Loftware Cloud 24.2 Release Notes

What's in this release?

Loftware Product Range Rebranding

Loftware introduces Loftware Cloud, a single converged labeling solution, designed to effectively cater to the demands of the entire market. By harnessing the power of combined technologies from NiceLabel, Spectrum, and eventually Smartflow and Prisym360, it is a robust platform that conquers diverse supply chain complexities and empowers business growth.

Loftware is streamlining the product portfolio, making it more categorized and easier to understand.

All editions (plans) are offered in a software-as-a-service model with a cloud-based dashboard (LoftwareControl Center) and Web Designer. You use the dashboard as the main interaction point to oversee the design and print activities, define user permissions, manage your printer infrastructure, and review the history of print and audit events (abilities dependent on the selected edition).

There are the following production editions (plans) available in the software-as-a-service model:

- **LoftwareCloud Designer**
- **LoftwareCloud Essentials**
- **LoftwareCloud Business**
- **LoftwareCloud Compliance**
- **LoftwareCloud Enterprise**

Table 2. Loftware Cloud editions comparison

FEATURE	DESIGNER	ESSENTIALS	BUSINESS	COMPLIANCE	ENTERPRISE
Control Center	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Web Designer	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Desktop Designer	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Cloud Print Form	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Desktop Print Form	☑	☑	☑	☑	☑
Designer PowerForms		☑	☑	☑	☑
Web Printing (with LoftwareWeb Client)		☑	☑	☑	☑
Cloud printers			☑	☑	☑
Printer management			☑	☑	☑
Print analytics			☑	☑	☑
Integrations		☑ [1]	☑	☑	☑
Cloud APIs			☑	☑	☑
Multi-tier environments			☑ [2]	☑	☑
Extended history data retention				☑	☑

FEATURE	DESIGNER ESSENTIALS	BUSINESS	COMPLIANCE	ENTERPRISE
Hybrid installation (with on-premise Control Center)			☑	
Compliance release schedule		☑	☑ [3]	

[1] available in the Cloud Essentials feature level

[2] add-on option

[3] add-on for Cloud Compliance customers

With all editions, you can design and print your label templates using any modern browser independent of the operating system using the built-in **Web Designer**. You can edit your labels in the comfort of your browser. However, if you prefer to use the on-premise label designer, you can also open the same label in LoftwareDesigner.

With **LoftwareCloud Essentials or above**, you can design form applications to control your data collection or print processes. You can run your form applications in the **LoftwarePrint** application or in **LoftwareWeb Client** thin client. Forms simplify label printing for label operators by removing technical details and focusing on the custom UI. You can also integrate label print into the existing business processes. You can use **LoftwareAutomation** to interface with existing systems and obtain the data for label templates. The integrations allow for two-way communication. The integration capabilities depend on the selected edition.

LoftwareCloud Compliance is a product suitable for companies operating in regulated environments and needing support for multi-tier architecture (with Dev/QA/Prod stages), data synchronization, extended history data retention, and a compliance release schedule.

LoftwareCloud Enterprise caters to more demanding enterprise customers that need multi-site deployment, multi-tier architecture, extended history data retention, a more responsive system, a hybrid installation option (with the on-premise Control Center for data caching), and with support for a large number of printers.

Loftware Licensing Policy

Loftware has moved forward to transition the company into a subscription-based business. As of March 19 (the general availability of the Loftware Cloud platform), it no longer sells perpetual licenses with the Loftware label design and print products. Moving forward, Loftware will only offer subscription-based licensing. Loftware will commit to an ongoing relationships with the customers and make more convenient and cost-efficient solutions.

Our strategy going forward is to enable enterprises to run apps across data centers and public clouds.

> **Note**
>
> The change applies to new sales. The existing customers can remain on the current licensing model and gradually move into the subscription model conveniently at their own pace in the future.

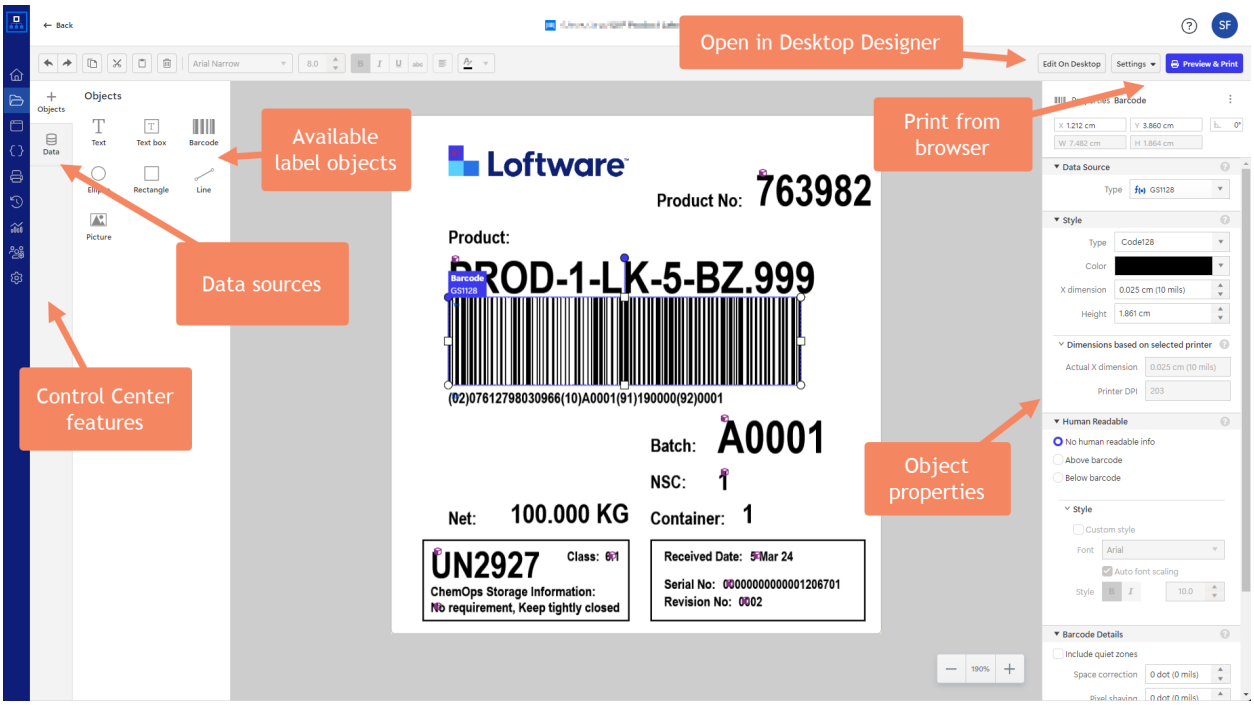
Table 1. Changes for existing customers

TODAY	GOING FORWARD
I am an existing NiceLabel Cloud customer.	No action is needed from your side, your account will **automatically be UPGRADED and REBRANDED to Loftware Cloud**.
I am an existing NiceLabel on-premise customer.	**NO REBRANDING.** You get access to **NiceLabel 10.5** and are encouraged to upgrade to Loftware Cloud.

Web Designer

All Loftware Cloud products feature a new approach to the label design process. The Web Designer is a true native web application that runs in any modern browser independent of the operating system and your device type. You can use Web Designer to design and modify your label templates from Control Center. All you need is a browser. There is no local installation of a Desktop Designer.

By design, the Web Designer provides a familiar look and feel of the existing Desktop Designer. Existing users will find the web user interface and design principles like the current software, thus lowering the learning curve. New users will also intuitively find their way around the application. The available label objects and data sources are displayed in the panel on the left side of the design window, and the label/object properties on the right. There are no modal dialog boxes. The complete design flow is available through the panel-based UI.



You can edit the label template using the browser-based Web Designer and the on-premise Desktop Designer. Think about the analogy in Microsoft Office apps, where you can edit documents online in a browser and the Windows application installed on your PC. More complex and feature-rich label templates will demand using the Desktop Designer.

> **Note**
>
> The Web Designer does not support the complete features set of the Desktop Designer, but the gap will diminish with each new release of Loftware Cloud.

The Cloud Print Form will print your templates to any cloud-connected or traditional on-premise printers. Each label template is associated with a selected printer from your infrastructure and, by default, prints to that printer. However, you can select any other printer before printing a label.

Desktop Designer

Changed rendering of the Rich Text Box object

Changed rendering of the Rich Text Box object

The Rich Text Box object is a graphically rich object that can contain formatted text and simultaneously use various fonts, tables, pictures, and symbols; you can also include shading effects and colors. The underlying rich text code (RTF) is processed by the external component (DevExpress).

The new Desktop Designer includes the latest version of the RTF component. The new RTF component supports new design capabilities in the Rich Text object (see the topics on hyphenation and multi-column support). On the other hand, the new component might change the layout of the Rich Text object in the existing label templates. The developers of the external component add enhancements in the layout calculation engine that influence the overall RTF result.

We have detected changes in printing the table objects included in the Rich Text object. The common use of tables is printing nutritional facts on the labels. The width of columns in the table might differ in the new version of the Desktop Designer compared with the previous release. The Desktop Designer will show the label template in WYSIWYG mode so you can quickly detect discrepancies.

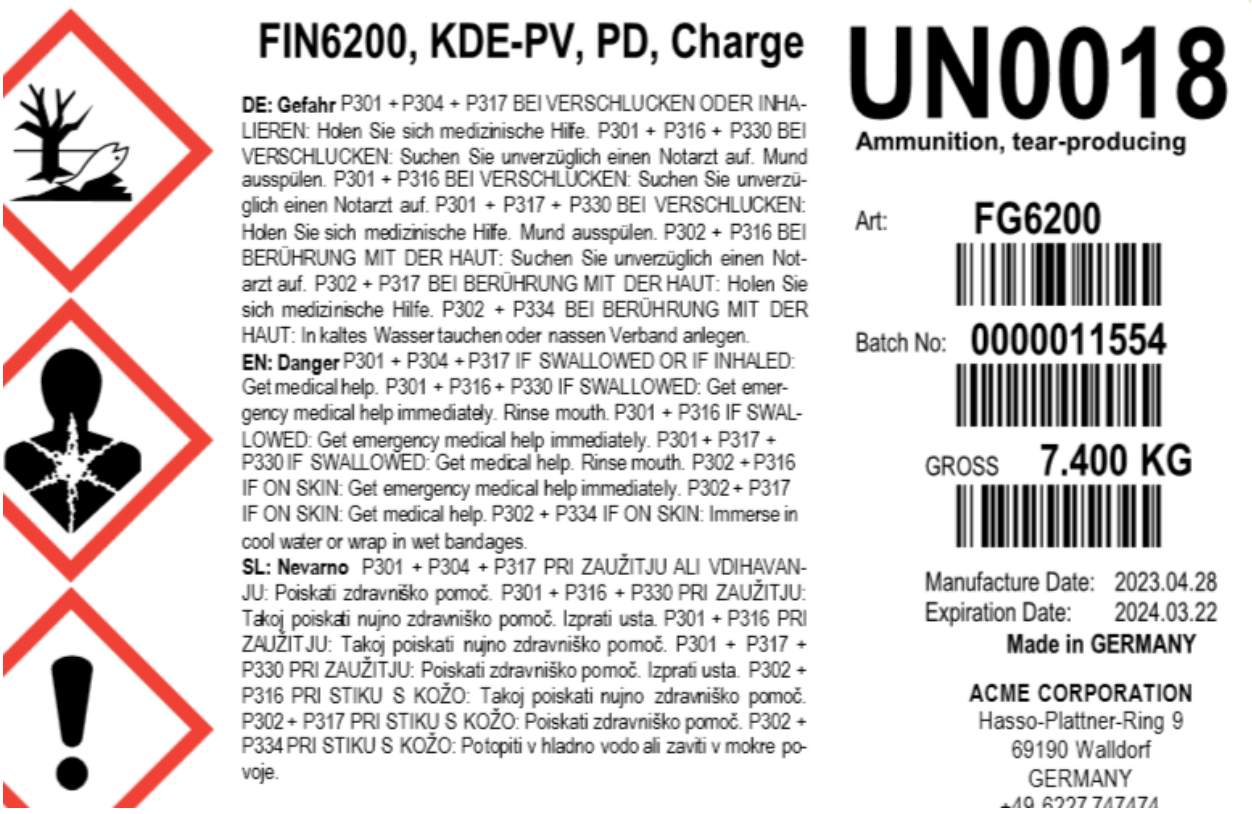
Warning

After the upgrade, you must verify your existing label templates for compliance. If the table object prints with changed column widths, please open the affected label template for editing and adjust the settings (decrease the width of the table object inside Rich Text or enlarge the width of the Rich Text object).

Soft hyphenation for Rich Text Box

The hyphen is a punctuation mark used to join words and to separate syllables of a single word. The use of hyphens is called hyphenation. Hyphenation is often a mandatory functionality on "busy" labels, where a lot of text must be printed in a confined area on the label template. When you don't break words by syllables, you end up with much white space in lines, expanding text over more lines than using hyphenation.

For example, chemical labels have hazardous and precautionary statements provided in several languages. You have a predefined amount of label real estate reserved for these multilingual statements, and you must fit all text content into that area.



The Rich Text Box object supports the soft hyphenation. In this case, you can include metadata with positions of soft hyphens in the input data. Soft hyphens specify the syllables in the words where Loftware can break works apart. The default syntax for a soft hyphen is a sequence of characters "\-", but you can change it to your requirements.

In most cases, you provide soft hyphens with the input data, but you can also manually type in soft hyphens in the Rich Text Box editor with Ctrl + "-" keyboard shortcut.

For example, the soft-hyphenated data for the English text in the screenshot would be provided as:

```
P301 + P304 + P317 IF SWAL\-LOWED OR IF IN\-HA\-LED: Get me\-di\-cal help. P301 + P316 + P330 IF SWAL\-LOWED: Get e\-mer\-gen\-cy med\-ic\-al help im\-me\-di\-ate\-ly. Rinse mouth. P301 + P316 IF SWAL\-LOWED: Get e\-mer\-gen\-cy med\-ic\-al help im\-me\-di\-ate\-ly. P301 + P317 + P330 IF SWAL\-LOWED: Get me\-di\-cal help. Rinse mouth. P302 + P316 IF ON SKIN: Get e\-mer\-gen\-cy med\-ic\-al help im\-me\-di\-ate\-ly. P302 + P317 IF ON SKIN: Get me\-di\-cal help. P302 + P334 IF ON SKIN: Im\-merse in cool wa\-ter or wrap in wet band\-ages.
```

Text formatted in columns in the Rich Text Box object

The Rich Text Box object can split the content into columns. The data will flow from one column to the next. The **Text Fit** option will make sure your data optimally fits into the columns by adjusting the font size. The columns are only visible inside the Rich Text Box editor when the view is set to **Print Layout** view. The columns are always visible in the label design area.

Use the columns feature with labels where a lot of text content must be provided to the consumer, typically for hazardous material. The columns better use the available area for text content and make text more readable.

Note

This functionality is not supported with Rich Text Box objects that use the alternative rendering option.

Rectangular Micro QR Code (rMQR)

Rectangular Micro QR Code extends Micro QR Code with a new fixed set of rectangular symbol sizes. Use rMQR Codes in narrow spaces where conventional QR Codes can't be printed, and you want to store more information than with Micro QR codes.

Like with QR Code, rMQR Code employs Reed-Solomon error control coding to detect and correct errors if the rMQR barcode is dirty or damaged. rMQR Code uses variable error correction levels and can handle all types of data. rMQR Code is capable of storing up to 361 numeric characters and 219 alpha-numeric.

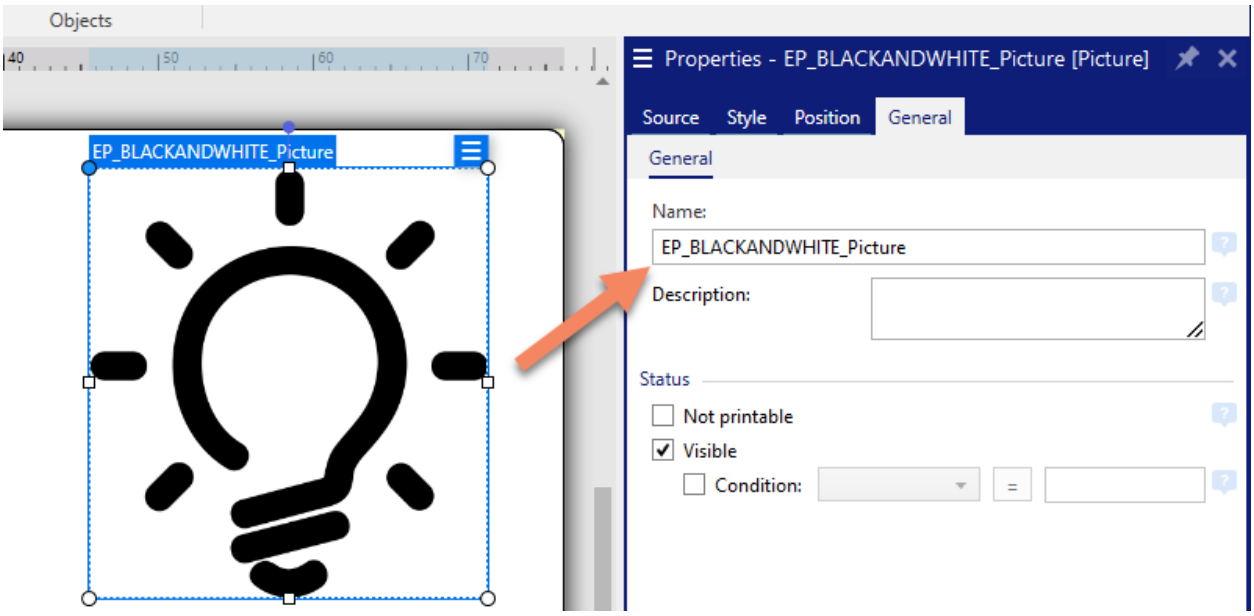
> **Note**
>
> The code has ISO certification through ISO/IEC DIS 23941.

Grayscale images can be printed as monochrome images

By default, Loftware prints grayscale images differently than monochromatic ones. Monochrome images provide color depth with 1 bit per pixel, while grayscale images provide 8 bits per pixel. Monochromatic images are printed as black and white images. Grayscale images are dithered – Loftware converts different shades of gray to monochromatic dots of various sizes and densities, keeping the impression of shades but printing the image as monochrome.

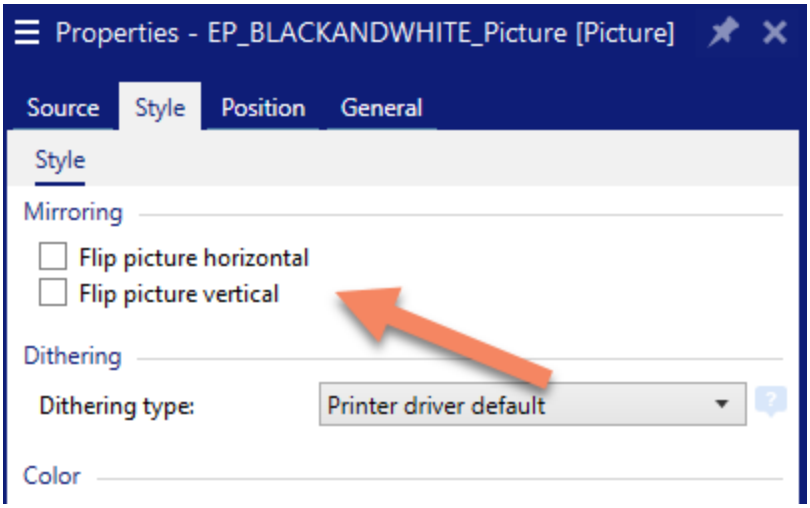
When building dynamic label templates, your Picture objects on your labels might contain images of various types during the print process. You can force the received images to monochromatic printing. Use this option when printing to a monochromatic printer, such as label printers with on-color ribbon.

You can enable this functionality by adding the **EP_BLACKANDWHITE_** prefix to the Picture object name or enabling the **Force picture color** option.



Pictures can be mirrored

You can mirror Picture objects in the label templates horizontally and vertically. The new option is available in the **Style** tab of the object properties.



A default processing order for labels across is set based on the paper orientation

The processing order refers to the sequence in which the labels are processed for a label media, where multiple labels are defined in horizontal or vertical directions. Imagine a page of labels (A4 / Letter page format), where label templates are positioned in rows and columns.

A default processing order is set based on the paper orientation:

- For portrait orientation, the default processing order is “Horizontally – start at the top left.“
- For landscape orientation, the default processing order is “Vertically – start at top left.“

Multicolor print gap adjustment

Multicolor print gap adjustment is a functionality that prevents white gaps between objects of different colors in the label template. You can set up print gap adjustment for each color – this is the amount of bleed edge, the extra print size that extends beyond the dimensions of the label object.

The new functionality is available in the **Printer** tab in the **Label Properties** dialog box only for Lighthouse MAX printers.

A corner radius is available for the Inverse object

You can define a custom corner radius for the Inverse object, effectively reshaping the object into an ellipse or circle. Your printer must support this functionality.

Updated support for GS1-128 standard

The GS1 published the new version (V24.0), the GS1 General Specifications. LoftwareDesigner supports the following updates and changes:

- Digital Signatures (DigSig)- (ISO/IEC 20248 Data Structures) AI(8030)
- AIDC media type AI(7241)
- Version Control Number (VCN) AI(7242)
- Maximum temperature in Fahrenheit AI(4330)
- Maximum temperature in Celsius AI(4331)
- Minimum temperature in Fahrenheit AI(4332)
- Minimum temperature in Celsius AI(4333)
- Updates for the name of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe abbreviation to UNECE AI(7002)

Loftware Cloud updates

Loftware Cloud is SOC2 Type II certified

SOC 2 is an auditing procedure that ensures your service providers (i. e. Loftware) securely manage your data to protect the interests of your organization and the privacy of its clients. With Loftware's service-driven landscape, your organization's data does not exist only in your IT environment but also in the Loftware Cloud.

Compliance certifications fall under frameworks and are verified by third-party auditors. They can give customers a stamp of approval that a vendor has all the necessary controls and protections to ensure their data is as safe as possible. One of these frameworks is called the Service Organization Control (SOC) framework.

SOC 2 Type II compliance is specifically designed for service organizations. The earned SOC 2 Type II certification verifies that Loftware has the proper controls in place for data compliance and security. As a customer, a big part of choosing which vendor to trust that data with is made with the help of certifications, which can demonstrate adherence to certain standards for security and confidentiality.

Loftware Cloud API support for EPSON ColorWorks cloud printers

In April 2023, Loftware and Seiko Epson Corporation announced a strategic partnership that aimed to revolutionize customers' labeling workflows.

The partnership between Epson and Loftware came following a sharp increase in demand for high-productivity color labeling solutions as businesses invested in supply chain improvements, both during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Demand has particularly grown among companies that employ SAP EH&S ERP systems and who plan to migrate to S/4 HANA and the cloud. These businesses manage production, warehouse, and distribution facilities and operate across multiple industry segments, including chemicals, medical devices, pharmaceuticals, electronics, automotive, aerospace, and retail.

The collaboration to develop cloud-based 1-step color printing solutions resulted in integrating the EPSON ColorWorks series of color label printers with Loftware Cloud's platforms. Businesses can print from Loftware Cloud directly to EPSON ColorWorks cloud-connected printers without any need for on-premise Loftware software and printer drivers installed. The following printer models are supported: EPSON CW-C4000, EPSON CW-C6000A, EPSON CW-C6000P, EPSON CW-C6500A, and EPSON CW-C6500P.

Disconnected unlicensed printers are removed after 1 day

Note

This functionality applies to **LoftwareCloud Designer** and **LoftwareCloud Essentials**.

The Loftware partners frequently help customers with the LoftwareCloud Designer and LoftwareCloud Essentials editions. The partners would log into the customer's LoftwareControl Center to help them configure and manage the system. However, at that time, their local printers are reported to the LoftwareControl Center and become available in the web print form.

The printers that are not licensed and were reported by a workstation as being disconnected for more than 1 day are removed from the list of printers. Effectively, the partner's printers are not production-ready printers and are automatically removed from the list.

New permission type to deny all access to the LoftwareControl Center

In certain scenarios, businesses do not want to grant access to Control Center to a specific group of users. For example, print operators or external invited users (e.g., third-party contractors and suppliers) need access to run their assigned print forms but do not need any access to the configuration/management sections in the Control Center.

The option to reject incoming data in the Cloud Print API

Loftware cloud print protocol is updated with the data rejection event. When the printer is busy processing the current print job when a new one arrives, the printer can reject the received print request. In this case, the Cloud Print API returns an error response so the client that sent the data knows the printer is busy and can retry later.

Integrations

Integration with Oracle E-Business Suite applications

The Loftware Oracle Agent provides a common engine for supported Loftware labeling solutions to integrate with Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS) applications to receive and process label print requests. The Loftware Oracle Agent is installed on an Oracle database server and connects to an Oracle integration in a Loftware labeling solution.

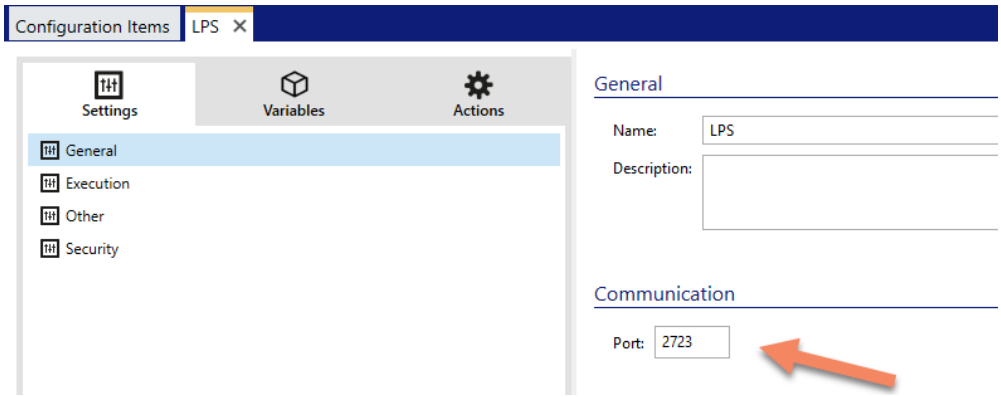
This Oracle integration extends the functionality of Oracle applications, enabling them to connect with a Loftware labeling solution. Print requests initiated by users in Oracle applications are processed and printed by the Loftware labeling solution, which reports the status of each request to the originating application.

Tip

The users can print labels and other documents from the Oracle Warehouse Management System (WMS), part of the Oracle E-Business Suite (EBS).

Configurable LPS Trigger port number

LoftwareAutomation no longer binds the LPS Trigger port number to **2723** but lets you select the arbitrary port number similar to what is available in the raw TCP/IP trigger.



Benefits of migrating from LPS to Loftware:

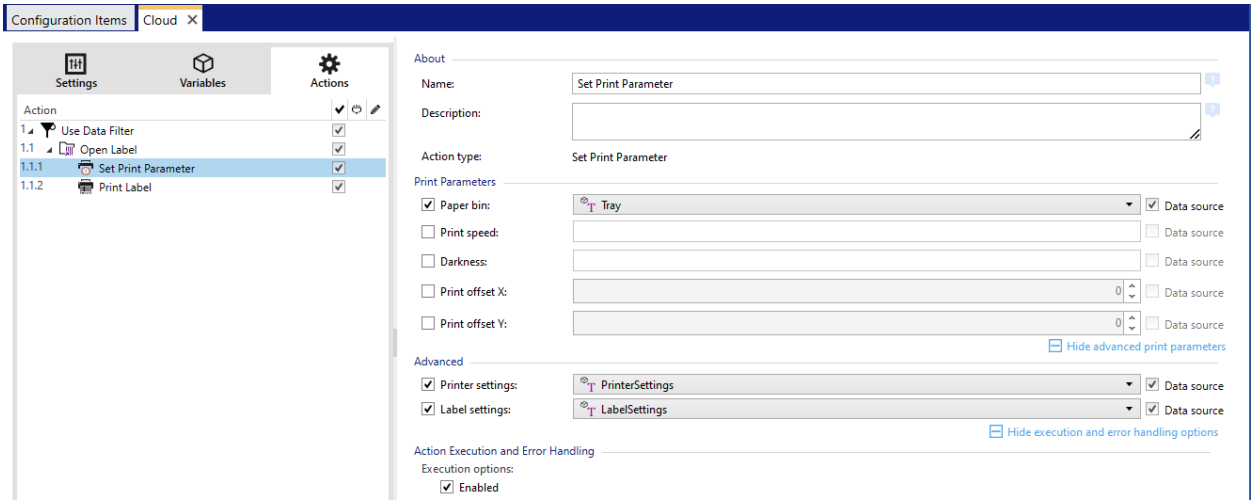
- Configurable LPS Trigger port number allows you to run the LPS and Loftware software on the same computer. Loftware LPS software will run the trigger on the original port number, while LoftwareAutomation will run it on a different port number.

- You can run multiple instances of the LPS trigger on the same computer. Each trigger binds to a different port number. Your data-providing business application must be updated to send data to the appropriate port number.

Automation ignores empty values in the "Set Print Parameter" action

The parameters for the **Set Print Parameter** action are commonly provided dynamically through the data sources. When the values of the data sources provide no value (are empty), the **Set Print Parameter** action will ignore this data source without any error.

This functionality is useful for cases where several parameters in the action Set Print Parameter get values from data sources. If no data is provided for any parameters, there must be no error in the action execution. The empty data values are silently ignored as if they would not be provided. This is often a case where the user simultaneously provides custom values for multiple parameters, such as tray name, label settings, and printer settings.



On-premise Control Center

.NET Core component update

> **Note**
>
> This update applies to the **LoftwareCloud Enterprise** edition.

LoftwareControl Center depends on some essential system components that must be installed on the local system. The prerequisites come bundled in the Control Center installer. With this release, the Control Center installer will update the .NET Core to version 7.x.x.

Microsoft SQL Server 2022 supported for the database installation

> **Note**
>
> This update applies to the LoftwareCloud Enterprise edition.

LoftwareControl Center uses Microsoft SQL Server as the database server. From this release, the installer supports Microsoft SQL Server 2022.

Printer drivers

Shared changes:

- Rebranded all drivers to the Loftware brand.
- Stabilized driver's communication component.
- Driver core stabilization by improving memory and heap allocations.
- Redesigned the self-extracting driver package users download from the web page.

New Loftware printer drivers:

- Anser
- Cajo
- FlexPackPro

ALFAService, AMACO:

- Added support for printing multiple documents when using third-party software.

CAB:

- Download TTF in 8.3 format.
- Fixed write error when deleting downloaded font.

Domino:

- Set the default status checking option to ignore printer status during printing.
- Status check type “Ignored during print“ now ignores printer errors.
- The minimum and maximum range for repeat pitch and print width have been expanded.
- "Update each print option" has been added for Ax printer models.
- "Ignored during print" is the default status check type.
- Driver setting “Delete failed print jobs from Windows print queue” is enabled by default.
- By default, the driver will use the printer settings instead of those in the driver.
- Status check type “Only before print“ is implemented for Domino printers.

Markem-Imaje:

- Fixed issue with job file settings format in case of using the latest firmware.
- The maximum print width on the 5940G model is extended to 3000 mm.
- Added 9222, 9232, 9232E, and 9232S models to the driver distribution.
- Added 9020, 9029, 9030, 9040, 9040 (Dual Head), 9042 and 9042 (Dual Head) printer models to the driver distribution.

- Updated enhanced status report on 5940G printer in case of empty ink.
- Enabled printing of the internal barcode in 90 and 270 degree rotation on 5600, 5800, 5940G.

Markoprint:

- Added Integra PP RAZR printer model.
- The group height setting is now correctly saved in the driver settings.
- Group offset is supported.

ReaJet:

- Added option for bidirectional printing for DoD, SC, ST and GK models.
- Added two options on GUI for bidirectional printing on HR printers.
- Added support for new head type 70 on GK model.

SATO:

- Added PW4NX and FX3-LX DT305-Ad models.
- Fixed SLIX2 RFID tag properties to encode correctly when using page protection options.

TEC/Toshiba:

- BV400T GS and BV400T TS added to driver distribution.
- Fixed cutting in case of cut at the end of batch and printing multiple pages in one job.
- Fixed syntax error when using TOPIX compression.
- Fixed printing in case of continuous media type.

- The continuous media type is now working correctly.

TSC:

- New printer models supported: PEX-2240L,PEX-2240R, PEX-2340L, PEX-2340R, PEX-2640L, PEX-2640R, PEX-2260L, PEX-2260R, PEX-2360L and PEX-2360R.
- Added support for RFID on PEX printers.

UBS:

- Added support for Aplink MRX72 Bicolor printer.
- Driver can now sequentially print multiple pages instead of just one.
- Correct alignment is set when printing text elements.