

Feature Focus

Barcode Label Printing



1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0

Item Description

Department

Retail Price: \$99999.00

Category

Our Price: \$99999.00



Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

Inventory Label Printing

This tutorial should give you all the essential information you need to successfully print barcode labels in POSitive.

The SKU field is what will be printed as a barcode if you print a label from the software. It is a common misconception that a barcode contains lots of information about the product it represents. For example we are asked all the time if the merchant wants to add a can of Pepsi into inventory can he just scan the barcode to create the inventory definition. Unfortunately it's not that easy. The barcode does not contain detailed product information.

WHAT is a Barcode?

It's simply a number – or alpha characters or a combination of alpha-numeric characters represented by the familiar bars of various widths found on many products. When you scan

the barcode the scanner converts the barcode into its characters and sends the converted information to the keyboard port. Scanning a bar code is the SAME as typing the number with the keyboard. Try this experiment if you have a barcode scanner connected to your POS system:



Open Notepad or Word, or other word processor. With that program active, scan a barcode and watch the screen literally type the barcode one character at a time. Once the characters are entered the cursor will move to a new line – that is a Carriage Return that takes it to the new line. The scanner is programmed to add the carriage return at the end of the scanned characters.

Your scanner comes with a book of codes. You MUST NOT lose this book! You will rarely need it. But when you do there is no substitute. The book is full of programming barcodes. If your scanner is adding additional characters or is NOT sending the carriage return the scanner can be reprogrammed using the codes in the book. These codes can also be used to reset the scanner to factory defaults, which generally works well with POSitive.

System Requirement for Scanners

The system requirement for scanners is any KEYBOARD WEDGE or USB style scanner. Check with your dealer or contact POSitive support if you're unsure of

Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

what to buy.

A Note About Barcode Symbologies

Symbology is a fancy word for “symbol type”. More specifically the Symbology represents not only the type but also the rules that must be followed in printing the barcode.

There are three barcode symbologies that allow both numbers and letters (Alpha-Numeric) SKU's. Since POSitive allows Alpha-Numeric SKU's we have found that most merchants choose to use them. If you choose to use an Alpha-Numeric SKU you must limit your Barcode type to either:

- Code 128
- Code 3of9 (aka code 39)
- 2.5 Datalogic

Each of the above symbologies has rules to follow. There are illegal characters that will cause your label not to print – or to print without the barcode. Generally don't use the shifted number keys (!@#% ^&*()) punctuation keys ({}[]\|:;”' <> ,./~). It's OK to use a DASH (-). But avoid using the slashes (\ /). If you find you have an illegal character, simply edit it in your Inventory List.

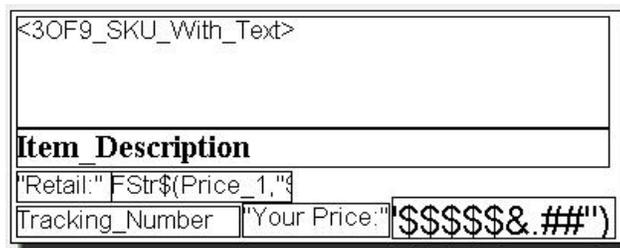
There are perhaps some other more obscure rules but these cover the typical problems that most people have with barcode symbologies.

An Occasional Misunderstanding

We have sometimes seen a merchant design a new label for each inventory item, “hard-coding” the SKU and description directly into the label. The flaw in this is that you only have 100 labels that you can design. If you make a label for each item then you can only have 100 inventory items.



Instead, you should generally make just ONE label. You use FIELDS like “DESCRIPTION” and “SKU” in the layout. Then you assign the label layout to the inventory item. When you print a label PFW will substitute the FIELD NAME with



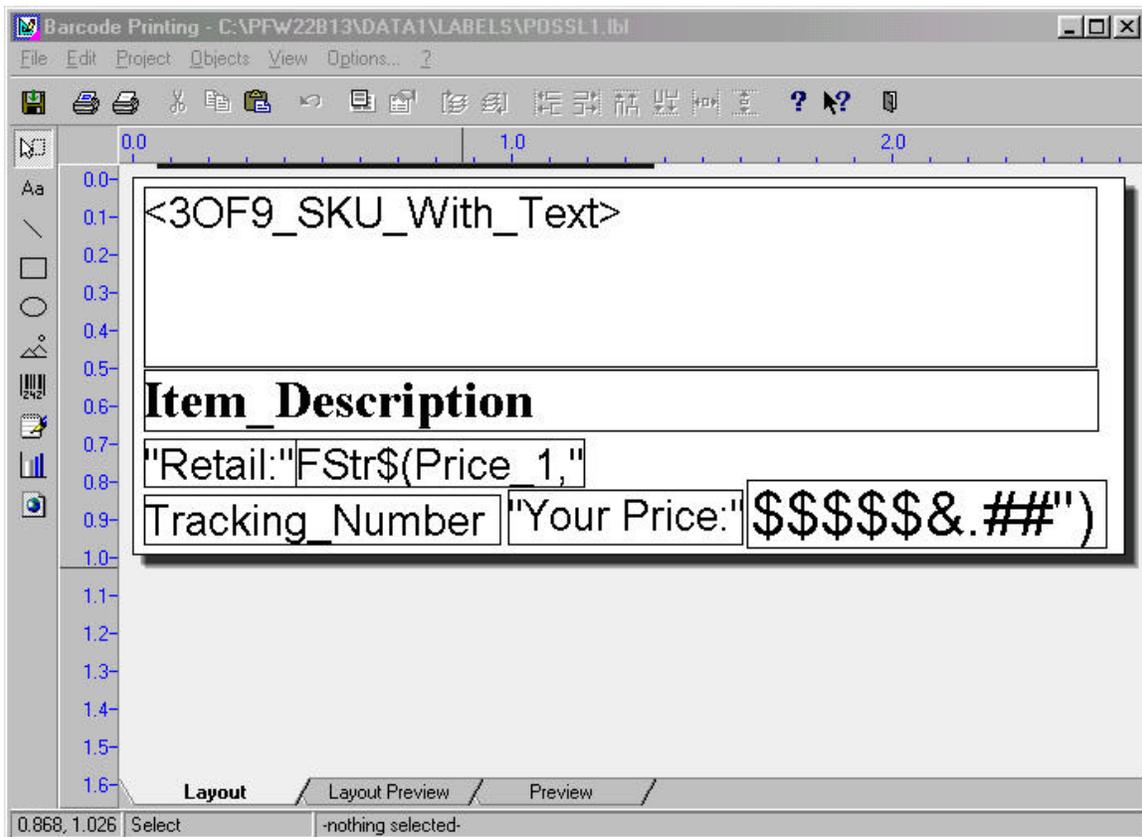
Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

the corresponding data in the inventory item's definition.

Label Editing.

You can access the label editor several ways but the easiest for now is to go to PURCHASING, PRINT LABELS, EDIT LABELS. Select a label and edit it.

TIP: By default all inventory items will be assigned to label design #1. If you design your label for label #1 then it won't be necessary later to re-assign your inventory items to your new design.



The label editor is flexible enough to accommodate any label size you would care to use. The only real limit you should be aware of is that the smallest label size you should plan to use is at least 1.75 inches long. Alpha Numeric SKU's print larger barcodes than numeric SKU's and a smaller label will "scrunch" the bars too closely together and thus be unreadable if you choose a shorter label. By the way, in our example above we're using the "Layout" view which shows the underlying formulas for some of the fields. Switch to "Layout Preview" for a more WYSIWYG view.

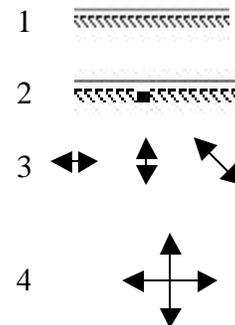
Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

This is the label layout of a typical barcode label. The boxes are DATA FIELDS that will be filled in by the inventory item when the label prints.

<30F9_SKU_With_Text>		
Item_Description		
"Retail:"	FStr\$(Price_1,"	
Tracking_Number	"Your Price:"	'\$\$\$\$\$&.#'

Re-sizing and Moving Fields

You can re-arrange the fields, you can re-size them, and you can change the font style and size. You can add new fields and remove unwanted fields. Notice the <30f9_SKU...> field is highlighted. The hashed line (1) is the "highlighted field" indicator. You can resize the field by grabbing the black dots (2) at the edges. Top and bottom dots allow you to re-size up and down. Those on the left and right edges allow left to right re-sizing. Finally the corners allow you to enlarge or reduce the size both up and down and left to right. Hover your mouse over the dots and when the cursor changes from an "open arrow pointer" to an icon like these (3), you can resize the field. Hover just over the hashed line and the cursor changes to a four-point arrow (4) and when that happens you can move the field.



Deleting a Field

Delete a field by highlighting it and pressing the delete key on your keyboard.

Label Layout Set-up

Access the Layout screen by Choosing PROJECT MENU: PAGE LAYOUT. Review the printer setting tab and click the CHOICE button. Be sure the correct printer driver and PAPER SIZE is selected. Barcode Printers like the Eltron printers recommended by POSitive will have a variety of label sizes to select in the paper size setting. Inkjets and laser printers will generally want the 8 1/2 x 11 letter size selected.

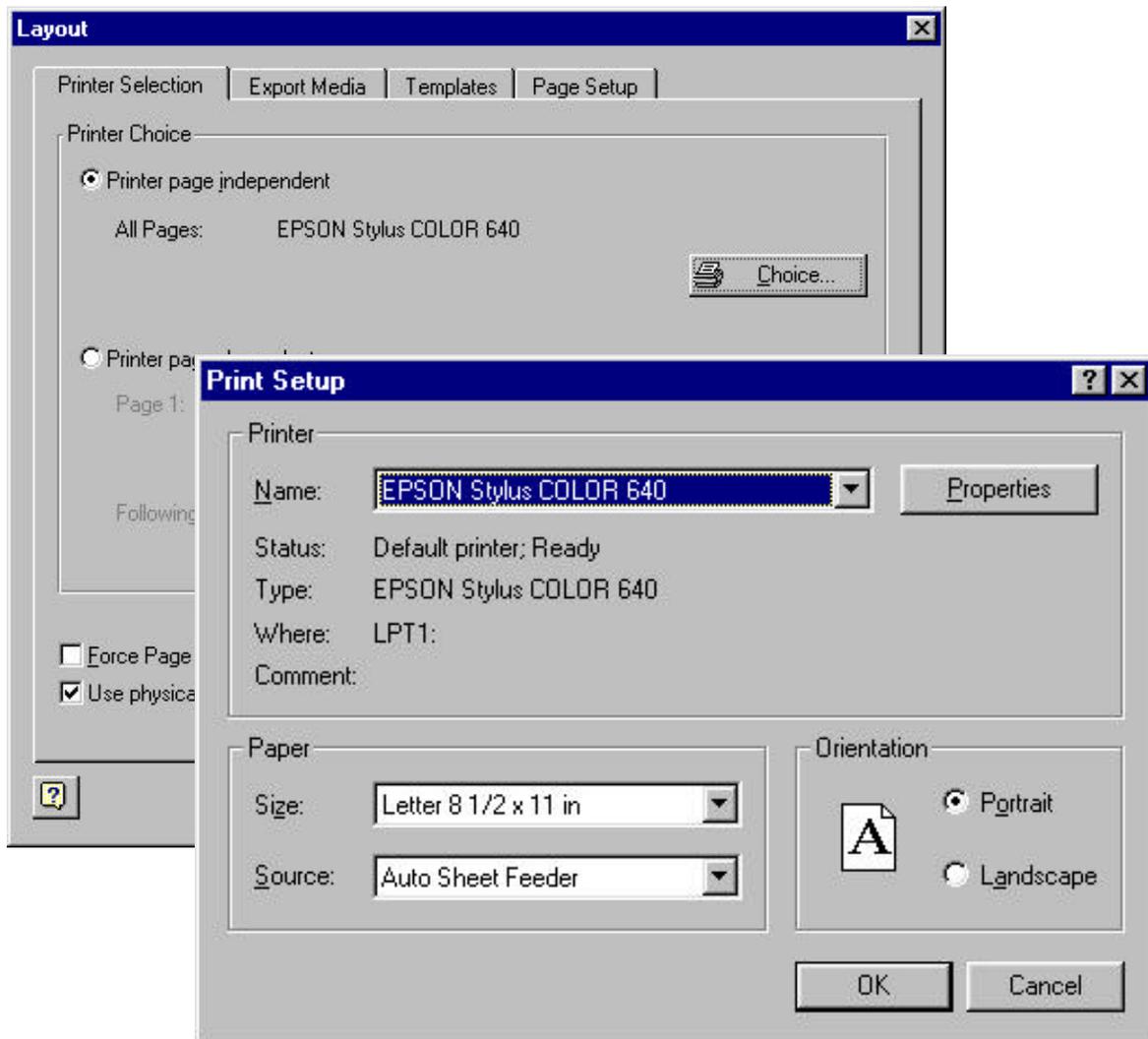
Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

Printer Selection Tab

You need to use a Windows Printer to print barcode labels. You'll need to install the correct driver for your printer. See your printer's user guide for details.

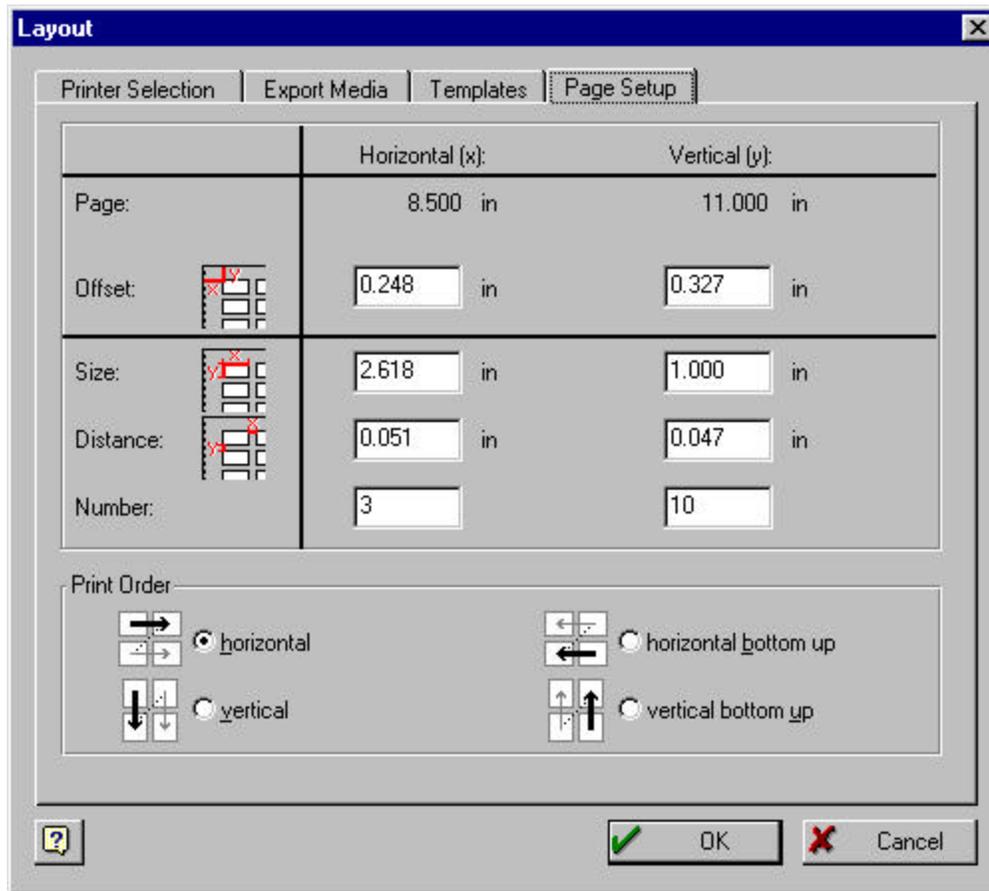
POSitive supports laser printers, inkjets and dedicated barcode printers. Basically any of them should work. We are most familiar with the Zebra line of barcode printers.

Inkjets are colorful but it will be expensive to print labels on an inkjet. The most economical are the dedicated Zebbras. The label stock costs much less than sheet labels. Since the Zebra printers are thermal printers there are no ink cartridges or toners to buy.



Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

Page Setup Tab



The Page Setup Tab makes it EASY to custom define any label you wish. Grab a ruler and a calculator and lets break this down to its simple form.

First, it's critical that you set up the printer as described in the previous section. Do it now if you haven't already.

Next, look closely at the icons. They describe the measurements the program is asking for.



The OFFSET fields want to know:

Y: how far it is from top edge of paper to top edge of first label.

X: how far it is from left edge of paper to left edge of first label.

TIP: Take your ruler and measure the distance from the top of the label sheet to the top of the first label. $\frac{1}{2}$ inch (1 divided by 2) would be expressed as .500. $\frac{5}{8}$ (5 divided by 8) would be .625. The main thing to remember is

Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

you are converting the ruler measurement to a decimal number. Generally, if you are converting a fraction you divide the top number by the bottom number.

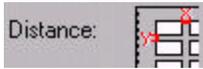


Size:

The SIZE fields want to know:

Y: how tall is the label?

X: how wide is the label?



Distance:

The DISTANCE fields want to know the distance between labels.

Finally the NUMBER fields want to know how many labels across the page by how many labels down the page.

Once you have these settings entered click the OK button to save and close the window.

Common variations

If you are creating labels on an inkjet or laser printer the most common labels are 3 across by 10 down - 30 labels to a sheet of labels. So in this case the NUMBER fields would be X=3, Y=10

If you are setting up labels on an Eltron Label printer use these settings:

	X	Y
Offset	0	0
Size	(Measure Width)	(Measure Height)
Distance	0	0
Number	1	1

Here's a fraction to decimal conversion chart for your convenience

1/4	0.25	1/8	0.125	1/16	.063
3/4	0.75	3/8	0.375	3/16	.188
		5/8	0.625	5/16	.313
		7/8	0.875	7/16	.438
				9/16	.563
				11/16	.688
				13/16	.813
				15/16	.938

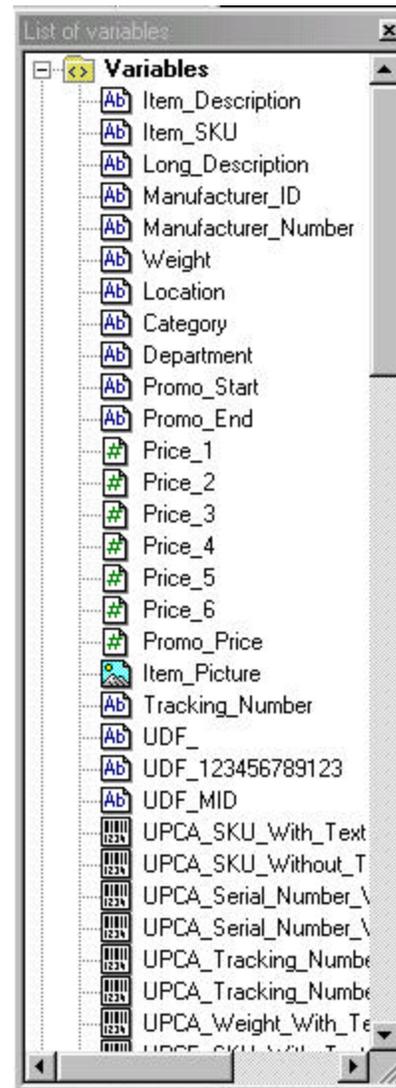
Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

Adding fields to the label

In brief review you should now understand how to move fields around in the label layout, how to define your Page Setup including printer setting, paper size, and label page setup. If not, review the previous sections.

In the Label Editor you can add fields to a layout in a couple of ways. The main way to add a database field is to go to the VIEW MENU: WINDOWS: Click on the VARIABLES folder.

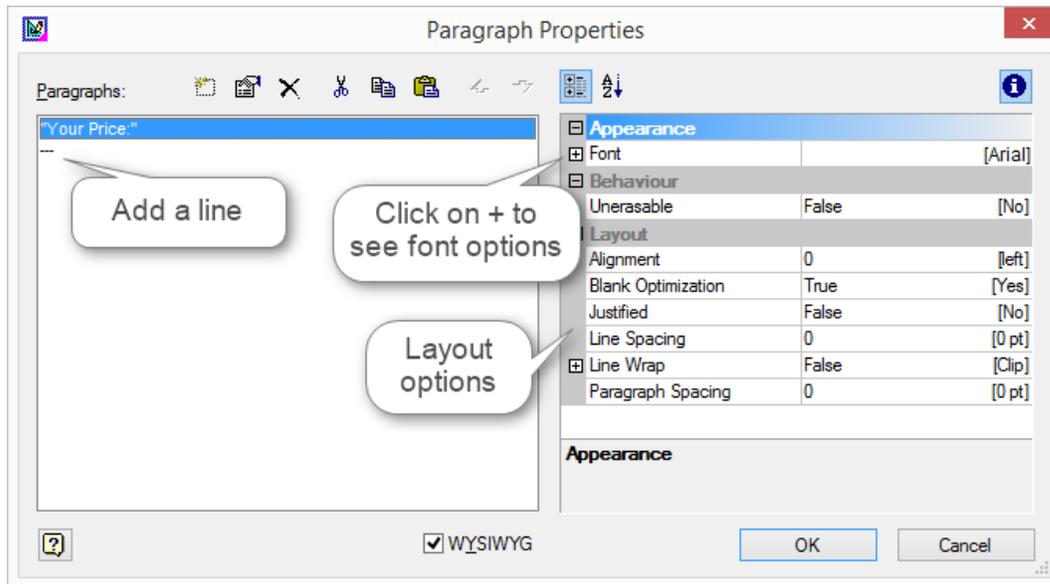
Here you have all the data fields available to put into a label. To add a field into the layout just DRAG and DROP it into the layout. Then resize it and move it where you want it.



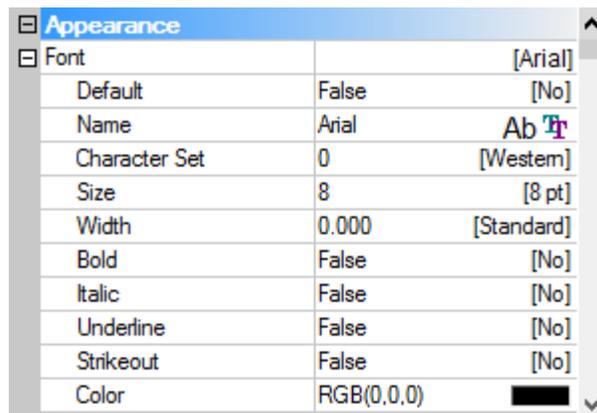
Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

Formatting Text Fields

You can control the text size, justification, font, and more. To edit the text just double click the field. The following screen appears giving you incredible formatting control from one screen.



Font options:



Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

Formatting Barcode Fields

Simply click on the barcode field to edit the details. Double click to see or change the symbology. Remember that Alpha Numeric SKU's will require 3OF9 (Code 3 of 9), CODE128, or 2.5DATALOGIC symbologies.

The screenshot shows the Barcode Printing software interface. The main window displays a label layout with a barcode at the top, followed by the text "12345678901234567890". Below this, there are fields for "Department", "Category", "Item Description", "Retail: \$99999.00", and "TN-9999-9999". A price field shows "Your Price: \$99999.00".

Two callout boxes are present: "Barcode Properties" points to the Properties window, and "Barcode Symbologies" points to the Barcode Contents window.

The Properties window shows the following settings:

Property	Value
Appearance	
Bar Color	RGB(0,0,0)
Font	[Arial]
Optimum Size	False [No]
Rotation	0 [0°]
Show Text	True [Yes]
Contents	
Design	
Locked	False [No]
Name	
Layout	
Appearance Condition	True [Show]
Pagewrap Before	False [No]
Position	[0.022, 0.017, 2.219, 0.422 in]

The Barcode Contents window shows the following settings:

Property	Value
Data Source	[Variable]
Format	any
Allowed characters	all printable characters

When viewing Barcode Contents the "Allowed characters" field shows you which characters are supported by each symbology.

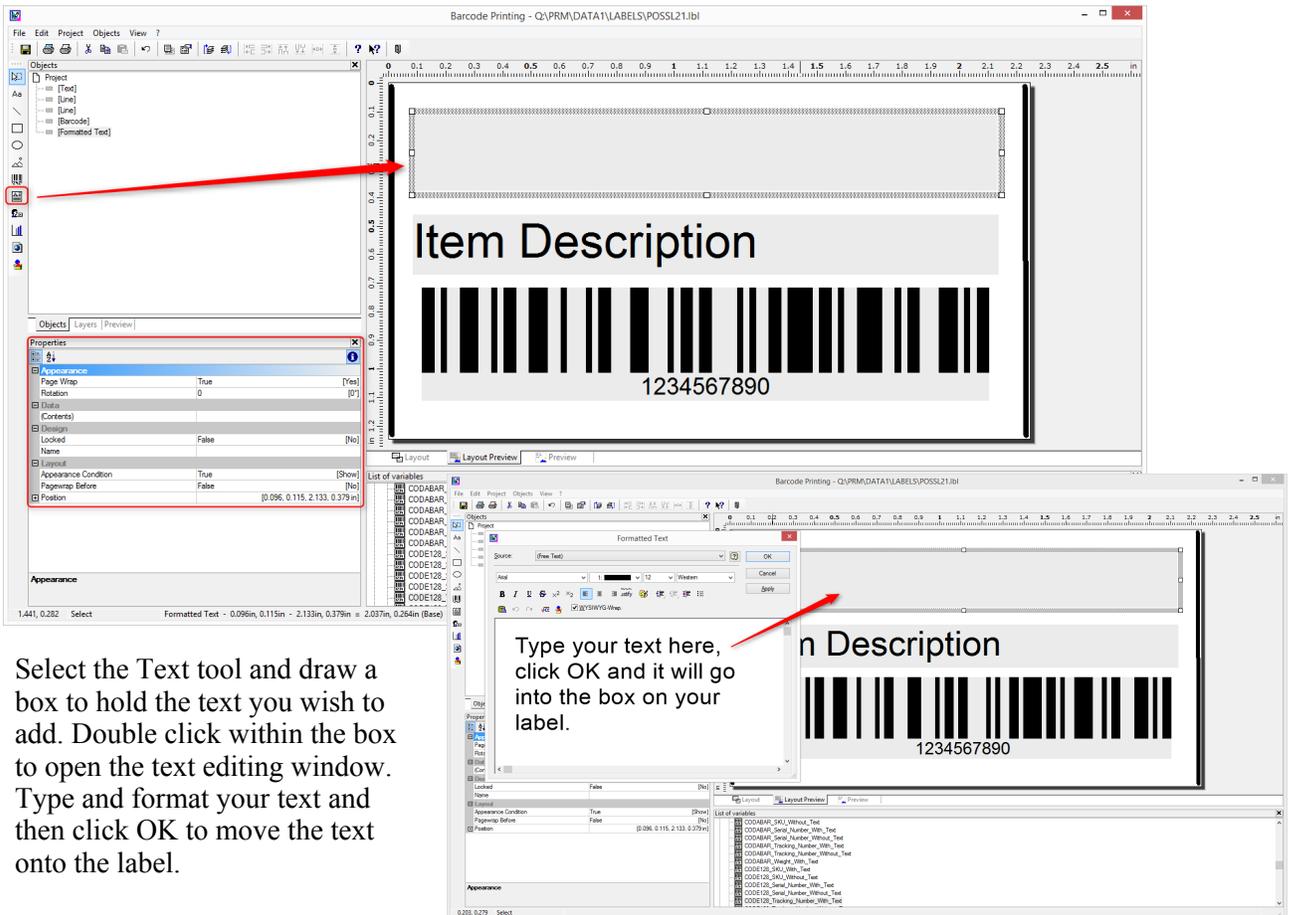
Adding Fields – Some Other Options

The Tool Bar gives you other options for adding Text, Lines, Squares, Circles, Pictures, and Barcodes. Just click the icon in the Tool Bar and draw a square in the design layout. Double click the field and edit as necessary.

Add some "hard coded" text (That is to say text that is NOT a data field which will be replaced by data from the software) by clicking the text box icon and drawing a box in the layout. The box will be empty. Now Double click the box. The Formatted Text windows will open and you can now add and format your text. Click OK to move the text to the label. Please see our example on the following page.

Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

Ideas for this hard-coded text field include... Store name and City/State, a Slogan, The word “PRICE:” just before a field that fills in the price. “Our Price”, “Your Price”



Select the Text tool and draw a box to hold the text you wish to add. Double click within the box to open the text editing window. Type and format your text and then click OK to move the text onto the label.

Testing Your Label

FILE MENU: PRINT SAMPLE –

- “Without frames” for roll label printers (Eltron).
- If you are printing on a laser or Inkjet printer choose “with frames” to show a reference frame on plain paper. Hold the test page over a label sheet to see that the data lines up correctly on the labels.

Saving Your Work

When you exit the label layout program be sure to save your work. Of course you can always go to the file menu and choose SAVE every 5 or 10 minutes.

Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

Assigning Inventory to a label

Now that the label is defined you can assign the label design to any or all of your inventory items.

Assigning one item at a time –

In POSitive, edit an inventory item. Choose the OPTIONS [F6] Tab. The following screen gives you a “Label Form” field. Type it in or choose it from a list.

The screenshot shows the 'Options [F6]' tab of an inventory item's configuration window. The window has a title bar with tabs for 'General [F5]', 'Options [F6]', 'Defaults [F7]', 'SubCats [F8]', and 'Sales [F9]'. The 'Options [F6]' tab is active. The options are as follows:

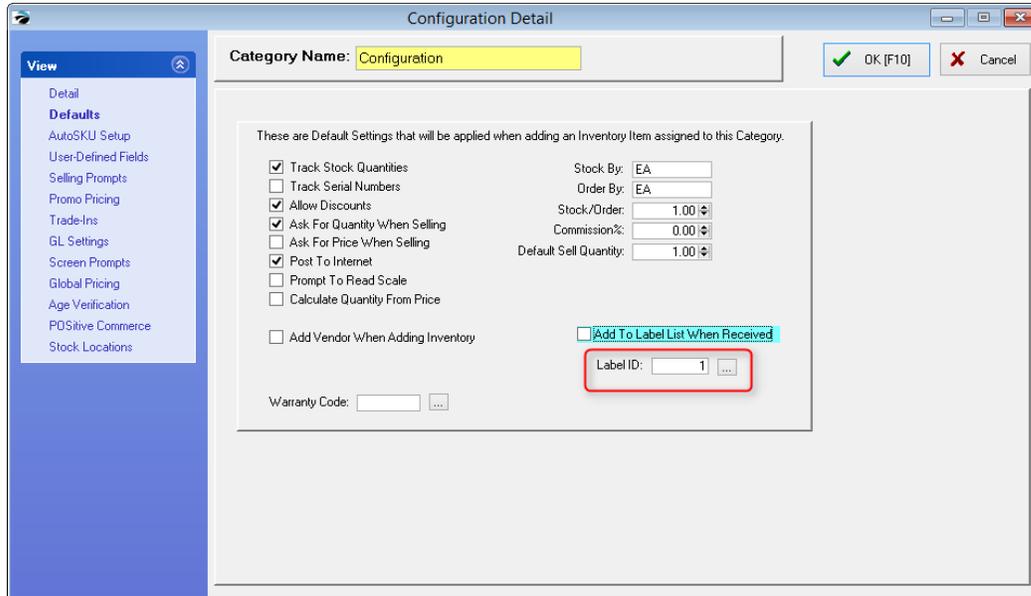
- Track Stock
- Track Serial #s
- Ask For Quantity
- Calculate Quantity From Price
- Post To Internet
- Item Is Active
- Ask For Price
- Allow Discounts
- Add To Label List When Received
- Prompt To Read Scale
- Allow Food Stamps

The 'Label Form' field is highlighted in cyan and contains the text '5660 Standard'. There is a small '...' button to the right of the field. An 'Equation' button is also visible below the 'Calculate Quantity From Price' option.

Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

Assigning to an entire category

In POSitive, choose MAINTENANCE: CATEGORIES - Highlight a category and click the DEFAULTS button.



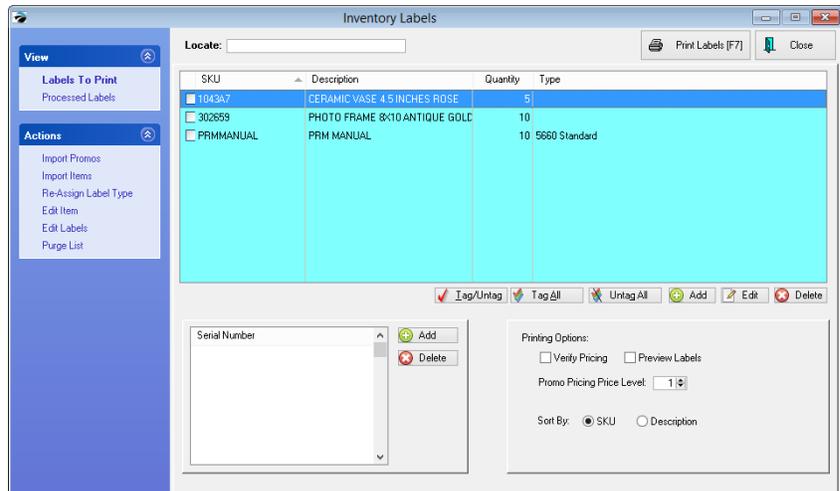
Edit the Label ID number and choose whether to add this item to the list of labels to be printed when the item is received on a PO.

Finally you can re-assign all products in this category to the new label style by going to Category Listing, highlight the category, select Defaults (F5) in the upper left corner and then select Reset Inventory or press F5 again.

Repeat for each category to re-assign.

The Label List

Now that your labels are defined and your inventory has been assigned to a label design you can add your inventory items to a list to be printed. There are several ways to access the label list and to add items to the list:



Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

Opening the Label List

- Purchasing: Print Labels

Adding Items to the Label List

- From the Inventory list – right click an item and choose “Send to label list” from the pop-up menu
- With the Inventory tool bar exposed (Help Menu) drag items from the inventory list and drop on the Labels Icon
- From the opened label list, click the add button

Changing Label Designs at the Label List

Perhaps you have just designed your label and have not had time to re-assign your inventory. No problem! From the label list simply RE-ASSIGN the items to a different label. The change is not permanent but the process can be repeated over and over as often as you like.

- Tag the item(s) to re-assign
- Click the “Re-Assign Label Type” button
- Choose the label
- Click “Select” button

Printing the labels

Simply tag the items you want to print and click the Print Labels button. Confirm the label design to be printed.

A Neat Idea

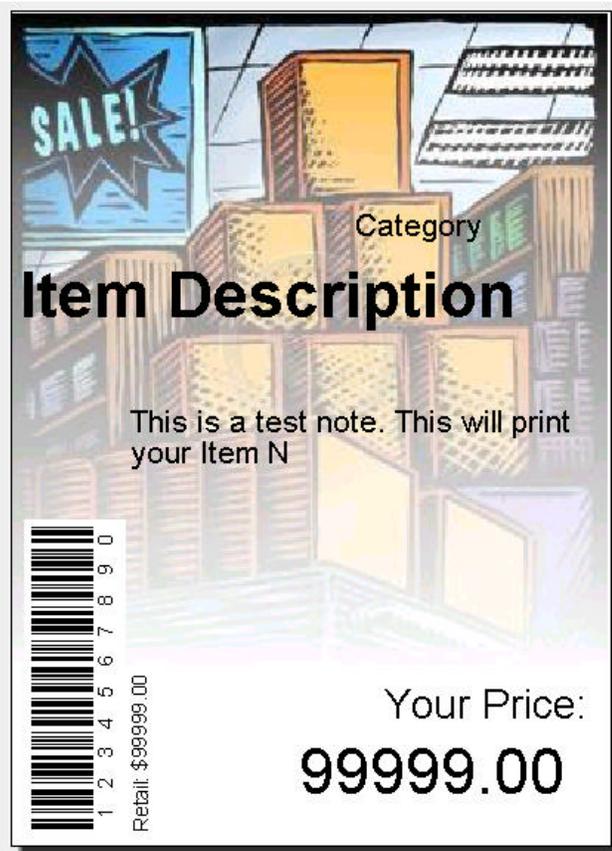
Now that you have printed inventory labels, how about printing Talk Cards to display on your products. Here’s an example

Set up to print on a Laser or Inkjet printer – 8 1/2x 11. Here’s the setup

	Horizontal X	Vertical Y
Page	8.5	11.0
Offset	.500	.500
Size	3.188	4.438
Distance	1.0	1.0
Number	2	2

Barcode and Inventory Label Printing

This example shows the Category field, an enlarged Item Description (LINE BREAK option is ON which will word wrap the description). The Item Notes field, and PRICE_1 and PRICE_2 fields are also used in this label. (Your Price is Price 2 – Retail is Price 1)



A graphic was placed in the background. The barcode was placed on top of a white box to prevent the background from interfering with a scan of the barcode.

This label can be edited over and over again by simply replacing the background graphic, say with a Winter Holiday background or Flag Theme or Fireworks or a Pumpkin, or a Holiday Turkey. Now you have a THEME tag to use throughout the store to “talk” to your customers about your product. The resulting Tag is 4 ¼x 5 ½

The finished Talk Card on the right demonstrates the complete power you have to go far beyond basic labeling techniques.

Now, you know as much as we do about printing labels in POSitive! Good Luck and have fun labeling your inventory!

