

Redbud Roots Uses Software's Nicelabel Cloud to Ensure Compliance and Speed Up Production

Case study

REDBUD
Roots



Introduction

Redbud Roots is a US-based craft cannabis company located in Michigan. The company's vision is to build medical grade commercial cultivation facilities, provisioning centers and processing labs throughout the state. They cultivate and manufacture medical cannabis and marijuana, as well as products for recreational use.

Redbud Roots has grown rapidly since the company's inception in 2017. They now have three provisioning centers and a packaging facility. Cannabis manufacturing and production is a highly regulated industry and Redbud

Roots must constantly adapt to changing business and legal requirements. The impact of these regulatory changes and manual processes was compounded by Redbud Roots' exponential growth. The company needed a labeling system that would help them rapidly respond to new regulations and scale along with their business. Together, working with Loftware and long-term partner Integrated Productivity Systems (IPSi), Redbud Roots implemented Loftware's NiceLabel Cloud labeling solution to meet the needs of their growing business.



Challenges

Simplify compliance with ever-changing regulations

Cannabis manufacturers operate at the intersection of several, highly regulated industries that place unique demands on their labeling processes. Companies often must comply with a variety of both state and national regulations. For example, Michigan – where Redbud Roots operates – has a statewide seed-to-sale marijuana tracking system, Metrc, that tracks marijuana inventory. The system requires serialized tags to be attached to every plant and labels to be attached to wholesale packages. This serialization helps track plants all the way through the growth process, through drying and curing, to eventual sale through a retail distribution point.

Redbud Roots also produces cannabis for adult-use or recreational purposes. These products need their own unique labels. Then, there are disclaimers, poison control numbers, license and package numbers, as well as source tags. The company's edible products also must have ingredient and allergen information that is governed by a separate set of rules and requirements.

Alex Gillet, Chief Production Officer at Redbud Roots, highlights how one change to this myriad of labeling requirements could impact the entire labeling process. “Originally, every product would need a source tag number indicating where it was tested. We could print 2,000 labels that were the same. Then, they changed the requirements so all products had to have an individual package label as well. So, instead of being able to just print everything in one go, we would have to go in and manually change the number and then print the next batch.”

Create a more efficient label creation process

Changing package information wasn't the only manual element in Redbud Roots' labeling process. Employees would maintain label information in a Microsoft Teams sheet. The graphic designer would then grab the information and put it into a self-made template in a PDF file. Next, they would print sheets of labels through a regular paper printer. Involving the graphic designer was fine, as long as they only had a few products. However, as Redbud Roots' product portfolio expanded, the complexity grew as well. Each new product had to be matched with the corresponding strain and testing data for that product. So, every time a label was printed, the data would change. Suddenly, the graphic designer went from creating one label to hundreds of labels, which was not a sustainable approach to label creation.



Automate review and approval processes

The manual processes continued when the labels reached the quality control phase of the process. “Once the labels were printed, we would have to verify them,” Alex relates. “If there was a mistake, we had already printed 20 pages, so we would have to redo everything. That was a big hassle and a bottleneck to our production process.” Staff would often have to manually calculate the values that went on the label. This also led to errors, which generated a lot of waste in the label production process. “For example, you might have someone who forgot to change the license number from medical to recreational. Then we would have to throw those labels out,” states Alex.

Implement a scalable labeling solution

Redbud Roots needed their labeling processes to keep pace with their rapidly growing business. “Redbud Roots first contacted us because labeling was becoming a bottleneck,” Rick Schilling, President at IPSi, explains. “Their goal was to build a scalable business, so they needed a more agile labeling solution.” With a printing volume of 4,000-6,000 labels a day, five days a week, Redbud Roots wanted to build a flexible labeling process that could accommodate that volume and grow with their business.

David Frankfater, CTO at Redbud Roots summarized the company’s situation by saying, “we had a number of printing and labeling challenges at Redbud. These included constantly changing statewide regulations that controlled what must or must not be listed on a cannabis product label, significant Redbud product variations with unique packaging requirements and different label sizes. We also have limited access to our graphic designers / Adobe professionals since they are busy working on their own marketing and branding challenges. Our previous printing system was not easy to use and would often require help from the IT department.”

He went on to describe their requirements for a labeling system. “Subsequently, we needed a system that could allow for quick changes that could be rolled out across label designs. The system must also accommodate varying label sizes and different packaging mediums without requiring us to enlist an Adobe designer. Most importantly, we needed a system that anyone can use.”

Solution

IPSi developed a labeling system for Redbud Roots based on Software's NiceLabel Cloud solution. The system has an architected database structure to support all of Redbud Roots' products, product types and strains. Using NiceLabel Cloud, Redbud Roots can manage multiple product types (e.g. edibles, adult use, medical use, etc.) and the system's dynamic user interface makes it easy for Redbud Roots to manage both product- and customer-specific requirements. This translates into much faster label printing and accelerates production. The number of labels that used to take a week to print can now be printed in 90 minutes.

David summarized the solution. "Epson printers utilizing IPSi's configured NiceLabel Cloud platform satisfied all of our requirements and allowed us to take our in-house printing to the next level. Furthermore, IPSi has truly become a valued partner and we highly recommend them to any company with similar printing challenges."



Results

Managing product complexity

IPSi used NiceLabel Cloud to help Redbud Roots get a handle on their label complexity. “As we were working with them, we were able to uncover the business rules so we could build the variability they needed into the system,” Rick explains. “So now they’re not just executing label printing, they’re actually able to use NiceLabel Cloud to manage all of their products.”

Ian Faust, Software Developer at IPSi, describes how they used this approach to simplify label creation. “Much of the complexity in their labeling process had to do with label creation. Instead of having to create a new label to match every single product-strain combination in their database, we changed label creation into a data-driven process. Now, all their product information is in a database. Users simply select a product on the print form, and the system automatically retrieves the label, template and strain that correspond to the selected product.”

By automating label creation, Redbud Roots can now process products more quickly and saves an hour on every label that is printed. “One thing I appreciate about the system is that you can make label changes very fast,” Alex observes. “Now all I have to do is choose the right template, plug in the information and we’re good to go.”

Simplifying support

Loftware’s NiceLabel Cloud labeling solution offers Redbud Roots several advantages. For example, the Cloud solution enables IPSi to provide proactive IT support. “They can log on and make changes in real time because they can access our system via the Cloud,” says Mark. “Without the system being in the Cloud, we could never get that response time. Everything would have to go through email and firewall updates.” That rapid response time is a critical part of Redbud Roots’ success. “In this industry, things change very fast. And if you can’t adapt to those changes quickly, you’ll get left behind,” Alex states. “That is what I was looking for when we started searching for a labeling solution – a system that could support that flexibility, because things change so fast.”

Providing a foundation for a scalable business

Label Cloud also makes it easier for Redbud Roots to scale both their business and product portfolio, without having to maintain an infrastructure-heavy, on-premise solution. As Mark states, “Having on-premise software deployed on multiple computers is not something we wanted to deal with.” Rick agrees and highlights why NiceLabel Cloud is ideal for companies like Redbud Roots. “One of the things they were looking for is portability,” he says. “Because they have multiple buildings and facilities, they needed a labeling system that is easy to deploy and access from different locations.”



Supporting new product innovation

The new system also supports Redbud Roots' commitment to innovating their product portfolio. For example, they currently have five different flavors of gummies in their edibles assortment. However, they're always experimenting with new flavors, and now they're able to launch limited batches of new product lines, with the corresponding labels, without involving a graphic designer. This gives them agility they didn't have prior to NiceLabel Cloud. "One of our goals with building the system around Loftware's NiceLabel Cloud platform was to help Redbud Roots streamline the introduction of new products," Rick says. "NiceLabel Cloud removed the bottleneck, and now labeling isn't going to be a stopping point for new product introduction."

Creating co-branding opportunities

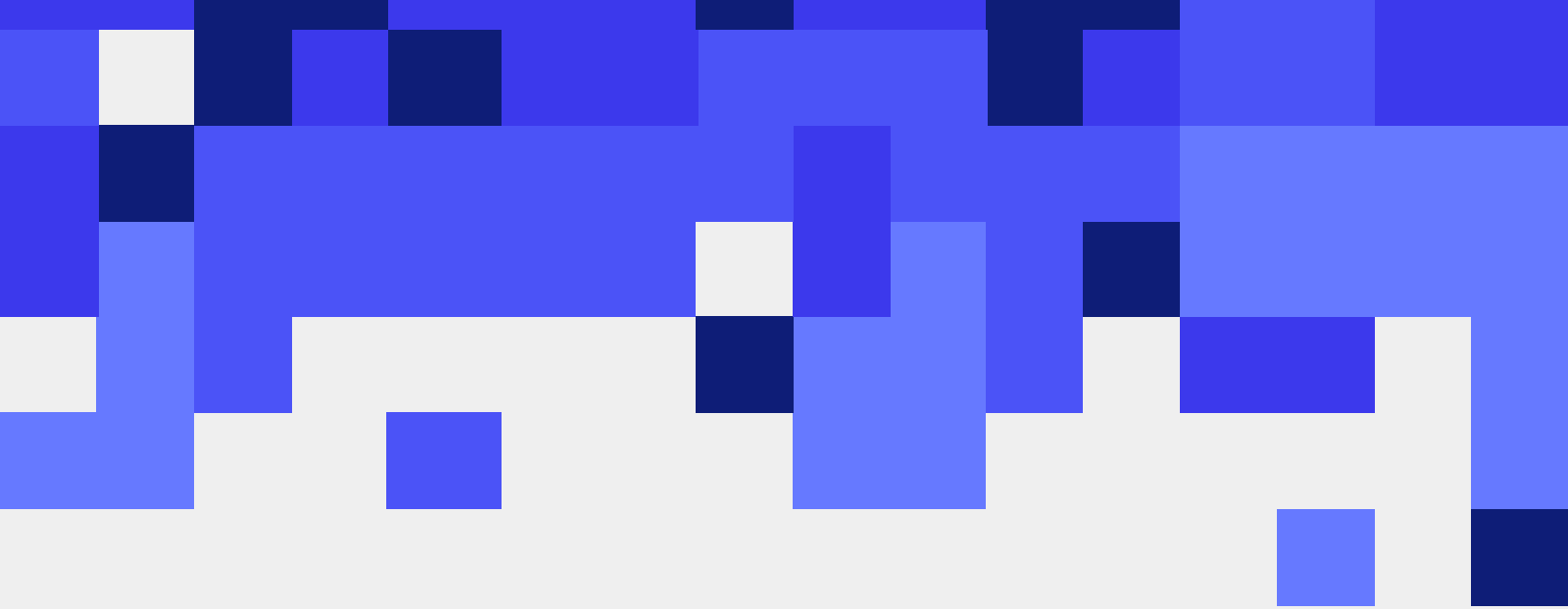
Now that Redbud Roots has implemented an agile, compliant labeling process, they can focus on offering value-adding labeling services to their customers. "Once you get the right system in place, you can see the possibilities," Rick explains. "Now we're taking the next step by doing private labeling and customization of these compliance labels to support Redbud Roots' customers. And we can do that because they have all the tools in place and a system that's flexible enough to do it."

Great things happen when passionate people work together

According to Mark, it's not just about having the right solution, but also about working with the right people. "It's amazing when you meet guys like Rick and Ian who are so passionate about what they do. We love Redbud Roots, we have a passion for the community, for cannabis and for being professionals, and this whole thing has been brought together because of that."

"One of Redbud Roots' keywords for 2021 is efficiency. That's what we were able to achieve with NiceLabel Cloud."

Mark Weedon, Packaging Plant Manager at Redbud Roots



Loftware is the world's largest cloud-based Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management provider, offering an end-to-end labeling solution platform for companies of all sizes. Maintaining a global presence with offices in the US, UK, Germany, Slovenia, China, and Singapore, Loftware boasts over 35 years of expertise in solving labeling challenges. We help companies improve accuracy, traceability and compliance while improving the quality, speed, and efficiency of their labeling. As the leading global provider of Enterprise Labeling and Artwork Management, along with Clinical Trials Labeling and Content Management, Loftware enables supply chain agility, supports evolving regulations, and optimizes business operations for a wide range of industries. These include automotive, chemicals, consumer products, electronics, food & beverage, manufacturing, medical device, pharmaceuticals, retail and apparel.

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