literally become part of the design palette to facilitate and reinforce the brand positioning.”

The label carries five colors—silver, green, white, black and red. The famous bright silver metallic racetrack element is printed with Avery Dennison Metalure pigments from its Performance Films Division. And now the clear label allows the green of the bottle to replace most of what was originally printed in green.

Heineken has been progressive in its approach to deploying pressure-sensitive labeling. In fact, the brewer is currently the second-largest user of the labeling technology in the entire beer industry. The Heineken brand with its clear-on-clear pressure-sensitive labels can be found in more countries than any other pressure-sensitive-branded application.

## Improving Total Applied Cost

Brewers enjoy total applied cost savings due to a host of operational efficiencies that factor into the production equation. One universal benefit of pressure-sensitive is the substantial savings in related change parts.

Brand owners are seeing double-digit throughput improvements between 10 to 15 percent compared to glue-applied labels. Avery Dennison has created total applied cost models that quantify this benefit.

“There was a lot of excitement because, for the first time, a packaging innovation was able to get so close to the iconic Heineken green bottle. People thought the bottles were actually direct printed. And that’s a very strong testament to the impact of a no-label look.”

Mr. P. van Rijssen, Manager of Heineken Technical Services

## Sustainability

Along with broad consumer acceptance, the switch to pressure-sensitive labels has also enabled Heineken to contribute to its sustainability agenda.

“We are able to use less ink on the labels and have implemented a liner recycling program,” said Mr. P. van Rijssen, Manager of Heineken Technical Services. Avery Dennison offers low-waste, pressure-sensitive labels that use thinner liners, line-less labels and a reduction in packaging materials.

All of these factors combine to deliver improved shelf appeal, with operational efficiencies, resulting in an increase in brand equity, volume and value.

Heineken brands that have made the switch to pressure-sensitive include Desperados in France; Moretti Zero in Italy; Cruzcampo® Light and Cruzcampo® Reserva in Spain; Amstel® Reserva in Spain; Amstel® Light and Buckler® in the United States; Amstel® Pulse in multiple countries, including Russia and Greece; Wieckse® Rose in Holland; and Dr. Diesel and Dr. Diesel sexy lime in Russia.

“Self-adhesive labeling in beer is the future,” said Mark Ruijgrok, Global Business Director Beer, Avery Dennison. “With a leading global brand like Heineken, as well as domestic market leaders in the United States implementing pressure-sensitive technology, a new era of labeling beer bottles is arising fast. We see further increased interest in self-adhesive labels in Asia Pacific and Latin America as well.”

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