

Results of 1992 paper package/ roll labeling survey

**DON HILDEBRAND
AND M. REBECCA CHAPMAN**

Respondents rate importance of label information and readability.

TAPPI's Packaging Committee, part of the organization's Finishing and Converting Division, conducted a survey by mail during August and September of 1992 to collect specific requirements for roll and package labeling in the paper industry and among customers. Hamilton-Hybar Inc. contributed the printing and mailing of the questionnaires. The Graphic Communications Association collected and tabulated the surveys.

The questionnaires were mailed to individuals on TAPPI's and GCA's mailing lists and included paper manufacturers,

converters, commercial printers, publication printers, and publishers. A total of 113 people responded. Of this group, the vast majority (105 of 113) were from the United States, while the remainder were Canadians.

About three of four respondents (89 of 113) represented customer companies: commercial printers, publications printers, publishers, and others (mainly book printers and publishers). The remainder of responses came from paper manufacturers and converters (Fig. 1).

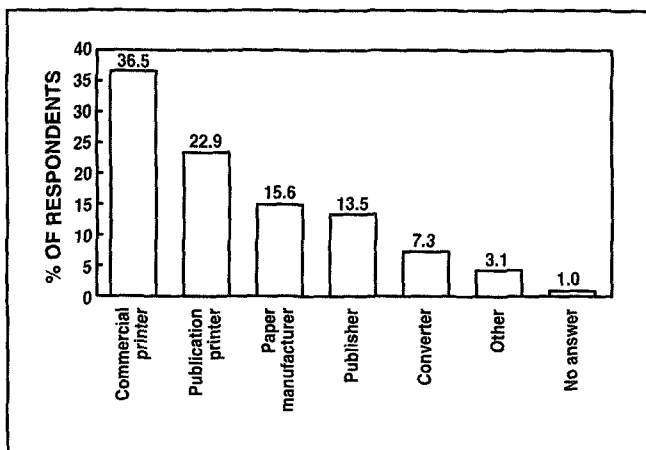
Importance of information on roll or package labels

Respondents rated each of 18 items representing different pieces of information on a roll or package label on a scale of 1 to 10, with 10 indicating strongly agree and 1 being strongly disagree. All groups gave high scores (average of 9 or higher) to:

- Package/roll number identifier
- Basis weight
- Roll width
- Product grade description

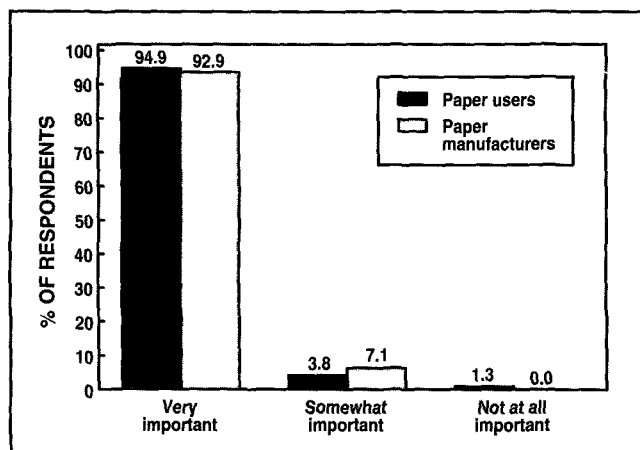
Customer groups also rated net package weight highly. Positive scores (average of 8 to 9) were also given to customer purchase order number and winding direction, in most categories.

1. Survey respondents by category



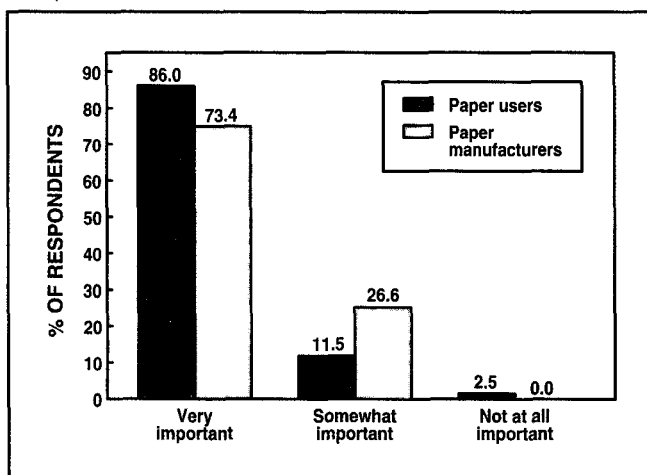
On a related series of six statements about labels, respondents strongly favored English over metric units, although the ratings were closer among the paper manufacturers who need to meet customer requirements for metric measures. Paper manufacturers also gave higher ratings to placing a single barcode on the label. Respondents in all groups gave about equal average scores (from 5 to 7) to either printing barcodes directly on the roll label or printing the codes on peel-off labels. Respondents in most groups gave high average ratings (from 7.5 to 10) to multiple barcodes on the labels, with the number of barcodes desired ranging from two to three.

2. Importance of overall readability



Respondents rated label placement options on the same 1 to 10 scale. Customer respondents generally favored placing the label on the bilge, either near the top or in the center of the roll. Paper manufacturers and converters also gave the highest scores to bilge placement, or secondly, near the top. Somewhat lower scores were given to the package head or on the bilge near the bottom of the roll. For multiroll packages, customer respondents strongly favored a separate label on each roll, as did converters. No strong preferences were given for the location of the supplemental labels, although below the package label or over the applicable roll on the bilge came out higher.

3. Importance of label condition



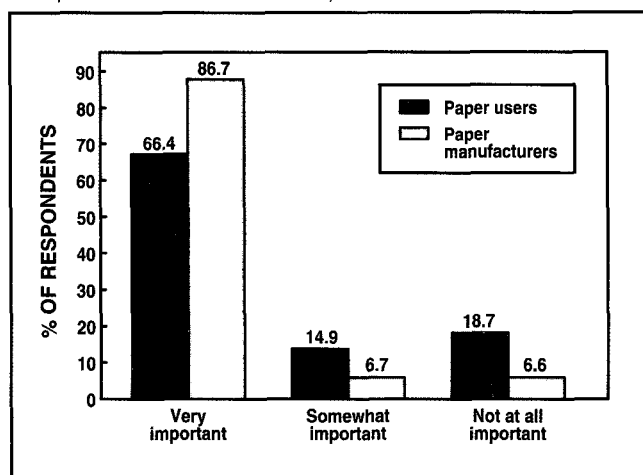
Roll label size

Respondents in the survey asked for large and clear roll labels. Four in 10 respondents, including three-quarters of the publisher representatives, did not choose a specific size, but stressed the need for readability (Fig. 2). Of the specific size options given, about two in 10 each preferred the 14-in. x 10-in. or 15-in. x 14-in. size.

Barcode use

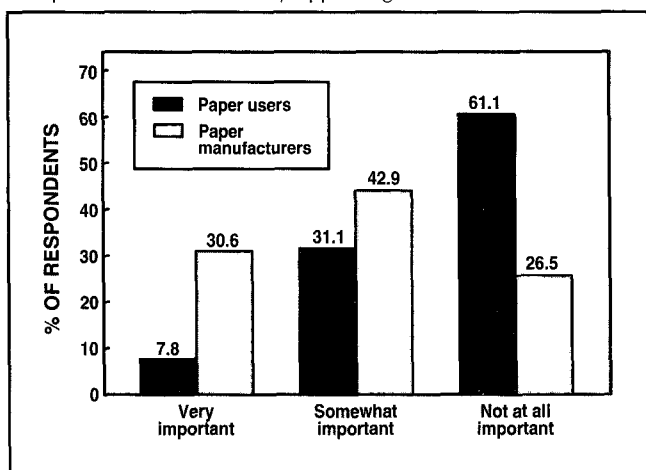
About half (51%) of the respondents overall said their companies used barcodes, ranging from nearly nine in 10 paper manufacturers to one of 10 converters. From four to six in 10 respondents in the other groups said they now use barcodes.

4. Importance of barcode readability



Of those not using barcodes, about half (47%) attributed the condition to the lack of suitable systems in-house. Another two in 10 respondents, including about a third of the publication printers and paper manufacturers answering the question, said they plan to start using barcodes soon. Another quarter of the commercial printers not using barcodes blamed the lack of standards in roll numbering. Only about one in seven (14%) of the total respondents said they or their customers specified barcode standards, but this number included about half of the paper manufacturers. Nearly all of those with specific barcode requirements (11 of 14 respondents) indicated a preference for Code 39 symbology.

5. Importance of color scheme/supplier logo



Electronic manifest use

About six in 10 respondents (61%) said they now use electronic manifests or plan to start in the next year or two. This number includes eight in 10 publication printers and paper manufacturers, six in 10 commercial printers, half of the publishers, and nearly four in 10 converters. About three in 10 respondents said they had no plans for using electronic manifests.

Automated roll handling systems

While nearly half (47%) of the paper manufacturers said they now have automated roll handling systems, very few of the other respondents said they now use or plan to use these systems. About

one in 10 commercial printers either now use or plan to use automated roll handling systems, while about a quarter of the publication printers and converters plan to install these systems in the next year or two.

Roll label attributes

Respondents rated a series of nine attributes of roll labels on their importance, choosing either very important, somewhat important, or not at all important. Nearly all (95%) of the respondents in total and in each group rated overall readability of the label as very important. Between eight and nine in 10 respondents (85%) also considered label condition very important, which included about equal percentages of each company category (Fig. 3). Seven in 10 respondents (71%) called barcode readability very important, including nearly nine in 10 paper manufacturers and eight in 10 publishers (Fig. 4).

About half of the respondents considered placement on the roll as very important, with converters (71%) and publication printers (65%) expressing the most interest. About half of the respondents also indicated character size as a very important feature of roll labels, as did about four in 10 for label size. Smaller numbers rated color scheme (11%), barcode size (25%), and location of information on the label (34%) as very important attributes (Fig. 5). **■**

Hildebrand is marketing consultant, 103 West Zola, Cinebar, WA 98533. Chapman is vice president—operations, Hamilton Hybar Inc., 4123 Carolian Ave., Richmond, VA 23222.