

Shifting Gears from Manual to Automated Quality Control

See Significant Returns on
Investment with Automation



Introduction

Quality control is an integral part of enterprises and the development lifecycles of their products. From cars on the road, to design software and packaging on store shelves, every product is guaranteed to go through a quality control department for verification and validation before reaching consumers.

With technology often focused on product features and increasing productivity for consumers, it's common for businesses to overlook the productivity gains that technology and automation in quality control can bring to help launch products faster. When it comes to automating quality control, the packaging industry relies mostly on manual methods that are inefficient, slow, and prone to errors.

Though individual reasons to automate may vary by industry and business size, it is overall a step in the right direction for any company. Companies can save time, lower costs, avoid recalls and damage to their reputation, and speed up the workflow.

Manual Quality Control & Human Error



The typical packaging quality control process usually involves hours of manual proofreading to find text, image, or barcode errors. When dealing with manual proofreading, human error is a clear issue. Typoglycemia, for example, is a theory that argues readers can **udnerstrand complete snentecnes even wehn the interoir lettres of ecah wrod are mxied aruond.**

If our mind theoretically fills in the blanks when manually proofreading, there's no telling how many errors are getting through to the final product.

As GlobalVision's Reuben Malz puts it, "People are mostly image-based instead of text-based. The word becomes an image to us, and we recognize the word as an image, not as an individual character. So, if the picture looks good, our mind moves on."

Word by word, character by character, that is how a manual proofreader goes about their job. Consider the following obstacles when manually proofreading:

Type Size

Packaging type can get awfully small, like pull-out-the-magnifying-glass small. With more regulations and less area to place the text in the designs, the solution seems to always be to reduce the point size to fit in required copy.

Fatigue

As time passes, eyes and minds begin to tire. Even with perfect vision, humans are affected in ways technology is not. The ability to control quality drops off drastically the longer people look at documents.

Distractions

How often does an impromptu department meeting take you away from the task at hand or something as simple as a new e-mail notification pop up on your screen? People often do not think about workplace distractions, but, to manually proofread efficiently, you need to be laser-focused. Simple distractions cause you to lose your place on the page and have to backtrack. The mind is required to refocus, which can be confusing and create opportunity for error.

Shifting back and forth

Have you ever played ping pong? Comparing two files manually requires continuously looking back and forth. You can easily miss characters along the way. This becomes even more challenging when trying to match up foreign text.

Why Automation Wins

Convincing colleagues to change your process is never easy.

Priorities are on keeping costs low. However, it's easy to see the return on investment from automation software. Avoiding the monumental cost of critical errors getting through is a surefire way to get others to listen. Here are several key facts to help kickstart the conversation:

Cost Efficiency

It's a constant juggling act between the number of man-hours to get the job done perfectly right and how much budget you have allocated to the project. You can always throw in more resources to help improve quality, but that's inefficient. Instead, you can invest in tools to help employees process jobs faster. The return becomes exponential rather than linear.

Time is Money

Every company would love to reduce the amount of time spent on quality control to get products to market faster. The faster they do, the faster revenue come in and the more resources you can devote to product development and innovation. Wouldn't it be nice to design, develop, and release a product that's perfect the first time? The reality is that you can't cut corners and skip the quality control process. Quality control helps avoid the release of a sub-par product or one wrapped in packaging filled with errors. Instead, automation reduces rework cycles if issues are found and helps quality teams qualify products faster for release. This helps avoid implementing overtime to get the initial job done or hiring new employees to keep up with production.


Quality has a Price Tag

The idea of spending money to automate the quality department is usually at the bottom of the priority list when it comes to projects and spending. What people usually miss is how, by improving quality, monetary value will follow. A brand is nothing but the reputation of their product. In fact, there are numerous surveys and studies that show consumers nowadays are willing to spend more on quality products.

The Consequences of an Error

A printed error can pose a number of problems:

1. Extra work and resources devoted to revision cycles and reworks.
2. Hits to your reputation and brand equity if it makes it into the hands of customers comparing your product against that of a competitor in the store.
3. The information printed on the packaging, such as a drug or dosage which can have serious ramifications.



4. Potentially expensive recalls. If an error related to nutrition facts or ingredients occurs, regulatory agencies, like the Food and Drug Administration, may get involved.

5. An unreadable barcode at point-of-sale means an immediate loss of revenue. Worse, if barcodes do not contain the right data, shipments may not get filled on time.

The Bottom Line

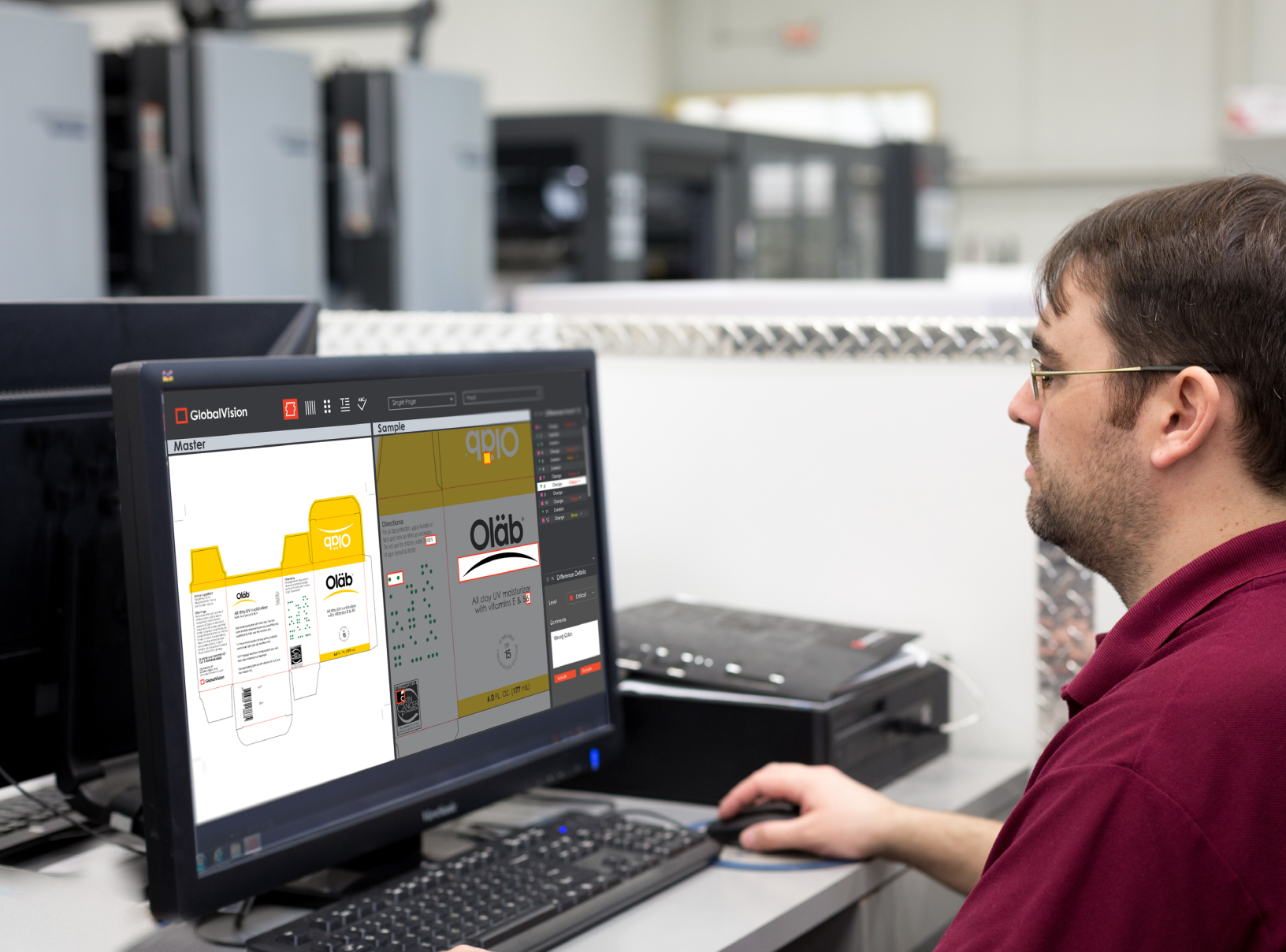
Both options, i.e., the status quo and switching to automation, require someone to put their name on the line. With production volumes increasing, so does the workload on quality teams and the risks associated with manual processes. When problems arise, the first question asked is, “Who signed off on this?”

However, over time the actual problem is more likely to be with a mistake on a document that had been proofed manually. The numbers back that up. Automating a business' proofing leads to countless benefits, not the least of which is the simple elimination of the fear of being held accountable, though. Here are some more numbers to consider:

- GlobalVision reduces inspection time by half compared to proofing manually
- By automating, direct labor costs can be reduced by over 90%, revision cycles by over 60%
- Avoiding thousands of artwork changes can lead to millions of dollars saved per year
- Fewer reworks and faster turnarounds can mean quicker entry to market by three-to-five days
- Each prevented recall can save up to \$15 million per day in lost revenue...and an immeasurable cost to brand equity

All numbers derived from internal research and industry experience.

At the end of the day, the return on investment compared to the up-front costs of proofreading software wins out time and time again. Over 75% of GlobalVision customers recoup their initial investment in less than two years. If you're looking for more information on automating your quality checks, get in touch with our team today for a complete demo of our tools.



Prevent common printed packaging errors with quality control software from GlobalVision.

Learn why 80% of our Quality Control Experts use GlobalVision daily.

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