



A Guide to Material Selection for Instant Redeemable Coupons and Coupon Labels

In recent years, brand managers, retailers, and distributors have taken labeling to a new level by offering consumers instant redeemable coupons, on-product rebate forms, and detailed product information integrally folded into the basic product label. These marketing innovations can be as simple as a folded coupon for an instant discount in the checkout lane, or as complex as necessary to fully comply with governmental regulations for medical warnings.

Creating more complex labels, of course, means that the production of these labels, too, becomes more complex. Label manufacturers, often for the first time, now must be concerned not only with how the label looks, but how it will perform in the marketplace. Label design becomes a factor affecting label operation as well as aesthetics, and the choice of material used to produce the label can often spell the difference between a successful marketing campaign and one which alienates the final consumer.

A few label producers have carved out significant niches producing instant redeemable coupons and coupon labels, but as marketers discover the benefits of these complex products, more and more converters are called upon to produce them as a means of retaining existing customers. The following should assist you in entering this extremely lucrative market.

Brand managers and their label designers are generally familiar with the materials they specify and the processes used to print. But material selection becomes much more critical as label complexity increases. Here are some issues which can dramatically affect label production and material selection:

- **Functional Stability**—Designers must be concerned about whether the coupon or information sheet is likely to become detached or loose before it gets to the consumer.
- **Adhesion**—Bonding of the coupon to the product should be consistent across the entire coupon.
- **Ease of Use**—The coupon should come free cleanly and easily, but only when the consumer desires.
- **Lift Anywhere**—Some designers like coupons that do not require a tab and may be lifted by the consumer from any side.
- **Resealability**—Some brand managers specify labels with flaps that can be lifted to provide additional information, but want the flap to be resealable in case the consumer does not elect to purchase the product.

- Clean Detachment—The coupon or information sheet should not leave any residue, and any printing beneath the coupon should be legible.
- Odor—Because much couponing occurs on food or beverages, and because pharmaceuticals and nutraceuticals are logical candidates for folded information sheets, the label construction must not contain materials which might contaminate the product being packaged.
- Product Configuration—Certain products may require specific release liner scoring patterns to ensure good adhesion.

Label converters, too, must carefully select materials for instant redeemable coupons and coupon labels. Here are some considerations:

- Runability—Complex material constructions often run differently than simple pressure sensitive materials. They may respond differently in rewinding and other postpress operations as well.
- Availability From Stock— Not all suppliers stock a good variety of complex constructions, and long delivery lead times are common.
- Master Widths—Some suppliers stock only one or two master widths, which can dramatically influence rewind time and production costs.
- Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act Compliance—Ensuring that coupon stock and all adhesives are fully compliant with federal regulations is particularly important to food and pharmaceutical clients.
- Release Liner Scoring Patterns—Jobs can tunnel on the press if the scoring pattern is not consistent with the design and the product being run.

How 3 Sigma Can Help

3 Sigma leads the industry in coupon technology. More than 100 billion square inches of 3 Sigma Universal Coupon Stock has been used by more than 350 converters around the world in the last 15 years. 3 Sigma Universal Coupon products are widely known for being press-friendly and providing superior consistency throughout the converting process. Our innovative, splittable designs permit the shopper or end user to conveniently lift anywhere on the coupon. The residue-free coupon minimizes handling issues for cashiers and redemption centers.

Coupon base stock is not easily produced. The 15 years of experience at 3 Sigma ensures that converters using our stock benefit from 3 Sigma knowledge and experience that cannot be found elsewhere. We understand label printing, but we also understand application criteria, end user performance, and brand functionality. No other supplier has such breadth and depth of coupon specific experience.

3 Sigma customer service representatives stand ready to assist converters and their customers in designing a wide variety of custom and specialty couponing products. 3 Sigma technical personnel are available to discuss unique or particularly complex coupon designs.