Book Industry Study Group

Guidelines For Shipping Container Labeling

Revision 04-2004

Developed by:
The Distribution Executives Interest Group (DEIG)
of the Book Industry Study Group

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Introduction & Background

It was 1996 when the Distributions Executives Interest Group (DEIG), a committee of the Book Industry Study Group (BISG) released a revised version of *Guidelines for Shipping Container Codes and Symbols for the US Book Industry*. Recent surveys and studies have shown that very few members of BISG actually use either of what was defined as the Primary Product Label (PPL) and Secondary Shipping Label (SLL) in the form set forth in the 1996 Guidelines.

DEIG formed a sub committee to recommend revisions in the voluntary standards for shipping labels and carton/pallet level product packaging identifiers. The goal of this sub-committee was to recommend standards for the book industry that will simplify capturing data at all stages of shipping, warehousing and receiving between publishers, distributors and booksellers and align the book industry with global trade generally.

These guidelines are designed to conform to "ANSI/UCC-6: Application Standard for Shipping Container Codes" published by the Uniform Code Council, Inc. and to be used as a basis for more specific agreements on shipping container labeling between trading partners.

Shipping Label

The Shipping Label, formerly known as the Secondary Shipping Label, contains information relevant to the shipping of the product. The committee recommends that the most current standards of the ANSI/UCC-128 label format be adopted as the basis for shipping standards in the book industry. The industry should continue to consider updates to its recommended guidelines as changes are made to the ANSI/UCC standards.

The layout of the ANSI/UCC-128 label is made up of different blocks or "zones". Each zone, with some exceptions, can vary in size to accommodate different pieces of information. The basic premise of this label is that each zone can be thought of as a "building block". The size of the blocks, with the exception of certain zones that have mandatory size requirements, can be adjusted to accommodate various pieces of information. Despite the resizing of the zones, the placement of information remains consistent allowing for more efficient shipping and receiving.

The recommended label width is 4". The recommended minimum label length is 6" and can be adjusted to a longer label to accommodate additional fields.

Figure 1 in Appendix A shows a sample of the zone layout of a 4" x 6" ANSI/UCC-128 Label with all fields being utilized and with Zones A through H at a 1" height. Figure 2 in Appendix A shows a sample of the zone layout of a 4" x 7" ANSI/UCC-128 Label again where Zones A through H are 1" in height and where Zones E and F are expanded to the full width of the label causing the label size to change to 7". Examples of Common Carrier (Truckload/LTL) and "mark-for" labels also appear in Appendix A.

Table D-1 in Appendix D defines the uses, sizes and mandatory or minimum requirements for the different zones on the shipping label. Whenever information on the shipping label is to be bar-coded, it should be based on UCC/EAN-128 Symbology and care should be taken to use the appropriate Application Identifier (AI) codes and data construction as outlined in Appendix D - Table 3.

Shipping Label Placement

The original BISG Guidelines for Shipping Labels called for the shipping label to be placed on the top of the carton. The current UCC Application Standards for Shipping Container Codes call for the placement of the shipping label on the side of the carton. To accommodate both top and side labeling, as well as provide guidelines for those that are transitioning from top to side or both, these new guidelines contain standards for each. Ultimately, the placement of shipping labels will be agreed to by trading partners based on the needs and abilities of both the shipper and receiver. However, it is recommended that as enhancements to shipping or receiving operations are planned, the ability to side-label or top-and- side label be considered.

Guidelines for Top Labeling

Shipping labels placed on the top of the carton should adhere to the following general guidelines, examples are provided in Appendix B, Figure B-1:

- The shipping label should be placed so it does not cover the seam of the carton and be damaged when opened or cause any bar-codes to be distorted.
- The shipping label should be placed in such a way that the tape used in sealing the carton does not cover any bar-code or other critical information on the shipping label.
- Ideally, the shipping label should be placed so that no bar-code particularly the SSCC-18, appears any closer than 1¼" from any natural edge of the carton.

For small cartons where the top surface does not allow for all of the above guidelines to be followed, the exceptions below are allowed:

- The shipping label may be placed on top of any sealing tape.
- If the shipping label must be placed in a manner in which the SSCC-18 bar-code will appear closer than 1¼" to the edge and side of the top of the carton, the label should be placed in such a way that the SSCC-18 bar-code is placed away from the short edge of the carton so that the quality of the bar-code is not diminished if the corner of the carton is damaged.
- If the shipping label must be placed across the seam of the carton care should be taken that no bar-code or other critical information crosses the seam and could be lost when the carton is opened.

Guidelines for Side Labeling

In keeping with the guidelines set forth by the UCC Application Standards for Shipping Container Codes, shipping labels placed on the side of the carton should meet the following criteria. (Examples are provided in Appendix B, Figure B-2):

- Shipping labels should be placed on the long side of the carton with the bar-codes in a vertical bar or "picket fence" configuration.
- Shipping labels should be placed in such a way that the SSCC-18 bar-code appears at least 1¼" from the natural bottom of the carton.
- The shipping label should be placed so that the SSCC-18 bar-code appears no closer than 1¼" from the edge of the carton.
- If the shipping label is to be placed on the same side of the carton as a product label, it should be placed to the side of the product label so that it does not obscure any of the information on the product label and so that no bar-code appears closer than 1¼" from the natural edge of the carton.

For cartons where the height of the carton is less than that of the shipping label, one of the following should occur:

- The entire shipping label should be placed on the top of the carton following the guidelines for Top Labeling.
- The shipping label should be placed on the side of the carton with the bottom of the bar-code placed at least 1¼" from the natural bottom; and the excess portion of the top of the label should be folded over to the top of the carton. Care should be taken in these cases to not crease the shipping label on any bar-codes or other critical information.

Product Label & Carton Markings

The Product Label & Carton Markings, formerly represented by the Primary Product label, contain information relevant to the contents of the carton.

With the emergence of new technology and the continued need for title marketing, it is understood that labeling should not be the only method for identifying the contents of a carton.

In an effort to minimize the duplication of information on the Shipping Label, the Product Label and Carton Markings and eliminate a need for printing two labels at the time of shipment, it is recommended the following standards be used when labeling or marking product information on full carton packs.

UCC/EAN-128 Symbology should be used for all bar-codes observing the appropriate Application Identifiers as outlined in Table D-3 in Appendix D.

Acceptable Standards for Carton Marking/Labeling

The acceptable methods for carton marking are by labeling, offset, flexo or ink jet printing. In all instances, carton information should appear in the zoned

layout as explained in the following section and also outlined in Table 2 of Appendix D. When printing bar-codes directly on the carton, care should be taken that the bar-codes are appropriately sized and with sufficient contrast to be accurately scanned. In cases where symbols printed directly on the carton will not properly scan, the bar-coded information should appear on a label placed on the carton.

When printed directly to the carton all barcodes should be properly sized and spaced with appropriate quiet zones and should not be printed closer than 1¼" from any edge of the carton. When using labels, they should be placed at least 1¼" from any carton edge or in such a manner that bar-codes on the label do not appear closer than 1¼" from any carton edge. When using wrap-around labels, they should be printed and applied so the bar-codes do not appear closer than 1¼" from the top and bottom or other edge of the carton.

Product label bar-codes should be in a vertical bar or "picket fence" configuration.

Zoned Product Information

The following explains the various zones, or order, in which the product information should be placed - either on a product label, printed directly on the carton itself, or by a combination of both. The table in Appendix D, Table 2 shows the various zones and a more detailed listing of some of the items that would be included in the various zones. Appendix C contains various examples of how the zone layouts would appear when using the different printing methods. The correct AI prefixes and data construction for bar-coded information is contained in the list in Appendix D Table 3.

Zone 1 - This zone, the first block of information to appear, contains Human Readable non-bar-coded information specific to the product. Typically, and to eliminate repeated information, this field would include information which is not otherwise bar-coded on the carton such as the Title, Author, On-sale date and publisher. In cases where bar-coded information is not being directly printed on the carton but is on a separate label, text for bar-coded information may also appear in this zone.

Zone 2 - The second zone, the middle block of information, is reserved for publisher specific information, which may or may not be bar-coded at the discretion of the publisher, e.g., the Publisher Purchase Order and Printing Number. When placing a bar-coded purchase order number in this area the proper AI (251) should be used and identified by either PPON, "Publisher Purchase Order Number" or similar text in order to clearly identify it as the publisher's order number and not be confused with the customer's purchase order number located on the shipping label.

Zone 3 - The last zone, the bottom section of information, is reserved for bar-coded product information that is equally useful to both the shipper and the receiver. Information included in this section would be ISBN, Carton Quantity, Carton Weight and Cover Price. In cases where printing directly on the carton would not create acceptable bar-codes, this information should be labeled at the bottom of the carton, taking care not to obstruct other information and maintaining a minimum distance from the bottom or edge of the carton of at least 1¼".

Label/Carton Marking Placement

Carton Labels or Carton Markings should appear on at least two sides of the carton, one of which must be the long side of the carton.

All labels should be placed at least 1¼" from the carton edges or labels should be placed so that bar-codes on the label are at least 1¼" from any carton edge.

Bar-codes printed directly on the carton should appear at least 1¼" from the carton edges.

When using wrap around labels, they should be printed and applied so the bar-codes do not appear closer than 1¼" from the top and bottom or other edge of the carton.

Additional Resources

Uniform Code Council, Inc.
7887 Washington Village Drive, Suite 300
Dayton, OH 45459
Phone: 937-435-3870
FAX: 937-435-7317
E-mail: info@uc-council.org
Web: www.uc-council.org

Figure A – 1
Sample 4" x 6" Shipping Label

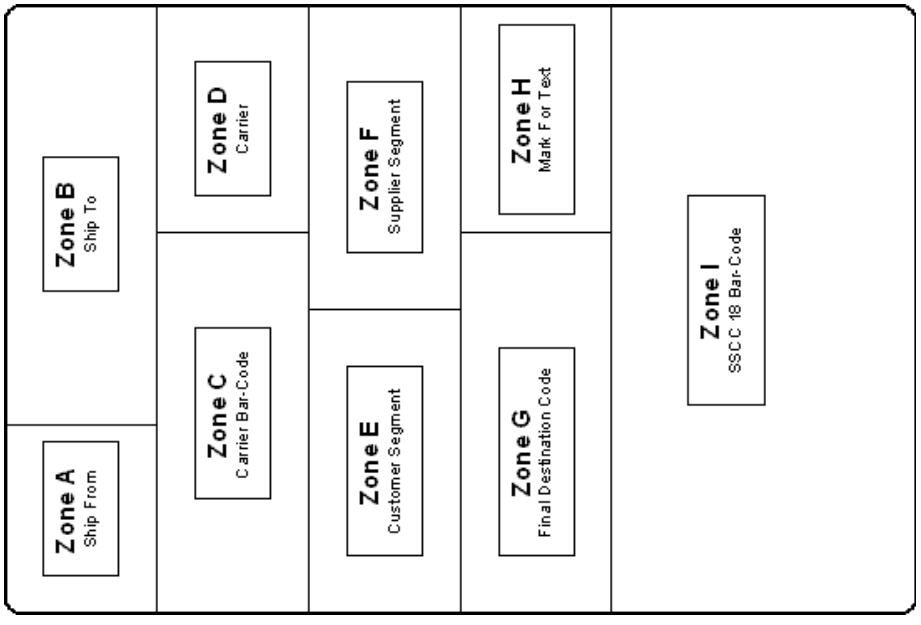

Figure A - 2
Sample 4" x 7" Shipping Label

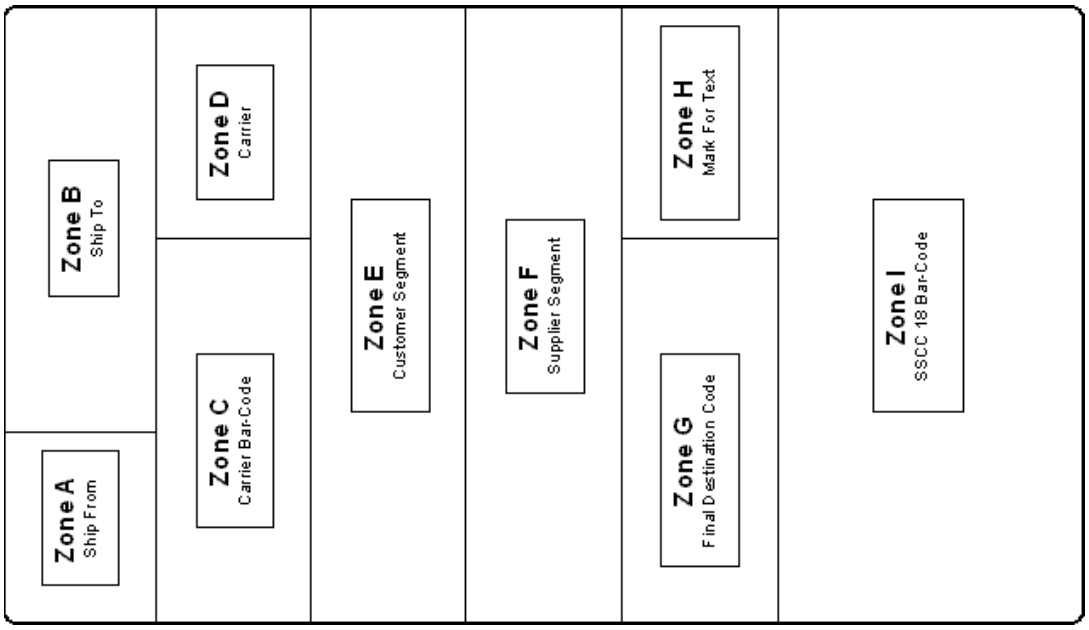

Figure A - 3
Sample 4" x 6" Common Carrier Shipping Label
(Truckload/LTL Carrier)

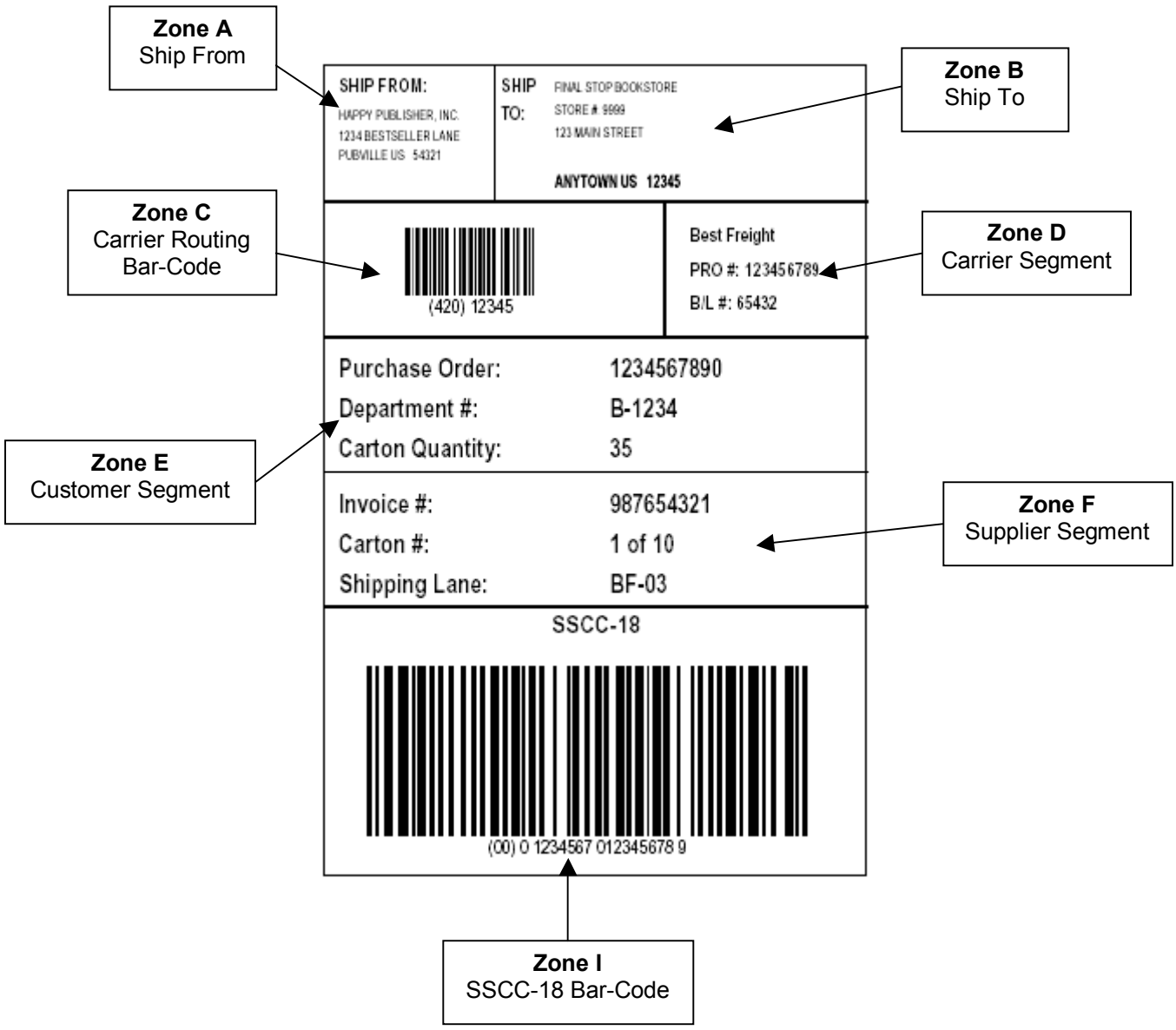

Figure A - 4
Sample 4" x 7" Mark-For Shipping Label
(Truckload/LTL Carrier)

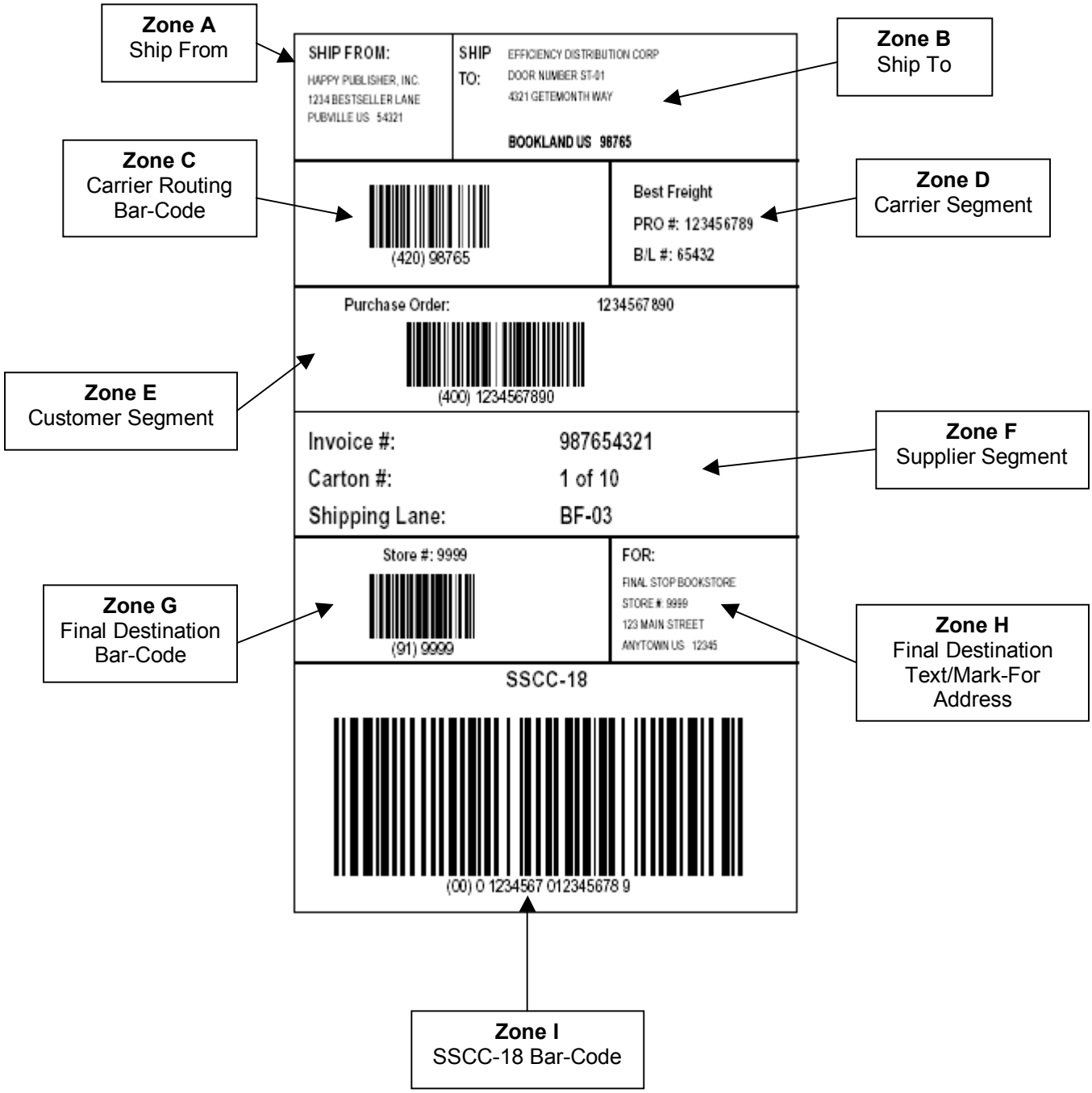

Figure B – 1
Top Placed Shipping Label Examples

Figure B.1.1
Full Sized Carton

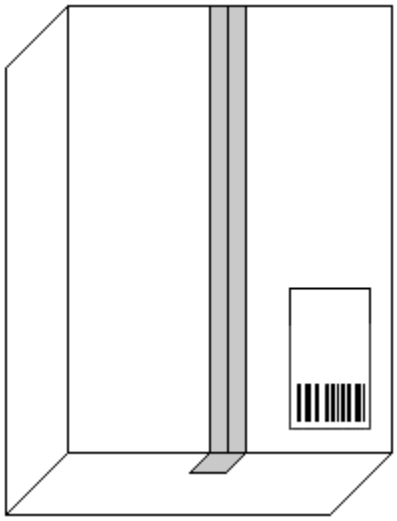

Figure B.1.2
Small Carton Option 1

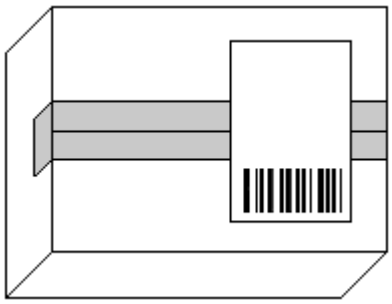

Figure B.1.3
Small Carton Option 2

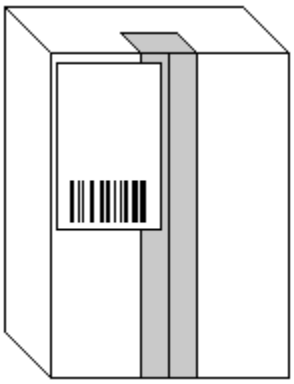

Figure B – 2
Side Placed Shipping Label Examples

Figure B.2.1
Full Sized Carton

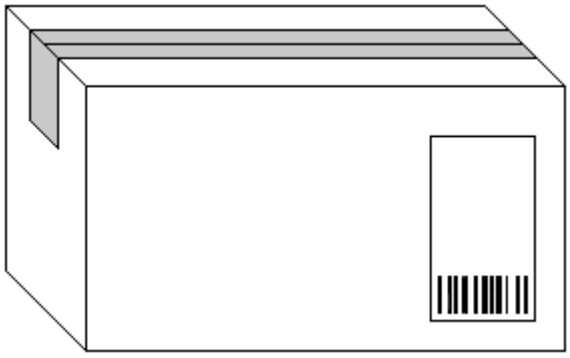

Figure B.2.2
Short Carton

Figure C - 1
6” x 4” Product Label

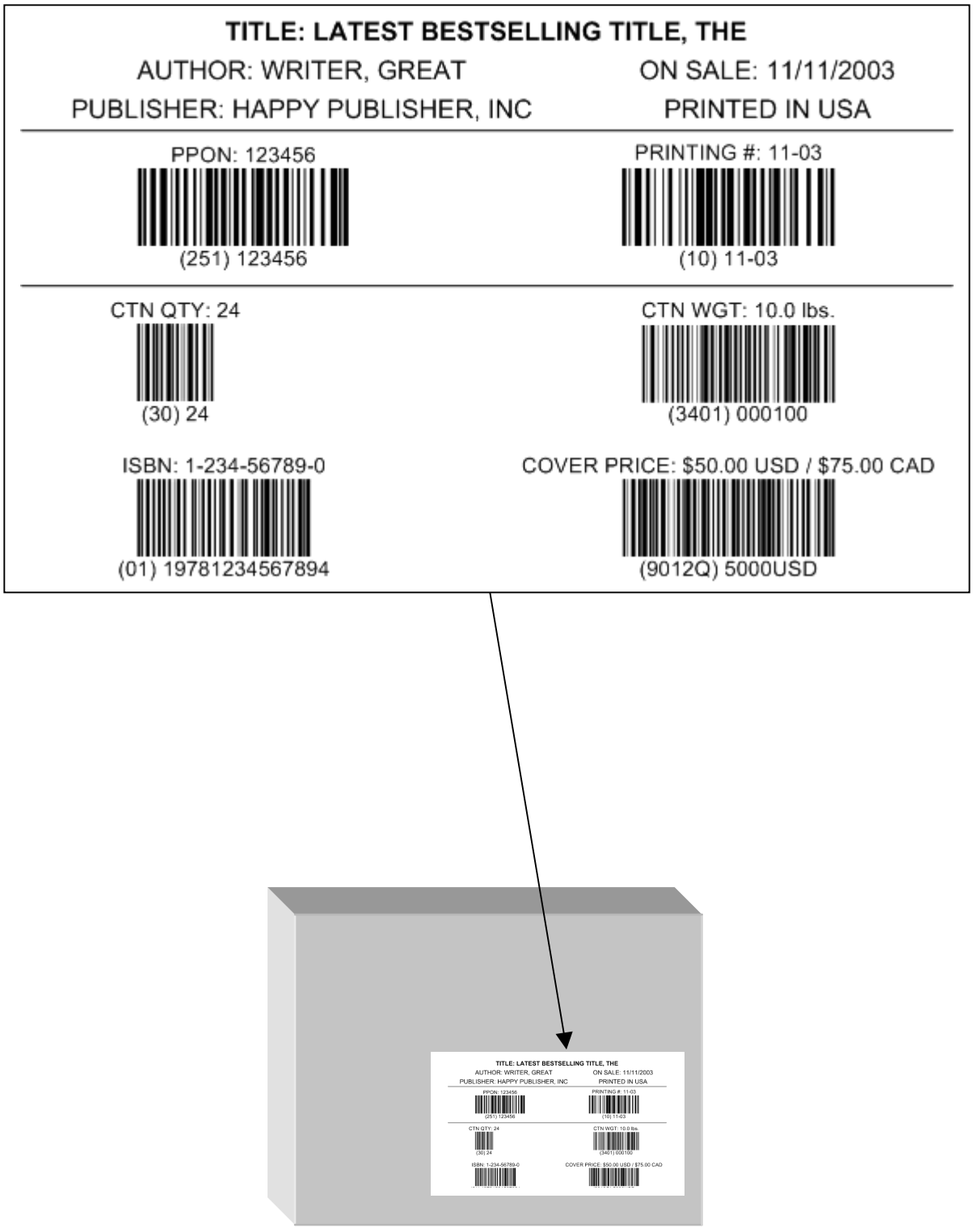

Figure C - 2
12” x 4” Wrap-Around Product Label

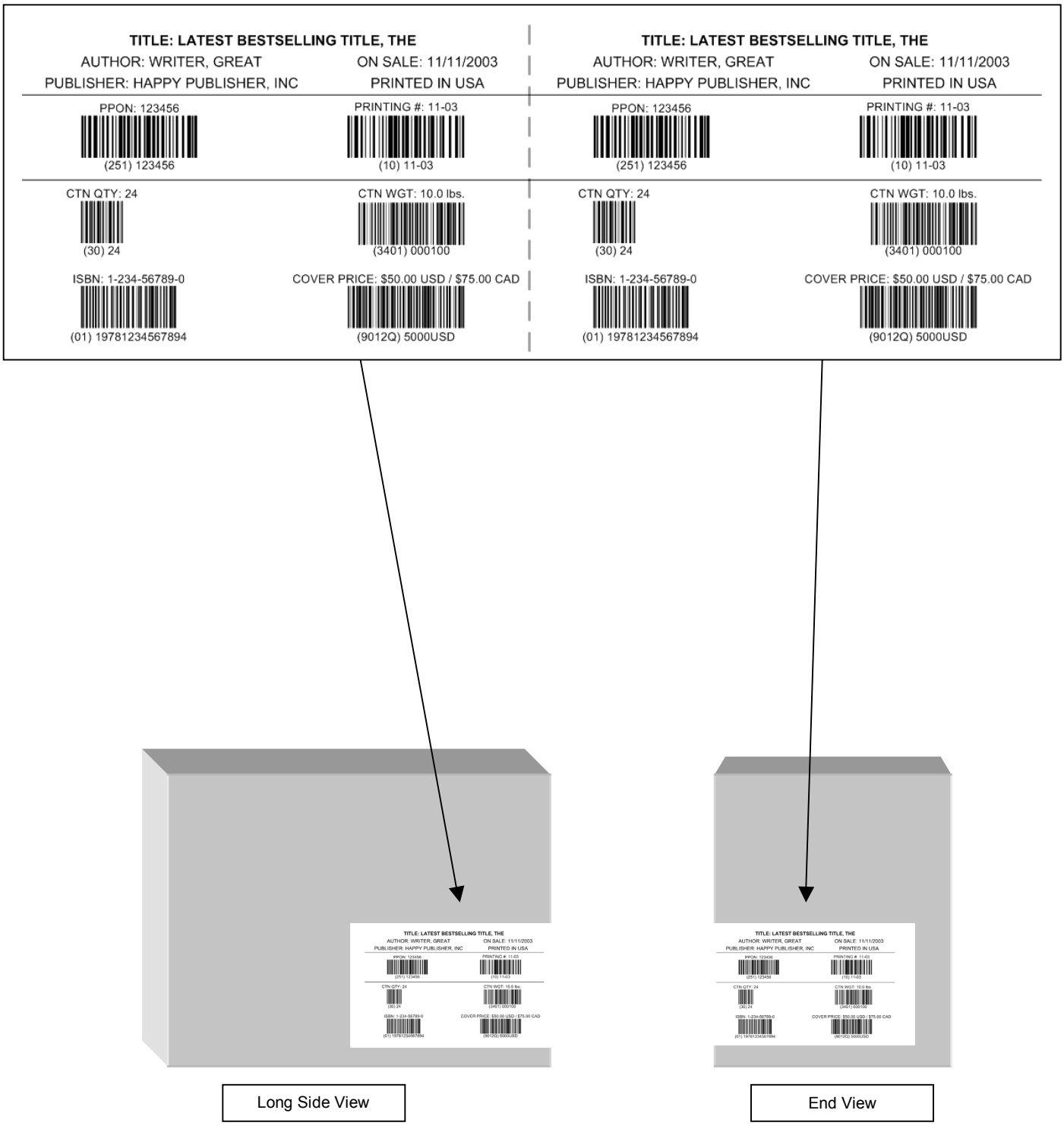

Figure C - 3
Off Set Printing of Title Information

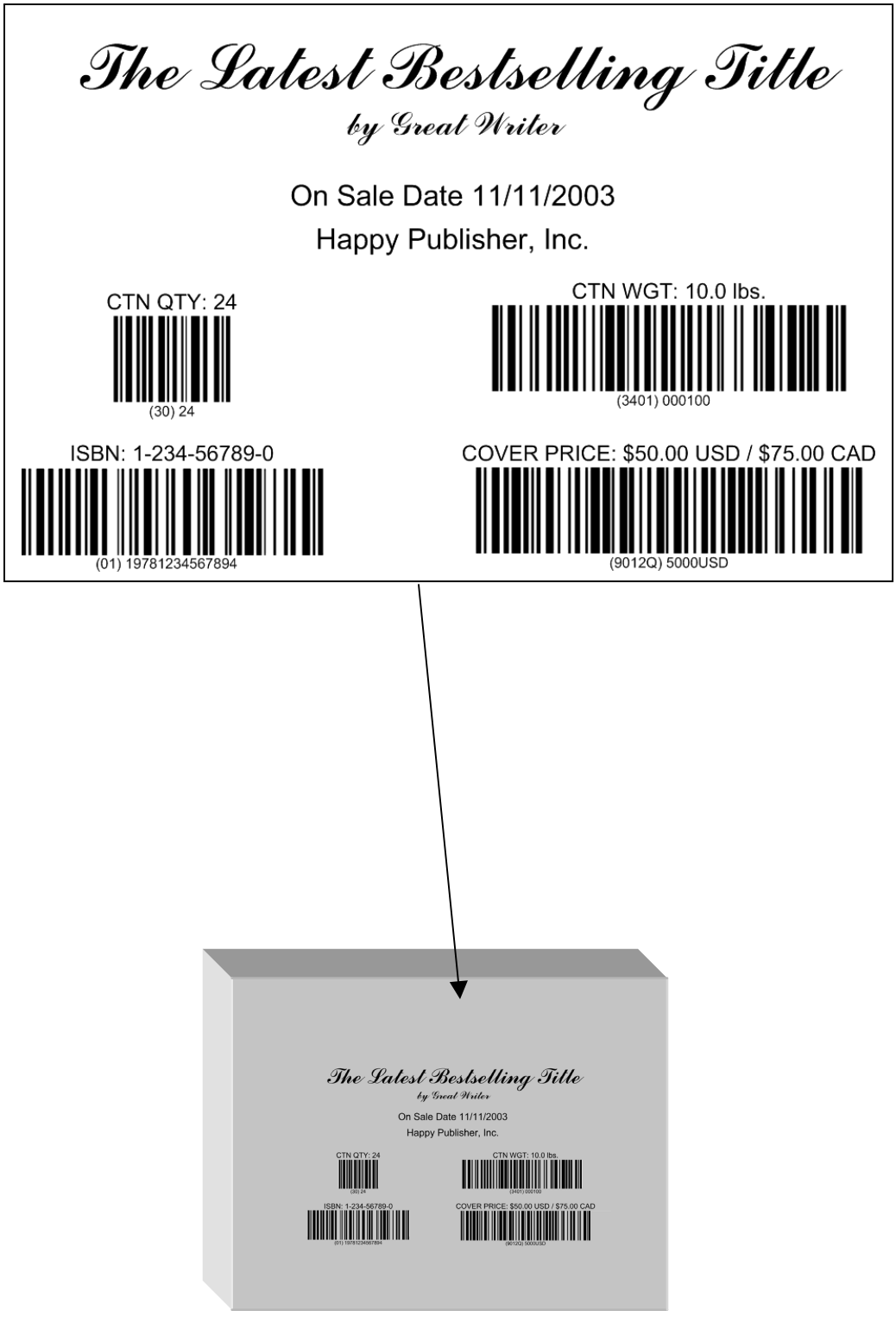

Figure C - 4
Off Set Printing with Labeled Bar-code Information

Figure C - 5
Inkjet
Spray-on Labeling

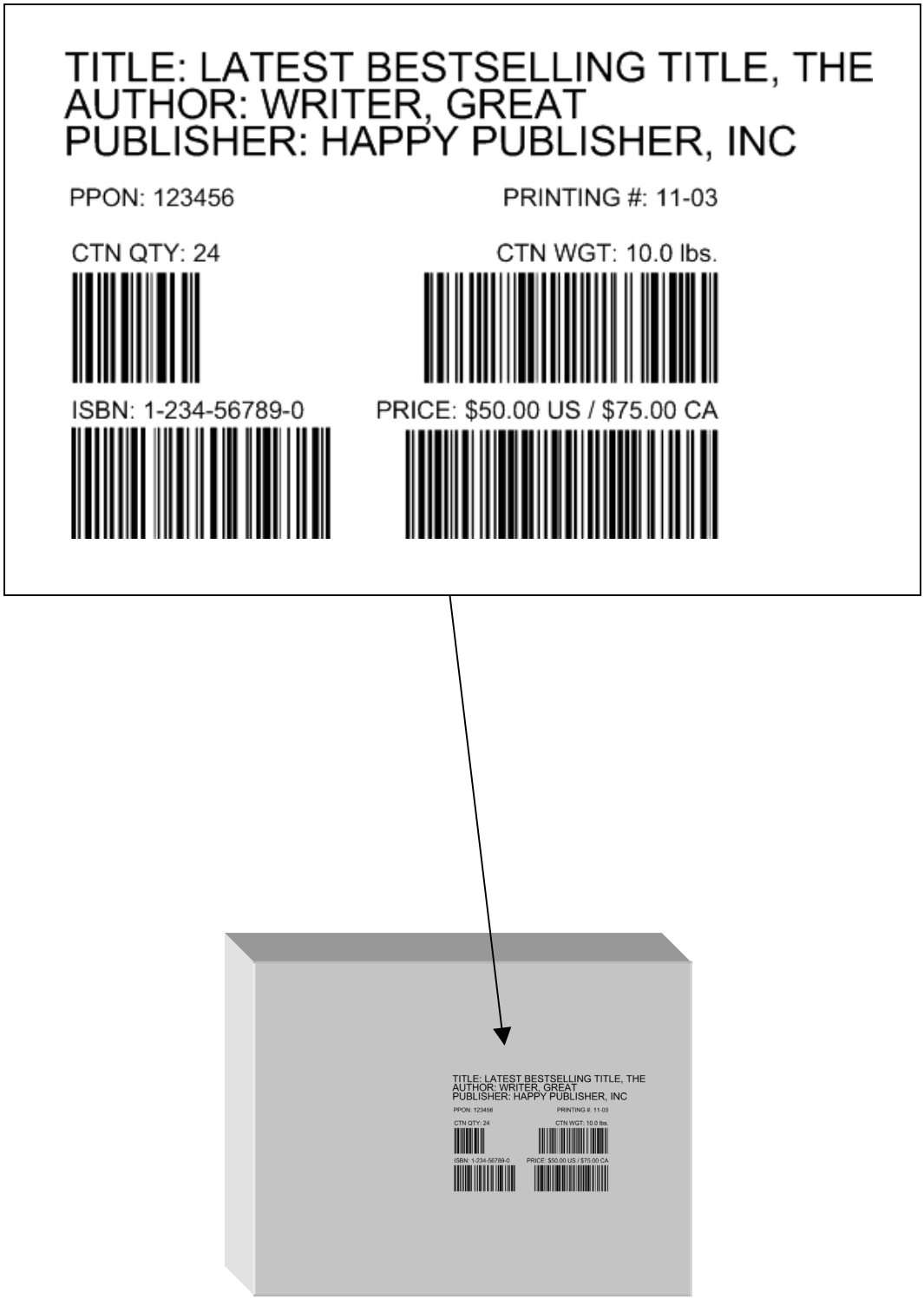

Table D - 1

Shipping Label Zones Defined				
Zone	Description	Information	Size	Mandatory?
A	Ship From	Always contains the Shipper name and address.	Height: 1.0" ± .2" Width: 1.25"	YES
B	Ship To	Always contains the Receiver name and address. In the case of Third Party or "Mark-For" shipments, this would be the address of the DC or Consolidator, not the final destination.	Height: 1.0" ± .2" Width: 2.75"	YES
C	Carrier Routing Bar-Code Segment	Bar-coded carrier information such as Postal Bar-code, SAN or Carrier PRO Number.	Height: 1.0" ± .2" Width: Minimum of 2.5", allowing for Zone D to appear next to Zone C or 4.0" to accommodate longer or multiple bar-codes, moving Zone D directly below Zone C.	Optional, exact requirements determined by the delivering carrier.
D	Carrier Text Segment	Carrier Name, SCAC Code, Pro Number, Trailer Number, Class of Service or other information required by the carrier to deliver the shipment.	Height: 1.0" ± .2" Width: 1.5" when used on the same plane as Zone C or up to 4.0" when used below Zone C.	Optional, exact requirements determined by the delivering carrier.
E	Customer Segment	Customer Specific information which may appear as either human readable or bar-coded depending on available space. Information may include Department Number, Carton Quantity, Package Identifiers or Purchase Order number. In the event of multiple purchase orders packed in the same carton the text "MIXED POS" should appear.	Height: 1.0" ± .2" Width: 2.0" if appearing on the same plane as Zone F or 4.0" if appearing above Zone F.	Requirements determined by trading partners.
F	Supplier Segment	Supplier specific information such as Waves, Deliveries, Dock Floor Spots, Carton Counts.	Height: 1.0" ± .2" Width: 2.0" if appearing on the same plane as Zone E or 4.0" if appearing below Zone E.	Optional, exact requirements determined by supplier.
G	Final Destination Code	Ship For or Mark For information, such as Store Numbers or SAN, usually in bar-coded formats used to identify the final destination when shipping via a third party, DC or Consolidator.	Height 1.0" ± .2" or 2.0" ± .4" to accommodate certain bar-coded information (Height of G must match height of H) Width: 2.5.	Required only if Zone H is being used.
H	Final Destination Text	Ship For or Mark For text, such as final destination address when shipping via a third party DC or Consolidator.	Height 1.0" ± .2" or 2.0" ± .4", depending on the height of Zone G Width: 1.5.	Required only if Zone G is being used.
I	SSCC-18 Bar-Code	Carton Identifier for ASN. Minimum height for bar-code must be 1.25".	Height: 2.0" Width: 4.0"	YES

Table D - 2

Product Label & Marking Zone Information	
Zone 1 Product Information Human Readable	• Title • Author • Publisher • On-Sale Date • Country of Origin
Zone 2 Publisher Information Human Readable And/or Bar-coded	• Publisher Purchase Order • Printing Number • Job Number
Zone 3 Product Information Bar-Coded	• ISBN • Carton Quantity • Cover Price • Carton Weight

Table D - 3

Acceptable Application Identifiers & Their Uses
(EAN/UCC – 128 Symbology)

Field Name	AI	Use	Format	Example
Carton Quantity	30	To identify the total number of units contained in the shipping container.	N2 + n..6	24 = 3024
Carton Weight	3401	To identify the weight of the shipping container in pounds. (Implies 1 decimal place.)	n4 + n6	10.0 lbs. = 3401000100
Cover Price	9012Q	To display the US cover price in a bar-coded format. Implies two decimal places. There is no upper limit to the representation of price. In the case of a non-US cover price, the appropriate ISO Currency Identifier should be used. Should match the bar-coded price on cover four of the actual book.	N4 + a1 + n..∞ + a3	$50.00 USD = 9012Q5000USD or $75.00 CAD = 9012Q7500CAD
Customer Purchase Order Number	400	Identifies the Customer's Purchase order, to be used on the shipping label only in the Customer Segment (Zone E). Not to be used in carton markings or to identify any purchase orders other than that of the receiver at the ultimate destination.	N3 + an..13	1234567890 = 4001234567890
Destination SAN	410	To identify the SAN of either the consolidation point or final destination. (Depending on which zone it is used in.)	n3 + n13 n13 = P + SAN + C Where: P = 079999 (UPC SAN Prefix) SAN = First 6 digits of SAN C = Check Digit	192-3579 = 4100799991923576
ISBN (EAN/UCC 128 Format)	01	To identify the ISBN of the product in EAN/UCC – 128 Format.	n2 + n14 n14 = P+978+ ISBN+C Where: P=1 ISBN = first nine digits of ISBN C = Check Digit	1-234-56789-0 = 0119781234567894
Mark For Store Number	91	To identify the final destination store number, typically used only in the Mark For (Zone G) of the shipping label.	N2 + n..6	1234 = 911234
Pack Identifier 1: single/single	904S	To identify a carton containing a single tile for a single purchase order.	N3 + a1	904S
Pack Identifier 2: mixed/single	905S	To identify a carton containing mixed titles for a single purchase order.	N3 + a1	905S

mixed/single		titles for a single purchase order.		
Pack Identifier 3: single/mixed	906S	To identify a carton containing a single title to fulfill multiple purchase orders.	N3 + a1	906S
Pack Identifier 4: mixed/mixed	907S	To identify a carton containing mixed titles filling multiple purchase orders.	N3 + a1	907S
Printing Number	10	Used to identify the printing number for the publisher.	N2 + an..18	11-03 = 101103
Publisher Purchase Order	251	Used to identify the purchase order form the publisher to the binder. Used only in carton markings, not on shipping labels.	N3 + an..30	123456 = 251123456
Ship To Postal Code	420	To identify the postal bar-code of the ship to destination.	N3 + n..9	98765 = 42098765 or 98765-4321 = 420987654321
SSCC-18 Bar-Code	00	To identify the SSCC-18 bar-code used to identify the carton in ASN transmissions.	N2 + n18	012345670123456789 = 00012345670123456789