Labels & Labelling

World of labels & narrow web

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Labelexpo Americas Special

LABELEXPO AMERICAS 2002

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Leader

Labelexpo Americas will be an exciting show in terms of new technology – particularly new press technology. The trend from the last Labelexpo show towards incorporation of Servo drives continues rapidly, with all the advantages in set-up times for repeat jobs and the ability to handle a range of substrates from thin, unsupported films to added-value laminates without complex mechanical changes. In this issue we examine the experience of European converter Permapack, which has spent a year field testing Gallus' all-servo RCS 330 press, and the results are encouraging – big reductions in set-up waste and set-up time, for example. New entrant to the narrow web market PCMC promises a technology announcement of a servo-driven press, while Omet shows for the first time outside Labelexpo Asia-Pacific its servo-driven Varyflex press line.

On the digital front we see the first appearance of the new-look HP Indigo, a part of the giant Hewlett Packard corporation, introducing to the Americas its Ws4000 digital offset press system.

We will also get our first chance at Labelexpo Americas to see Mark Andy's hybrid conventional-digital press, which utilises a 6-color inkjet unit as a module in a conventional 2200 flexo/screen press, complete with standard finishing section.

> "Labelexpo Americas will be an exciting show in terms of new technology – particularly new press technology"

As well as a host of new materials launches covering security, variable information printing and high end decoration, we see a trend towards monofoils – not only shrink films but also unsupported flexible packaging substrates which take advantage of the multi-substrate possibilities offered by the new press generation.

Another key area is digital workflow from design and pre-production, to worldwide proofing and approval over the internet, to digital platemaking. These systems are now being integrated with plant planning and press management software modules to build complete virtual 'models' of the converting operation and all its links with suppliers, other company plants and clients worldwide.

Labels & Labeling has its own stand, 1829, so please take the opportunity to drop in and tell us what you think of the show and how your business is doing.

Andy Thomas
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FB launch

Following its takeover of Cincinnati-based Roto Press, Nilpeter showed for the first time the new FB-series press based around an enhanced Roto Press design. **Andy Thomas** assesses the technology and its target market.

The European launch of the FB-Line, the latest addition to Nilpeter's range of narrow web flexo presses, was the highpoint of the first Open House held by Nilpeter Ltd. The three-day-event was held in mid-June at the UK company's new purpose-built sales, service and demonstration facility in Hessle, near Hull in East Yorkshire.

The press demonstrated was an FB-4200 with six flexo units and three die-cutting modules. It was sold at the event and is due to be delivered to an unnamed label converter in the North of England in September 2002.

Nick Hughes, managing director, said this was the first time Nilpeter's UK company had staged an event on this scale. 'We had around 80 visitors representing labelling and packaging converters from the UK and Ireland, plus some visitors from mainland Europe. Shortly afterwards we also demonstrated the new press to a party of six Russian label converters.'

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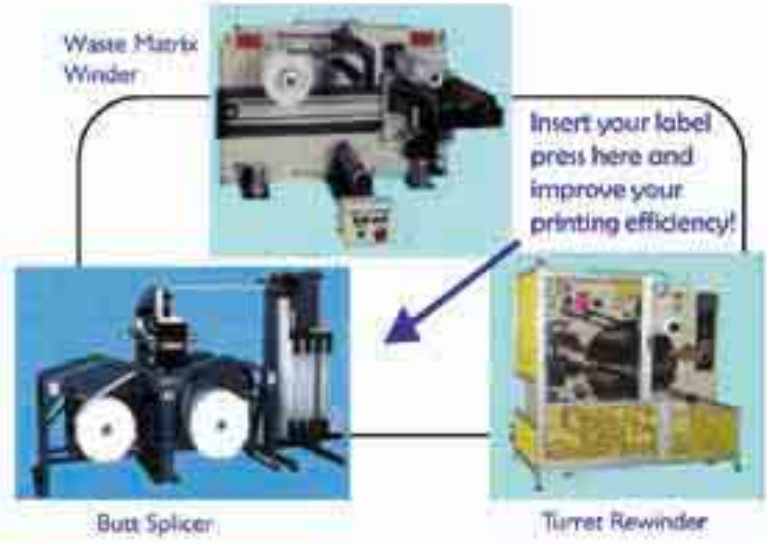

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> “Plate changes can be made in under ten minutes, allowing frequent copy changes in smaller batches”

The FB series presses are manufactured at the former Roto Press International company plant in Cincinnatti, which Nilpeter acquired last year. There are three maximum web widths: FB-2500 at 270 mm (10 3/4"), the FB-3300 at 350 mm (13 3/4") and the FB-4200 with a 425 mm width (16 3/4"), with a 24in repeat.

With a mechanical speed of 228 m/minute (750 feet/minute), the modular presses should be well suited to high volume applications, such as labels for food and beverages as well as shrink wraps, in-mold labels and similar items.

Narrow web packaging

The press could also be targeted at narrow web packaging applications – it comes with special packages for both cartons and flexible packaging. Although Roto Press targeted mainly labels converters, in the last four years they have had much success with North American flexible packaging and carton converters in formats up to 26 inches. Bespoke, servo-driven systems have been developed to cope with heat and tensioning issues on thin, unsupported films and the very different tensioning required to pull heavier cartonboard thru a press. Roto Press had also developed its own in-line converting systems. The FB-Line can run with inter-deck UV-curing lamp units allowing combinations of UV-flexo, rotary screen and hot foil stamping units.

Labelexpo Americas will see the launch of both hot and cold foil removable cassette units. These can be placed anywhere on the press, allowing converters, for example, to varnish then print on top of foil.

A chill drum is optional, while future developments may include servo drives and Nilpeter's new in-line gravure unit.

Andy Colletta, president/CEO of Roto Press since 1994 and now CEO of Nilpeter Inc., stressed the 'tool-free' quick-change facilities with slide-out print units and removable ink pans. Plate changes can be made in under ten minutes, allowing frequent copy changes in smaller batches.

The FB press includes familiar Roto Press 3500 series features such as heavy duty unwinds – servo driven – and rewinds. They are complimented by new electronic controls, helical gearing, larger print pacing units and a new style of guarding as well an aesthetic makeover. The presses are now CE marked.

‘This represents the perfect combination of Nilpeter's renowned design skills and the solid workmanlike features that Roto Press is known for', said Andy Colletta.

Also present at the launch was designer Mike Vandenberg, who had been with Roto Press for 16 years before its takeover by Nilpeter. He now sits with a joint design team from both companies. The Cincinnati operation employs around 100 people.

‘There is a growing convergence between the converting industries in the US and Europe,’ says Vandenberg. ‘Although water-based is the main process in North America, UV flexo is growing fast, as is rotary screen for combination printing.’

The Open Day FB press was fitted with a Solatell UV lamp measurement system (see www.labelsandlabelling.com for full review), with each print unit drilled to take the special probe which gives operators an indication of when UV lamp power falls below tolerance. ‘This is great for people who are serious about UV printing and is well worth the investment,’ says Mike Vandenberg.

Nilpeter is still working out where the press will fit into its existing flexographic press range. ‘We have not yet 100 per cent defined this to our sales force,’ says Nilpeter’s Steen Thoisen. ‘ We need to get more familiar with it. The FA4200 is a much more sophisticated press than the FB, but the market certainly needs a 16 inch press for pressure sensitive applications.’

Nick Hughes tells L&L, ‘the 16in FB is very competitively priced. There is no gear marking, a great drying system and it’s very operator friendly. I see the FB series as a workhorse press at a competitive price which can have added value combinations.’

Currently, the main installed base of Roto Press machines is in North America and Canada. The UK has 19 machines. It seems likely that Nilpeter could use the FB press to target converters in emerging markets like China, India, Latin America, South Africa, Russia and Asia-Pacific, where this kind of a fast, more basic and versatile machine could fit in well. Indeed, an FB press is due to be installed at the Shanghai showroom of Nilpeter’s Asia-Pacific partner MAN Roland.

Other suppliers supporting the Open Day were Avery Dennison - Fasson Roll Label Division, Akzo Nobel (water-based and UV-curable flexo inks), GerhardtInternational (die-cutting modules), Praxair (anilox rolls and doctorblades), 3M United Kingdom (plate mounting tapes), BST UK North (presscontrols and video web viewers), Alphasonics (roll cleaning) and Corniche Fine Arts (reprographics). ■

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No. 103

This autumn, Raflatac's new US-based manufacturing facility will have been in operation for one year. It has been a challenging year for the North American printing industry, however for Raflatac it has been one of continuing growth and success. **Jennifer Dochstadter** reports

Raflatac doubles US market share

Lately, growth isn't a word often found in the North American material manufacturer's vocabulary. As label printers reign in excess spending due to the economic downturn, pressure sensitive material manufacturers are feeling the impact. Material manufacturers that is, with the exception of Raflatac.

It has been a year since Raflatac's grand opening ceremony at the company's new Fletcher, North Carolina manufacturing facility. Given the North American economic roller-coaster ride of late, some could argue that Raflatac's timing for investing in the North American marketplace couldn't have been worse. Raflatac's North American growth rates from the past year however have effectively proven otherwise. Dan O'Connell, President of Raflatac, Inc. comments, 'Once our North American customer base witnessed our investment in this market, they took us more seriously as a true global supplier of pressure sensitive material. This has resulted in an increase in orders, and we have been able to achieve substantial growth in this market while industry growth has virtually come to a standstill. Other factors have additionally contributed to the growth and success of our new operation in the United States – shortened product lead times and a more expansive product range. According to the Tag and Label Manufacturers' Institute [TLMI], pressure sensitive market growth in the US has actually been negative. Raflatac's growth however has increased significantly.'

When Raflatac's US facility first opened its doors, the coating operation was running 24 hours a day, five days a week. July marks the integration of a fourth shift and the company's coater is now operating 24/7. This, coupled with efficiency improvements, yields substantial additional capacity to meet the increasing demand coming from the market. The US facility is a collective result of decades of pressure sensitive material manufacturing experience, bringing together Raflatac's proprietary coating technology and a fully automated inventory and order tracking system. Jouko Lahepelto, Vice President and Area Director for Raflatac in the Americas, explains, 'Our US factory gave us the opportunity to bring together all of Raflatac's most advanced manufacturing technology worldwide under one roof. All of our manufacturing, ▶

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> "From the receipt of raw material, to the shipment of a customer's order, quality and consistency are assured as we have removed all manual material handling from the process"

Raflatac Inc president Dan O'Connell

slitting, inventory management and order tracking solutions in the North Carolina factory are proprietary. We have developed new order processing and logistic systems and have redesigned the IT system infrastructure in order to meet the unique demands of twenty-first century supply chain logistic requirements. From the receipt of raw material, to the shipment of a customer's order, quality and consistency are assured as we have removed all manual material handling from the process.'

Since the new factory began production, Raflatac's market-share in the US has nearly doubled. The company has been able to build upon their historically well-known brands of pressure sensitive labelstock for variable information printing applications and is currently strengthening its position in high quality prime label materials including filmic substrates.

Jim Harris, founder and CEO of a North Carolina-based label printing company, Mt. Holly Tag & Label, is a Raflatac customer and comments on the company's expansion. 'We're currently printing on a lot of polypropylenes and other synthetic substrates like brushed polyesters and foils. We buy some of our films from Raflatac, as they're just beginning to expand into the film sector in the United States. If I have a technical issue and need someone on the phone, or at my company quickly, I know I can count on Raflatac. Their response time and product consistency are excellent.'

Rafatac Inc. aiming for 10 per cent overcapacity

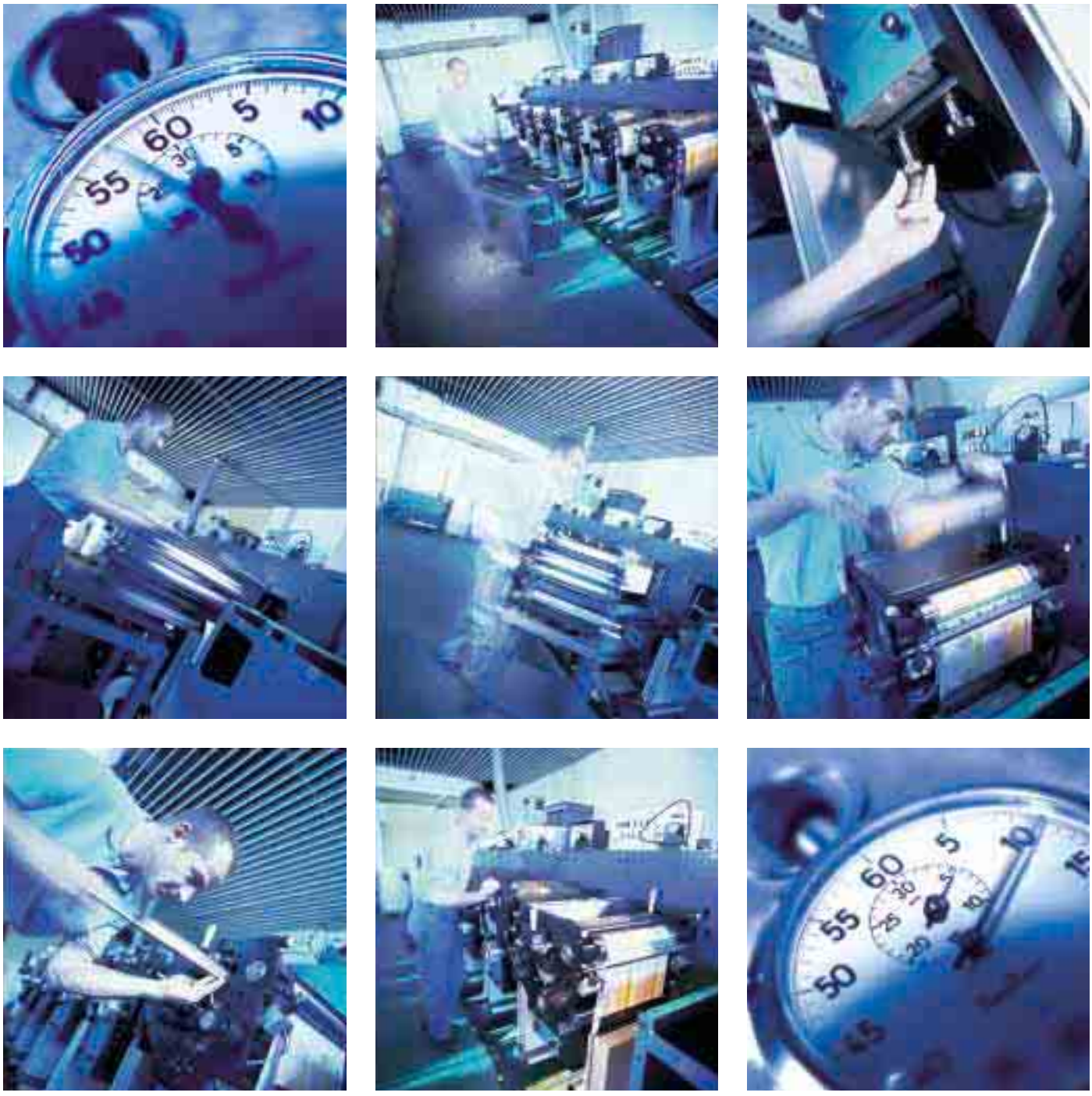
Product consistency is something Raflatac as a global player has taken very seriously, as end-users increasingly dictate globalized print quality and label performance standards on their products in every country around the world.

Global expertise

Raflatac is able to achieve such a high standard of product consistency due to the company's commitment to placing global expertise in all major markets in addition to the company's close partnership to UPM – Kymmene's label papers division and ongoing research and development efforts. Lahepelto comments, 'Raflatac takes its global brand, quality, consistency and product performance very seriously. Global experts were brought to the US to start up the new facility. We're able to achieve high product quality consistency because of our technology know-how and the integration of UPM's range of paper products and release liners.'

Raflatac's growth objectives for the future echo those that have brought the company to its present position as a primary player in the North American marketplace: to continue to expand product lines with material grades that are being manufactured in the US, and to deliver a personalized approach to customers that has been a cornerstone of the company's success worldwide.

Raflatac will be introducing a broad range of filmic substrates at Labelexpo Americas this September, reinforcing their commitment to the high quality prime label sector. Future e-business initiatives in the US include plans to create a link between the company's proprietary IT system and its customers in the marketplace to enable streamlined, faster, more efficient communication. As Dan O'Connell comments, 'Before we broke ground for the new facility we had 45 employees in the US. Today, we have around 275 employees here. Our plan is to always have 10 percent overcapacity in order to grow along with our customer base.'■



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8-colour Komori for wet glue

Gavin Watson raises sheet label stakes with new eight-colour Komori

If you want to make money in the fiercely competitive wet glue labels market you have to innovate and add value. An excellent example is Gavin Watson, which has just invested in one of Komori's first 8-colour 828 presses.

Leading label printer Gavin Watson, Glasgow, is out to steal a march on the competition with a uniquely-configured eight-colour Komori Lithrone 828 with a coater and UV dryer.

Says managing director Drew Samuel: 'We believe that there's currently only one other eight-colour litho label press in the UK and Ireland, so we believe that the new press puts us in a market-leading position for the printing of wet glue labels.' He adds that the press is also designed to print on plastics. The new press will make a major contribution to the services the company already offers its clients, which include blue-chip companies in the food, alcoholic and soft beverage industries, pharmaceutical and security markets throughout Europe.

Comments Drew Samuel: 'The capabilities this new press gives us will in particular excite our clients' designers and marketing departments, who are always looking to produce complex and multi-colour labels. Requirements for more than six colours are increasingly common and the use of different substrates such as film and plastics give our clients' products an increased shelf life against their competitors. Another key attraction is that the new press is able to produce such products at a competitive price.'

The new Komori press joins a four-colour Lithrone 28 and an automated six-colour Lithrone 28 with online coating and UV drying facilities. Gavin Watson was the first company in Scotland to buy a Komori press some seventeen years ago and this Lithrone 26 has only just left the premises to make room for the new press.

Sheet and roll

Gavin Watson was established as a security printer in 1863 and for more than 50 years has been involved in litho label printing. It remains a family-run business. In addition to the printing operation, Gavin Watson specialises in the design of both wet glue and self-adhesive labels – it also runs both a Webtron 1000 and Comco flexo press. The company has extensive in-house facilities from design, illustrations and photography, prepress, ISDN and email communication dedicated for proofing, high quality lithographic and flexographic printing, its own transport fleet and a secure storage and archiving facility for customer artwork and origination and CD backup.

'Western Europe is losing some work to Eastern Europe and places further afield such as India and China,' says Drew Samuel. 'However, logistics do work in our favour in Europe, in particular with "just-in-time" work, especially in the food and non-alcoholic drinks sector. With the expertise we have built up over the years, there's a lot we can offer clients to meet their demands. But we do constantly review our offering to maintain a competitive position in the market.'

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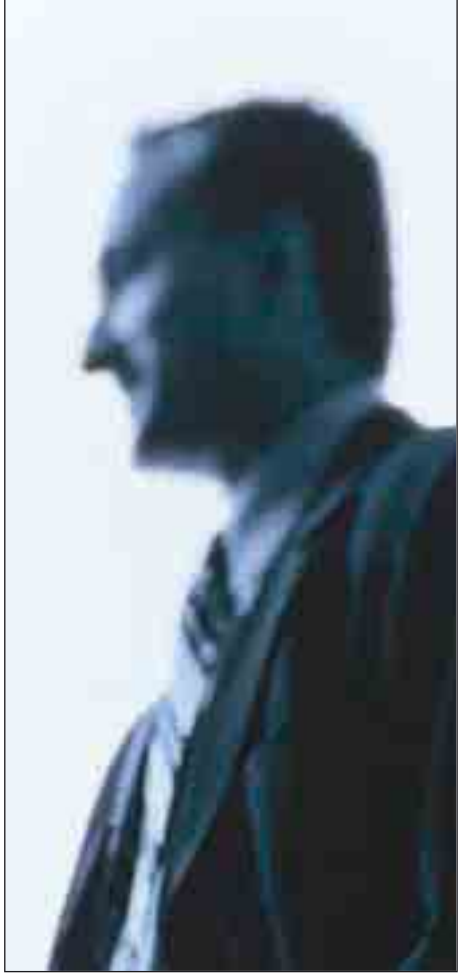


No.154

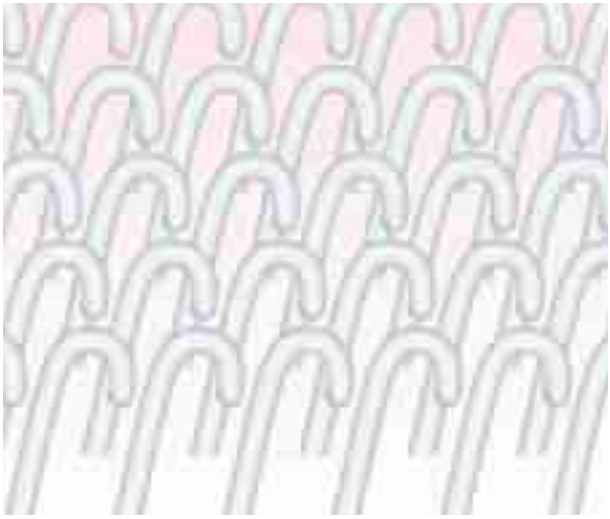
> "Over detacking? That is extremely bad for photopolymer plates since the germicidal lamps actually generate ozone, which is extremely bad for flexo plates"

been activated (hardened) they will not react much further.

Detacking is more sensitive to the different types of materials. Using the UV-C light spectrum, the printing surface of a plate can be made to not stick like Velcro. As this aspect was once described to me, the surface molecules of photopolymer after processing actually are like little Velcro "fingers" that when come in contact with most other surfaces they grab onto it causing the sticking action.

During the exposure to UV-C light the energy from the light actually shears those little "fingers" off the surface making it non-tacky. As we all know, if a plate is tacky, every occasional lint particle remains on the plate rather than remaining on the web causing more time cleaning time rather than running time. Determining the length of exposure time can be rather subjective since manufacturers only publish guidelines on determining when the plate is properly detacked. Listening to many opinions, there are many different theories on determining detack (germicidal light) times.

However just take a solid strip (4.000" x 12.000") of exposed plate material exposed as a solid image then washed out and dried. This strip will simulate the most important part of the plate, the printing surface. Start out by taking the piece of exposed, washed, dried plate and again utilizing two pieces of masking material like orange vinyl, tape them to the bed of the exposure unit about 2.000" apart – making sure they are long enough to completely cover the remainder of the non-detacked photopolymer strip. This is a very similar procedure to determining exposure times for back exposures.



Velcro is simply "fingers" that have a "hook" on the end similar to the molecules that are on the surface of a plate prior to detack/post exposing. Detacking removes the hooked fingers to prevent sticking (eliminate tackiness).

Not knowing a starting point, again break out the trusty old dartboard and go with a few good guesses. Many manufacturers start the detack exposure tests in increments of one minute, starting with five minutes, by making an exposure of the first 2.000" of the strip (5 minutes, then 6 minutes….) marking the increments after each exposure. Once the first exposure is complete, slide the exposed portion under the neighboring mask and proceed to add in one minute increments of exposure until the end of strip.

This procedure takes time since each test exposure requires the post exposure (10 minutes) to be included with the test. It would be futile to perform only part of the exposure test since both operations work together. Once the series of exposures has been performed, determining which one is correct becomes slightly subjective since each manufacturer has their own method.

Cover sheet

One is to take the discarded cover sheet, and press it onto the plate surface. If it sticks then it is not completely detacked. Another is to press the section onto a light piece of paper "Kleenex" to see if it will stick (plate face down to "kleenex"). Or folding the plate upon itself surface to surface until the "kiss" goes away as the surface separates is another method. Doing all three effectively produces very similar results. Once the detack/post exposure time has been determined, one last verification test should be performed exposing the whole strip to the identified detack/ post exposure time to prove the initial test was accurate.

Over detacking? OOOOPPPPSSSS that is extremely bad for photopolymer plates since the germicidal lamps actually generate ozone, which is extremely bad for flexo plates. What does ozone do? It immediately starts to crack the printing surface of the plates, so if while inspecting a plate by squeezing backing to backing (avoid kinking) you can see slight surface cracking on the surface or floor, the plate has been exposed to excessive ozone, or over detacked. Unfortunately as with all good technology too much of anything can also be bad.

The inspection process should begin 15 minutes after the plate is first placed into the oven after washout. Remove each plate individually and examining it for flaws. If a flaw is detected now, the sooner a plate is remade the faster a new ▶

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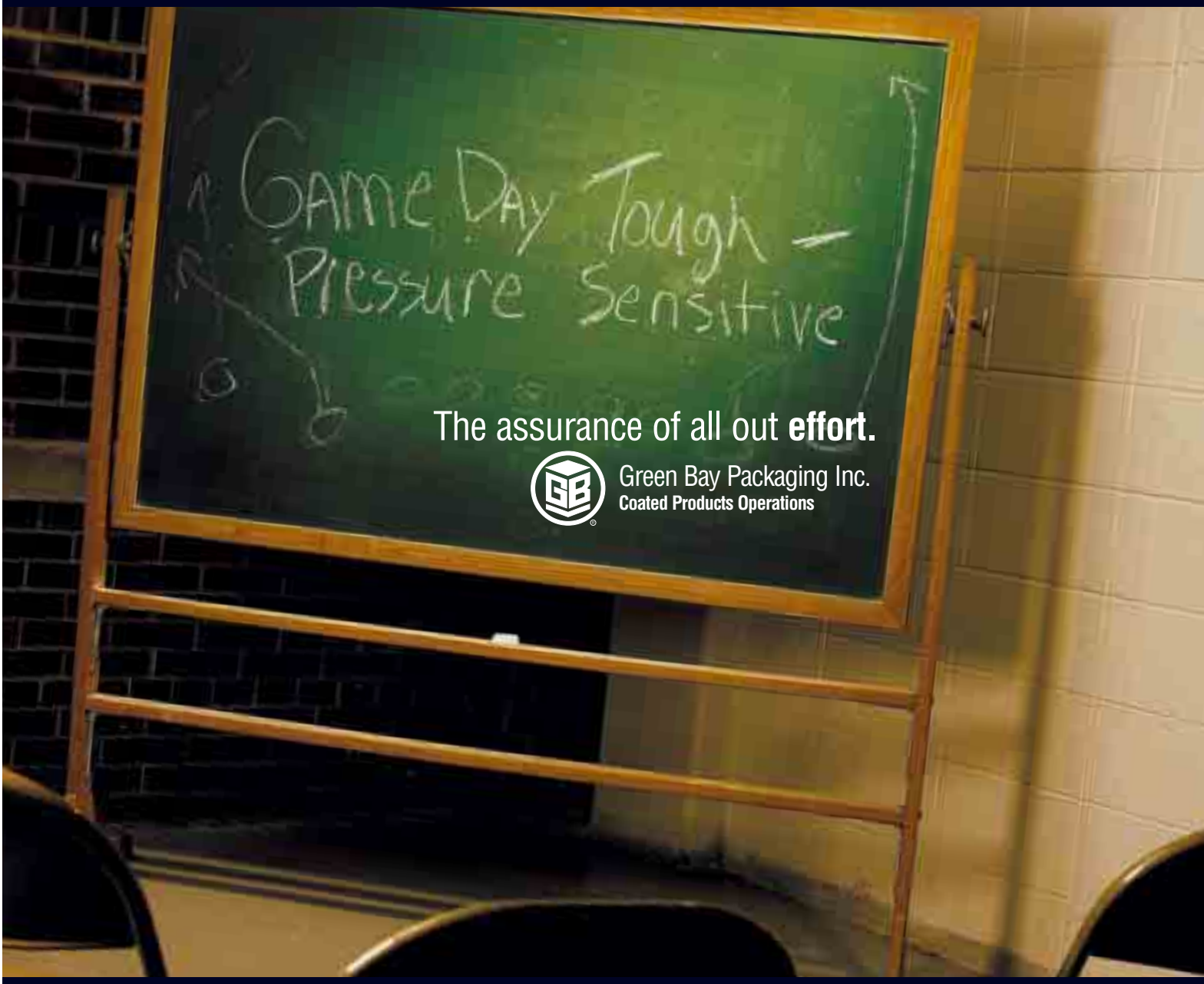

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e No. 131

In part two of his Flexo platemaking basics article, **James Kadlec** tackles issues relating to plate finishing

Flexo platemaking 101

Remember 15 years ago when I made my first flexo plate? Back then the most common technology to detack a plate was acid, water, and bleach mixture. For all of us who remember those days of chlorine gas being emitted, burning our eyes and lungs not to mention ruining our clothes. Those days now are just memories because a much newer and safer method has been proven, it is called light finishing. What is that? The final finishing of a photopolymer plate requires two more stages, first detacking of the printing surface, then post expose (final "hardening" of the photopolymer), together called finishing.

What is detack/post exposure (light finishing)? The most common method is to use two banks of lights that are both in the UV (ultraviolet) family. Post exposure uses UV-A, a long wavelength of 320-400 nanometers. UV-A is light used for both the back/main exposure and post exposure. Light detack uses UV-C (germicidal), a short wavelength 180-280 nanometers. SAFETY: Under NO circumstances should these lamps be looked at directly without special safety glasses or special welders mask. A manufacturer recommends a minimum of shade 6 to protect your eyes from the extremely harmful rays. Viewing these spectrums of light in the concentration emitted from the finishing equipment can and WILL cause non-reversible eye damage or blindness. Skin should also be protected with gloves for example. BEST: let a trained professional do this procedure if the lamps are in suspect of failure. The only time viewing your lamps is required it's when verifying that all lamps are lit. Now that we understand about the lights, we must figure out how to use them.

Light spectrum

Post exposure and detacking of a flexo plate can be done at the same time since the light spectrums are different, and they can be used simultaneously. The post exposure part of finishing is basically finalizing the polymerization (hardening) of the photopolymer plate material. A photopolymer plate is basically "jello" like, and does not fully harden during the main exposure. If we hardened the photopolymer completely during our main exposure we would "overexpose" all printing areas on the plate causing a "blown-out" effect overall. This is why two stages are required – a main exposure as short as possible to obtain the objective of holding a desired minimum dot, and reverses clean, and then the post exposure to fully harden the material throughout. A generally accepted post exposure time for most photopolymer plate materials is 10 minutes. Some manufacturers vary slightly with their recommendations, but in general unless taken to extreme over post exposing cannot happen. Once the photosensitive aspects of the plate have ▶

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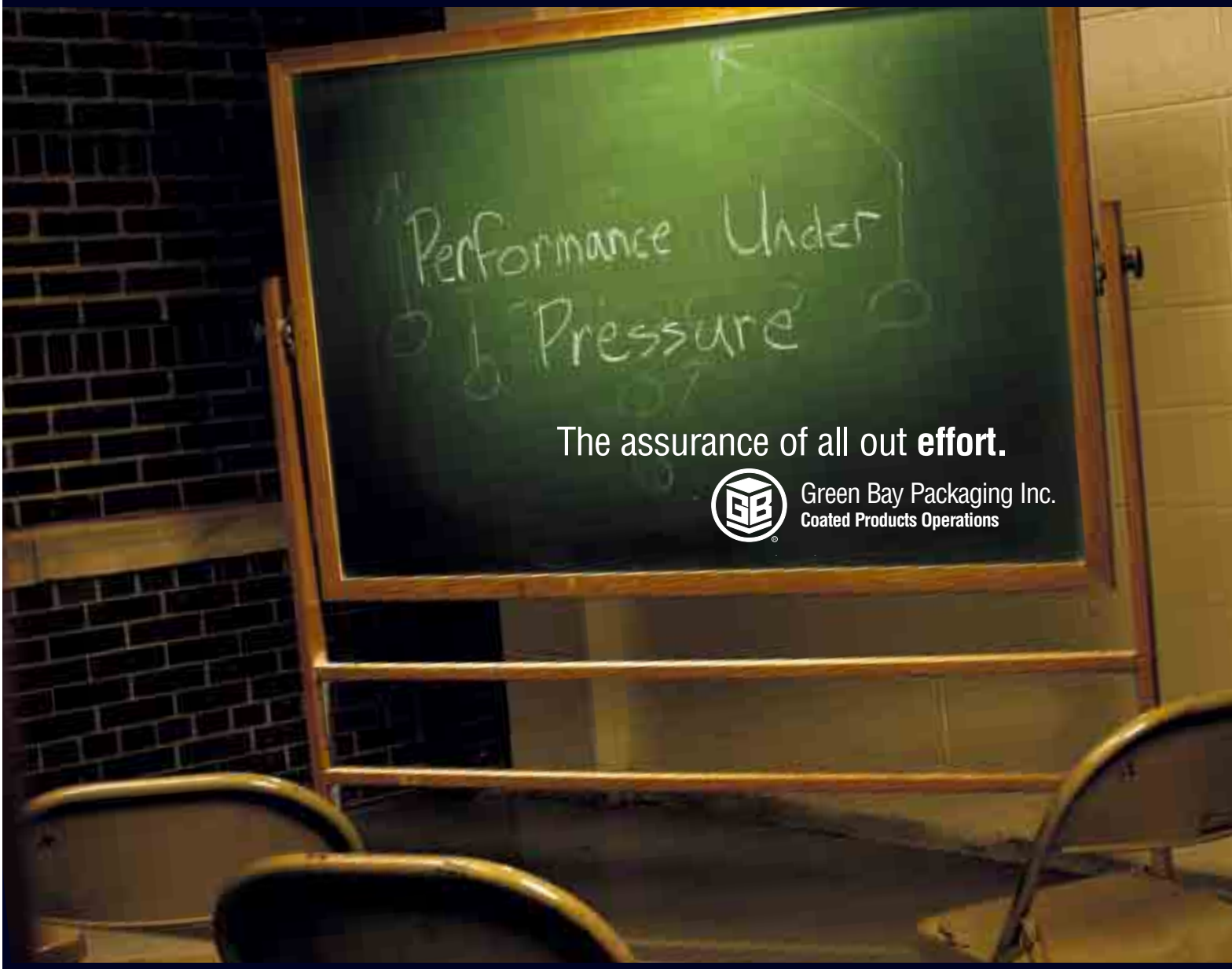

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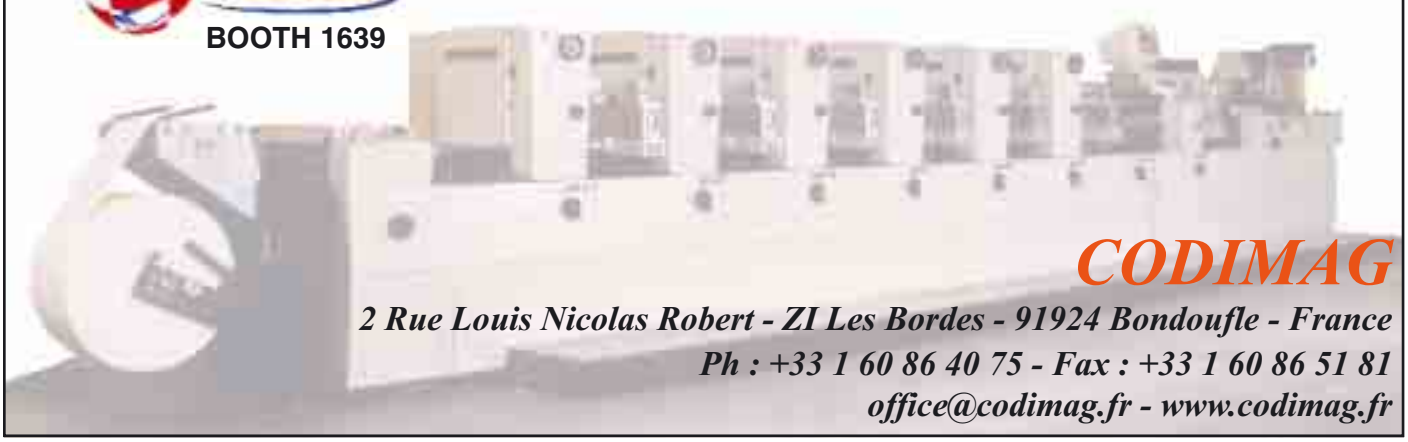

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one can be reproduced maintaining the shortest lead time for delivery. Wiping the surface of the printing plate with a fast drying non-harmful chemical called film cleaner aids the inspection process as well as cleans any potential membrane/photopolymer left behind by the washout solution. Wiping is very simple – fold a blue towel to a manageable wiping size lint side in. Next saturate the wipe with film cleaner (latex gloves recommended for this procedure). Wipe the surface of the plate smoothly concentrating on the printing surface until no shiny streaks remain. Changing or refolding of the wipe may be required to achieve a satin look on the printing surface. Wiping the floor may pick up residue and redeposit it back to the surface requiring more wiping. Once satisfied, return the plate to the oven for final drying. Additional re-wiping of the plate 5 minutes prior to detacking then final drying insures that all streaks have been removed. Streaks that remain after detack may show up in the printing once on press causing downtime and an unhappy boss. Once satisfied with the wiped plates, some manufacturers suggest allowing the plates to cool off a few minutes prior to finishing the plate. After finishing, final wiping of the backside again with film cleaner cleans and polishes the surface for smooth mounting. Trimming the plate can be done using scissors, or a tabletop paper cutter (my favorite) available in many office supply stores.

n *James Kadlec is president of Advanced Pre-press Graphics. More information www.flexoprepress.com*

Tips for inspecting a photopolymer plate:

1) Hold the plate backing side toward you, and the face toward a light source like the overhead fluorescent lights. Look "through" the plate especially examining type, reverses, and screens. A "blown out" area will quickly show as an inconsistent spot or blob.

2) Turning the plate around with the surface facing you, do the same examination. Concentrate on the edges of the dot areas since they will appear shiny and clumped together if the plate was improperly exposed. Typically process areas that are underexposed or have too small dots to hold with current light source.

3) While wiping the printing surface at an angle to the plate, observe the film cleaner as it dries for holes in the printing surface dry slower, making them more visible.

4) Laying the plate onto a lighted light table, and using a magnifying glass, also makes flaws more visible prior to press. Look for improperly exposed highlight dots, hairs, or general pinholes. If a screen tint looks to have "orange peel" effect, then it may be underexposed.

5) Prior to finishing a plate, again curl the plate after wiping, curl inward the plate backing toward backing and look at the top of the curl slowly with indirect light to view for more imperfections, or improperly exposed areas.

After following these tips, most imperfections can be identified prior to press. Press time is extremely valuable, therefore preventing imperfections from making "it" to the press proves invaluable.

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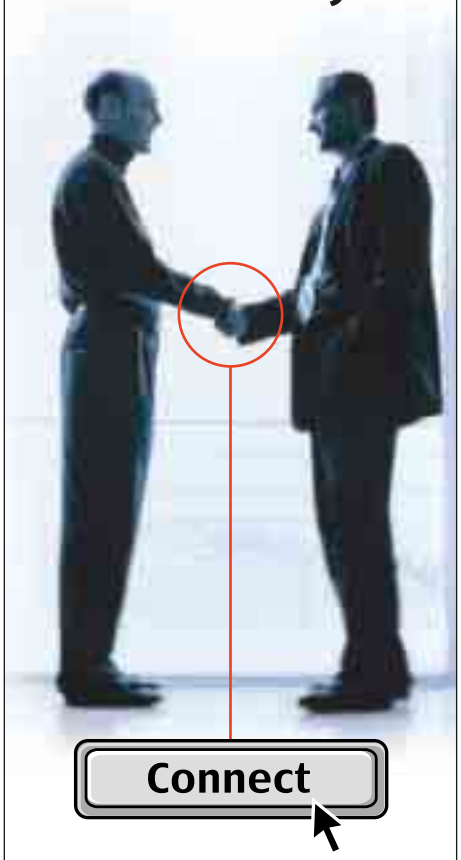

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e No.154

The Future of JDF

Workflow specialist ScenicSoft talks about how it sees the Job Description Format developing.

Job Description Format, or JDF is an important enabler that has opened the door for constructive cross-vendor integration. However, JDF is not the silver bullet or the new standard that will magically resolve every printer's needs. The current revision of the JDF specification by no means completely covers the entire spectrum of challenges when it comes to automating print manufacturing, it does, however, provide a solid baseline and a starting point to tackle the challenge.

While it is critical that the specifications for JDF continue to evolve, it is equally important that the number of revisions be kept under control or at least monitored carefully to ensure backward compatibility. This will be a key factor in allowing different vendors to finish and synchronize their implementations, and make sure true JDF-based solutions materialize. It is also essential that real solutions are introduced and demonstrated, as opposed to just marketing hype about potential JDF compliance. ScenicSoft has committed to leveraging JDF to aid in streamlining the process of producing printed materials, and introduced UpFront, the production planning solution, and will release Pandora 2.0 this fall, that provides a real link between the departments of a print shop by leveraging the JDF standard.

In addition to the potential streamlining effects, JDF has the potential to create a more level playing field in which vendors can compete on equal ground, and cooperate more effectively where appropriate. Thus far, ScenicSoft is very pleased with the traction its own JDF-efforts have gotten and the new partnerships that have been created under the JDF umbrella. UpFront and Preps support JDF, Pandora 2.0 (scheduled for late summer) will also export JDF information.

Open standards such as the Print Production Format (PPF) and JDF, both controlled by the CIP4 organization, have played a key role in establishing connectivity with existing solutions outside of the prepress arena.

Users are already starting to take full advantage of systems that provide digital connectivity across departments. With added JDF and PPF support and existing connectivity between products from MIS, prepress and finishing equipment vendors, end-users are installing and building solutions today that connect the entire range of activities from the CSR all the way into finishing.

So what's next? Device control through JDF is a topic of keen interest to ScenicSoft. PDF workflows are in desperate need for a supporting device control framework. PostScript Printer Description (PPD) files have never been replaced with a valid alternative in the PDF world. JDF and JMF can take on the challenge to fill this important void and provide a much more dynamic and interactive framework for device configuration.

The ultimate challenge though, is deeper integration between MIS systems, ScenicSoft applications, and prepress workflow solutions to create fully closed loop systems that can also fluently cover scenarios involving job reroutes, branching and merging, and "go-back-and-redo". There are some very specific challenges in this regard, but this is the future of print production. Visit LabelExpo, Booth 6117, for more information.

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RCS 330 passes first field test

Swiss converter Permapack has been field-testing the servo-driven Gallus RCS330 press since last June. **Andy Thomas** visited the company to assess the performance of this groundbreaking machine.

We first covered the launch of the Gallus RCS 330 servo driven press two years ago, following its launch at Labelexpos in Brussels and Chicago. At the time, we noted that its high specification – including 13 independent motors in each print station – made it suitable for 'high end' converters who can offset the higher cost of the press against more efficient production of short-to-medium runs of high value added materials.

Now L&L has had a chance to see the press in action at the label printer which beta tested the machine - Permapack, based in Rorschach, Switzerland. A family run business, Permapack has been producing self-adhesive labels since 1964, and runs a wide range of print processes including letterpress, flexo, screen combination and hot foil stamping. The company has long been a Gallus reference house and ten years ago was the first label printer in Switzerland to introduce combination letterpress/screen printing on Gallus machines.

RCS 330 screen and flexo units can be freely exchanged

Permapack is a good example of the type of label converter the Gallus RCS 330 is aimed at. With around 250 employees and a 57 million Euro annual turnover, the high end food and cosmetics sectors make up around 45 per cent of its end use market. Pharmaceuticals account for another 15 per cent with the balance made up of retail, electrical and logistics end users. The diversity of Permapack's end use markets mean that fast press turnarounds and minimising waste are key factors. Half of the 12,000 label jobs Permapack converts over a typical year's production run for less than 1.5 hours.

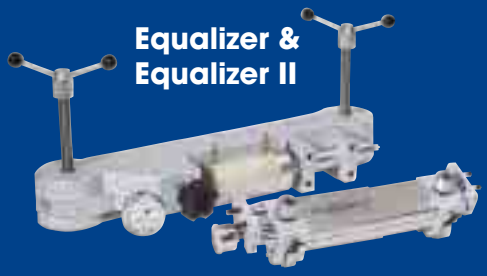
Permapack recently purchased a conventional 16" press, which sits next to the Gallus RCS 330 on the shop floor and provides a useful benchmark against which to judge its performance.

Mark Lehmann, a member of the Permapack board, says the RCS takes around 20 per cent less time to set up, particularly on repeat jobs where press setting data can be instantly recalled. Longitudinal and lateral register control, for example, are integrated into the machine control system, making setting easier. Lehmann is confident that changeover times will continue to fall as his operators get more familiar with the press.

Washup times have been cut in half, thanks mainly to the automatic wash-up of the aniloxes in the press. Critically, waste during makeready has been cut by between 45 - 67 per cent depending on the combination of print stations used.

One of the key benefits of a servo-driven press is the ability to re-configure print stations without having to worry about disconnecting from a mechanical drive shaft. Permapack's Gallus RCS 330 press was supplied with seven flexo stations and five screen stations, giving great flexibility in configuring the press - one sample shown to L&L was printed with four screen units, hot foil then flexo. On average there are between 2-5 ▶

Multiscorer



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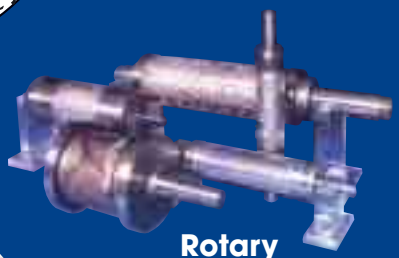

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e No.116

Future of the RCS

Gallus' new CEO Klaus Bachstein has confirmed that tentative plans to introduce a letterpress station for the RCS 330 have been abandoned. 'UV flexo is now so good we don't need it'. An offset print station is definitely under development, although there was 'no comment' to suggestions it might employ Waterless offset technology. Gallus also plans to develop a 430mm wide version of the RCS 330 press.
A new development – to be launched at Labelexpo Americas in September – is a flying imprinting station where frequent changes of text are called for without generating stop/start waste. Typically on a six-colour press this would involve placing two flying imprinter stations to print black after the CMYK stations (although the imprinting units can be placed anywhere in the press line). The text plate can be changed in the idle print station while the press is still printing at full speed. The servos then bring the plate cylinder up to press speed and switch it into the press without stopping the web when the text change is made.

process changes over two shifts.

Mark Lehmann comments, 'It's a bit of a job to change the screen units, to open up and pull off the whole printing section – although it is still faster than the Gallus EM 410, for example. Tool-free changeovers are a key benefit of the RCS system, however – it's amazing how much time you can waste looking for tools.'

Faster makeready on the RCS has focused Permapack's attention on the efficiency of its pre-press operations. (The company mixes its own inks and makes its own plates and is considering introducing digital platemaking next year). Lehmann would like to be able to use pre-mounted plate sleeves on the RCS 330 to speed changeovers still further. Permapack's Gallus EM 410 is already set up for sleeves.

Second shift working on the RCS 330 was introduced earlier this year, and after some software teething problems earlier on, Lehmann is now satisfied about the press' reliability. Lehmann says the print quality of the RCS is as good as the EM 410.

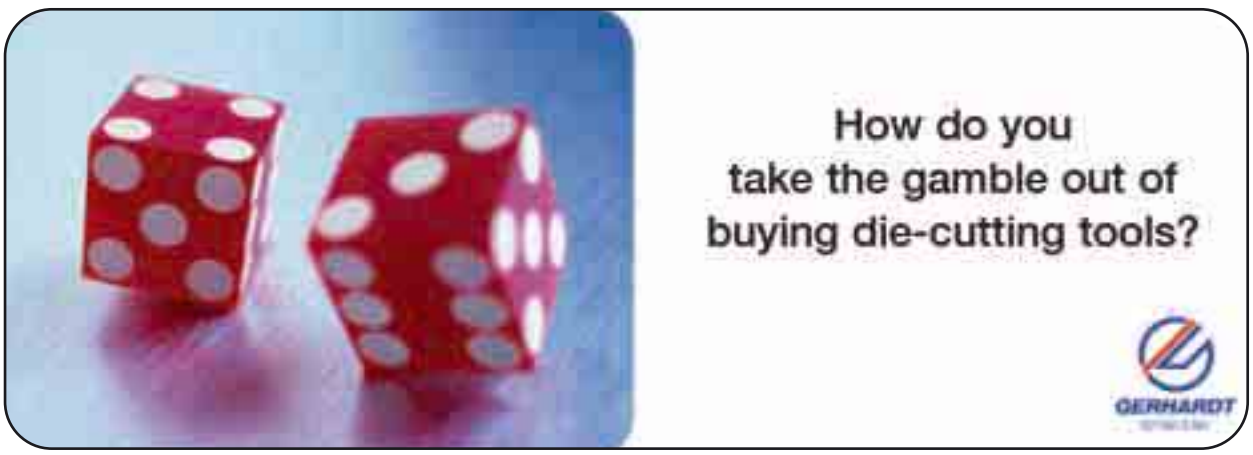
Permapack's feedback also led to some minor mechanical changes to the press, such as making the covers from perspex rather than metal.

Gallus remains firmly convinced that the press will find its market niche now that it has been thoroughly field tested, and says that two orders have been confirmed in France and Germany.

Other developments

A press conference held by Gallus discussed a number oif interesting topics including the future of Gallus' digital strategy. Klaus Bachstein confirmed that the OEM relationship with Indigo is at an end: 'The technology at that time was not up to the industrial strength required by this industry. There were also substrate limitations, limited colours, and the lack of ▶

Mark Lehmann, Permapack board member



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e No.187

> "Tool-free changeovers are a key benefit of the RCS system, however – it's amazing how much time you can waste looking for tools"

The Gallus RCS 330 at Permapack's facility in Rorscach is a seven unit machine, supplied with seven flexo heads and five rotary screen units

digitisation of converting processes. Finally the market issues were not addressed, how to sell new products in new markets.' Bachstein says that with servo technology and digital control systems on conventional presses such as the RCS 330 the breakeven point with digital is brought much closer in terms of job changeover times. There are six Gallus DO330 digital presses in the market, which the company will continue to service. Bachstein did not close the door on future digital projects, however, and says 'very interesting products are in the pipeline.'

This is not likely to include in-line inkjet, which Gallus believes will remain a niche product. 'It reduces press speed and we do not see variable data in-line as a market. This is normally done off-line and after quality control.'

Monofoil growth

The growth in the monofoil market was also discussed. These applications include in-mold labels (IML), stretch and shrinkwrap labels. Gallus sees growth in monofoil applications for narrow web converters as run lengths come down and it becomes uneconomic to print 50 or 60-up 42mm labels across a flexo CI web, while solvent-based gravure remains under environmental pressure from solvent emission legislation. At the same time converters printing paper labels are being faced with end users moving towards value-added monofoil labels and sleeves. Narrow web converters can also offer substitution of UV Screen and metallic inks for white and metallised substrates on many of these applications, which could offer end users significant benefits.

Servo-driven presses are particularly suitable to rapid changing between monofoils and laminates, although monofoils are being successfully run on suitably modified 'standard' multi-purpose machines like the EM range. Indeed, there are a whole range of 'packaging' products now being run on these machines including tube laminates and aluminium yoghurt lids. A dual drive system is usually installed for converting thin films. Gallus warns converters not to get involved with IMLs for blow moulding applications however, since the non-oriented H/LDPE material is unstable, highly heat sensitive and hard to hold in register. PVC still dominates the shrink sleeve label market, although it is under attack by environmentalists and new materials like PET-G, which is capable of more than 70 per cent shrink.

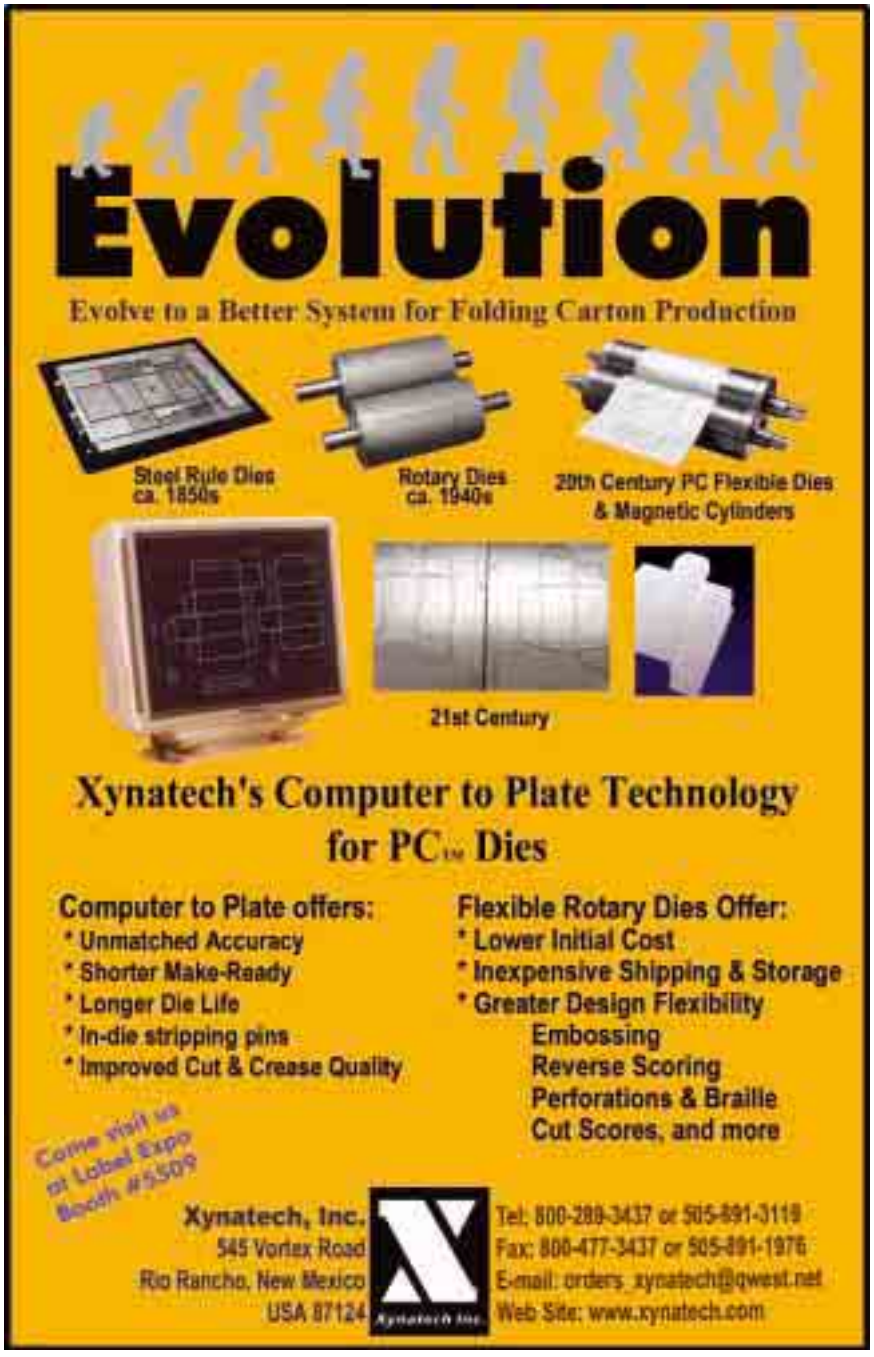
Another significant trend is that Gallus' servo-driven translative offset presses are selling in increasing numbers to sheetfed offset label printers looking to move to in-line production. Almost half the Gallus TCS 250 presses sold are at offset printers, particularly in the wine labels sector.

e No.238

e No.153

Making sure your PS

All too often converters do not ask enough questions about the containers their labels will have to stick to. This can create major problems at the end user, by which time usually it's too late to do anything about it, says **David Laycock**



e No.144

Applying self-adhesive labels to any substrate is a marriage of the two surfaces that like any marriage may or may not be of a compatible nature. Take two common products that are over a century old – corrugated board and glass. What could be simpler? Yet they are the most variable and potentially difficult. The former is largely recycled, varies in moisture content, is rough in texture, full of debris from cutting and moves about with humidity in the atmosphere. One or two 'strong' acrylic adhesives can be used, but thorough tests need to be carried out, especially in freeze-thaw cycles.

Glass – what could be simpler! Glass can be plain or coated with chemicals that prevent chipping during transportation and on the filling line. The coating could be polycarbonate, epoxy, oleic acid, silicone, or in the 'hot' process stannas chloride, the so-called 'tin coated' glass commonly found on whisky bottles.

Coatings that prevent chipping

labels stick

often make it difficult to form a fibre tearing band on the glass, while treatments for wet glue may not be suitable for self-adhesive labels. Not all coatings are hostile to self-adhesives. Hot tin coatings, for example, definitely help self-adhesive labels to adhere.

But how often are glass bottles purchased with a precise drawing of the bottle's physical dimensions but no knowledge of the actual surface treatment? It pays to inform your supplier of the type of labels which will be applied and under what conditions.

Adhesives can be tested to give their 'open time' – the period while the label can be removed and repositioned before a permanent bond takes place. This saves scraping or soaking mis-labelled product. Again, work with the label supplier to give optimum results.

Soft touch

Plastic containers come in all shapes, sizes and finishes which present their own problems. There is a move to produce 'soft touch' plastics for the toiletries market which use hitherto unknown polymers – ie elastomers, rubber-based products which are difficult to adhere to, but generate static electricity which can repel the label once applied, making it curl up at the edges for no apparent reason.

Static is generated by most plastics. If the polarity is opposite, attraction occurs, causing the label to be attracted before the container advances. This may cause a vertical crease. If the polarity is the same, the label may curl away from the container, causing it to 'miss'. Static can be earthed away but beg or borrow or purchase a static meter to find out about the local conditions on your site.

Another common problem is applying labels to compound curves. Self-adhesive labels will successfully apply round almost any diameter of curve provided the material is thinner, as the curve is smaller and the adhesive is stronger. However, compound curves which go from left to right, top to bottom (like sticking a label on the top of a football) always cause a crease in the label no matter how well it is rubbed down by hand.

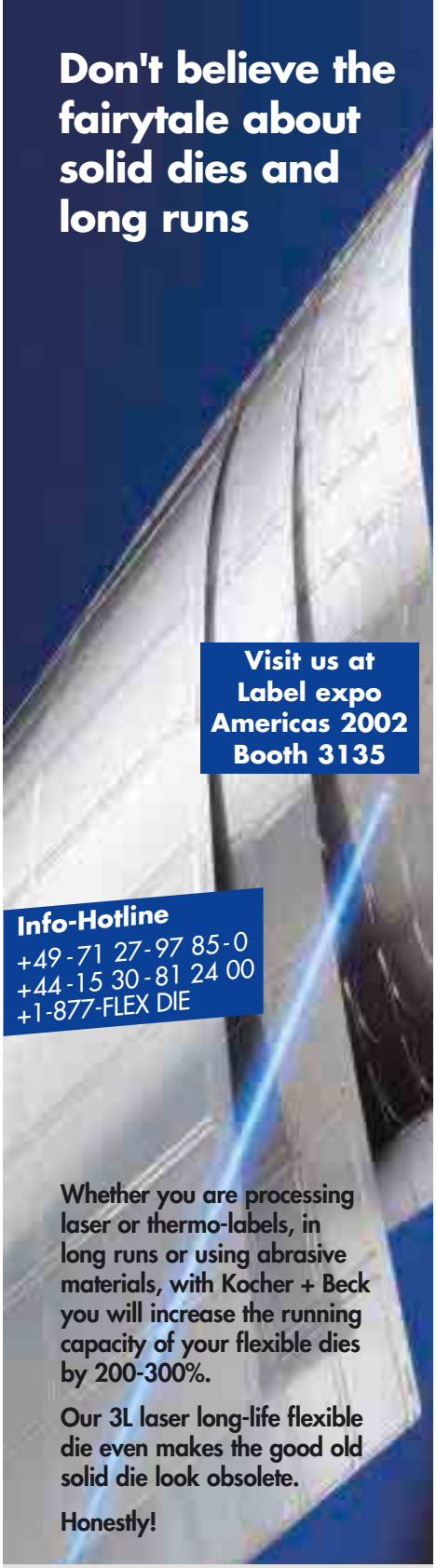
Silk screen

Where you have to work with bottles which were direct silk screen printed, and where the same mould is being used for self-adhesive labels, you will often have a compound curve. The label is also usually too large, and a crease can form when the labelled product is in packing boxes in the warehouse. The adhesive 'creeps' as it forms a bond, since the container surface is always stronger than the face material.

Physical blasting of a mold can produce a crazed surface that the self-adhesive label has difficulty 'flowing' into to form a bond. This gives the impression of a poor bond. Self-adhesives flow with time but it does depend on the hardness or ability to shear or flow.

The Latin phrase caveat emptor – buyer beware – was never more relevant than when it is applied to self-adhesive label application.

**David Laycock (Ass Inst Q.A) is technical manager at UK converter Olympus Labels, the latest post in a long career which has included senior positions at Field Packaging and Jarvis Porter.* ■



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e No.188

Implementing a streamlined data management system can help you run your narrow web converting business more efficiently. But first you have to understand the concepts involved, as top industry consultant **Alex Abbate** explains

Data warehousing

ERP, OLTP, OLAPs, Datawarehouse (DWs), Datamarts (DMs)...there are many misunderstandings around these acronyms and words. Most corporate managers understand that E.R.P. stands for Enterprise Resource Planner, which is meant to cover all key aspects of information storage and retrieval and management of corporate resources. The concept of data warehousing and data marts is less understood. To understand the difference between an ERP and a data warehouse we must understand two more acronyms: OLTP and OLAP. The world of 'big' software systems rotates around them.

- On-Line Transaction Processing. Routine operations including electronic documents such as delivery notes, invoices, payment orders, warehouse picking order, and work orders.
- OLAP, On-Line Analytical Processing. Any analysis made upon data stored in an ERP database.

Data Warehouses are much more oriented towards OLAP's world - they are used to give management complex analytical pictures using data contained in various information silos, and as such are powerful knowledge management tools with enormous strategic implications.

There are different types of Data Warehouses (DW):

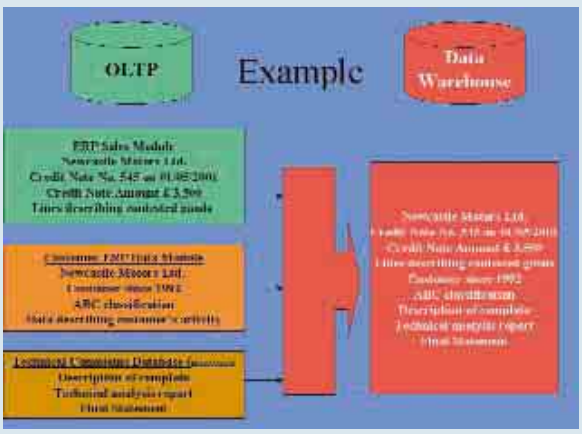
- Complex ones, often called Open Warehouse Solution Framework, made for large corporations and meant for processing large amounts of historical data.
- Datamarts, miniature DWs or partitioned subsets of larger DWs, often called department databases (a sales division may build its own datamart by using sales related data)
- Operational Data Stores (ODSs), small OLAP databases with a much reduced amount of historical data, which may be useful for single individuals within the organisation (see diagram below left). In this case a label manufacturer wants to cross-reference:

1. Customer's credit notes originated by technical complaint
2. Customer's detailed information
3. Statements coming from enterprise's lab, describing nature of product defects and final conclusions.

Our Data Warehouse will be integrated with two information silos belonging to corporate ERP, and one database managed on a stand-alone workstation. The pay-off for the entrepreneur is to have a constantly updated 'customer credit notes/description of product defects' situation without being forced to purchase a very complex and expensive total quality control ERP module. We would call this structure a small datamart or Operational Data Store (ODS).

Project planning

Let's use the example of a label converter who wants a clear picture of his/her costs. Production costs must be shown together with indirect costs such as transportation, customer originated costs, marketing costs, etc., in order to determine whether a customer, an area, or a product family is profitable.



Data Warehouse basic example

Sample of a Data Warehouse integrating information from different 'silos'

> "the user would be able to track down even a particular event that made or is making that customer less profitable"

For the 'Customer Profitability' Data Warehouse we now need to define which data we need and where it is. The next diagram will give the reader an idea of the complexity of this task.

In this situation, our fictitious label converter is using an ERP to cover Admin and Sales, a specialised Production Management Program and another external module covering marketing and some Customer Relationship Management functions. In this case, both Production and Marketing modules do not belong to the ERP. There would be in reality hundred of links among the macro-objects portrayed in the design, but let's keep things simple.

Each one of these macro-objects could contain a set of modules, each one composed of thousands of records, which are themselves composed of hundred of fields. In our example, we highlight the areas we want in Admin, the Customer Module, and some fields contained in the Cost Account_Info record.

Now let's take a look at the structure of our Customer Profitability_Profile record (an example of Activity Based Costing or ABC).

This record could group fields containing sales transactions data (Order_ID) by period (Period_ID), cross-reference them with marketing costs (Marketing_ID), production costs (Product_ID), customer data (Customer_ID), regional information (Region_ID), and indirect cost data associated with that particular customer (Customer_ Account_Info_ID). While all these IDs will be used to retrieve and group OLTP data, the last of our information silos (Customer_ Account_Info_ID) is an Operational Data Storage the ERP already operates.

This structure will give the user a complete overview about the profitability of her/his customer. Since our Data Warehouse will be fully scalable, the user would be able to track down even a particular event that made or is making that customer less profitable than the others. The event may stem from the complexity of products the customer is requiring, from additional transportation costs, from the fact that too much money was spent in acquiring that customer in comparison with the amount and typology of her/his orders etc.

Datamarts for the smaller company

Because many label manufacturing plants are medium or small size, they will more likely be pushed to develop datamarts and ODS rather than the much bigger Data Warehouses used by larger enterprises.

This project is far simpler and means that implementation time can be very much reduced. In the above example, a powerful data-cruncher asks the user to either create a new datamart or select an existing one (Stdy_002). Then the program will guide the user through a set of possible activities, such as data source selection, goal identification, statistic collection, and data preparation.

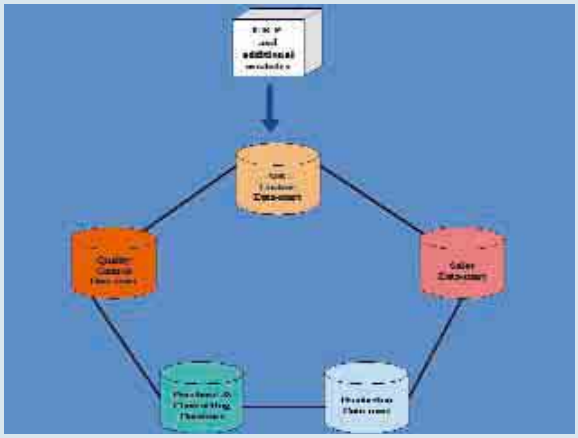
The next steps pertain to the data mining world - 'what kind of profitability is my business going to have next year?' is a typical data mining question.

Different variables in the average narrow web business will either facilitate implementation or make it more difficult:

- Determination: many label converters are Owner managers, whose strong determination to reach a goal is essential in pushing the project to its final roll-out. But this may hinder the project if the owner manager is very much prone to micro-management.
- Internal situation: Personnel working in label manufacturing plants are often too oriented towards other aspects of computer literacy such as graphic printing programs, graphic tools, etc., rather than data management and OLAP (ABC costing, sales statistics, production statistics, etc...). Other personnel may be committed to proprietary systems or fearful of change.
- Management concepts: Activity Based Costing (ABC) is a very fertile territory for the development of Data Warehouses, and gives full cost determination either in sheet or reel-fed environments. However, many narrow web converters prefer a more classical approach based upon the maximum affordable cost of a single label (or its minimum affordable price). They may need persuading that a Data Warehouse based upon an ABC architecture gives more opportunities to check how far we can go in diminishing our prices without affecting too much our potential profits. Even if we decide to have our pricing policy driven by benchmarking, we have got to know 'where' our margin becomes negative and 'why'.

A bottom-up model, where small ODSs and data-marts are created, will probably give much better ROI figures for most narrow web converters

Ultimately, we could still have a large Data Warehouse by integrating our Datamarts, which can always be, by definition, a subset of a DW.



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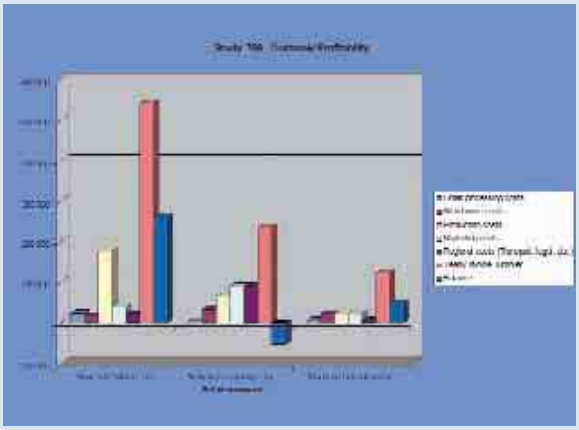
> "Success stems from how goals, projects, good raw DW tools, training, and strong determination to achieve results are brought together"

The final goal can be like one shown in the next figure.



A customer profitability study

In this example, a range of three customers has been selected: profitability has been calculated by cross-referencing yearly invoice turnover with cost macro-categories such as order processing, warehouse and marketing. Each category has been structured according to various activity-based costs - promotion campaign costs are grouped under macro-category Marketing; picking procedures costs are grouped under macro-category Warehouse, etc. More general global cost views can be originated by the same datamart. One could even create a hierarchical structure of enterprise costs in which cost typology is plotted as pyramidal components in descending layers. This would give the entrepreneur and her/his management team a cockpit from which to drive the enterprise.

Finally, there is the danger of putting too much data in our DW or DM structure. We should select what we really need. In many cases, 4-5 dimensions (such as Customer, Customer's Contracts, Product Family, Product Variants, Sales Area) will be more than enough. Remember that half of all DW implementations fail. Success stems very much from how goals, projects, good 'raw DW tools, training, and strong determination to achieve results are brought together. But all these are worthless without common sense. e No.201

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& News in brief

Raflatac ECO labelstock

Raflatac introduces its improved direct thermal ECO pressure sensitive labelstock, claimed to offer the label printer an economic substrate that provides improved print resolution for high-speed printers, even at low energy.

This 6.2 mil material construction combines a non-top coated facestock with Raflatac's RP51 permanent adhesive and a 2.5 mil kraft liner. Direct thermal Eco, says Raflatac, offers an economic thermal paper option with standard sensitivity for short-life labels and labeling dry environments, and is ideal for applications such as retail, point-of-sale, warehousing, dispatch labels, deli and dry corrugated box labeling applications.

RP51 permanent adhesive offers UV resistance, strong low-temperature performance and excellent adhesion characteristics to non-polar substrates, says the manufacturer. Direct thermal ECO is suitable for a wide range of print processes including water-based flexo, offset, screen and UV letterpress. It is compatible with all thermal printers, at all running speeds. e No.202

UV/EB curable ink systems

Flint Ink's North American Packaging Division now offers a series of UV and EB curable ink systems said to offer label converters and printers improved on-press performance and enhanced image quality.

The Flint Ink systems include Matrixcure, Gemini, and Arrowbeam for litho printing, and Cureflex and Arcure for flexo applications.

The Matrixcure UV ink system, which is based on a new, proprietary chemistry, offers improved gray balance and provides enhanced ink/water latitude, says Flint. The Gemini ink system enables converters to achieve sharp wet traps between printing stations and utilize minimal UV light at the end of the press for curing. The Arrowbeam ink system is a series of process inks and blending bases designed specifically for EB curing applications and is claimed to work well on variety of substrates, including synthetics.

The Cureflex UV flexo ink system is specifically formulated to print high color density at low viscosities on a variety of substrates. The Arcure ink system is an extra strength UV flexo system designed for use with a fine line anilox roller. e No.203

Booklet label first

Ampersand Label purchases PowerForward machine

PowerForward Inc. has sold its first machine for producing booklet labels to Ampersand Labels of Los Angeles, CA. The PF102 unit manufactured by PowerForward is designed for accurately affixing ECL products onto the base label at 30,000 units per hour.

The PF102 can apply various booklet styles down to as small as 7/8" long, and is ideally suited for the affixing products onto any web of paper, film or foil.

Applications include pharmaceutical booklets, promotion items, game pieces, fridge magnets and other marketing devices. 'Ampersand Label sees the PF102 as a key component in our ever-expanding line of patent protected ECL's' says Ampersand CEO Lowell Mathews. e No.204

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New programs by Avery Dennison 'n Labelmen Machinery

Avery Dennison (Fasson) and Labelmen Machinery are working as partners on a new project: Labelmen Machinery has provided two printing machines to Self-Adhesive Label Conversion College established by Avery Dennison for demonstration and drill purposes. Labelmen would also take part in developing related programs. The joint forces of the two companies mark the new era of printing industries and demonstrate the strengthened bond of Avery Dennison and Labelmen Machinery.

The machines provided are stated as followings:

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Programs related to the above-mentioned machines will be offered in Self-Adhesive Label Conversion College. For more information, please contact Mr. Dieu Dai Huynh of Avery Dennison or Joseph Hsiao of Labelmen Machinery at:

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Edale scores with alpha

Edale has announced a string of new 'Alpha' flexo press installations. Bond Labels, in Essex, UK, has ordered a 3-colour machine. 'It's faster than our existing converting machines, with the added advantage that we can now coat and print in close registration,' says technical director Tony Bridge. Millenium Labels of Smethwick, converter of blank labels for the retail, trade and computer markets, has added an Alpha under the contract hire option. An interesting case study is Jemprint, a sheetfed litho printer which was looking to diversify as digital printing started to make incursions into its traditional market. 'We went to Labelexpo in Brussels to see the Alpha in action and decided to invest in the new 4-colour plus varnish model. It's now fully operational and printing a million labels a week,' says Md Noel Robinson.

RST Applications in Coleraine, Co Londonderry has installed a 4-colour machine, fitted with the new additional UV varnish station. Norman Malcomson at RST says he decided on the Alpha for a number of reasons: 'Its size is an obvious advantage, with floor space at a premium. I also like the simplicity of the machine; all the controls are straightforward and easy to access. We use it to print a wide range of labels, mainly short runs and quick turnaround - speed is of the essence. Last and and by no means least, it also comes with a sensible price tag.'

Edale's French agent is also making inroads three sales of the Beta press range. Etiquette Express based in Sainte Savine has installed a Beta that has been specifically developed for the production of complex and value-added multi-layer labels. The 7-colour press has a Stork rotary screen RSI unit mounted on a rail above the machine, as well as full UV drying, three delam/relam positions and a second web servo insetting unit midway down the machine.

Etiq' Systems have had a 4-colour Beta installed at their works in Froges, while the third machine, an 8-colour Beta upgraded with a 1.25m diameter unwind with motorized reel lift has been installed with Imprimerie Nouvelle of Carmaux, a company looking to move into label production. ■

'Pure' UV source claimed

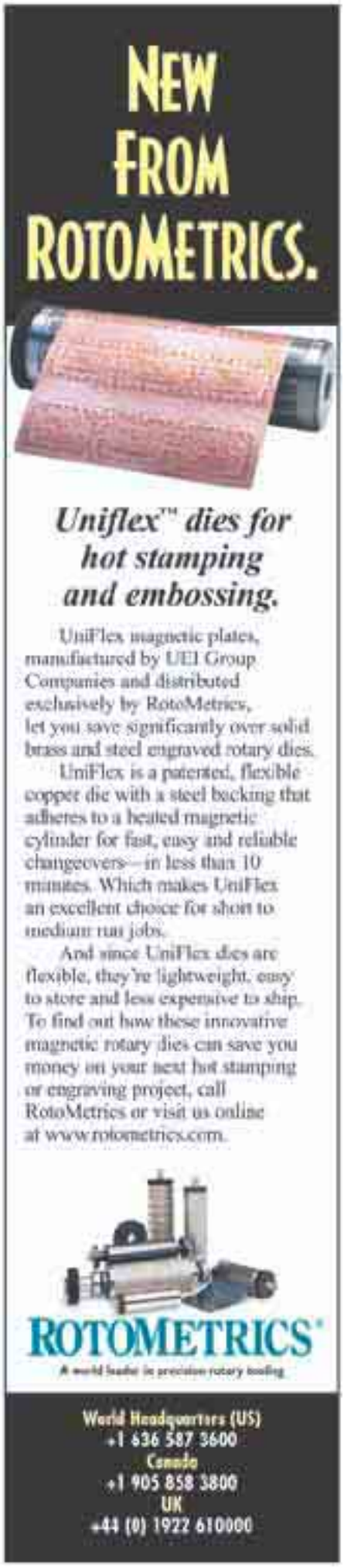
German UV specialist Arccure is moving its Pure UV technology - developed for applications in the optical disk, medical devices, electronics and automotive industries - into the narrow web converting market.

The company claims the modular system's spectral output produces 95 per cent pure UV light, 'with no hearing from IR radiation'. Arc length is up to two metres and the lamp power greater than 300 W/cm with stepless power supply and a closed loop cooling system with in-line measurement.

Michael Bisges, md at Arccure, says 'the maximum UV dose can be up to five times higher than in conventional UV dryers without approaching the critical substrate temperature. UV intensity can be balanced with target cure time.'

The system is currently used is difficult curing environments such as DVD production and curing through plastics.

Pure UV is based on a dual focus system using two distinct bands of high intensity UV light, giving a 'double flash' with higher power, minimum light scatter and optimised reaction kinetics, according to Bisges. ■



Release liners

After use they are discarded, yet release liners are a fundamental part of a pressure sensitive construction. **Barry Hunt** describes the basics.

High-speed application lines present challenges for release liners

Pressure-sensitive products simply would not function without incorporating some means of protecting the adhesive through all the converting processes to the end-use application. That's why the silicone coated release liner - the so-called backing material - is a vital component, even if it is disposed off after use. In the case of label liners, they perform the dual role of acting as a type of anvil during the die cutting process, while being readily separated from the facestock at the point of dispensing.

The label industry accounts for most of the total liner production. Other applications include pressure-sensitive liners for health care, personal hygiene and medical products, as well as industrial tapes, building and insulation products, envelopes, transit bags, decorative vinyls and much else. In the developed markets, label liners account for roughly 75-80 per cent of total production if the experience of Loparex is any guide. (It is the world market leader having been formed over year ago by the Lohja Group, part of UPM-Kymmene's converting division, to consolidate existing producers in Europe and the US, as well as the Rexham Release operations.) Strong growth is being experienced outside North America and Western Europe with the expansion of new coating and laminating facilities in the Asia Pacific region, Latin America and Eastern Europe.

The split between paper-based liners and filmic versions has settled at around 90 per cent for paper and 10 per cent for film, although volumes in each case have increased in line with a general rise in pressure sensitive products of all kinds. The familiar glassine versions with high density kraft stock as the base substrate remain the dominant paper type. Available in bleached or unbleached grades, they present a smooth and hard surface, which is essential for good die cutting stability. A level of translucency is important for automatic label application where photo electronic sensing devices help control the label feed.

Super-calendered kraft (SKF) is a popular North American variant of glassine with a different fibre structure. Others paper types include clay coated kraft, used mainly for sheeted labels, and clay-coated machine finished (MF) liners. Several suppliers offer polycoated liners, which have a polyethylene ▶

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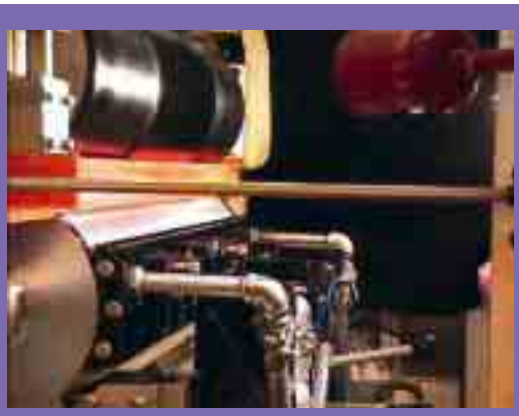


Dow Corning has developed a process which stops misting (left) on release coating lines. Picture right shows solvent release coating running at 700 m/min (2300 ft/min) with 2% Syl-off 7137 High Speed Crosslinker

coating to provide dimensional stability and improved strength. There are even self-image producing liners consisting of a polyethylene-coated paper base with encapsulated formers in the manner of carbonless paper and laminated to the surface.

Manufacturers aim to achieve liners exhibiting a smooth and consistent thickness with a high basis weight per caliper, while simultaneously providing a barrier for the lowest possible weight of silicone coating. Strength is another important consideration. A liner must be strong enough to prevent breaking or tearing during printing, die cutting and final dispensing. A uniform caliper - not too thick or too thin in certain places - is obviously essential to ensure good die cutting capability. Converters should also match the cutter profiles (bevels) with that of the chosen facestock's texture to avoid cutting or bruising the liner. The liner's release value must also be at the right level, not too tight or too loose, to ensure proper removal of the matrix or label dispensing.

The interaction of the silicone is another factor. Silicone migration, or volatilization, is also a problem for silicone-sensitive end uses such as microelectronics and automotive applications. Minimal silicone transfer provides the advantages of maintaining adhesive properties and reducing related printing problems on facestock.

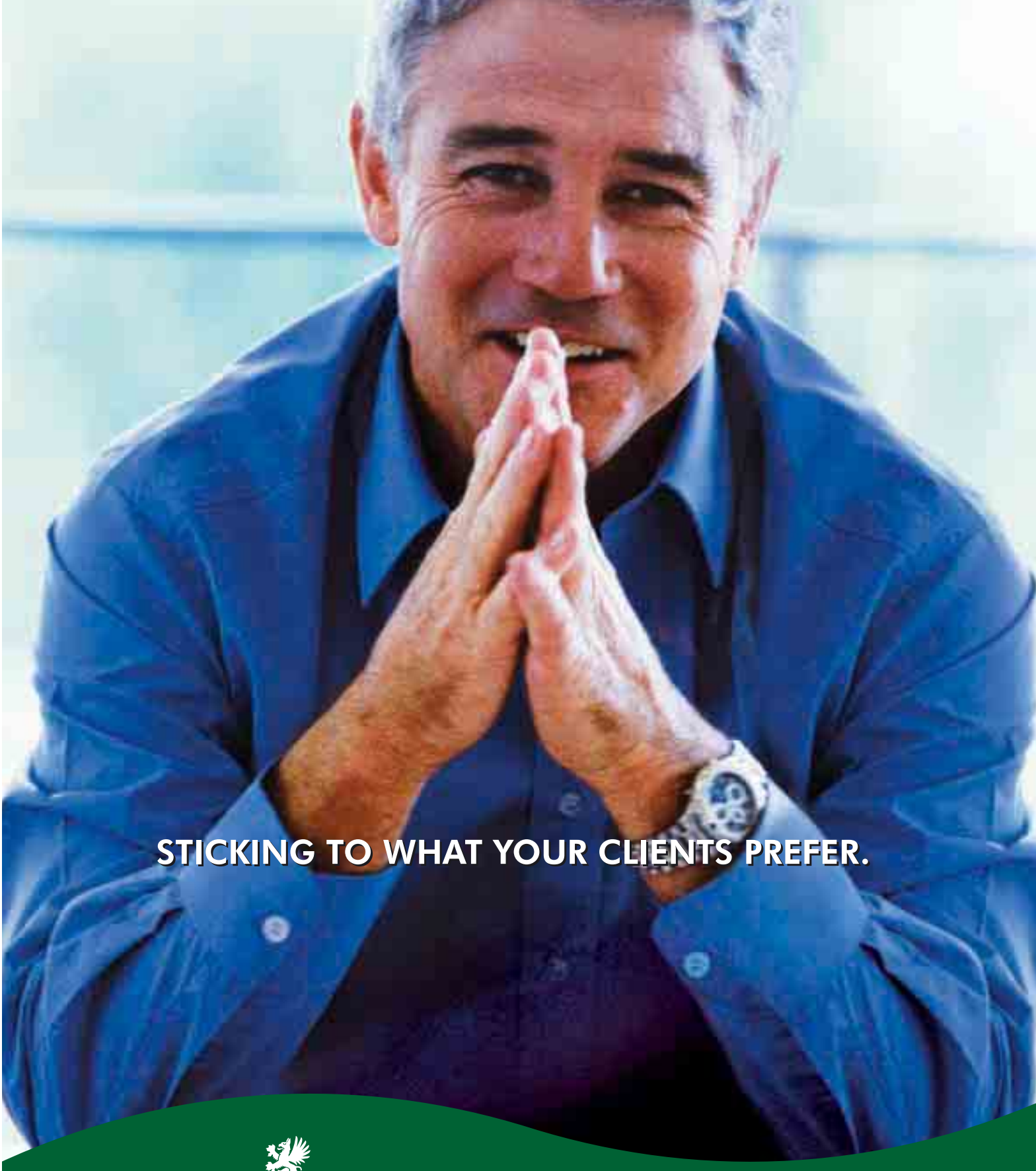
Filmic liner characteristics

Paper-based liners will always retain their dominant hold on the market, but filmic versions made from a variety of polymer-based plastics offer certain qualities that paper cannot match. Currently, they account for 10-12 per cent of the liner label market. Cast-processed polyester (PET) films have the largest market share because of their excellent dimensional stability, the widest heat resistance range of all materials and good layflat characteristics. Other filmic types include high and low density polyethylene, polystyrene and polypropylene. Biaxially-oriented polypropylene (BOPP) liner grades, which are mainly cast extruded or blown in a bubble process, compete effectively with PET in the label market. From the mid-1990s market leaders like Mobil Plastics, Trespaphan and UCB Films began to develop lighter-weight (down-gauged) grades in a range of 25-50 micron. The development of multi-layer co extrusion techniques have allowed manufacturers to build specific properties into films to give improved temperature ranges and elongation characteristics.

At one time the price gap between PET and BOPP liner grades appeared to narrow, but as Paul Lambert, sales and marketing director of Loparex Ltd, confirms, parity is a long way off. 'Polyester remains a firm favourite for the label market. Its optically-clear characteristics makes it ideal for "no label look" products, while at the same time its high tensile strength reduces web breaks during high-speed dispensing applications'.

As with glassines, polyester now comes in thinner gauges, which not only reduce material costs but also give more labels to the roll. Strong, thin films also helps label dispensing because the labels conform more closely to the edge of the beak, or peeler plate. 'What began with 50 microns has steadily dropped through 36, 30 and even 23 microns', confirms Lambert.

Besides being more costly, all film-based products have limitations in respect of increases in temperature, which could effect their tensile strength and processing capabilities. However, as far as filmic liners for labels are concerned, there are no risks of shrinkage arising from ambient humidity and they are 100 per cent transparent with smooth, non-fibrous surfaces. When peeled apart, the adhesive's surface replicates exactly the liner's surface. Filmic liners combined with a good quality transparent facestock therefore offer optimum wet-out and excellent aesthetic effects for premium-quality labels. Laminates comprising either a top coated polyester or polystyrene facestock, filmic liner and a clear acrylic adhesive



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In brief...

• GE Silicones will show a new line of release coatings and other new technologies at LabelExpo. The company is also introducing new online product selection, training and application development tools, for label and tape customers.

• Rhodia Silicones now offers a hold-out additive to improve coating quality and lower coating costs of emulsion silicone systems. Also new is a UV-curable 'premium' release polymer that has a release profile equivalent to a thermal solventless system. A low-temperature curing thermal solventless silicone system to allow for coating on thermally-sensitive substrates is now available.

• Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics will introduce at Labelexo additions to its fluoro-silicone release technology and a new film technology for chemical and UV protection for facestock applications.

• Wacker Silicones features new products and solutions for release liner applications at Labelexpo, along with the full line of DEHESIVE Release coatings. New products include AMA 70 an anti-mist additive for high speed coating. It also features solutions for producing polyester release liners.

• New products from Wausau Coated Products include tinted and/or coloured silicone, pattern coated silicone & adhesives, dual adhesives and dual facestocks, toll coats and custom coatings, heat-seal coatings, transfer tapes, tyre labels, horticultural labels and ink jet products.

• Wausau Mosinee Paper Corp. (Specialty Paper Group) features high-performancerelease liners for 'peel and stick' applications on shampoo, soap,deodorant and other consumer products at Labelexpo.

are widely used for toiletry/cosmetics labels, pharmaceutical and security-based products. It is possible to to incorporate a UV-reactive dye in the adhesive to detect missing labels at the inspection or packaging stages.

Figures from AWA Alexander Watson Associates suggest that around 90 per cent of European release liner production for pressure-sensitive labels comes from in-house silicone coating plants operated by the major labelstock manufacturers. In North America the corresponding figure is 80 per cent. Commercial companies manufacturing and supplying pre silicionised release liners to the laminating plants produce the remainder. Silicone production basically involves mixing fine silicone powder that has undergone several chemical processes with methyl chloride, followed by several purification processes.

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e No.188

New liner developments

• Loparex Inc of Willowbrook in Illinois has introduced LO-EX, a new type of patented liner that exhibits minimal or substantially no silicone transfer to adjacent surfaces, such as adhesives or the reverse side of the support substrate. The company says unreacted or non-crosslinked silicone compounds present in the cured silicone release layer can reduce adhesive properties.

• Northwest Coatings of Oak Creek, Wisconsin, now offers a range of premium silicone release coatings using cationic-based chemistry rather than free radicals. It claims its one-part system provides a more stable and faster cure, with more consistent release characteristics, than any other cationic system on the market. The coatings are available to customers throughout the Americas and Europe.

• Ahlstrom Labelpack has introduced Extrachrome X3, an extremely white, high gloss paper facestock. It is said to have excellent opacity and brightness, equalling the appearance of cast-coated stock and assuring high ink gloss. Its high mechanical properties ensure good runnability on coating lines, trouble-free die-cutting and matrix stripping.

• Silca Speed is a new generation liner base, providing best performance athighest converting speeds (1000 m/min). The exceptionally smooth multi layer surface delivers a 30 per cent saving on silicone and facilitates its adhesion. Good caliper consistency also assures superior die cutting.

• At Labelexo Dow Corning will introduce a new line of Syl-Off UV-curable solventless silicone release coatings to expand its offerings for the filmic applications market. It will also feature High Speed Crosslinkers. They are said to significantly reduce misting during the silicone release coating process, therefore allowing higher line speeds.

• The Spanish company ITASA will introduce a new line of label release liners at Labelexpo. Smoothness, transparency and excellent processability are claimed. The company says its silicone systems have an extremely low silicone transfer. Its liners are available silicone coated on one or both sides, both with and without release differentials.

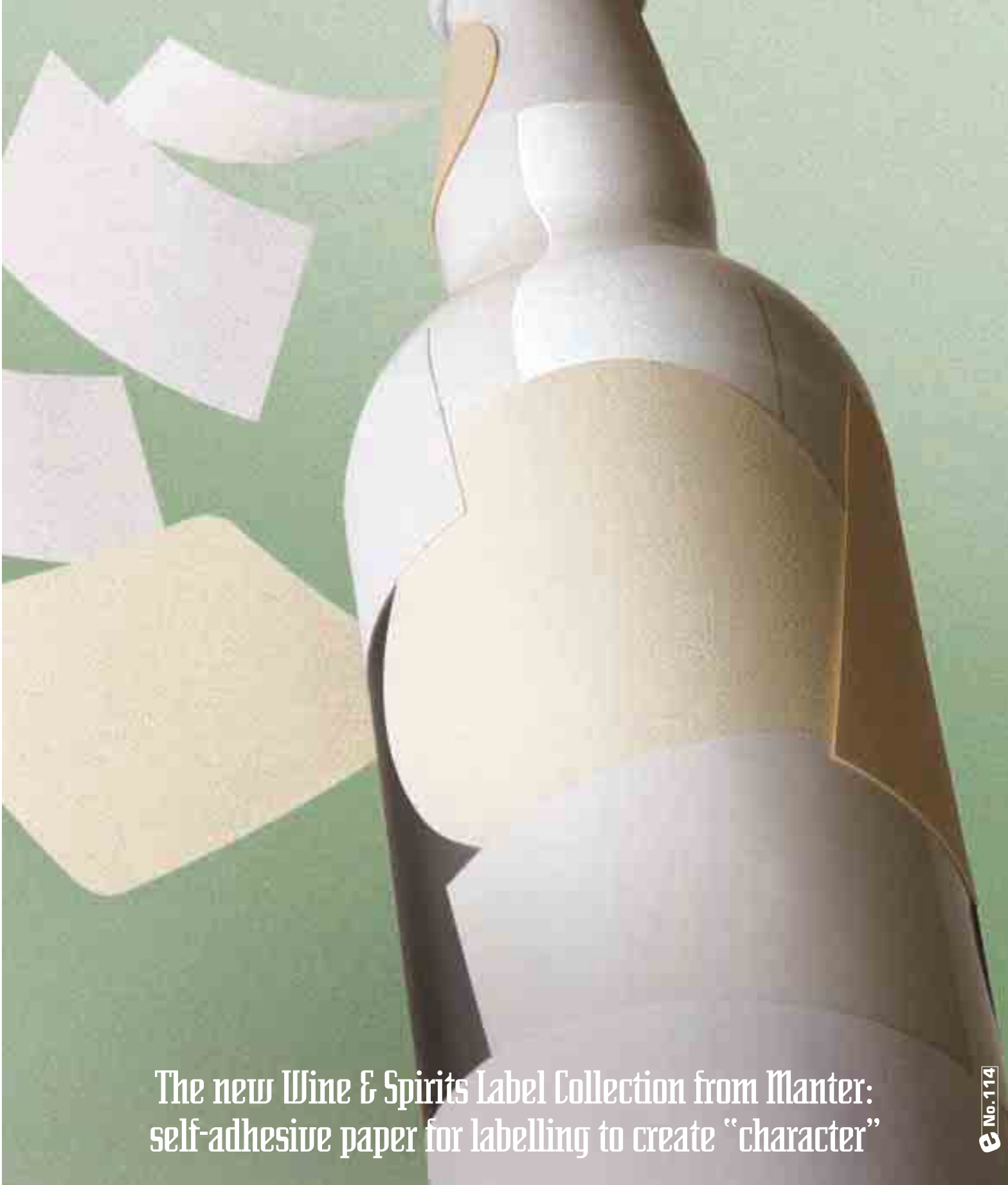
“Filmic liners bring their own disposal problems and, while several initiatives have been tried, it appears incineration remains the best of all compromises, especially as they have a high calorific value”

Silicones are cured either thermally or with UV or electron beam radiation on the coating line. Depending on the chemistry, they are applied as either cross-linked solventless or solvent-based silicones, as well as water-based emulsion types. UV curing is gaining ground and is seeing many developments.

Not unexpectedly, environmental factors now impinge on the release liner industry. The EU Packaging Waste Directive includes liners as part of the supply chain responsibility for collecting and disposing of what is defined as packaging waste. By definition, however, liner waste is industrial, rather than post-consumer. Its function and life-cycle are completed before the consumer sees the label. It has been estimated that liner and matrix waste accounts for around 60 per cent of all pressure-sensitive label material wastage, but as little as 0.2 per cent of the packaging waste in Western Europe.

One thing is certain, liners are a high-value raw material that is arguably too valuable to incinerate or throw into a landfill site. It is possible to reuse and recycle calendered kraft liners, providing they are clean and without an adhesive residue. One example of this involving laminators, converters and end-users dates back to the early 1990s. Ahlstrom Kämmerer, a manufacturer of silicone base papers, undertook a joint recycling initiative with FINAT to recycle paper liner waste in central European countries. Filmic liners bring their own disposal problems and, while several initiatives have been tried, it appears incineration remains the best of all compromises, especially as they have a high calorific value.

Of course, doing away with the liner entirely is one way of sidestepping this environmental issue. During the past 20 years the industry has seen a variety of 'linerless' label and sleeving technologies involving in-line coating laminating methods on presses. They include systems from Ko Pack International, Printing Specialities (Phlxprint), DAS Labelling System and SE Labels Group. Nevertheless, it looks like the release liner will retain its key role in the label conversion and application processes. ■



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The right tack: an introduction to adhesive technology

Pressure-sensitive adhesives have some unique properties, as **Barry Hunt** explains

Clear adhesives are a critical component in the expanding sector of clear-on-clear label constructions

Much is expected from pressure-sensitive adhesives (PSAs). Not only must they bond sufficiently to allow handling of rolls or sheets, the adhesion between adhesive and liner must be low enough to allow easy peeling during dispensing on the packaging line. Naturally they must provide a stable, processable laminate that keeps the release liner attached to the label facestock throughout the entire converting process without any unwanted residues. Beside their normal service and technological support, adhesive manufacturers must also take into account environmental issues in respect of their products.

PSAs are formulated to meet often demanding requirements, ranging from extremely dry to damp conditions often within fluctuating temperature ranges. Labels for freezer packs or automotive components involve very different PSAs, while others may need to withstand intensive UV radiation. In addition, a label may have to conform to an irregular shape, while other properties allow the label to bond to a specific surface, from a piece of fruit to a concrete brick, say. Depending upon end-use, the adhesive could be permanent, semi-permanent or freely removable, yet remain tacky. Interest in 'dry-peel' products, such as coupon and booklet labels, has led to some interesting PSAs. Then there are the adhesives for laser-imprintable filmic grades must, which must have high levels of heat resistance.

Additives can increase the versatility of an adhesive without detracting from its physical properties. Commonplace ones include UV-reactive compounds or photoluminescent agents to detect missing pharmaceutical labels during verification procedures, as well as to authenticate items in the store or elsewhere. Microtaggants can also be added to PSAs as ▶

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part of more stringent product protection measures. It is also possible to include pigmented adhesives with clear films to provide colour options, as well as to improve the adhesive's overall opacity in respect of bar code readability. Metallic flakes and phosphorescent additives have been used to obtain eye-catching and glow-in-the dark effects.

Water-based adhesives (emulsion types) can be permanent, semi permanent for repositioning, removable and formulated for chill and deep freeze label applications. Water wash-off grades are available for returnable pallets, beer kegs, bread trays and drinks bottles.

They are based on single or blended latexes, commonly acrylic, but also vinyl acetate/ethylene and types of rubber are used. Varying concentrations of rosin or hydrocarbon-based resins are added to the adhesive's tack and peel properties. Other ingredients include plasticizers and wetting agents to improve the wettability of the adhesive on release liner and thickeners.

Water-based PSAs also offer a practical option for in-house coaters because they can be blended economically. Most large-volume labelstock manufacturers formulate their own adhesives, but off-the-shelf formulations are commercially available for small and medium-sized coaters from companies like National Starch & Chemical, Henkel Technologies, Rohm & Haas, H P Fuller and Swift Adhesives.

Hot-melt PSAs are a fast-growing sector thanks to the environmental factors mentioned earlier. The improved performance from today's formulations have largely overcome earlier problems with die cutting behaviour on filmics. Hot-melts are easy to coat on compact coaters retrofitted to narrow-web presses, or wider-width stand-alone coaters. This versatility and the absence of high-energy drying ovens has made hot-melts the PSA of choice for most European in-house converters and printers, although they care need care when formulating.

Acrylic solution adhesives (solvent-based) are formulated from cross-linked acrylic polymers and are generally resistant to high heat and oxidation. They generally exhibit lower initial tack and require a fairly long set-up period to reach their maximum adhesion. Environmental legislation and high

> "With a more demanding market, more converters and industry suppliers find it is necessary to adopt a more scientific approach in defining an adhesive's performance"

solvent costs have reduced their usage in favour of water-based acrylics and hot-melts. Other factors include lower coating speeds at high coat weight and poor ageing. However, these PSAa are less prone to develop sticky edges, so are ideal for external vinyl labels and signage items that require optimum water resistance.

Rubber/resin solutions are used mainly for 'peelable' labels and such specialities as labelling lubricant containers. They have higher initial tack, peel strength and shear strength at room temperature, but poor UV resistance. Because of their softer formulation they are prone to cause sticky edges through adhesive flow. Removable rubber based adhesives tend to increase in adhesion throughout the life of the label and could possibly become permanent.

Radiation-cure adhesives can be cross-linked (cured) by electron beam or ultra-violet radiation. This enhances some characteristics, such as the high temperature performance of hot-melt adhesives. They have good peel and shear properties. Radcure adhesives are used in some speciality tape applications. After a slow start they have begun to make their mark in the labelling industry, helped by environmental considerations and a gradual decline in raw materials prices for UV-cure PSAs.

Key properties of PSAs

From the converter's standpoint, adhesives must be compatible with the printing and die cutting process, so a basic understanding of PSA properties is essential. For example, certain rubber-based adhesives are difficult to cut through with flat-bed die cutting, but work better with rotary die cutting. With the more demanding needs of the market and increased specialisation, more converters and industry suppliers find it is necessary to adopt a more scientific approach in defining an adhesive's performance. For example, differences in an adhesive's peel rate might lead to such failures as curl, lifting or tunnelling from a substrate.

Fortunately, testing the key properties of PSAs has become a far more objective procedure then in the past and is not a necessary a black art denied to all but the largest converters or materials suppliers. Contract testing is available from reliable laboratories, which can report and interpret results.

Several European and US companies offer test equipment for measuring the key properties of adhesive to standards ▶

> "Testing failure can result in catastrophic field failures, unhappy customers and frustrated product developers"

established by such trade bodies as FINAT, TLMI and adhesive industry organisations. Chemsultants International Network, a market leader, advises that tests should be reproducible from lab to lab and from lot to lot of material using equipment that is easy to use. Assuming the test is relevant to the required performance of the material, the technician must assess the application and determine which of the 'standard' PSA properties best describes the performance required. 'Failure to consider these two factors can result in catastrophic field failures, unhappy customers, irritated marketing and sales personnel and frustrated product developers.'

Tack
This describes the adhesive's initial adhesion or stickiness when under minimal or no pressure. Moderate to high initial tack is needed to prevent labels falling off during high-speed automatic label application. Rubber based adhesives can be formulated for very high tack. Acrylic solutions and dispersions, and hot-melts have satisfactory tack for normal applications.

Peel strength
This is the force required to remove the adhesive from the label substrate to which it is attached. Rubber adhesives and hot-melts develop high peel strength after quite a short contact time. Acrylic adhesives take a few hours to build up their full adhesion.

Shear strength
This is the measure of the adhesive's inner cohesive strength. Insufficient shear will cause the adhesive to slip. Moderate to high shear properties are necessary for squeezable containers, allowing a label to remain in contact with the container during deformation. Most PSAs have reasonable shear strength at ambient or room temperatures. At higher temperatures rubber adhesives and hot-melts soften and lose their shear strength, while acrylics are relatively unaffected.

Die cutting ability
PSAs should show minimum deformation when penetrated by the die blade, and should tear cleanly, with no stringing, when the matrix is stripped. Die cutting behaviour of PSAs is to some extent related to their shear strength. Acrylic types generally offer easier convertibility than rubber or hot-melt PSAs.

Adhesive bleed
PSAs should have low flow over their working temperature range, even under pressure, to avoid edge exudation or penetration into the paper. Rubber and hot-melt adhesives often contain low molecular weight tackifiers and plasticisers which cause bleed and migration. PSAs based on homogeneous acrylic polymers with no low molecular weight constituents are less likely to cause such problems.

UV and heat resistance
PSAs for labels and decals for long-term outdoor use or in extreme temperature environments generally need special stabilisers to provide heat and/or UV resistance. Saturated acrylic PSAs are least affected by heat or UV radiation.

Plasticiser resistance
Plasticisers used in PVC film stocks can migrate into the adhesive with potentially disastrous results. Rubber and hot-melt adhesives soften, become stringy and lose both adhesion and cohesion. The bond strength of acrylic dispersion adhesives is affected to a lesser degree. Specially formulated acrylic solution adhesives can provide adequate plasticiser migration resistance.

Colour and transparency
PSAs for the important 'no-label-look' market should be ultra clear and free from all coating imperfections. These demands are best met by acrylic PSAs and some of the latest hot-melts.

Low temperature
Freezer labels have to maintain their bond to paper and 'difficult' polyolefin surfaces at temperatures down to -40°C. Rubber solution PSAs offer the best performance for this sector, with acrylics and hot-melts providing an adequate alternative.

Wet conditions
Hot-melts and solution PSAs can be used for labels that are applied on moist surfaces or have to withstand wet conditions once applied. Water based acrylic PSAs should not be considered for these applications.

Wet-Out
Wet-out in this case describes the bonding of the adhesive to the substrate so eliminating any air trapped between the adhesive and the substrate . During initial contact, wet-out percentages range from 70 to 80 per cent, but the adhesive flow should reach total wet-out after around 24 hours and give extreme clarity for use with transparent films.

The idea of a general-purpose pressure-sensitive adhesive capable of meeting all end-uses and converting needs is as remote as ever, although more PSAs can handle a wider variety of applications. Instead, the trend towards special adhesives will continue, which in itself reflects the diverse nature of the pressure-sensitive labelling industry. ■

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Profitability under spotlight at Finat congress

Mike Fairley reports from the recent FINAT Congress in Madrid

The label industry is facing many challenges today, from economic slowdown and consolidation, to a highly competitive and cost-conscious environment. It was therefore opportune for the FINAT World Congress 2002, jointly organised with ANFEC, the Spanish label converters association, to take as its theme 'Meeting Customer Demands and Remain Profitable'.

Speakers throughout the two-day programme addressed industry trends, profitability and management issues, benchmarking, company performance, family owned companies and end-user requirements – all concluding with the FINAT Label Competition Award Ceremony.

Keynote speaker on the first morning was Dean Scarborough, President and Chief Operating Officer, Avery Dennison Corporation, who addressed some of the key issues facing the label industry, from globalisation to temporary and transitional problems facing the industry.

"Globalisation," said Scarborough, "was particularly evident amongst large multi-national corporations, leading them in turn to seek global supply, global consistency of products, shorter runs, productivity gains and lower costs. Nevertheless, globalisation still offers opportunities to the label industry.

"While there may be market saturation and price pressures on suppliers – particularly in the USA – there were still new opportunities emerging. Double digit labelstock growth in Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe; double digit growth in bar code printers".

So what does the label industry need to do for the future? "We have been through tough times before, and come through them stronger than before," explained Scarborough. The challenge is to keep margins and returns at the current level, but grow the top line faster. Previously the industry looked at the business from the inside out. Now we need to be looking from the outside in – selling existing products and services into new markets and channels, as well as new products into existing markets.

"Furthermore," says Scarborough, "we need to focus more time and attention on growth prospects, devoting ample resources to drive growth forward. This will mean looking beyond self-adhesive materials; helping customers to create value and expand their revenue, as well as helping them to save money.

"Business will change in the future through miniaturisation, through cost reductions in electronics, through smart labels and through printed plastic displays. The industry must be problem solvers to survive in the future."

PS trends

Trends in pressure-sensitive materials were discussed by Noel Mitchell on behalf of EPSMA, the European Pressure Sensitive Materials Association. "In 2001," said Mitchell, "pressure-sensitive materials grew in Europe by 5.5% (209 million square metres) to reach a total of 4028 million sq. m. – with the relative trend towards roll label materials, as against sheets, continuing. This is particularly true for non-paper products.

"Paper rolls increased to 2945 million sq. m., or 73.1% of the total; non-paper rolls increased to 714.9 million sq. m., or ▶

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Dean Scarborough

> "There is double digit labelstock growth in Latin America, Asia and Eastern Europe and double digit growth in bar code printers"

17.8% of the total; paper sheets declined by 0.4% to 273.2 million sq. m., or 6.8% of the total; and non-paper sheets were 95.21 million sq. m., or 2.3% of the total.

"As far as regions are concerned, the Eastern region continues to grow at a rate of some 4-5 times (20.9%) greater than most other European regions. Also, for the first time," explained Mitchell, "the Eastern region has increased its market share to clearly overtake the Northern region – with all other regions remaining virtually static or marginally declining."

In looking at growth rates Noel Mitchell highlighted the high growth of non-paper rolls (89% over the past seven years). This compares with paper rolls growing at 41% over seven years, paper sheets +5% and non-paper -11%. This later figure being largely due to a significant reduction in promotional materials.

The average growth in the non-paper roll market in 2001 was 10% compared with the previous year of 11.74%. However, this is still almost double that of the average growth for paper rolls at 5.6%.

In forecasting likely growth patterns for pressure-sensitive labelstock in 2002 Mitchell was optimistic, predicting growth for paper rolls at 5.5%, non-paper rolls at 11.5%, paper sheets at 1.5% and for non-paper sheets to decline by -4.5%.

"While volumes are somewhat more optimistic," he explained, "pricing in many areas is under strong pressure, with its resultant impact on profitability. Additionally, there have been major increases in the price of crude oil leading to dramatic increases in petrochemical feedstocks, in turn resulting in major increases in the costs of all films and adhesives."

A survey of the Spanish label market was presented by José Luis Mercé, ANFEC, Spain. "There are some 256 label converters in Spain," he explained, "of which 87 are members of ANFEC, the Spanish label converters association. However, in terms of turnover, ANFEC members represent €271 million (out of a total industry turnover of €387 million). Overall, over 63% of Spanish label converters had a turnover below €2 million."

Materials usage in Spain in 2001 was 291.84 million sq. m., while flexo was now the dominant press technology, followed by letterpress and then combination process presses. Some 54 new presses were installed in 2001, against 67 in 2000 and 80 in 1999. Generally, the trend in press installations was now towards wider web width machines.

Trends in e-commerce towards an EPSMA XML standard for digital ordering, fulfilment and invoicing of labelstock, were presented by Dr. Thomas Gloger, Jackstädt GmbH/EPSMA XML Working Group, while Jacques van Leeuwen gave a status report on the FINAT recycling and blueprint.

Jules Lejeune of FINAT highlighted some of the results of the recent FINAT benchmarking exercise. Issues included end-user requirements, transparency in the market following the introduction of the Euro, and the way that e-commerce was changing the way that we do business.

The benchmarking exercise was targeted at how converters compare with others in the industry – on a year-by-year basis – and looking at the strengths and weaknesses of converters compared with their competitors. Lejeune highlighted some of the results of the benchmarking exercise, although these are not for publication, only being available to participating companies.

Low profitability

In looking at the profitability of the label sector Tim Rothwell, Ernst & Young, said that his analysis showed that at least in the UK this was below that of the packaging industry in general.

Challenges for the label sector, explained Rothwell, were that there were "no apparent economies of scale, that there was a destabilised market structure, there were continuing margin pressures, and that barriers to entry continued to reduce through lower capital costs.

"Additionally, the above average growth of the self-adhesive sector continued to attract new entrants, there were too few proprietary processes or unique product offerings available to reduce commoditisation – while major companies in the sector have failed to achieve profitable consolidation/rationalisation strategies."

Rothwell's winning strategies for the label sector included placing emphasis on the value chains, on adding service in supply chains, the use of benchmarking, optimising the capital base, exploiting new technology, being first to market with ▶

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"The average car in Europe carried some €2.50 of labels. In the States it was around $5.00"

new products and the development of other (self-adhesive) added value products.

In analysing the role of the family-owned company, Helmut Schreiner, Schreiner Etiketten, reviewed the history of his own company – founded by his parents in 1951. When Helmut took over the running of the company in 1970 he had been able to double turnover in just five years. This was done cautiously, with him having to learn the skills of delegation, forming a company structure, training and development, quality performance, etc. Companies today still have to learn all these skills to be successful.

The skills and fundamental tasks of a general manager were further amplified in a presentation by Jaume Puigbo, Sinel, in Spain. His view of the skill required of a manager in the label industry included choosing the right team, motivating the workforce, coaching, how to delegate (but still control) and how to be both a good listener and a good communicator.

Fundamental tasks for the general manager, explained Puigbo, were those of strategy formulation, planning, supervising operations, focusing the business on customers, evaluating management teams and personnel and team development.

Day two of the FINAT Congress opened with a presentation

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by Corey Reardon of Alexander Watson Associates, in which he outlined the results of the FINAT End User Market Survey 2002. This survey looked at the entire value chain and at the various end-user label segments – from Food to Health & Beauty, Pharmaceutical to logistics and Transport, as well as the split between VIP, Prime and Functional/Security labels. Copies of the full report are available to members from FINAT.

To present delegates with end-user perspectives and viewpoints, speakers from TNT Express, the Auto-ID Centre and Avery Dennison commented on their respective markets.

TNT delivers

Andrew Heyworth of TNT Express for example, said that "this year TNT will be using 200 million labels that carry information on the service, on routing, the address for delivery and for tracking. In 1984 they used 10 million labels; by 2010 they expected to be using 500 million labels.

"A key requirement for all labels used was to achieve 100% readability. This provides correct routing and loading. Both hand held and fixed overhead barcode scanners were used."

Heyworth also discussed the potential of linerless labels – on which TNT Express were currently carrying out trials in 12 depots – and RF labels. Initial trials of these, he explained, were not encouraging for early adoption.

The subject of 'intelligent tagging in the real world' was covered by Helen Druce, Auto ID-Centre, who discussed the challenges of how to make tags cheap enough for mass use. Currently, she explained, tags were around 41 cents. The aim was to get this down to 5 cents by 2004 which, she believed would be achievable with volumes of 10 billion tags a year.

In the final paper of the Congress, Bill Podojil, Avery Dennison, told delegates that the average car in Europe carried some €2.50 of labels. In the States it was around $5.00. In total automotive units, the European market was some 15.5 million.

Considerable consolidation of suppliers had taken place in recent years said Podojil, and there were now only some 35 suppliers of automotive labels in Europe. Yet the market for automotive labels in Europe represented around €37 million.

Challenges for suppliers were that OEM's were shifting liability to suppliers, new projects can take up to 3 years, OEM's only work with suppliers who have product development and project management capabilities and that labels were often the last thing that customers thought about.

Concluding the formal sessions of the Congress was the FINAT Label Competition Award Ceremony, with Awards presented by label industry personality, Mike Fairley. g

Technology

Swedish printer shifts to UV flexo from letterpress

Rotakett Herma's latest press is a high specification Gallus EM 280 UV flexo line, installed to produce added value packaging, according to Bengt Eliason

Rotakett, located at Helsingborg in southern Sweden, has moved to UV flexo production with an 8-station Gallus EM 280 line supplied with eight flexo and four screen heads, together with the new mobile hot foil module. The specification includes water-cooled chill drums to facilitate the handling of synthetic materials and a Teknek web cleaning device before the first print unit. Auto register is due to be fitted and the machine has IST UV curing throughout.

Owner Bengt Eliason explains his decision: 'We had developed our own flexo heads for the Gallus R160Bs, so we understood the technology well and how to make the best use of it in combination with screen and hot foil. The jump from a 160 web width to the 410mm machine was too great, so the Gallus EM 280, with its moveable print modules, was the obvious move.'

To support the new EM280, Rotakett has a 50 per cent interest in a repro house — the likely next move would be to install a digital platemaking system. Commenting on the advantages of modern UV flexo, Bengt Eliason said: 'It has a high colour pigmentation and performs well on uncoated paper, where its softer plates offer something not possible with letterpress.'

As a Gallus reference house in Scandinavia, Bengt Eliason has looked hard at the RCS press system: 'We rate the new Gallus RCS 330 system very highly. Its servo technology and flexo/screen combination would suit our type of work well, and its waste management is second to none. Unfortunately, our need for a new machine arose before series production of the Gallus RCS began, but it is on our shopping list for the future, and I am keen to establish a dialogue with the first two users to discuss actual production figures – I hear they're very good.'

Markets served by Rotakett include cosmetics and health care, foodstuffs, and top end alcoholic beverages. In the market for wine and liquor labels, where inline flexo is replacing sheet fed litho, converted offline, Rotakett is currently supplying around 25 per cent of its output to Scandinavian bottlers. For the premium brand liquors, typically a metallised paper has a matt varnish applied before being overprinted with screen and hot foil. For clear on clear applications, Rotakett lays down a tinted background to match the product colour, before overprinting with screen and flexo, as well as printing a reversed image that shows through. e No.205

Record-making Scout installed

Audioprint, a self-adhesive label printer based in Bedford in the UK, has installed a new six-colour Mark Andy Scout. The 10" flexo machine was chosen for its ability to produce the high quality, multi colour work that is now demanded by the record and multi media industry, according to works director, Peter Hull. With UV curing fitted to the sixth print station, the Scout also allows Audioprint to produce 'added value' finishes.

According to Hull's deputy, Steve Lawrence: 'The Scout is easy and quick to make ready, making it economical even on two and three-colour jobs. It also handles non-paper substrates well, which just adds to its production flexibility.' A typical job at Audioprint is 50,000 labels in four-colour process, with a special and UV varnish added. The Scout runs at 300 ft/min. e No.206

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Technology

Links Labels focus on future

Links Labels & Tapes Ltd has confirmed an order for a 6-colour, 10" wide Centraflex flexo press from Focus Label Machinery. The press will be installed alongside existing Focus flexo presses at the company's new manufacturing premises in Lincolnshire in the UK.

The Centraflex 250 will be equipped with infra red/forced air drying, UV varnishing, three die stations, web guide, splice table, turn bar, two rewinds and sheet stacker.

Additional equipment includes the Trucolor 1000 video inspection system as well as the Platemate video platemounter, manufactured by Focus.

Reg Rudd, managing director of Links Labels & Tapes explained 'We chose the Centraflex because it was the only press which offered us a realistic, affordable alternative to a six colour, in-line press. Although the press is very compact, it will still give us six colours, three dies, UV varnishing and reverse side printing. Also, the newly designed drying system will allow us to reach production speeds similar to those on many in-line presses.' **e No.207**

Reproflex Indigo for pack samples

Reproflex 3, offering a full project management service to flexo and litho printers, has installed a six-colour HP Indigo Press ws2000 (formerly Indigo's Omnius WebStream 50) to further enhance its quality flexo packaging capacity.

The HP Indigo Press ws2000 is primarily aimed at the labels market, enabling the production of short run, high quality colour labels quickly and on-demand. Reproflex 3, however, intends to use the press mainly for the production of quality flexo packaging marketing samples.

Says Reproflex 3 sales and marketing manager Mark Hunter Purvis, 'Our company was set up to service flexo and litho printers, not to compete against them, and what this new press enables us to do is to provide them with a value added service which can ultimately help them build or create new digital business with their customers.'

Reproflex 3 chose the HP Indigo Press ws2000 (7m/min), in preference to waiting for the imminent release of its faster sister press, the HP Indigo Press ws4000 (16m/min), because productivity was not a driving factor in the purchase. 'What was a driving factor,' continued the company's other joint MD, Trevor Lowes, 'is the press's ability to print to the same high offset-like degree of quality on virtually any substrate, including a wide variety of plastics, paper and label stocks.'

The press's inline finishing capability was another plus as it will enable Reproflex 3 to supply its customers with a product that could be die-cut, varnished or laminated.

Commenting on the Hewlett Packard acquisition of Indigo, Hewitson said, 'We have enormous belief in the Indigo technology and were delighted to hear the news about HP, since such powerful backing gives added reassurance that the HP Indigo press is definitely the best platform for digital print.' **e No.208**

Magnadata takes second Gallus

To help cope with new contracts, Magnadata has installed a second Gallus EM 410 flexo press at its plant in Boston, Lincs in the UK. The latest eight-colour press, which joins a Gallus EMO 410 offset/flexo combination machine installed in 1999, is fitted with the new digital GEW UV system, a Teknek web cleaner, and Tectonic web inspection system.

The new press consolidates a £12m turnover, of which 70 per cent is exported, making Magnadata one of the world's leading suppliers of transit system and airline tickets.

Mike Thornalley, production director at Magnadata, did not specify auto register on the new Gallus. 'We had it fitted to the Gallus EMO 410 because of its overall length, but the new press is so well engineered that it holds register across a range of substrates from 120-micron thermal paper to 350-micron laminates, including PE and PVC.'

Key to the Gallus machine's appeal for Magnadata is its platform construction, which allows more than 80 different modules to be designed into the line. For Magnadata, whose requirements span security ticket applications from runs of 5000 with multiple design changes, to 20 million units or more, the Gallus offers easy compatibility with a range of ancillary equipment that includes ink jet heads and applicators, to a variety of delivery systems. To offer an additional security feature, hot-foil capability has been introduced with Gallus' own mobile unit. **e No.209**

Multiprint makes flexo move

Multiprint in Dublin has installed a Gallus EM 410 UV flexo line as part of a £5m investment plan which includes a new 30,000 sq ft headquarters building. The Gallus press is the company's first departure from rotary letterpress technology. Fitted with eight UV flexo and three moveable rotary screen heads, the 16" press has a corona web treater, hot foil stamping, adhesive-side printing, both flat and rotary die stations, and auto register.

Capable of running at 80m/min, the press is well suited to long run work, particularly on filmic substrates, according to operations manager, Bill Smyth. 'There is a learning curve with UV flexo, but it is not a steep one. We are in no doubt now that the quality it can produce is the equal of letterpress.'

Multiprint's greenfield factory site currently houses six Gallus machines, the first of which dates back to 1989. ▶

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Technology

There are two Gallus R200s, either seven or eight colour with inline embossing and hot foil, two Gallus R250s and two Gallus R300s, all six-colour presses with inline hot foil, varnishing and both flat and rotary die cutting.

Where the company attracted mostly food industry work in its early days, Multiprint is now heavily involved in supplying labels to the healthcare, beverage and automotive markets, with around 40 per cent of its production involving a combination of techniques. Sales in 2002 are expected to top 12m, with the UK accounting for more than 80%. Bill Smyth concludes: 'I can foresee the need for a second Gallus flexo line, which will probably have the same specification because it fits our needs, and because the engineering quality is so sound.' e No.210

Two more 3300s for Labelsco

Labelsco Ltd. of Leicester is one of the UK's oldest and most successful independent label printers. To increase its UV-flexo capacity the company recently commissioned its third Nilpeter FA-3300 in-line modular press. A fourth FA-3300 has been ordered from Nilpeter Ltd., UK, and was delivered in July. The company has also five water-based flexo presses to complement its UV-facility.

The latest FA-3300 has eight print units and three die-cutting units. It processes a variety of pressure-sensitive paper and filmic substrates, as well as unsupported films and foils, up to 330 mm wide. The press is equipped with Nilpeter's own 'cold cure' UV-curing system. A unique type of web tension control, based on free running impression roll and filmic-drive rollers, creates individual tension zones for printing thin films. Complementing them are spiral rollers and lay-on rolls to retain a straight web path into a 'soft tension' rewinder.

Other equipment includes a Sherman Corona treater, Teknek anti-static web cleaner and BST video-web viewer. Labelsco has designed and developed its own cold foil system, which features UV-curing through the carrier foil.

Labelsco recently became one of the few converters in Europe to produce work using hexachrome techniques complemented by stochastic screening. Extensive research was necessary over twelve months with experts in selected repro houses before the application was proven to the customers' satisfaction.

The increased UV-flexo capacity follows year-on-year growth rates of around 25 per cent. Much of this business comes from blue-chip names in the highly-competitive toiletries and healthcare label and film satchet sectors.

Now in its 25th year of business, Labelsco has 100 employees and a turnover projected to £7.5 million in the current year. e No.211

Thin films first for Congo printer

A reconditioned 16 inch Mark Andy 4150 UV flexo press supplied by David Hulme Machinery to a printer in the Congo now has the capability of processing almost all of today's new heat-sensitive films and substrates with the addition of the new ACM cold mirror system from Honle UV Technology. Because the press is intended to print unsupported film, the Honle Advanced Cold Mirror (ACM) was selected for the project. During the acceptance trials, 30 micron white BOPP was printed with two colours with all eight UV lamps operating at normal power settings. There was no evidence of substrate distortion or any affect on print registration and the increase in temperature from the unwind to the exit of the eighth Honle ACM UV lamp was only 8°C.

The printer was previously printing and converting films on gravure presses, and UV flexo has proven itself as a cost effective alternative to gravure in terms of print quality and short runs for just in time printing (JIT). e No.212

Sheeter provides flexible solution

Connemara Converting has installed a Valmet Sheeter to deliver maximum flexibility across a wide range of label and board related products

Company president, Charles B. Connolly comments, 'The ability to source custom-sheeted orders and custom quantities of specialty paper substrates – on demand – and at competitive prices, is the basis of Connemara's selling proposition. The new sheeter had to provide dust-free sheeting of a wide range of paper and board products, avoid guillotine trimming, provide weld-free sheeting of OPP plastic films and cut metallized, holographic paper and board in tight register with no scratching.

'An additional challenge was that the machine had to fit into an existing space and be suitable for fast turn-around, short-run work.'

The Valmet TSK Sheeter was chosen for its efficient sheeting of both plastic film and specialty paper substrates, with a registration system installed to accommodate the burgeoning demand for register-sheeted holographic papers and holographic board products.

'There has been an increasing demand for opaque OPP film for label substrate, replacing paper/OPP laminates as well as C1S label papers typically used for beverage labels,' stated Connolly. Many Connemara customers require a reliable US-based source of OPP material for cut and stock label applications that can be readily accessed, competitively priced and defect free.

The new Valmet TSK sheeter delivers a weld-free edge, sheeted product without the need to four-side guillotine trim.

Utilizing an eight-roll backstand, sheeted material is delivered at line speeds in excess of 50,000 sheets per hour in a press ready condition, with a cut-to-length tolerance of +/- 1/64 of an inch. e No.213

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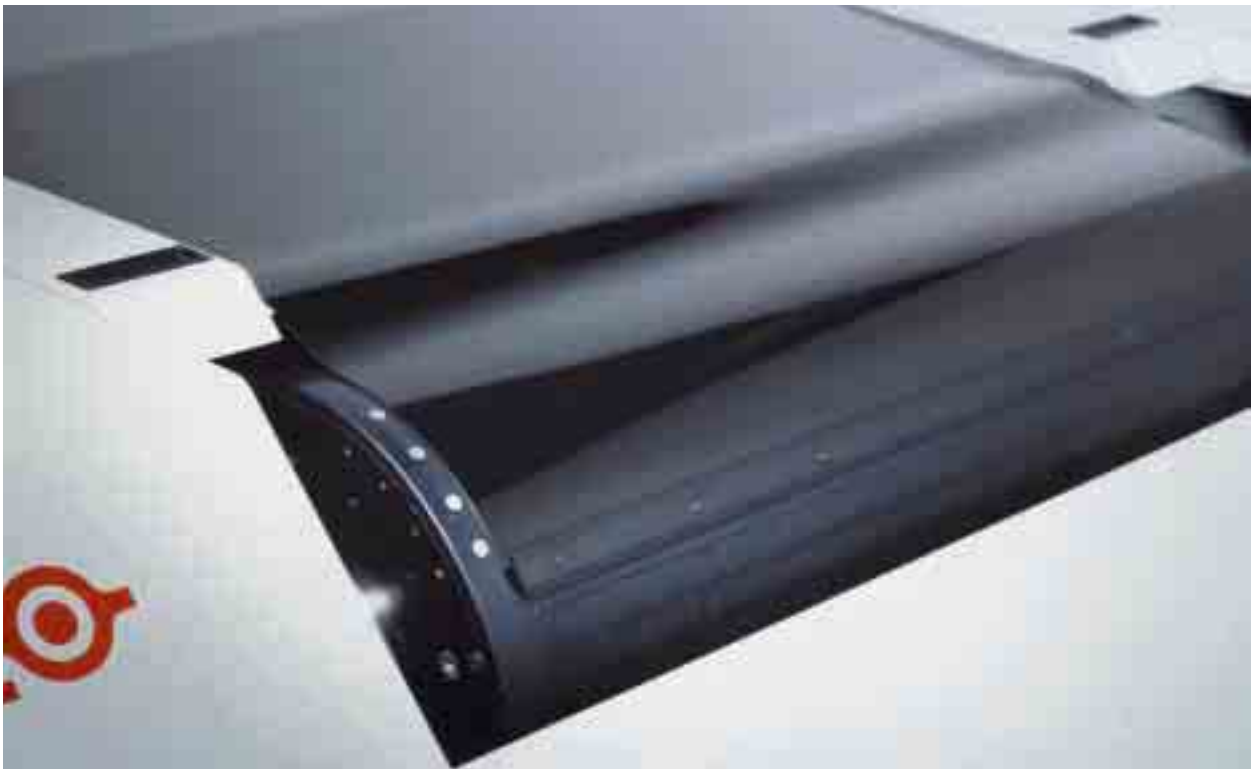

Esko commits to packaging with new CTP flexo imager

Esko Graphics – the company formed from the merger of Barco Graphics and Purup-Eskofot – has launched a larger version of the CDI Spark flexo CTP system to match the requirements of flexible packaging, label and folding carton converters, as well as tradeshops with low to medium flexo plate volumes.

The Cyrel Digital Imager Spark XT images digital photopolymer plates in sizes up to 48" x 35" or 1200 x 900 millimeter. CDI Spark XT has the same TwinBeam optical system as used with other CDI and CDI Compact models. CDI Spark XT comes with an incorporated plate loading/unloading table and with EasyClamp to easily apply and securely hold down plates up to 6.35 mm thickness on the drum. Like its other family members, CDI Spark XT can easily image plates smaller than the maximum size.

'As digital flexo platemaking spreads throughout packaging pre-production, converters in the flexible, label and folding carton segments expressed their need for a compact, easy-to-use, reliable and affordable computer-to-plate device', explains Jürgen Andresen, Esko-Graphics Marketing Director. 'CDI Spark XT offers the 1200x900 mm plate format, the convenient plate handling, the doubled imaging speed and the small footprint these customers have been looking for. The same benefits will appeal to flexo tradeshops producing smaller to medium plate volumes.'

CDI Spark XT supports any imaging resolution between 2000 and 4000 dpi, freely selectable from job to job. CDI Spark XT comes in two versions: Optics 15 with an imaging speed of up to 1,5 m2/h, and Optics 25 offering an enhanced productivity of up to 2,5 m2/h. The corresponding times required to image a full-size 900x1200 mm plate at 2000 or 2450 dpi are 43 and 26 minutes respectively.

Esko-Graphics has also confirmed its commitment to the labels and packaging sector with the launch of the entry level DeskPack, a suite of dedicated packaging design, print verification and packaging trapping tools centered around Adobe Illustrator clients. The server ensures that the Illustrator stations are freed up for more interactive tasks while complex manipulations continue in the background.

The DeskPack workflow starts from the original design data, and returns all added information back into the ▶

"One of our customers was having trouble with misaligned container labels. They literally had to pull the full container off the line and scrape the labels off. In response to their need, we developed Adhesive 47—which allowed our customer to quickly and easily pull the container off-line, remove the label and put the container back on-line."

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Technology

DeskPack, a suite of dedicated packaging design, print verification and packaging trapping tools centered around Adobe Illustrator clients.

same file - trapping objects for example are added as a separate layer to the Illustrator document, and can be freely edited or discarded as desired. The plug-ins include Barco's boostX drawing, editing and ink control tools, checkX, which analyses a design and compensates for limitations of the reproduction process early in the workflow and trapX packaging trapping system.

Indeed, DeskPack incorporates the same advanced ColorStitch object trapping technology as used with the most recent versions of PackEdge and BackStage.

It supports any number (and any mixes) of process and spot inks, creates fully editable trap objects in a separate layer within the job, and introduces new solutions to CT and vignette trapping. Illustrator 9 and 10 enable accurate interactive preview of traps with overprints.

Trapping job tickets and checkX press profiles can be created interactively, stored for later reuse and reference, or accepted from other advanced users, tradeshops and print experts — including those already using BackStage, says Esko. **No.214**

DuPont pushes flexo standard thru Brunner deal

An agreement between DuPont Imaging Technologies and System Brunner aims to improve the accuracy of Eurostandard Cromalin contract proofing in a CTP environment for offset printing while establishinig similar standards for the flexographic process.

The integration of System Brunner's Instrument Flight press fingerprinting system into the Cromalin standard will be one of the highlights of the new agreement. Instrument Flight provides a simple 'star' system to reflect the accuracy of a proof against the final printed result. It automatically scans a patented control strip, printed on the side of the signature, and gathers readings to allow more than 30 printing parameters to be evaluated. The control strip uses a unique zebra design, which has high- and low-density patches next to each other to increase densitometer accuracy.

Felix Brunner (right) and Paolo Barbieri, head of DuPont Imaging Technologies in Europe (left)

The initial work between the two companies will be the development of a new Cromalin Eurostandard for Cromalin Digital, which takes into consideration the print quality improvements in offset due to the adoption of CTP technology. This quality improvement is the basis of the Instrument Flight rating – five stars being the quality achieved with perfectly made plates and printed using perfect color curves. **No.215**

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No.111

Technology

Nexus improves workflow at UK trade shops

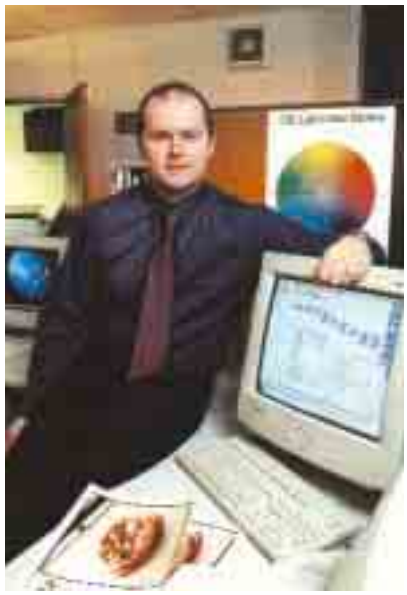
In today's intensely competitive environment, repro houses are having to get plates and proofs out faster while maintaining data integrity and enhancing quality. *Andy Thomas* reports on two repro houses using Artwork Systems' new Nexus products to enhance their workflows.

Chameleon was one of the first specialist packaging repro houses to install Artwork Systems' Nexus workflow software, adding the NexusProcessor and NexusRIP to its six existing seats of ArtPro. The company supplies plates and films to over 300 packaging printers throughout Europe and is part of a holding company with operations in the UK and Holland.

Flexibility and connectivity were key elements in the decision to purchase the Nexus system, as Paul Tarpley, quality executive at Chameleon explains: 'We have a huge range of pre-press equipment and Nexus interfaces with it all. The NexusRIP drives each of Chameleon's 11 output devices, including digital Chromalins, an Agfa Galileo platesetter, Agfa Avantra imagesetters and an Indigo Omnius press.'

The ROOM (RIP Once Output Many) principle of the NexusRIP was a key deciding factor in Chameleon's choice. 'The fact that the data sent to the output devices is pre-RIPped reduces the risk of errors and guarantees that the films and plates we send out to the printer are identical to the proofs approved by the customer.

'To meet some proofing requirements we were previously having to send up to six files to as many different RIPs. Now we have not only increased the turnaround of jobs, we've increased the data integrity of our files. I can honestly say that the NexusRIP is the most reliable I have seen.'



Paul Tarpley, quality executive, Chameleon

The NexusProcessor allows Chameleon to set up client-specific workflows and automate almost every element of the processing of files, reducing costs and delivery times.

The Artwork Systems package also includes NexusWebWay, NexusImport and NexusManager. WebWay serves as the communication link between the print buyer and the production plant, allowing customers to be automatically notified by email when a job is ready for previewing. 'It's a great benefit for our clients – to be able to safely view their files and check the status, etc, through a secure Internet browser,' says Tarpley.

NexusImport converts all incoming files to a native file format and extensively checks and reports on PDF and PostScript, intercepting potential and real errors early in the pre-press process. NexusManager creates and controls the workflow setups, jobs and queues.

MPH in Harwich is another Artwork Systems-based repro house in the UK which has moved to a Nexus workflow, with a system including NexusRIP, NexusProcessor, NexusImport, FlexoCal, PlateCell Patterning and Hybrid Screening, plus a third seat of ArtPro.

'We've seen a particularly large increase in quality on smaller products,' says Tim Warner, technical director at MPH. 'For instance, with FlexoCal we can produce very clear, sharp text reversed out of a solid which allows more text to be printed within a specific area. This is a great benefit to customers with multi-language or heavy text products – they are able to change the quantities printed or held in stock. We are providing more cost-effective, as well as high quality, solutions for customers.'

FlexoCal utilises a unique non-linear imagesetter calibration to produce harder, rounder and smaller dots on the plate and press.

Nexus has also enabled MPH to turn-around jobs very quickly. 'The current demand from customers is for one or two day turnaround time,' says Tim Warner. 'NexusProcessor allows us to create specific workflows which are automatically checked at each stage of the process. The high level of automation means ease of use and has speeded up the processing of files. What's more, data integrity is again increased.'

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LABELEXPO AMERICAS 2002

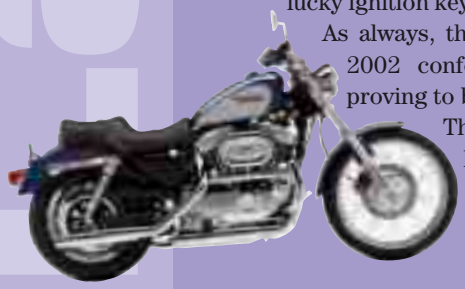
The biggest narrow web event on the American continent kicks off in September. Labels and Labeling, along with the TLMI, is sponsoring the show, and here L&L editor Andy Thomas rounds up new products on show – everything from digital presses to the latest in materials and converting equipment.

Visitors from over 60 countries will be attending Labelexpo Americas 2002, the most important event yet in its 16-year history. Visitors are expected from across North America; from all over Europe and Eastern Europe, including Russia; and from Australasia and the Far East, including Japan, Korea and the Philippines.

Labelexpo Americas 2002, the show and conference, takes place on September 10 - 12 at the Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Chicago. The tally to date is 450 exhibitors, 65 of them showing for the first time, and covering up to 180,000 sq ft of floor space. Our show floorplans and exhibitor lists were correct at the time of going to press, but for the very latest updates be sure to check back on the show's dedicated website, www.labelexpo-americas.com.

Attendees to Labelexpo Americas 2002 will also benefit from new organisational developments, including teams of over 60 experienced registration staff. This will dramatically increase the speed and flow at which visitors will be processed into the show.

Among the tempting offers for those attending the show is a competition for a Harley Davidson bike. The visitor who eventually picks out the lucky ignition key gets to take it home.



As always, the Labelexpo Americas 2002 conference programme is proving to be a popular attraction. This year's programme has 28 individual conference sessions .

Press bonanza

This Labelexpo Americas show sees a host of new press launches and technology announcements, particularly centering on new digital developments, the continued penetration of servo technology and the introduction of 'entry' level flexo presses which are essentially cut-down versions of top of the range machines.Latest advances in digital printing will be a key feature of the Labelexpo Americas.

Mark Andy will show its eagerly anticipated hybrid digital/conventional press, which integrates a 6-color inkjet imaging unit into the body of a standard 2200 flexo press. There are currently two of these presses built - the one at Labelexpo Americas, and a European beta test press now being commissioned at Strålfors in Gothenborg, Sweden.

The SPICE UV-cured inkjet units are 'seamlessly' integrated into the 2200, with modular flexo units positioned in front and behind, and a variety of finishing units including die cutting at the end of the line. The 330mm wide flexo/inkjet press is designed to print fully variable data up to six colours at a maximum speed of 80 feet (24 metres) per minute on substrates ranging from film and pressure-sensitive stocks to wine label stocks. The UV-curing unit is equipped with a water cooled counter roller that enables printing on heat and pressure sensitive materials. The imaging resolution is 300dpi, but three bit grayscale per spot - or eight levels of grey per spot - can be achieved by varying the droplet sizes, which enhances the apparent resolution.

WebStream

Digital print specialist Indigo – now a part of Hewlett Packard - will launch into the US its latest WebStream 100 digital press. HP Indigo's Series 2 printing process not only allows up to 7-colours to be used (though at reduced printing speed), but has the potential to match conventional press speeds by ganging up 'one shot' digital offset print stations. The WebStream 100 prints up to 16 meters a minute in four colors, but Indigo has already demonstrated four units ganged up on its 'Publisher 8000' commercial print press, delivering speeds up to 64 meters/minute.

Supporting the digital press will be both on- and off-line converting solutions and specialist coated substrates from

suppliers like Hanita Coatings, Intercoat and Dunmore Corporation, which introduces a new family of Dun-Kote films developed for use with digital printing processes. Products coated with Dunmore's Digital topcoat DP-44, have a one-year shelf life and have been RIT certified.

> "Digital technologies are also impacting on conventional press designs with the introduction of servo drive technologies into the narrow web sector"

Digital technologies are also impacting on conventional press designs with the introduction of servo drive technologies into the narrow web sector. Use of servos allows a wide range of substrates to be processed as well as reducing makeready times on repeat jobs and adding modular flexibility. Omet will give an American premier to its Varyflex press which utilises a servo-driven print unit design. The new press is capable of converting cartons as well as flexible packaging and labels, converting a wide range of material from 12 micron plastics film to 600 micron folding carton. This flexibility is delivered by a gearless print unit design, electronic web control and a sleeve changing system which enables rapid and easy job changeover. The absence of gears gives other advantages in terms speed of makeready, from easy print pressure adjustment to automatic pre-register on repeat jobs.

It's also worth noting that the Omet Varyflex incorporates sleeves, and is among the first narrow web flexo presses to do so.

Gallus brings its RCS 330 servo-driven press to the show, now with a new flying imprinter station for frequent text changes without stop/start waste. Typically on a six-colour press this would involve placing two flying imprinter stations to print black after the CMYK stations (although the imprinting units can be placed anywhere in the press line). The text plate can be changed in the idle print station while the press is still printing at full speed. The servos then bring the plate cylinder up to press speed and switch it into the press without stopping the web when the text change is made.

Of major significance will be the launch by Nilpeter of its FB line of flexographic printing presses, a US-built range which follows the company's acquisition of the Roto Press brand. The FB line will be manufactured at the Nilpeter, U.S.A. facility in Cincinnati, Ohio. The FB line comprises the 10-inch wide FB-2500, 13-inch wide FB-3300 and the 16-inch wide Servo-driven FB-4200. Repeat lengths range from 5.25 inches to 24 inches, allowing compatibility with users' existing Nilpeter print cylinders and dies in these web widths. The FB-Line can also run with inter-deck UV- curing lamp units allowing combinations of UV-flexo, rotary screen and hot foilstamping units, as well as chill rollers for converting films.

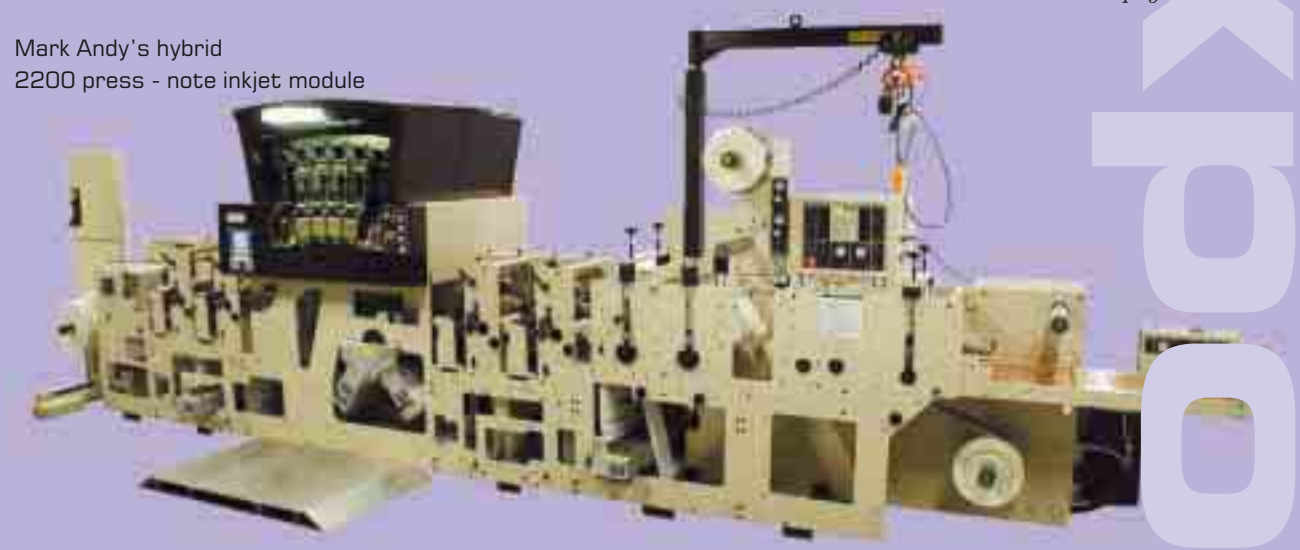
A high capacity drying system incorporating nine air knives for each print station, allows production speeds of up to 750 feet per minute, according to Nilpeter. Slide out print stations include removable ink pans and tool-free quick change print cylinders, anilox and doctor rolls.

This will also be the first chance for American converters to see Nilpeter's modular gravure station designed for the M3300 platform press and fitted with laser-engraved sleeves (displayed as a stand-alone unit). Gravure allows users to print metallic inks for high quality labels, flexible packaging, and cartons at less cost than conventional foiling or off-press bronzing. for applying metallics, coatings etc.

It's interesting to note that Chesnut Engineering, which also has a stand at the show, is now offering gravure press sub-systems for addition to existing press lines. Available in 16 and 24" widths and 2, 4 or more colors, each Sub-System comes complete with hot air dryer and integral drive. High performance drying and in-line lamination may also be incorporated.

Continued on page 100

Mark Andy's hybrid 2200 press - note inkjet module



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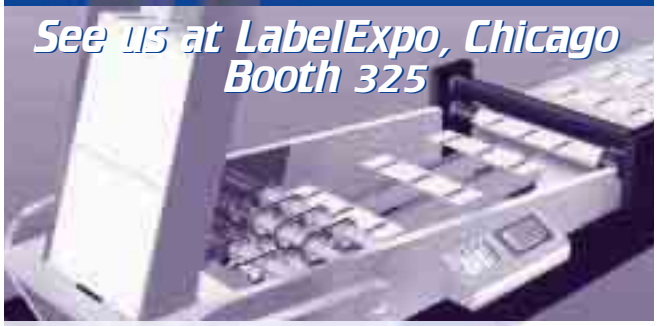

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Labelexpo Americas 2002 technology preview by L&L Editor **Andy Thomas**, continued from page 85...

Stork meanwhile offers an alternative route to printing metallics with the launch of its Hot Air Drying System, claimed dramatically to cut waste levels in metallic gold and silver application. The system offers a more economical solution for printing and drying of UV, water and solvent based inks for a host of applications, says the company. Besides label decoration, Stork sees applications for iridescent stripes in bank notes and security labels, RFID or 'smart' label antennae and electroluminescent adhesives.

Chromas Technologies will unveil upgrades to its Instaprep presses, showing a 10" 6-color Instaprep running with new 360 degree gear boxes – now standard – as well as a new patent pending doctor blade design. Chromas will also debut its self-designed rotary screen cassette to fit into any flexo station. The rotary screen unit uses the same Instant Change Technology system that the printing cassettes use.

Chromas will also show the Argio Digital UV Ink Jet in-line with UV Flexo and UV Rotary Screen. This UV Ink Jet system can run 100+ FPM at 600 DPI.

Nilpeter
FB series press

Webtron revived

Labelexpo Americas will also be remembered as the time PCMC 'officially' entered the narrow web market with the debut of an upgraded Webtron press. This improved version of the classic Webtron machine incorporates more stable web handling and improved print unit performance (see previous article on www.labelsandlabelling.com). This follows PCMC's purchase of the intellectual property rights to the Webtron and ZigZag press ranges. The company is looking to develop a new in-line platform which brings key elements of its CI press designs to the narrow web arena. A 'major new press announcement' will be made at the show for what the company says is a 'revolutionary new flexo converting system to serve the narrow web marketplace.' The press will be multi-substrate, servo driven, offer 'world class changeover and best in class registration'. Available web widths will be 18" (457 mm), 22" (559 mm) and 26" (660 mm).

HP Indigo Ws4000 digital press

Gi Due launches an entry-level version of its Combat press at the show. The Quadra is a limited configuration Combat, 4-colours + 1 die-cut, without any retrofit possibility, and with 'very aggressive' pricing. It is aimed at start up label printers, or to printers who want to specialize presses for specific duties. The Quadra will be available in widths of 280 mm, 370 mm and 430 mm and retains the key 'Flower' technology concepts. It is only three meters long and less than 150 cm deep, in any configuration and is available in three configurations: 4 UV, or 4 Hot air/IR, or 4 Hot air/IR + 1 UV.

Another very interesting development from Gi Due launched at the show will be a drop-in Screen printing head for the Combat press range, which will replace the Stork units currently installed across the range. In a statement, joint md Cristina Toffolo says, 'Flexo and screen printing will become fully interchangeable for enhanced graphic possibilities. We are currently still under prototype and test.'

Focus is aiming at the same market sector with its new Centraflex CI flexo press, a 250 mm wide, 6-colour machine which includes many features normally associated with larger, in-line presses, as well as a new interstation drying system, enabling higher press speeds. The Centraflex has been designed to print and convert a wide range of substrates, from 10 micron film, to foils, vinyls, plastics, labelstock, tickets

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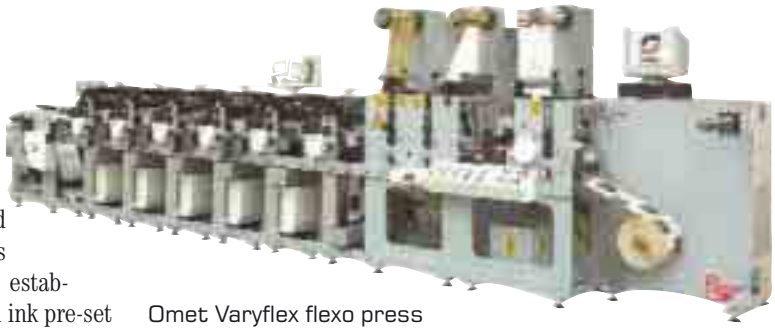
and carton board. As we published this guide, it was not confirmed whether a working press would be at the show.

Just to prove that letterpress is far from a dead technology, Lintec will give the premier to its LPM300 iT press. This latest incarnation of the established 300 system is equipped with a computerized ink pre-set system, eliminating the need for long and tedious adjustment and reducing set-up times. The system works through a computer-controlled segmented ink ductor system which indexes back and forward to deliver ink onto the plate. This also means that job data can be stored ready for automated set-up on re-runs. AP Maschinen will also demonstrate segmented ink duct solutions for offset and letterpress printers, fitted to its AEIC 2000 (Electronic ink flow control) system, which will be introduced at the show. Ko-Pack too, launches a new press, the modular 250 C-Class Version III machine, which can accept additional flexo-varnish, letterpress or silk screen units.

Waterless offset figures at the show, with the VIVA waterless combination press from Codimag, and the new Iwasaki TR2 UV Waterless Offset Roll Label Press, which can be seen on the Pactek International stand. This is a 13" wide machine claimed to provide a 'low cost, most efficient way to manufacture short to medium runs of premium quality value added roll labels.'



Omet Varyflex flexo press

Web control

As higher value substrates are used, wastage levels become more and more critical. This in turn has created a demand for more sophisticated video inspection and web control systems in the narrow web market.

n TruColor Vision Systems Inc., introduces its high-end 100 per cent active inspection model – TG 4000 Series – with optional Automatic (Closed Loop) Register Control. System features include color monitoring which automatically checks shifts in color and a cross-hair feature for inspecting die cut.

n Hurletron releases its new MicroDot, Automatic Registration System, a camera-based system for use where registration marks need to be 'virtually invisible'.

n Unilux Inc. introduces its hand-held Cricket stroboscopic light for printed web inspection at full production speed. The Cricket can be used as a handheld, or permanently mounted unit, powered by either a battery or AC power. It has a light output of 500 Lux at 0.3m (12 inches) at 3000 flashes per minute or 250 Lux at 0.3m at 6,000 flashes per minute. It can be mounted over a press, slitter or rewinder with an articulating arm that provides a reach up to 1.15m (45 inches).

n BST Pro Mark will introduce the Genius Digital and LeX inspection and defect detection systems which provide full visual capabilities with automatic defect detection, color monitoring, barcode verification. Both products feature Virtual Repeat Technology, which allows the entire web to be viewed and inspected at a glance. The LS300 is a new ISO compliant bar code verification system that will scan 100 per cent and verify either static or sequential bar codes at normal speeds.

n Inspection Systems, Inc, specialist in high speed bar code inspection applications shows its new Compliance Pro (Sequence Management) System. Webscan unveils its new TruMatrix bar code verifier for use on Data Matrix and other matrix type codes. Engineered with CCD and solid state LED illumination technology, TruMatrix is claimed to be the industry's first data matrix verifier that is NIST traceable.

In brief...

• Harper Corporation of America will be exhibiting its Platinum anilox technology. This utilises a new laser process, which reacts with modified trace elements in the Echoplasma ceramic coatings, producing a 60 per cent increase in ceramic cauterisation. Harper claims that this additional cauterisation of the cell walls and cell bottoms forms smoother cell cavities, providing easier cleaning, better ink release, and smoother lay downs. The Platinum cell walls also reduce the risk of scoring and excessive doctor blade wear.

• Benton Graphics introduces its Ultimeter line of doctor blades constructed from a patent pending high performance steel alloy, Microloy. Daetwyler Corporation introduces the PRO line of non-metallic doctor blades designed to resist wear, prevent ink buildup, and allow for safer handling.

• Meech Static Eliminators shows new resistively coupled high power shockless ionizing bar and shockless static generation systems.

• Corotec Corporation will be introducing its Uni-Dyne concept treating system with removable electrode drawer for easy cleaning and job changeover. The exhibit will include an operating Uni-Dyne narrow-web treating system with Power Density Control, Plasma-Jet 3-D treating system with new microprocessor-based alarm system, and Nozone ozone destruction system.

• Softal-3DT will display the new CLRE narrow web corona treating system with integrated web cleaning of conductive and non-conductive web materials. Specially designed for label printing machines, the CLRE is claimed to 'eliminate set-up changes between corona treatments and web cleaning of conductive and non-conductive web materials.'

Gallus Group announces management shake-up

Klaus Bachstein has been announced as the new chairman of the Gallus Group in a major restructuring which sees key Heidelberg managers taking a prominent role in the company's management.

Klaus Aarestrup – former head of business development for narrow-web printing at Heidelberg – will take over Bachstein's former role as head of sales and marketing and becomes a member of the group management team, while Jon Guy becomes Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Gallus Inc. Philadelphia, the US subsidiary of the Gallus Group. Guy is currently responsible for global sales of second-hand machines at Heidelberg. He takes over the position of CEO from Ferdinand Rüesch Jr. who is returning to Switzerland after ten years in the USA to become the new vice-chairman of the board of directors. As a member of the group management team, Rüesch will also be responsible for key account management.

Flint Ink and Gebrüder Schmidt deal finalises global ink market merger

Flint Ink Corporation and German ink manufacturer Gebrüder Schmidt GmbH have combined their operations to form Flint-Schmidt GmbH & Co. KG, one of the largest ink companies in Europe.

Headquartered in Frankfurt/Main, the new Flint-Schmidt organization also has a significant market share in Germany, employs a combined workforce of approximately 1,400, and has revenues of approximately €450 million. As part of the agreement, Gebrüder Schmidt's operations in Canada were acquired and will immediately become part of Flint Ink North America.

Jim Mahony, president of Flint Ink Europe, now serves as chief executive officer of Flint-Schmidt and is responsible for driving the integration of the company. Dr. Helmut Schmidt, who was managing director and a principal shareholder of Gebr. Schmidt GmbH, is now CEO of the combined organization.

'Our global customer base will benefit from our companies' combined resources and economies of scale,' says Mahony. 'Together we will concentrate on serving all our customers with a special focus on the eastern European region, where we see considerable opportunity for growth.'

New base for ribbon supplier

IIMAK, a leader in thermal-transfer ribbons for the auto ID market, has expanded into a state-of-the-art distribution center in North America with a potential for growth that would double its capacity. With its continued commitment to same-day fulfillment, the company is currently shipping 1,200 to 1,500 packages daily from the new, Amherst, NY facility.

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n PC Industries will exhibit the new RX 100 Digital Inspection System, a low cost, compact web viewer which can automatically alert the operator to print defects.

n The new AccuColour system from Eltromat will be introduced to the Americas. AccuColour measures 'in the image' the consistency of color throughout press runs.

n AccuWeb, Inc. will be introducing three new models of compact intermediate web guide assemblies for the label and narrow web market which can be selected for edge, alternate edge or centerline guiding. The 5.0 inch long array allows 2.4 inches of web width change without moving the sensors.

n Fife Corporation will show its new SBPC serial bus communication processor that communicates with DeviceNet, ControlNet as well as Ethernet, the Narroweb Label Press Digital Guiding systems and the new SE-38 First*Edge safe sensor that senses opaque and hard to see materials.

n Andantex USA meanwhile introduces its new line of digital web tension and registration controllers associated with its sensors and load cells.

n From Simco Industrial Static Control comes the new PerforMAX static neutralizing system, claimed the first to automatically sense the static neutralizing power needed to remove a charge from a surface and adjust the ion output of the static bar to achieve the most effective static neutralizing performance. It can be mounted up to 10" from the web surface, and up to 20" on winders.

Inks

The growing complexity of modern converting with multiple print processes – usually involving rotary UV screen in combination with flexo and/or letterpress and offset – means the offerings of ink suppliers showing complete 'sets' of complementary inks will be of great interest.

Indeed, this was the motive behind one of the big inks stories at the show – the alliance between INX International Ink Co – the third largest producer of ink in North America – and Nazdar, leading US manufacturer of screen printing inks. The two companies will co-develop products and services specifically for the Roll Label Market. INX manufacturers Letterpress, Flexo and Gravure printing inks.

Nazdar's Rotary Screen Ink will be packaged under the INX label with sales and service to the Roll Label Market through INX distribution. ▶

Akzo Nobel launches new ink systems

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Stork shows high definition rotary screens

Although invisible to the customer, Nazdar's product and support will be integrated into this new relationship.

INX launches two new products at the show, INXFlex UV inks – claimed to provide good adhesion to a wide range of substrates and to exhibit high strength at low viscosity – and INXScreen – a silicone-free rotary screen ink that allows for trapping of flexo inks without the need for a flow package. It provides for excellent adhesion to various substrates and has the capability of being stampable, says INX.

At the same time, Rotary screen specialist Stork will be introducing the latest in its range of non-woven pure nickel Rotamesh screens, 'Rotamesh 405', which prints high definition tactile images. With 25,500 holes per cm^2, each 25 micron in diameter, the Rotamesh 405 achieves resolutions down to 95 micron, and sharpest possible reproduction of both positive and negative lines 'as thin as a human hair' according to Stork.

Key applications include counterfeit-protection labelling applications, and clear reproduction of small text and oriental characters such as Chinese and Japanese.

Flat and rotary screen specialist Mec introduces a precision rigidized mesh for rotary screen printing applications.

Meanwhile, there is no doubt about the increased penetration of UV curing in a North American market which remains overwhelmingly water-based.

n Water Ink Technologies Inc., will be introducing its new UV PureFlex UV low viscosity inks, which can be poured from a jug or delivered through a pump. Water Ink believes that the perceived hazards of working with UV inks are holding back many converters, and claims that PureFlex UV inks are the 'first and only UV formulations that significantly reduce skin irritation, an important breakthrough for anyone concerned about the health and safety of their pressroom personnel.'

n On the water-based inks front, Environmental Inks and Coating introduces PRO Plus water-based inks, as well as low viscosity Ultraflex III UV flexo inks. The water-based ink can print high-impact process images and intense line colors from one ink system.

n Akzo Nobel Inks features several new ink systems, including Lithotube, Uvonyl II, PackCure, and PackLam. Also new is the company's Benzophenone-free UV Coating.

n Arcar has a new line of High Strength, Low Viscosity UV Flexo Inks, and a new line of High Density UV Screen Inks.

n Mirage has in development a new Cationic UV ink system that will compliment its existing Quartz system. The new system will demonstrate increased rates of curing and be ideally suitable for food packaging requirements, says the company.

n Kolorcure Corporation is introducing a series of one component metallic inks which the company says, are print ready and do not require press-side adjustments. Metal Cure inks are available for flexographic, rotary screen, offset, and letterpress formulations. A full range of metallic shades is offered in each printing and decorating method.

n Kolorcure's other introduction, Mirror Cure UV curable inks, provide 'the ultimate in metallic brilliance where highly reflective quality and value added special effects are required.'

n BASF Printing Systems shows a new line of Ultraking UV-curable and hybrid inks, which will be displayed with its K+E Printing Inks for sheetfed offset and narrow web offset printing. BASF will also show samples of the Nova Space project, which seeks to extend the color gamut of four-color process ink sets.

n Graphic Systems International introduces what it claims is the first fully-automated dispenser designed for the Narrow Web market, incorporating self-cleaning dispense heads and automatic return ink software. The SS-900NW system accommodates up to 16 components for automatic dispensing and unlimited hand-adds.

n AAA Press International, Inc. will highlight its new LIGHTouch UV Curing systems, including the 3" x 5" rear-loading unit with 27 step programmable power supply and integrated UV intensity monitoring system.

n Deco Chem Inc include HVF (High Viscosity Flexo) inks.

Materials

If there is a theme emerging for Labelexpo Americas among materials suppliers, it is an increased emphasis on the need to streamline the whole of the value chain by intelligent use of internet-based multiple user networks.

Raflatac Group CEO Juhani Stromberg sums it up, 'Large end-users of labels are developing e-business solutions across a wide front. The labeling industry and laminate suppliers must join this movement to maintain their competitiveness.' Stromberg stressed the opportunities the internet opens up for linking the whole value chain, rather than simply for closed transactions with single partners.

Currently, however, most e-Business developments are taking place within the laminate suppliers' own closed systems. Avery Dennison, for example, will introduce its RollXchange.com program to North America, a web-based

MACtac Javaflex for non-PS applications

trading site for surplus roll materials, with credit, collection and delivery logistics all handled by Avery.

In terms of technology, UV-cured hotmelt adhesives on film and paper stocks is an area to watch. These perform well in demanding end uses where only solvent-based adhesives could be used before. They can be coated at high weights, allowing application to problematical substrates such as high-density polyethylene, while their clarity makes them suitable for application to clear substrates.

Adhesive developments are also accelerating in areas such as VIP (Variable Information Print) labeling of pre-packed foods and film-wrapped meats and sausages, where product identification and tracking is becoming a critical requirement for the food chain. These adhesives are required to operate in the 0°C to 5°C range while withstanding the levels of condensation associated with previously refrigerated and frozen items. The thermal transfer printed face must remain readable throughout the lifetime of the product – a challenging combination.

n For those wishing to use color, thermal transfer ribbon specialist Armor introduces Colorpack, allowing clients access to a wide palette of colors. Offered in single box quantities of just 10 ribbons. Specifications of the ribbons are 3.54" (90mm) and 4.33" (110mm) wide with a standard 984' length ensure compatibility with most standard printers in the market. Colorpack is available in wax, wax/resin and resin formulations.

n Dynic USA Corporation will be exhibiting the new high-speed HT-8 ribbon and five new colors of C3 ribbon. HT-8 is a wax-resin ribbon that can print date and lot codes at up to 600 millimeters per second (almost 24 i.p.s.).

n Nakai will be displaying new products specifically designed for the label industry. These products include; foils with print-over capability when used with UV silkscreen inks, high-speed foils for rotary hot stamping applications and products designed for Cold Foiling. Also on display will be the latest edition of Nakai's color chart, which contains all of the new metallic colors.

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VIP substrates tailored for those using emerging Near Infrared scanning (675nm) technology will also be shown by suppliers.

Materials trends will focus on continued downgauging of filmic products, which has major advantages for both converters and end users as more labels can be converted on each reel. Naturally, this puts a major premium on the tensioning and web control systems on the converting press and label applicator, while taking heat away from the web on UV curing systems becomes more important.

Indeed, the ability of label presses to handle thin films is becoming a key issue with the rapid move of wrap-around, shrink and stretch systems from wider web CI presses onto narrow web, opening up major opportunities for converters to target shorter-run, marketing driven work.

n Ahlstrom Labelpack introduces Extrachrome X3, 'an extremely white, high gloss paper facestock featuring excellent opacity and brightness equalling the appearance of cast-coated and assuring high ink gloss.' Silca Speed is a new generation liner base, providing high performance at high converting speeds (1000 m/min). Ahlstrom says the exceptionally smooth multi-layer surface delivered 30 per cent silicone saving and facilitates silicone adhesion.

n Acpo shows its new line of high end specialty base-stock products for the prime label market – includes the 'no label look'.

n The Avery Dennison Engineered Films Division booth will focus on its new roll-fed applied clear shrink film, a polypropylene-based, high shrink film. Shrink demonstrations will be given every hour using an actual heat tunnel.

n Plastic Suppliers, manufacturer of unsupported film substrates for the label market, showcases a new range of shrink label films.

n Polinas Plastic of America shows new shrink, pearlized and transparent label films.

n New from Dow Corning are UV cure materials to enable coating of a wider variety of thermal-sensitive substrates. The Syl-Off brand UV cure solventless silicone release coatings expand the company's offerings to the fast-growing filmic applications market.

n Wausau Coated Products introduces tinted and/or colored silicone, pattern coated silicones and adhesives.

n Rhodia Silicones will launch three new products: A hold-out additive to improve coating quality and lower coating costs of emulsion silicone systems; A UV-Curable 'premium' release polymer that provides good cure performance and a release profile equivalent to a thermal solventless system; A low temperature curing thermal solventless silicone system to allow for coating on thermally sensitive substrates.

n Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics will be introducing at the show new additions to their Fluorosilicone release technology platform and a new film technology for chemical and UV protection for graphic face stock applications.

n Wacker Silicones' new products include AMA 70, a new anti-mist additive for high speed coating. Wacker Silicones will also be featuring solutions for production of polyester release liners.

n GE Silicones is introducing a new line of silicone release coatings, along with new online product selection, training and application development tools, for customers in pressure sensitive tape and label manufacturing.

n ExxonMobil Chemical will showcase several additions to its portfolio of Label-Lyte labeling solutionsm and promises 'an exciting development in hot melt and ▶

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cold glue application for cut and stack technologies' as well as a new coating technology for pressure sensitive labels.

n UCB Films, Inc. will display a series of newly launched biaxially oriented polypropylene films. Rayoart is a BOPP graphic arts film that resists UV degradation for up to two years. Other Label facestock films to be showcased include a new range of Rayoface ready-to-use metallised label facestock and two-side coated films that feature a print receptive top coating on one side and an adhesive anchorage coating on the other. These are ideal for peel, re-seal and removable applications.

n For converters who want to manufacture their own laminates, the Cohesio, ETI's unique pressure-sensitive converting machine, has been upgraded and now features an online die cut. Its counterpart, the Metronome, is 'an innovative flexo press that integrates a series of novel features', says ETI, and will accompany the Cohesio.

In-mold labelling is another technology fast migrating onto narrow web platforms away from sheetfed offset, a development which will be boosted by robotic application systems which can handle reels of in-mould labels and cut them 'in place' rather than feeding from cut labels in a magazine. Applications include not only injection-moulded PP food containers, but also boxes for toys, CD's, videos and similar products. IMLs in blow moulds is another rapidly advancing technology, opening up new possibilities in fmcg decoration. It is even possible now to incorporate RFID tags into IMLs, opening up a range of applications for returnable logistics operations. IML conversion is a major challenge for press manufacturers. As well as temperature control and stable tension control, die cutting has been a big issue, so it will be worth checking out the Nilpeter stand where the company's partner, Dan-Mekano of Copenhagen shows a new approach to die-cutting and stacking in-mold film labels using narrow web production techniques. The unit operates in-line with a label press or offline with an unwind unit. A vacuum band keeps the material straight and eliminates static and other handling problems to ensure accuracy at high production speeds.

Brand and product security is another key issue being addressed by materials suppliers, including the development of tamper-evident polyesters aimed at applications such as fire extinguishers, mobile phone battery labels, asset tracking labels on OTC drugs and authenticated OEM spare parts. Various techniques such as scoring the film surface or pattern coating of adhesive are employed to show evidence of tampering, including film which leaves behind geometric patterns when label removal is attempted, or where warning text is revealed.

n ITW Holographics will introduce its new iSCAN system-custom hologram technology that produces high speed, custom 2D, instant hologram.

n 3M will be highlighting its new line of Radiant Label Materials. 3M describes its films as producing 'colours that shimmer and shift with changes in viewing angle, light source, and color of the labeled surface.' The Radiant Color Label Materials can appear to be lit from inside as the colors shift from blue, magenta, gold and magenta. Color of the labeled surface can dramatically alter the colors seen on the label, as it reflects more than 98 per cent visible light.

We will also see continued developments in siliconised filmic backing liners, which allow for faster processing speeds on automatic labelling machines, with transparent liners critical for clear-on-clear applications.

Removable and promotional labels are a growing area. Check out in-particular Green Bay Packaging's intruiging Microsphere technology, where label 'movability' comes from a random layer of microscopic spherical particles. The ▶

In brief...

• MACtac will be showing three new products in the labelstock realm, including a breakaway tag stock with clean, die-cut edges for uses such as personal business cards and CD covers; a smudge-resistant paperstock used for continuous feed impact and laser printing for shipping and identification processes; and White Radiance, a white film used for wall-to-wall squeezable applications like hair care containers and body lotion tubes.

• FLEXcon will introduce a range of new products for the high end labels market, including optiFLEX CONFORM, a line of conformable polypropylenes designed for semi-squeeze/rigid containers and THINflex 1.6 mil topcoated hard clear polypropylene, a lower cost alternative to 2 mil polypropylene.
VIP products feature heavily too, with the launch of COMPUcal EXCEL polyesters, which are compatible with thermal transfer, laser, impact and electron beam print technologies, as well as conventional UV screen, letterpress and flexo inks. Also a range of vinyls, polyesters, specialty films, overlaminates and high-performance adhesives designed to meet stringent application requirements for product ID and Safety/Hazard/Instructional labeling.

• Labelexpo Americas 2002 marks a milestone for Raflatac, Inc., following the fall 2001 Grand Opening of the company's 50 million dollar state-of-the-art manufacturing facility in Fletcher, NC. Raflatac will be introducing a range of pressure sensitive material solutions and services (see p16).

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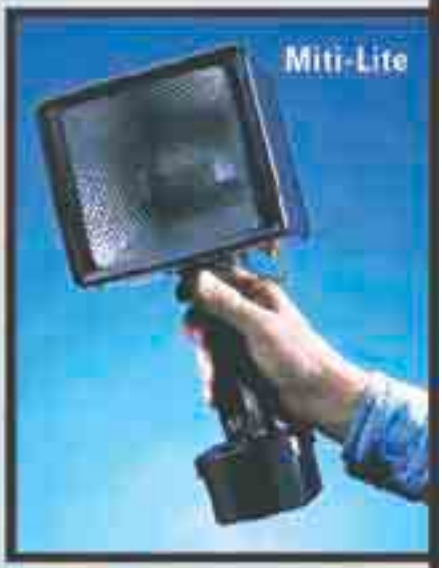

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CE

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Flexible packaging for Narrow Web converters developed by Curwood

company claims Microsphere-treated labels will remove cleanly from corrugated, glossy papers, glass and plastics.

It is not just self-adhesive materials that can be seen at the show. As narrow web converters realise that they can run a whole list of packaging and other non-PS substrates down their presses, MACtac is joining with sister company Curwood to supply a variety of flexible packaging products designed specifically for narrow web printers.

Hot vs cold foiling will be an interesting arena for debate, with proponents of the new Dieless foiling techniques – where the adhesive is cured thru the foil – showing how far the process has improved. The cut-off point between hot and cold foiling will continue to fluctuate depending on factors like cost (cold foiling radically cuts cost by requiring no more than a flexo plate for origination) quality and speed (where hot stamping still has decisive advantages).

Pre-press

This Labelexpo will see the further consolidation of computer-to-flexo plate technology and the digital workflow systems that drive it. Esko Graphics – the company formed from the merger of Barco Graphics and Purup-Eskofot – will continue its quest to make label converters look at taking digital flexo platemaking in-house with its Spark system. The new Cyrel Digital Imager Spark XT, which images digital photopolymer and letterpress plates in sizes up to 48" x 35" or 1200 x 900 millimeter, is specifically designed for the small and medium volume label shop. CDI Spark XT has the same TwinBeam optical system as used with other CDI and CDI Compact models and comes with an incorporated plate loading/unloading table and with EasyClamp to easily apply and securely hold down plates up to 6.35 mm thickness on the drum. CDI Spark XT can image plates smaller than the maximum size.

There is now a Cyrel FAST thermal flexo plate processor for digital flexo plates – look in on the Pitman stand – which allows chemical-free removal of the ablation layer in around one third the time of conventional washout systems.

Of growing interest is direct engraving of photopolymer, now being taken more seriously as a process as laser systems and materials quality improves. We've already seen the announcement of alliances between Stork and BASF, and between Artwork Systems and ZED to further develop the potential of a technology which promises to eliminate multiple processing steps from flexographic platemaking. ZED recently expanded its ZEDMini family of systems with the introduction of a system incorporating a 500W laser, which doubles the engraving speed.

In brief...

• RIPit Corps will show the latest version of its narrow-web specific OpenRIP Label-Flexo system.

• Primac Systems will demonstrate how MIS system providers are also moving to internet-enabled workflows, when it shows significant updates to its Printing Industry Management and Control System. E-PRIMAC is a browser enabled version of PRIMAC, while PRInet gives internet access to PRIMAC data for end users, including finished goods inventory views, job status, shipment status and tracking, request for quote, repeat item order entry.

• For converters looking to analyse overall printing process performance, RDP Marathon will launch its Optim+ system, designed to provide a real-time plant MIS with the ability to zero in on a user-specified timeline for an individual press, product or shift, allowing printers to identify and improve key problem areas.

Optim+'s shift report screen, accessible at the press console, automatically logs downtime events and associated waste, while prompting the press operator to select a pre-defined down-time reason from a pop-up menu. Plant management also has the ability to customize down-time reasons to their own operations. Optim+ runs concurrently with the RDP SmartoSet 2000 press control system which provides control of all press functions.

The systems produce high quality tone screens in excess of 150 lpi, and a key feature is the capability to vary the height of the tone dots below the surface, ensuring minimum press dot-gain.

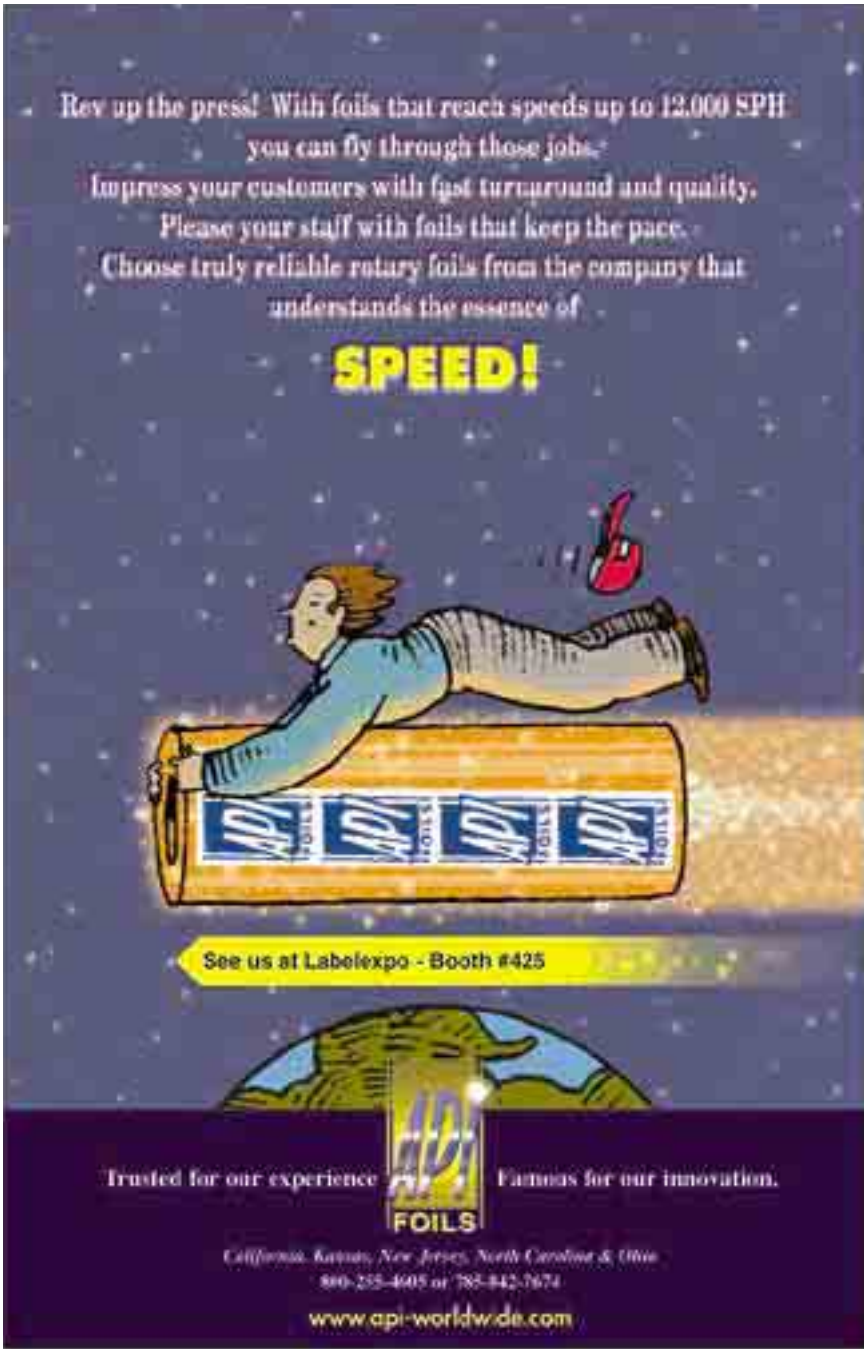
BASF Printing Systems will introduce its direct laser engraved plate (LEP) technology for flexographic printing at the show.

Conventional plate developments are also unveiled at Labelexpo Americas, with MacDermid Printing Solutions introducing its new uncapped sheet photopolymer product, Encore, compatible with UV, alcohol, water and glycol based printing inks. The company is claiming rapid dry times, shorter detack times and 'outstanding' performance on a wide variety of substrates. Encore can be used with conventional and point-light imaging processes.

Cortron Corporation is demonstrating a new high definition flexo plate exposure device claimed to provide users with 'digital quality plates at analogue prices'. Utilizing a patent pending tuned reflector technology, optimal shoulder angle is achieved. As a result highlight shoulders stand up and reverses don't fill in. There is no fall off from edge to edge and floors are consistent across the entire plate, says Cortron.

ARC International will exhibit its new seamless laser engraved printing plates and OptiSleeves, suitable for direct plate mounting or continuous digital engraving.

Look out too for dedicated digital workflow products for label converters and trade shops. An exciting development is the integration of internet-based asset management and remote proofing systems into converters' work-



exciting development is the integration of internet-based asset management and remote proofing systems into converters' workflows, which will be shown by Creo, Artwork Systems and Esko (formerly Barco before its merger with Purup Eskofot. We are also seeing the integration of digital workflow systems with 'back office' MIS software packages. JDF is emerging as a key factor here, containing as it does complete workflow information in the digital job file.

Workflow

Artwork Systems will introduce SmartNexus, a Nexus 7.0 module that facilitates variable database driven workflows by allowing access through external Java programs for customising workflows and modifying job tickets. Using SmartNexus a customer can build conditional workflows that follow a different execution path, or apply different parameter sets depending on the content of database fields, eg customer job tickets which determine the type of proof, output resolution etc. The company will also make a technology announcement for 'Odyssey', a new hotfolder based workflow system, aimed at mid-range printers, and repro houses, where high-end workflow systems are too elaborate, cumbersome or expensive.

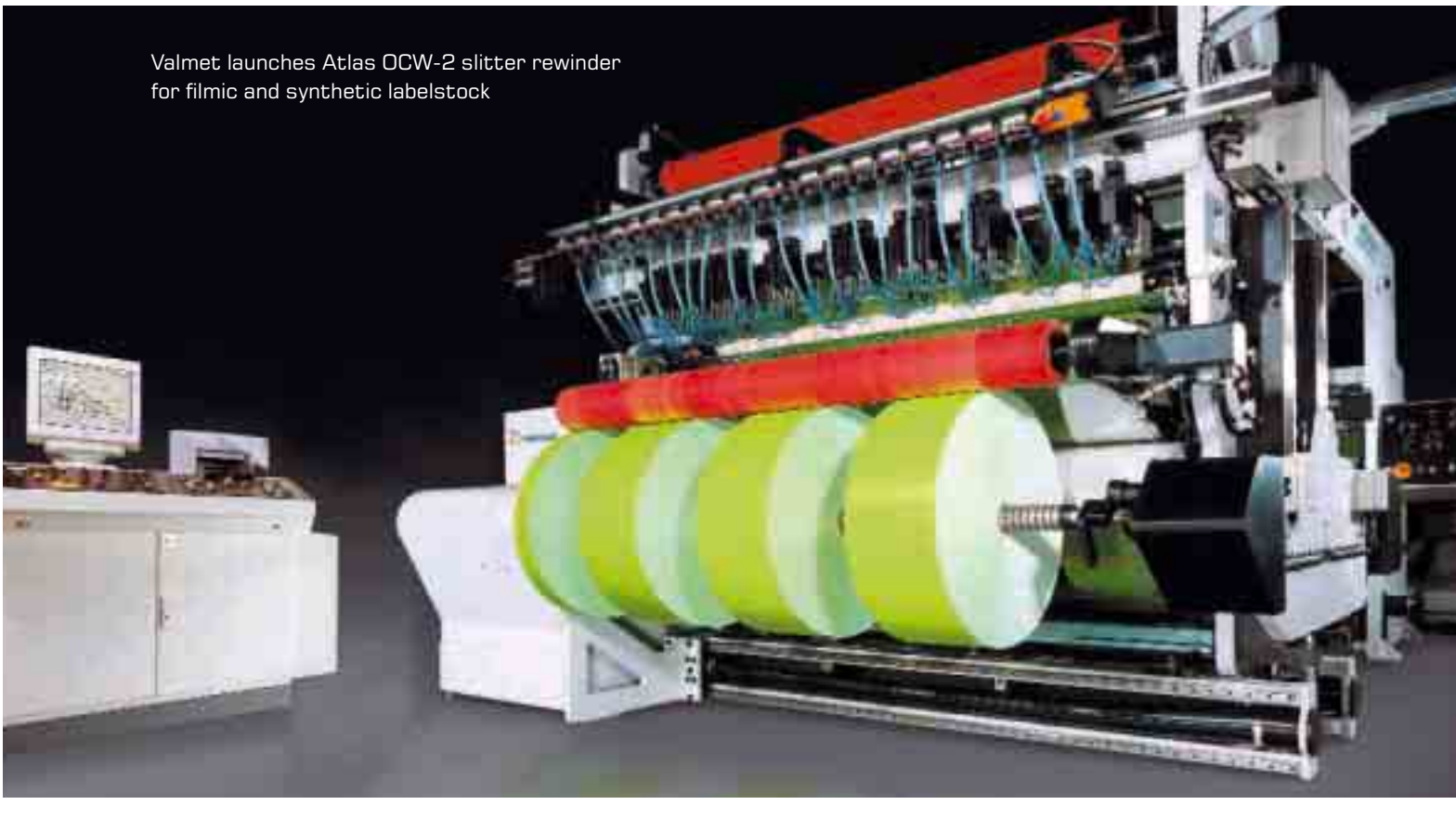
Esko introduces the entry level DeskPack, a suite of dedicated packaging design, print verification and packaging trapping tools centered around Adobe Illustrator clients. The DeskPack workflow starts from the original design data, and returns all added information back into the same file – trapping objects for example are added as a separate layer to the Illustrator document, and can be freely edited or discarded as desired. The plug-ins include Barco's boostX drawing, editing and ink control tools, checkX, which analyses a design and compensates for limitations of the reproduction process early in the workflow and trapX packaging trapping system.

Creo is the latest of the big pre-press system vendors to make a major move into the packaging-specific pre-press sector via key alliances. ScenicSoft's Pandora PDF-based packaging layout solution is now to be integrated in version 2.1 of the Prinergy Powerpack workflow. This powerful step-and-repeat program and nesting application is designed to automatically optimize the press sheet surface for label, postcard and packaging printers. Version 2.1 of the Prinergy Powerpack workflow will include enhanced features that specifically address the needs of flexographic printers, converters and trade shops. This version includes 7.5 degree-shifted flexo angle screening and vector scaling as standard features. Creo will also introduce its Networked Graphic Production initiative, as well as the Synapse InSite Internet portal, which enables online collaboration between creative and technical people, online job submission, and remote proofing for a faster and simplified proofing process.

Converting

The latest buzz in the narrow web industry is printing on multiple substrates. This possibility has long been realizable with Comco MSP presses as well as Webtron/ZigZag machines among others, but we now see the concept start to migrate to other press manufactures such as Omet and Gi Due, which have both launched dedicated carton presses.

A major problem when converting cartons in-line has ▶



Valmet launches Atlas OCW-2 slitter rewinder for filmic and synthetic labelstock

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In brief...

• An interesting announcement from T.D. Wright Inc. is the launch of a new magnetic cylinder for labels and folding carton work. Modular Magnetic is a patent pending construction that eliminates the magnetically 'dead' band found on conventional milled groove type magnetic cylinders. According to TDW, the edge of the die can be held more tightly to the cylinder regardless of die length. Additional benefits of the modular approach include allowing variable substitution of low cost ceramic for expensive rare earth based magnetic materials based upon the end user's application and performance objectives, easy repair, and lowered purchase costs.

• RotoMetrics shows for the first time the new UEI Group-manufactured rotary hot stamping and embossing tools, for which it is the exclusive distributor. UEI's UniFlex system is a patented flexible copper die with a unique steel backing that is securely positioned onto a heated magnetic cylinder.

• Sohn Mfg. will be demonstrating that it can register a rotary die to preprinted stock, laminate and register the rotary die to preprinted stock and register the die to pre-die cut materials.

• American Die Technology has new products on show including Equalizer II pressure equalization system for rotary presses, and its own hot foil stamping unit.

• Kocher & Beck introduces a new version of its established Gap Master adjustable anvil system. The Gap Master Plus allows the press operator to change the gap by increments of 0.8 microns (3/10,000). This adjustment can be done on both the operator and gear side at the same time, or just on the gear side to give maximum flexibility.

• Xynatech will feature its computer to plate flexible die making technology. Known as direct imaging process (DIP), this elimination of film as an intermediate step in flexible die making improves accuracy several fold, says the company. Also new, low impact die cutting where the 'offset' normally present in RP or PC cuts has been greatly reduced by a new die design. Xynatech's answer for increased die life, X-63 die will be shown for the first time.

• Laser die cutting is represented at the show by Cartes Equipment, which launches its Laser 350 system with an operating speed of 1350 feet/minute on a web width of 89". The CO2 semi-sealed laser system, means it requires virtually no maintenance and minimal operation costs, says Cartes.

• Bunting Magnetic Co. introduces the Cerface Converting System, a die cutting system for retrofit on existing narrow web presses. The system consists of a die cutting module custom built for existing presses, a set of Cerface magnetic cylinders, and flexible die cutting plates.

• The latest Crusader web converting system will be launched by Delta Industrial Services with updates including a new seal bed with increased sealing speeds and a new flexo printer with a telescoping cartridge which will allow for easy changeover of rollers, ink pans and doctor blades.

• An interesting development from Schober USA is the Cut and Place system, which can cut a full section or only part of a web and transfer it onto a second one. These webs can be self-adhesive. This is of particular interest for 'sandwich' type products.

been die-cutting/creasing, but at this show a number of rotary tooling suppliers launch specialist systems, including Gerhardt, with its MultiLines BoxCut single cut/crease die, Xynatech, Rotometrics and Schober. The Schober system is a complete converting solution in working widths from 550 mm to 850 mm, which can be operated either in-line with a web press or off-line. It can incorporate hologram/heat sealing units, embossing units, rotary creasing, punching, punching and cutting units and a fully automated pile delivery.

Arpeco Engineering will introduce what it claims is a major innovation in printing and converting web-based folding cartons. The Arpeco Injector System uses flexible steel tooling to process the printed web inline without the use of repeat-specific magnetic cylinders. For fast changeover, the cutting module and waste stripping system roll out as a unit onto a changeover platform. In a few minutes, the flexible steel dies and the stripping systems are changed over and pre-registered.

The servo system makes it possible for the web to be processed into 'shaped sheets', maximizing board usage for each type of carton configuration.

The Injector System can also be used as a conventional repeat-specific rotary cutter by installing repeat specific magnetic bases or dedicated tooling, offering converters a single solution for both short and long run carton production.

For those looking to convert heat sensitive materials on UV-cured narrow web lines, take a look at the systems at the show which divert heat from the web. Honle UV America, for example, shows a radical design which rotates the lamp away from the substrate and returns the UV energy thru heat absorbing mirrors. Honle says its Advanced Cold Mirror (ACM) technology delivers higher peak intensity than direct UV with up to 80 per cent reduction in substrate temperature rise depending on the absorption characteristics of the material.

Prime UV's portable Miniscan system launched at the show also offers 'super-cooling' for film stocks and is available with diachroic reflectors. The Prime UV Miniscan is less than 4" in the web or product direction and is claimed easy to install interstation on all narrow web and label presses such as ▶

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For measuring UV emissions EIT will be introducing the PALM Probe radiometer, which allows the user to take measurements in difficult to reach areas of UV curing systems.

Slitter rewinder/ inspectors

Slitter/rewinders with inspection and/or die cutting facilities, will also make an impact at Labelexpo Americas with a range of new products, as the converting end of the line becomes more important to rigorous QA regimes. Adding an ink jet printer to a slitter/rewinder gives a useful batch numbering and encoding facility at the point of shipment.

n Aztech Machinery introduces a line of slitter/rewinders with 40" roll capacity and widths up to 16", the DieMaster, DM-4016, 16" three station die cutter/slitter which includes slitting and dual rewind, and a single station re-registration option for all three DieMasters 10 ", 13" and 16" widths.

n Label Accessories Inc. will be introducing the GLR-50 label Rewinder, a smaller version of its established GLR-100 rewinder. The GLR-50 supports labels from 1-4" wide, maximum speed of 10" per second and an Outer diameter roll of 9".

n KOR Engineering introduces the PAC 51 FWD high speed inspection rewinder for film and paper, which comes standard with removable Shear Slitting, Razor Slitting, Rotary Diecutting modules and a Duplex Rewind, plus a fully integrated vision system

n Martin Automatic, Inc. will run a new low-tension model of its popular MBS zero speed butt splicer with the Martin LR rewind and a Vectra multi-spindle rewind. The LR will demonstrate its new automatic ribbon tab-down feature. Martin will also demonstrate, for the first time, its model SSBS, same side, narrow web, in-register, zero speed butt splicer.

n CTC will demonstrate a new small roll turret rewinder, a glue-less start turret rewinder, automatic tail label roll closure system, and a new automatic butt splicer.

n Matthias Paper Corporation shows its new Duplex Slitter/Rewinder, which expands the company's product line of non-pressure sensitive substrates to include non-woven textiles and synthetics, HDPE films and foil laminations.

n Valmet's Atlas OCW-2 slitter rewinder for filmic/synthetic labelstock is a new machine launched in June. The machine is a centre surface slitter that can also be used as a pure centre winder. The Atlas OCW-2 is equipped with fixed height differential rewind shafts and two full width layon rolls which can be driven by a separate motor. This centre surface slitter rewinder minimises adhesive 'bleed' and provides better balance of rewind tension in finished reels.

Rewinders are emerging as key components in Radio Frequency ID tag insertion systems. Converters interested in investigating setting up their own RFID 'smart labeling' divisions should talk to suppliers like Burton Engineering and should also vist bielomatik's stand to find out more about its Qualified Manufacturing Process (QMP) for RFID.

bielomatik will introduce a new compact Transponder Coding and Transfer machine with a processing speed of 60 m/min. Using a camera based vision system instead or in addition to the universal RFID reader, the capability of the machine can be extended to a detection and replacement system for optical defects, colour problems etc.

Applicators

The world of label applicators is becoming more important as label converters push self-adhesive labelling systems into end users to promote their PS label sales.

n Impresstik, a 'high-decoration' p/s label printer and applicator manufacturer based in Sydney, Australia, will introduce its patented promotional neck-tag application system, targeted at the wine market, and for all other bottled products.

The 'Protag' concept, comprising a custom-designed neck-tag and dedicated applicator, offers numerous advantages compared to other promotional labelling systems and conventional hand-applied alternatives, says Impresstik. The company has formed a separate division called Reeltek Systems International Pty Ltd, which will focus on international development via recruitment of licensees who will be granted exclusive marketing rights.

n Start International will be exhibiting five new labeling machines. The Bottle Labeler, for semi-automatic labeling; the Edge Labeler, for security labels; the Label Press which places labels on tops, sides or bottoms of flat or slightly curved surfaces; a heavy duty dispenser for large labels and finally a label dispenser that dispenses and prints date codes and/or batch numbers with a hot stamp onto preprinted labels.

n OPP film specialist AET Films has introduced an exciting sounding developmental technology that makes it possible for existing cut and stack labeling equipment to apply die-cut OPP labels. Designated the TOppCure 153 Labeling System, the process combines innovative pressure-sensitive labeling techniques with modified cut and stack labeling equipment. The system enables converters to maximize return on their capital investment while allowing package designers to take advantage of the graphic capabilities of OPP films.■

UV curing

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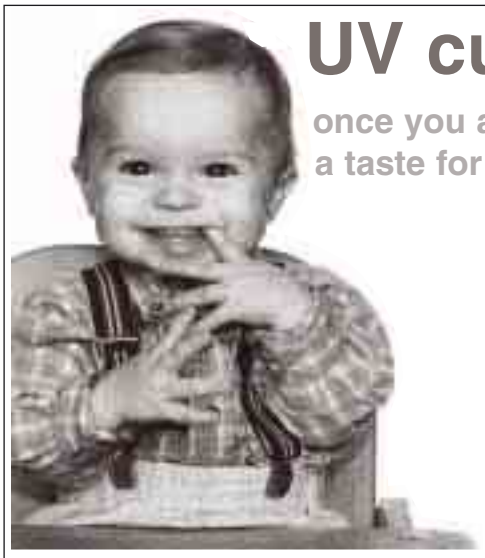

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AIRTRIM, INC.	6114
AKZO NOBEL INKS	1429
ALDEN & OTT FLEXO	205
ALIPACK AMERICAS	351
ALLISON SYSTEMS CORP.	5002
ALPHA INNOVATION INC.	4002
AMAGIC HOLOGRAPHICS INC	3000
AMERICAN BANKNOTE HOLOGRAPHICS	5613
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ARCONVERT-MANTER/GRUPPO FEDRIGONI	1361
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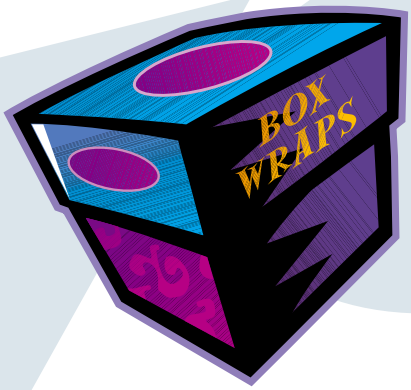

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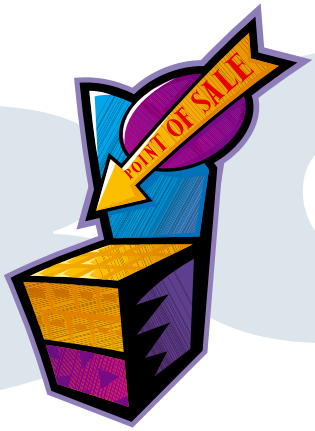

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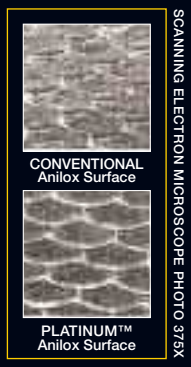

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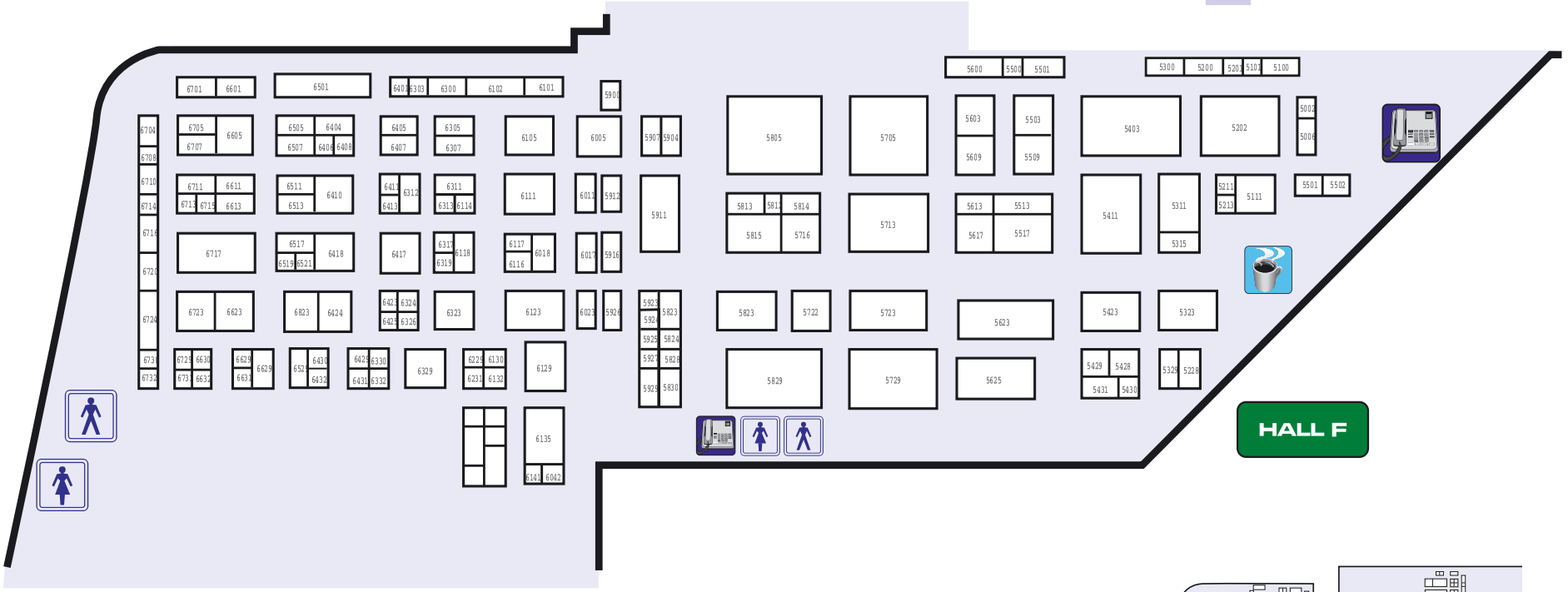

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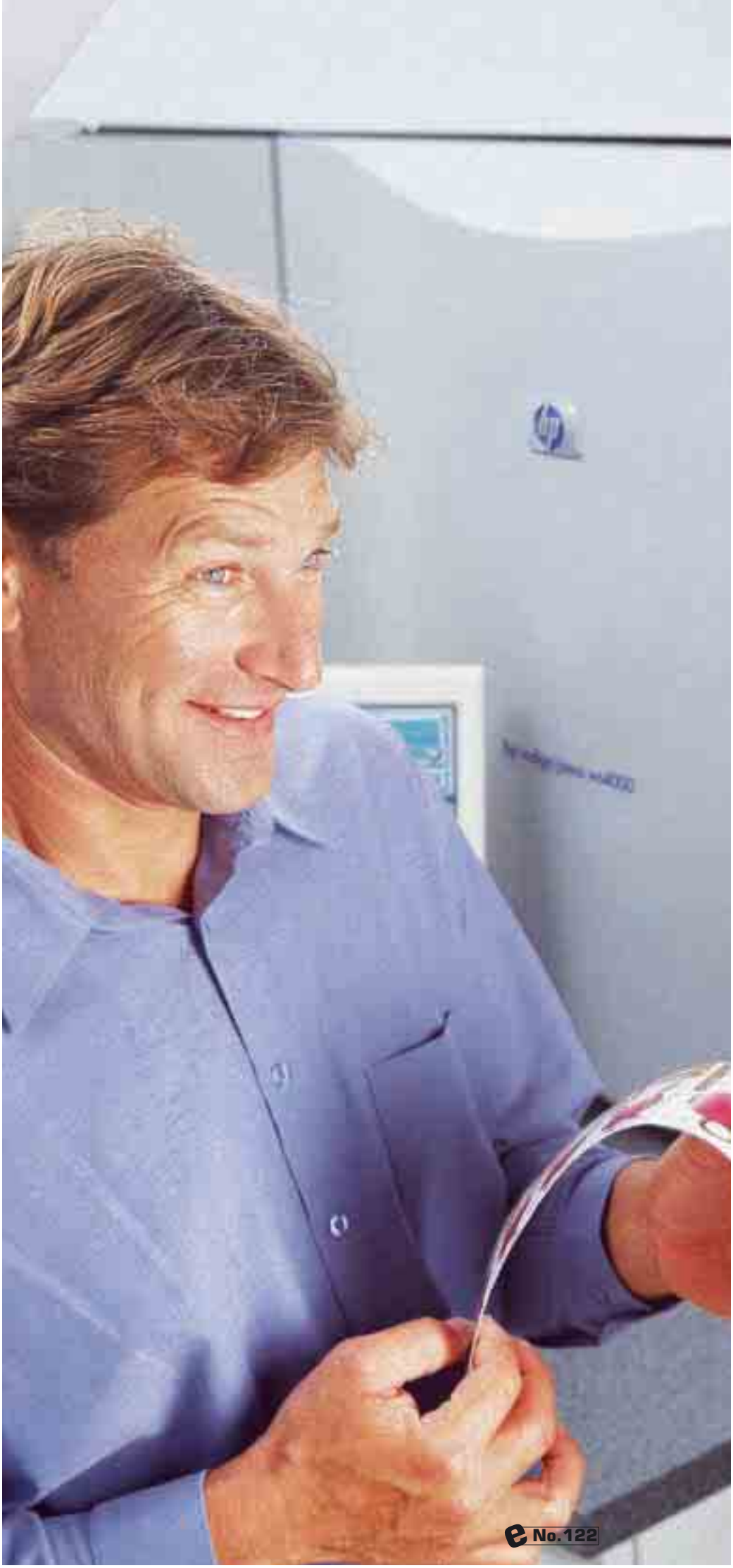

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Conference Program

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Conference

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Registration/General Information

Participation in Labelexpo Americas 2002 is limited to registered attendees. The official badge is required for admittance to all sessions and exhibits.

Tuesday 10th September 2002

06.30am – 2pm **Conference Registration**
Donald E Stephens Conference Center

T10 07.30—08.30 **Keynote Address**
Global Trends and Market Influences Affecting the Labeling Industry
Christian Simcic Group Vice President, Avery Dennison, Roll Materials Worldwide

T11 08.45-10.00 **Security Markets I**
Emerging Security Applications/Technologies and the Role of the Converter Gadi Hoenig GM Technology Division, Tadbik
Practical Solutions Bill Wheeler American Bank Note Holographics
Validation Features Alexei Palladin Microsoft (TBC)
Andre Cote Checkpoint

T12 08.45-10.00 **Utilizing Information Technology to Better Link with Customers & Shorten the Supply Chain**
Raymond Dickinson Product Marketing Manager Hewlett-Packard, Indigo Division

T13 08.45-10.00 **Transforming the Sales Force to Create Customer Value**
How to Change the Customer's Perception of the Salesperson's Value from a Product-Oriented 'Vendor' to a Business- Oriented 'Resource'
Jerry Stapleton Stapleton Resources LLC

T14 08.45-09.45 **New Ideas for Growing your Business**
Bob Jewell Omega Leadership Group
Highlights Include:
1. What a "complementor" is and how it can impact your business's success or failure
2. How do I identify complementors
3. How complementors can enhance your businesses planning and strategy
4. How you can leverage complementors to expand into new markets

T15 10.30-12.30 **Behind the Label – The Inside Story on Beverage Container Decoration**
Topics to be discussed:
Beverage Industry Growth
Substrate Trends
Press Innovations
New Dispensing Technologies
Recycling PET Products

Companies represented for the Panel Discussion include:
Havis Dawson Editor in Chief, Beverage World
Mary Ellen Reis President, Packnology
Ed Boyle Paper Film Foil Converter, Contributing Editor
Erik With Director of Sales, K2 Engineering Group
Mike Schedler Vice President of Technology, NAPCOR
Chris Weir Market Development Manager, Avery Dennsion

T16 10.30-12.00 **Security Markets II**
Fighting Counterfeits in the Aerospace Industry
Wayne Leaders NASA
Case Study **Rick Weatherly** Westvaco
Barry Madel MACtac

T17 10.30-11.30 **The Shape of things to Come**
The Power of Your Brand!
Sue Barkis Leapfrog Consulting

7 Golden Rules of Label/Packaging Design
Robert Wilkes President Monaghan & Company

T18 10.30-11.30 Business Practices
The Cost and Impact of a Vacant Position
Sheldon Myeroff, President, Direct Recruiters Inc

Wednesday 11th September 2002

06.30am – 2pm **Conference Registration**
Donald E Stephens Conference Center

W10 07.30-08.30 **What's Driving the changes in Product Decorating?**
Part I Greater Intensity at Retail. "Its Disneyland out there."
James W. Peters Peters + Associates

W11 09.15-10.30 **Security Markets III**
RFID Overview **Mark Roberti** Editor RFID Journal
The Road to a Very Low Cost RFID Tag
Tuomo Wall Regional Sales Manager, Rafsec
RFID Application Systems **Jurgen Rexer** bielomatik
Title TBA **Douglas Karp** Checkpoint

W12 09.15-10.30 **Narrow Web Opportunities Beyond Pressure Sensitive – One Niche at a time.**
Market Overview of Opportunities Beyond Pressure Sensitive Labels **Gary Gates** Gates Packaging Inc.
Shrink Materials for shrink labels
Gary Duncan King Global Enterprises Inc.
New Seaming Technologies for Shrink Sleeves
Raul Matos Karlville Development

W13 09.15-10.30 **Focus on Latin America I**
Narrow Web Market Overview (Mercosur Trade Zone-Argentina, Brazil, Chile and Uruguay)
John Wurzburger Avery Dennison

Packaging Innovation using Pressure Sensitive Technology In Latin America
Trends and latest developments highlighted by recent case studies from the following applications:
1. Prime Label Identification on HABA market
2. Wines and Beverage
3. Electronics/durable labeling applications
Isabela Monteiro Marketing Avery Dennison Brazil

E-Business in the Latin America Pressure Sensitive Industry
1. Overview of general E-Business
2. E-Business overview for the Graphic Arts Industry
3. E-Business for the Pressure Sensitive Industry
Federico Favro Velo Marketing Avery Dennison Argentina

W14 09.15-10.30 **Value Added Applications – Enhancing the Value of Labels**
Special Effect Inks and Coatings. Opening up Hollywood markets and achieving Hollywood margins
Ed Dedman SICPA North America
UV Technology – Come into the Light
Frank Simonetti Sales Manager, Aetek UV Systems

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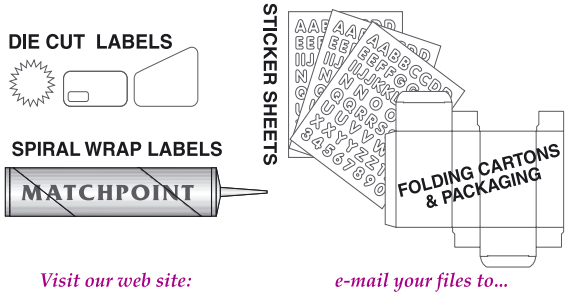

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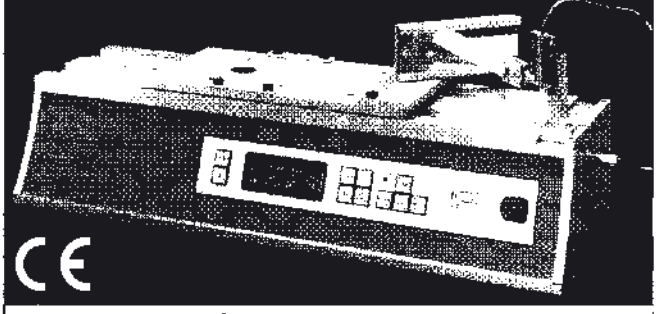

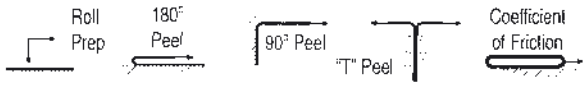

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Conference Program

W15 09.15-10.30 **When Every Penny Counts!**
Understanding Finance Leases, Operating Leases and Refinancing of Existing Leases and Loans
Bob Seeds International Financial Services
What your balance sheet should look like
David Roper President Alliant Capital
Return on Investments – How to Justify and Support Spending on IT Systems **Chris Wood** Radius Systems
What has your business management system done for you lately? (Case study report Impressive Labels)
Glen Forbes VP Sales, CRC Information Systems

W16 11.00-12.00 **Narrow Web Opportunities Beyond Pressure Sensitive – One Niche at a time.**
Application of Shrink Wrap Around and Shrink Sleeve Labels **Dave Niemouth** Krones
The Future Outlook for Shrink Sleeve and Wrap Around Shrink Labeling **Houston Keith** Keymark Associates

W17 11.00-12.00 Tools of the On-Line Trade – How do I keep from losing my shorts? **Bill Klein** Executive Director, PLGA
Opportunities, Threats and Challenges
Auctions **Carter Lynch** Team Lead Packaging, FreeMarkets.com

W18 11.00-12.00 **Transforming the Sales Force to Create Customer Value**
How to Change the Customer's Perception of the Salesperson's Value from a Product-Oriented 'Vendor' to a Business- Oriented 'Resource'
Jerry Stapleton Stapleton Resources LLC

W19 11.00-12.00 **Value Added Applications – Enhancing the Value of Labels**
Opaltone is not for everybody! Is it for you?
Steve Paynter Harper
How the New Generation of Narrow Web Corona Treaters Can Make you More Productive and Profitable
Scott Kessler Sales Manager, ITW-Pillar Technologies

W20 11.00-12.00 **New Ideas for Growing your Business**
Bob Jewell Omega Leadership Group
Highlights Include:
1. What a "complementor" is and how it can impact your business's success or failure
2. How do I identify complementors
3. How complementors can enhance your businesses planning and strategy
4. How you can leverage complementors to expand into new markets

Thursday 12th September 2002

06.30am – 2pm **Conference Registration**
Donald E Stephens Conference Center

H10 07.30-08.30 **What's Driving the Changes in Product Decorating Part II**
James W. Peters, Peters + Associates

H11 08.45-10.00 **Emerging Applications for Narrow Web Technology – One Niche at a time.**
An Overview of the Flexible Packaging Market and Where the Narrow Web Converter fits **Bill Hare** Director of Marketing, Curwood/Bemis
The Growth Potential In the Pouch and Sachet Marketplace and How the Future is Bright for the Continued Growth of Flexible Packaging **Dennis Calamusa** AlliedFlexTechnologies Inc.
Panel Discussions to include: Avery Dennison/Glenroy/ MACtac – Curwood

H12 08.45-10.00 **What's New in Food Labeling?**
Technology Needed for New Markets
Bill Austen CEO, MACtac,**Mark Gillis** Director, PCMC
Rob Carter Director of Label Market Development, AET Films

H13 08.45-10.00 **Focus on Latin America II**
Narrow Web Market Overview (Andean Pact Trade Zone) Colombia, Equador, Peru and Venezuela)
John Wurzburger Avery Dennison
Pre-Press – Digital Work Flows
Tom Caplinger MacDermid Graphic Arts
Plate Mounting **Bruce Price** Rogers Corporation
UV and Water Base Speciality/Combination Inks – Application and Use **Carmen Eide** Akzo Nobel Inks
Press Technology **Paul Mattle** Gallus

H14 08.45-10.00 **Technology Updates I**
Combination Printing **Eric Short** RDP Marathon
Digital Printing **Ken Daming**, Mark Andy
Digital Workflow (CTP) – E-Business, Digital Workflow, Low Cost CTP Engines **Jim Austin**, Marketing Manager, Dupont USA
Digital Quality Flexo Plates at Analogue Prices
Marc Fioravanti VP Sales & Marketing, Cortron Corporation

H15 10.30-11.30 **Transforming the Sales Force to Create Customer Value**
How to Change the Customer's Perception of the Salesperson's Value from a Product-Oriented 'Vendor' to a Business- Oriented 'Resource' "
Jerry Stapleton Stapleton Resources LLC

H16 10.30-12.00 **Emerging Applications for Narrow Web Technology – One Niche at a Time.**
Dual Web Pouch Machine Allows for Narrow Webs to make Larger Pouches **John Price** Karlville Development
Prelaminated Flexible Packaging for the Narrow Web Converter **Greg Martin** MACtac Flexible Packaging
Glenroy's Narrow Web Converter Program **Gary Bobko** Sales Manager, Glenroy
Converting Flexible Packaging On Press
Gary Gates Gates Packaging Inc.

H17 10.30-12.00 **Food/Beverage Labeling**
Case Study I **Keith Fowler** Impresstik Pty
Wine Label Trends
Maureen Erickson Designer and Toad Hollow Vineyards
Press Trends **Kishore Sarkar** Gallus

H18 10.30-12.00 **Technology Updates II**
Differences between Hot Foil and Cold Foil
Dan Plash Sales Manager, Telstar Engineering
Rotary Hot Stamping Market Updates
Jeff Peterson Foil Stamping and Embossing Association

H19 10.30-12.00 **Macro Trends in the Pharmaceutical Industry impacting the Labeling Industry Ralph Dillon**
Director of Quality Engineering, Pharmacia Corporation
Rick Harris VP Marketing, Flexcon **Denny McGee**
National Accounts Manager, Mark Andy

Labelling news

3M acquires Emtech business

3M has acquired Emtech Emulsion Technologies, Inc., a specialist in emulsion adhesive technology for high-performance film label materials used primarily in the automotive, security and consumer products markets. Emtech and 3M's label businesses will be combined into a single 3M operating unit.

Jim Mahan, division vice president, 3M Engineered Adhesives Division, commented, 'This deal will strengthen our ability to meet customers' needs by significantly expanding our line of products and services for the label and converting industry.'

'This is a great move for our customers and our people,' said, Greg Lampe, president, Emtech. 'Our people and products will benefit tremendously from 3M's strong brand name, unmatched technology base and worldwide presence.'

The acquisition, subject to normal closing conditions, including regulatory approvals, was expected to close in mid-July as *L&L* went to press. Emtech Emulsion Technologies, Inc., is a $40 million company with approximately 95 employees headquartered in Medina, Ohio.

AET claims cut and stack technology breakthrough

OPP film specialist AET Films has introduced a developmental technology that makes it possible for existing cut and stack labeling equipment to apply die-cut OPP labels. Designated the TOppCure 153 Labeling System, the process combines innovative pressure-sensitive labeling techniques with modified cut and stack labeling equipment.

The system enables converters to maximize return on their capital investment while allowing package designers to take advantage of the graphic capabilities of OPP films.

Previously, package designers were limited to paper-based labels that are suited for the cold glue systems of cut and stack labeling equipment. Traditional OPP cut and stack labels have been limited to wrap-around, square-cut labels applied with hot melt adhesive systems. AET says its TOppCure labeling technology enables application of die-cut OPP labels with cut and stack labeling equipment.

The TOppCure System uses an accurately metered adhesive application system to apply a custom formulated adhesive to labels on specially designed pallets that remove individual labels from a modified magazine.

The pallets transmit the labels to a transfer wheel where the label adhesive is cured as it passes through an irradiation zone. The label is then placed on the container, where it delivers appearance and performance properties comparable to that of a typical pressure-sensitive label, says AET.

AVT acquires Geiger to expand labels presence

Advanced Vision Technology has acquired Geiger Vision Systems (GVS) GmbH, the German-based specialist in automatic print defect detection equipment for the label printing industry.

GVS solutions are used worldwide for label and bar code inspection with a particularly strong presence in the pharmaceutical package-printing sector. In addition, the company has developed optical character recognition (OCR) systems that are used by banks, insurance companies and the public sector.

AVT will now establish a subsidiary in Germany into which all GVS activities will be incorporated. AVT Germany will focus on research and development and will be headed by GVS's founder and managing director Axel Geiger. The purchase is expected to be completed in the third quarter 2002.

Commented Axel Geiger, 'GVS's particular technology and marketplace complements AVT's experience and expertise. We share the same vision for the labels market, and working as part of AVT will be a rewarding and exciting experience.'

Gi Due to launch Screen head

Gi Due has developed a drop in screen printing head for its Combat press range. The company says flexo and screen printing will become 'fully interchangeable for enhanced graphic possibilities and greater added value on the printed product.'

L&L understands the unit is currently at prototype stage and will be launched at Labelexpo Americas in September.

Gallus Group announces management shake-up

Klaus Bachstein has been announced as the new chairman of the Gallus Group in a major restructuring which sees key Heidelberg managers taking a prominent role in the company's management.

Klaus Aarestrup – former head of business development for narrow-web printing at Heidelberg – will take over Bachstein's former role as head of sales and marketing and becomes a member of the group management team, while Jon Guy becomes Chief Executive Officer (CEO) of Gallus Inc. Philadelphia, the US subsidiary of the Gallus Group. Guy is currently responsible for global sales of second-hand machines at Heidelberg. He takes over the position of CEO from Ferdinand Rüesch Jr. who is returning to Switzerland after ten years in the USA to become the new vice-chairman of the board of directors. As a member of the group management team, Rüesch will also be responsible for key account management.

Flint Ink and Gebrüder Schmidt deal finalises global ink market merger

Flint Ink Corporation and German ink manufacturer Gebrüder Schmidt GmbH have combined their operations to form Flint-Schmidt GmbH & Co. KG, one of the largest ink companies in Europe.

Headquartered in Frankfurt/Main, the new Flint-Schmidt organization also has a significant market share in Germany, employs a combined workforce of approximately 1,400, and has revenues of approximately €450 million. As part of the agreement, Gebrüder Schmidt's operations in Canada were acquired and will immediately become part of Flint Ink North America.

Jim Mahony, president of Flint Ink Europe, now serves as chief executive officer of Flint-Schmidt and is responsible for driving the integration of the company. Dr. Helmut Schmidt, who was managing director and a principal shareholder of Gebr. Schmidt GmbH, is now CEO of the combined organization.

'Our global customer base will benefit from our companies' combined resources and economies of scale,' says Mahony. 'Together we will concentrate on serving all our customers with a special focus on the eastern European region, where we see considerable opportunity for growth.'

New base for ribbon supplier

IIMAK, a leader in thermal-transfer ribbons for the auto ID market, has expanded into a state-of-the-art distribution center in North America with a potential for growth that would double its capacity. With its continued commitment to same-day fulfillment, the company is currently shipping 1,200 to 1,500 packages daily from the new, Amherst, NY facility.

Labelling news

INX enters screen ink alliance

INX International Ink Co., the third largest producer of ink in North America and Nazdar, the leading manufacturer of screen printing inks in North America, have formed an alliance to co-develop products and services for the Roll Label Market.

Nazdar has been developing UV curable systems for this market for 25 years, while INX International is a full service provider of ink and coating technology for packaging and commercial print applications.

With Roll Label adopting various combinations of print reproduction methods such as Flexography, Offset, Letterpress, and Rotary Screen, the addition of Nazdar's Screen ink experience will give INX a comprehensive development program along with specialist distribution and technical support.

A statement released by the two companies says 'This new partnership leverages the key strengths of both INX (Letterpress, Flexo and Gravure printing inks) and Nazdar (Rotary Screen inks and coatings) in supporting the rotary label market, thus allowing each to more effectively serve this market.'

Nazdar's Rotary Screen Ink will be packaged under the INX label with sales and service to the Roll Label Market through INX distribution. Although invisible to the customer, Nazdar's product and support will be integrated into this new relationship. e No.233

PCMC announces new US sales agent

H.C. Miller Press, a division of H.C. Miller, has joined PCMC In-Line Systems as Independent Sales Agent for Webtron 750 and X-10 In-Line Flexo Printing Presses, as well as for OEM parts, service and upgrade packages. H.C. Miller is a 113 year old company located in Green Bay.

Says Mark Gillis, director of In-Line Systems for PCMC, 'This addition to our sales team helps broaden our national coverage for Webtron products and service through the North American marketplace. Tim and Cindy Glass have years of experience with Webtron products and will be a valuable asset to both customers and PCMC.'

To kick off the announcement, H.C. Miller Press sponsored a web auction for a new PCMC 8-color Webtron 750. e No.234

Valmet opens converting centre

Valmet Converting has opened its new Technology Center at Valmet Rotomec SpA, in San Giorgio Monferrato in northern Italy. The inauguration ceremony was attended by 180 guests, amongst whom were senior management executives from parent company Metso Corporation of Finland, representatives from local, provincial and regional government, Industrial Associations, Trade Unions and the Bishop of Casale Monferrato.

Juhani Pakkala, president & CEO of Metso Paper, Inc. Finland confirmed Metso's commitment to the future development of its Converting business operations, while Mikko Helander, president of Valmet Converting, emphasised the importance of adding value, especially in the sphere of flexible packaging and label films, which represents directly or indirectly more than 70 per cent of Valmet's business.

Future opportunities will be dependent on Valmet's further development of 'short-run' machines, improvements in barrier technology, exciting new printing technologies, brand protection concepts for consumer security and important R&D of 'intelligent packaging' for data transfer in electronic format, said Helander. e No.235

YUPO acquires Kimberly-Clark IML

Yupo Corporation America has acquired Kimberly-Clark Corporation's In-Mold Label (IML), and Non-Label Specialty Paper businesses. This follows the purchase in December 2001 of Kimberly-Clark's Direct Thermal paper business. The company's products, formerly available under Kimberly-Clark's Kimdura brand, will now be available under Yupo Corporation's YUPO brand synthetic paper.

'The purchase is a result of our desire to help customers gain a competitive advantage in their markets through the delivery of higher quality products and services,' says Osamu Sasaki, president and CEO Yupo Corporation America. 'Packagers and converters can expect the same high quality products but with a new suite of more responsive services. This combination will help them gain a competitive edge.'

The buyout will extend Yupo's direct reach from the commercial printing

industry to the technical papers market. The company has been supplying the base sheet for Kimberly-Clark's Kimdura brand for 30 years. Yupo Corporation America is a wholly owned subsidiary of Yupo Corporation, claimed the world's largest synthetic paper manufacturer. e No.236

ITW Sherman/Pillar grows in NAFTA

Web treatment specialist ITW Sherman/Pillar has expanded its worldwide sales, service and customer support network with the addition of seven new offices across the NAFTA countries. These include five sales and support offices across the US (Control Concepts-Houston, Dallas, Anaheim; South Shore Controls-Ohio; Pillar Technologies-Hartland WI) and one each in Toronto, Canada (Sheridan Electric) and Mexico City (Productos Flexible). e No.237

The identification market is changing

The number of applications has grown and become more diverse. As a result, customers are demanding much more in terms of quality and service. In this environment, ARMOR -today's European market leader- is determined to create a strong position in tomorrow's world market as a leading manufacturer of thermal transfer ribbons.

ARMOR is constantly widening its commercial presence and developing its range of products -wax, wax/resin, resin- to answer customers' requirements.

Our policy of industrial investments remains ambitious, our quest of quality is guided by ISO 9001 version 2000 and our response to customers' needs is continually improving. All this energy has one aim: "to create and consolidate a partnership which will make our companies be indispensable in this world".

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In the Latin loop

Think your Latin American agents always have your best marketing interests in mind? Think again, says **Jennifer Dochstadter**

Oh, the economics of angst. If you ask a U.S. label printer about their equipment purchasing decisions for the remainder of 2002, the most common response you'll hear is something along the lines of, "everything's on hold right now". Translation: We're not signing a purchase order for a new press or piece of press auxiliary equipment until the economy does an about face.

So who's buying? Mexican label printers. Costa Rican label printers. Brazilian label printers. Chilean label printers. A few select press manufacturers are doing very well in the Latin American marketplace, and we're all familiar with the domino effect of a newly installed flexographic press system – new anilox rolls, dies, a video inspection system, UV dryers, web cleaners and web guides in addition to an increase in plate, substrate, ink and varnish consumption. Latin Americans are buying machinery, however in the recent past, they've been buying primarily from one particular narrow web manufacturer. A word to the press manufacturing wise – take a look at your Latin American sales and marketing strategies and give this company some competition!

One of the most common mistakes North American and European manufacturers are committing in today's growing Latin American economy, is that they're willingly handing marketing efforts over to their Latin American agents. I sold flexographic, letterpress, and screen narrow web presses in Latin America for eight years, and while there are certainly some agents who are spectacular salespeople, it's important that manufacturers take a reality check when it comes to these entities marketing their products in the region.

Forget about it. Agents represent a grab bag of products, a common mix being in-line flexo press systems, wide web CI systems for flexible packaging, rewinding/slitting systems, video inspection systems, and perhaps a handful of consumable products. You think that these companies are going to come up with some kind of comprehensive marketing plan for each of their represented products? That they're going to allocate ad budgets, compile press releases on a regular basis, and conduct direct mail campaigns on behalf of your company's products? Think again.

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e No. 105

Jennifer Dochstadter

> "There are a lot of Latin American label, flexible packaging and folding carton printers who are going to be making major equipment procurement decisions in the coming year"

conducting an unprecedented poll in the Latin American region. Printers are being asked what their equipment procurement decisions are going to be in the coming twelve months, which manufacturers' products they're currently using (plates, presses, materials, dies, anilox rolls, inks, etc.), and who is giving them the best service.

These companies are also being asked if they prefer to deal directly with the supplier located in North America or Europe, or if they prefer to deal with an agency representative located in their own country. Eighty-six percent of nearly a thousand Latin American printers polled stated that they prefer dealing directly with manufacturing headquarters in the US and Europe, and that they have English-speaking people in place for that job function. I know what you're thinking. You can't afford to have a salesperson knocking on Latin American doors for several weeks each month, charging expensive flights to Sao Paulo, Mexico City and Santiago on the corporate credit card.

Making sales

However, this isn't a prerequisite to making sales in Latin America. When a Latin American label printer wants to secure a new anilox roll supplier, they contact all of the companies they know about, asking for literature, technical specifications and prices. But I can guarantee that there are prominent American and European anilox roll manufacturers that don't make it into the running because our Latin American label printer has either never heard of them, or visited their booth at a tradeshow three years ago and has forgotten they even exist.

It's time that manufacturers reclaimed their Latin American marketing strategies. And no, you don't need to be able to speak Spanish and Portuguese to effectively do so. There are a lot of Latin American label, flexible packaging and folding carton printers who are going to be making major equipment procurement decisions in the coming year. Make sure they know who you are, what you manufacture, and how great that product is. Don't count on your agents to spend marketing dollars in your behalf. It's up to you to make sure your products stay in the loop.

n Jennifer Dochstadter is editor of our sister magazine *Labels & Labeling Latin America*, which is produced in Portugese and Spanish.

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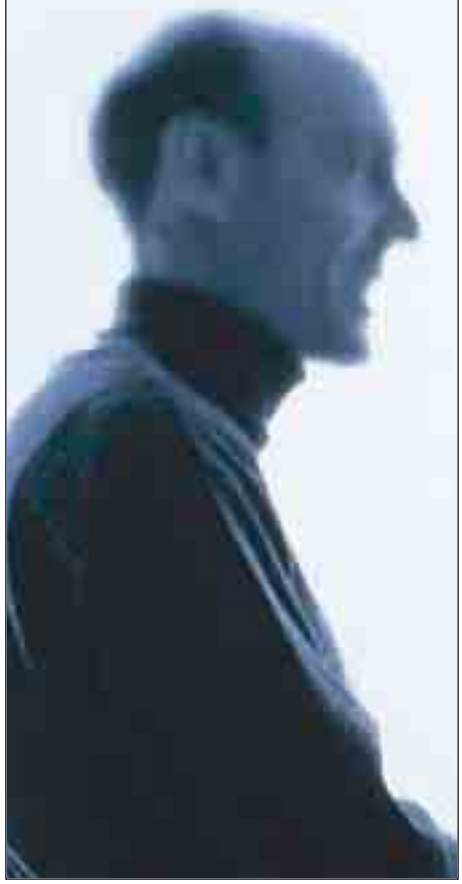

e No.154

Designer labels

We look at the latest developments in label design, materials

Spot gloss varnishing and embossing enhance stand-out of 'triple 8' balls for international launch of US Vodka brand
Printer: **Brook & Whittle, North Brandford USA**
Client:**Triple Eight Distillery, Nantucket**
Materials: **Silver foiling, vignetted black and registered matt varnish on water-resistant paper**

Waterproof film label protects against insect and chemical attack in hostile garden environment
Printer: **Labelgraphics**
Materials: **Fasson PE Premium**
Process: **8-colour UV flexo + varnish, Gallus Arsoma**

7-page promotional form-label launches Irish-themed beef campaign
Printer: **New Era Packaging**
Client: **Bord Bia (Irish Beef Board)**
Process: **4-colour process rotary letterpress, 5-colour on front page**

Matt lacquer surface-printed on zebra design enhances visual and tactile appeal
Printer: **Decorative Sleeves**
Client: **Pioneer Brewing Company**
Materials: **pasteurisable shrink sleeve**
Process: **6-colour gravure + matt lacquer**

and printing techniques to see which way the brands are moving

Launch of new range of syrups is joint design project between converter and end user
Printer: **Label Converters**
Client: **Tate & Lyle**

6-page Fix-a-Form promotional leaflet-label with double perforation. Construction supplied on-reel to bottling line
Printer: **Denny Bros**
Materials: **Construction based on Fasson MC90 No Stick material**

Labels printed one colour - two colours for cap seal - complement icicle-shaped PET container
Printer: **Simpson Label Co**
Materials: **Fasson PE Premium Top Transparent, with glassine liner**
Process: Nilpeter B3000 rotary letterpress

Sleeve labels support new oval container shape. Print-applied adhesive retains sleeve in place on tapered surfaces
Printer: **Decorative Sleeves**
Client: **Burton Biscuits for Cadbury's**
Materials: **Sleeves**
Process: **Gravure - including metallic ink for 'Cadbury' name**

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e No.175

Technology

Rochester takes auto mounter

IEC International has delivered one of its fully automated plate mounting systems to the Rochester Institute of Technology in Rochester, NY. This new plate mounting system offers standard features such as automatic cylinder loading and unloading, vacuum assist, proofing and full microprocessor controls. The new Auto Mounter can load the cylinder, mount the plate and unload the cylinder in around 30 seconds. The Auto Mounting system can be used in narrow web, wide web and corrugated markets. e No.218

Dover dances to intermittent tune

Tension controls manufacturer Dover Flexo Electronics, Inc, has released its SmartWeb digital dancer arm controller. The SmartWeb manages tension on converting and winding machinery or web presses where the process is intermittent and web slack take-up is needed. The controller can calculate instantaneous torque requirements based on fixed and variable rotating inertia using application data to produce a model of the machine, including the web material's inertia, the brake or drive's torque-producing facility, and parameters from the line speed and roll diameter sensors. As the controller runs, it refines its estimates of rotating inertia so that it can improve the torque level applied to the unwinding roll during periods of acceleration and deceleration. e No219

Banding and shrinking systems

Erapa has launched its automated BandAll 24-30 TR-C banding system, capable of banding packs of A4 labels up to a height of 120 mm at a speed in excess of 1,300 packs per hour using paper or clear plastic band. The machine can turn a single banded pack 90 degrees and feed into a second machine for cross over security banding, and there is an option for multiple pack banding. The machine can be supplied with an on-line printer.

The AUTO 30 L, meanwhile, is a new addition to Erapa's range of LadyPack shrink wrapping machines. The machine will seal and shrink at up to 60 packs per minute, depending on size, operating on either Polyolefin or Polythene shrink-films.

The machine's 20 page memory allows several pack sizes to be pre-programmed and it can be interfaced with fully automatic lines to provide a complete shrink-wrapping and banding process. e No.220

Digital converting in one pass

A four colour thermal transfer print and converting system incorporating laminating, die cutting, perforating, slitting and cutting has been developed by m print morlock of Baiersbronn, Germany.

A previous model named LP 8410 was developed by Markem in the USA and also sold in Europe. M print morlock bought the rights and has now further developed the printer.

The core of this complete solution are the four thermal transfer printing units with a resolution of 400 dpi and a maximum printing width of 215mm. The maximum print speed is 3'', or 75mm per second. All qualities of thermal transfer ribbons including wax, wax-resin as well as pure resin in length running to 900m can be used. The core holders are fast and simple to exchange through the help of a bayonet-lock. In addition to the standard measurements from 1'' to 1'5'' other sizes are available.

Additionally the LP2000 has a re-register function for printed or pre-die cut materials.

The Windows-driven user software of the LP2000 allows parameter such as print speed, heating time, registration of the individual images in X and Y direction and die cutting parameter to be set as well as all other print and converting options.

The integrated label software offers everything for the design of labels and graphics, as well as integration of externally created graphics, one and two dimensional barcodes, database connection etc. e No.221

BASF explores four-colour space

BASF has developed a four-colour ink set which significantly increases the colour space in offset printing. Novaspace is claimed to reproduce some 600,000 more colour nuances than printing with standard Euroscale four-colour inks, which enable around 320,000 colour nuances.

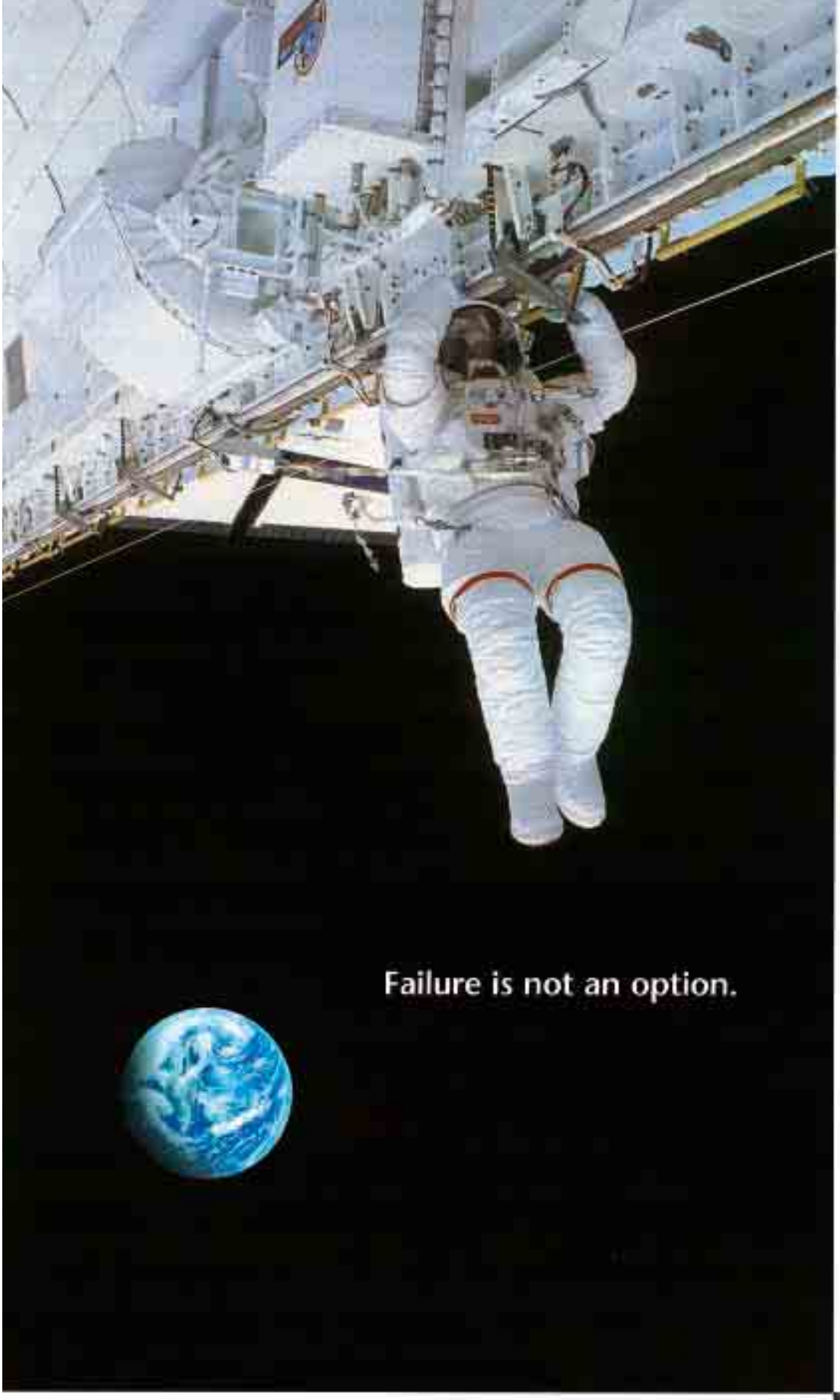
BASF Printing Systems product specialist Paul Kelleway says: 'Novaspace provides a cost effective alternative to a system such as Pantone's Hexachrome for a significantly enhanced finished result. One of the key benefits for packaging and labels designers working with Novaspace is the significantly reduced reliance on spot colours.'

The Novaspace effect is achieved through careful pigment selections and colour blending combined with BASF's specialised Hyperspace pre-press software, and is claimed especially powerful when printing deep blues, purples, reds and oranges.

'Novaspace has proved highly effective when used on uncoated papers, even without using Hyperspace software, and it can also be used straight out of the tin instead of standard CMYK process inks,' says Paul Kelleway. e No.222

RDP launches process control

RDP Marathon Inc., manufacturer of web presses for labels and packaging, ▶



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Technology

has released Optim+, an advanced information system offering an analytic view of printing process performance.

'Equipment downtime and waste are without question the greatest causes of reduced profitability, and most companies struggle with how to measure and improve their printing operation,' says Eric Short, president and CEO, RDP Marathon. 'The value of knowing the length of the downtime event increases when you know both the cause and what waste can be attributed to it. Optim+ tracks both.'

Optim+ is designed to provide a real-time, informed overview of the entire printing operation with the ability to zero in on a user-specified timeline for an individual press, product or shift, allowing printers to identify and improve key problem areas.

Optim+'s shift report screen, accessible at the press console, automatically logs downtime events and associated waste, while prompting the press operator to select a pre-defined down-time reason from a pop-up menu. Plant management also has the ability to customize down-time reasons to their own operations.

Plant management has remote access to the production overview display, showing the status, speed and production totals for each press, including estimated job completion time. There are multiple views of the data for analytical and decision support, including plant-wide overview comparing production rates, waste and downtime, and how well each product runs on an individual press for a particular shift. Efficiency benchmarking by comparing how presses perform and downtime details for an individual press, product or shift are other key abilities.

Compatible with Microsoft Access, additional presses can easily be added to the Optim server station using Optim client stations to provide consolidated data collection and reporting enterprise wide. Optim+ runs concurrently with the RDP SmartoSet 2000 press control system which provides control of all press functions on easy-to-read, easy-to-use touch screen graphic displays accessible from both the main console and individual print units. Developed to integrate seamlessly with management software, including CIP4 digital workflow, the control system provides job storage and retrieval, and a modem interface for remote systems diagnostics. e No.223

Scratch n' Sniff adds new sense

Olfactory dimensions can be added to labels with a scratch n' sniff system developed by Yupo for its synthetic paper. 'With many applications, designers look to convey a total design experience touching on all the senses. The new scratch n' sniff application brings that all together in one paper,' says Paul Mitcham, national marketing manager, Yupo Corporation America. 'For this new scratch n' sniff application, the paper's durable properties play a critical role in protecting printed images on the sheet. The durability and consistency of the sheet optimizes even the most demanding die-cutting essential to such processes like sticker production and perfume packaging.' e No.224

Thermal RFID rolls out at CLC

To meet growing demand for thermal transfer-printable Smart media, CLC has developed what Smart Flexi-card technology.

The concept is to be able to supply media in a roll format, which can be pre-printed in multi-colour on both sides. It can be sub-branded with human readable text and/or barcodes on both sides, while simultaneously programming the inlay.

Among a wide range of applications including direct mailing and promotions, the Smart Flexi-card could also be used as an alternative to a rigid credit card.

Options include a foam mounted smart label which can be read in close proximity to metal and hi-tack/synthetic face smart labels for more demanding environments. e No225

Softblade doctor blade from MDC

Max Daetwyler Corporation has introduced its Softblade doctor blade, constructed from a carbon steel doctor blade and a nickel-based coated tip to protect the blade. It is claimed to reduce defects in gravure printing and score lines in flexo applications, especially when running higher line counts. The base carbon steel combined with a tough coating makes the MDC softblade ideal when using high pH inks, says the manufacturer. This coating is resistant to the effects of light to medium corrosive inks and lacquers. During operation, the coating flows into the contact zone, protecting it from oxidation and corrosion. Toning and streaking are reduced because the coating can cover small damages to the contact zone. The friction coefficient between the doctor blade and cylinder surface is reduced, resulting in a blade life claimed to be two to three times greater than regular carbon steel blades. e No.226

ALE optimises laser engraving

With the launch of its Meridian Progressive laser engraving system, ALE has responded to calls for a cost effective system optimised for narrow to mid-web printing applications.

The Meridian Progressive machine bed employs axial moving cylinder technology which means a very short beam path will be required irrespective of how long a roller is to be engraved. The ▶

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machine beds are optically aligned to give high accuracy, and are of a robust steel construction for rigidity and stability.

The Meridian Progressive entry level system purchased with a single laser would provide a productivity of 0.15- 0.3 square metres per hour, dependent on engraving depth required. When greater productivity is required the system can be updated to a dual, triple or even quad beam system, doubling or quadrupling the productivity. e No.227

Versatile care label ribbon

Armor USA introduces its new AXR9 care label resin ribbon. Designed for flat head printers, the AXR9 is claimed to provide legibility on all labels including nylon, polyester or acetate. The resin ribbon produces an image on care labels which retains legibility. After 50 washes, the label retains the same legibility as when new. e No.228

Xaar produces greyscale inkjet

Xaar has shown its first full production greyscale inkjet printhead. Developed in a unique collaborative project with licensee Toshiba TEC, the new printhead is designed for delivering high quality printing output onto plastics such as smart cards and ID cards, CD decoration and other packaging applications including carton and label printing.

'The introduction of our new Greyscale printhead marks a significant breakthrough for industrial printing applications,' said Jan Fineman, chief executive of Xaar. 'Our latest printhead can now supply industrial and packaging printers with near photographic quality output onto plastics, whilst at the same time, retaining the ability to print variable information on demand.'

With greyscale inkjet technology, multiple droplets are fired from the same nozzle in rapid succession, rather than a single droplet as occurs in binary applications, and these droplets merge in flight to form pixels of variable size which promote enhanced resolution. The result is that the variation in the droplet size creates a much higher apparent visual image. This means, says Xaar, that near-photographic quality is achievable using relatively low print resolutions.

Working with its Japanese licensee, Toshiba TEC, highlights a new direction for Xaar. In the past, Xaar has licensed its patented technologies but never before explored ways of working together with licensees to develop and market new cooperative products.

Protected by a stainless steel nozzle guard and integrating a thermal management facility to improve performance, the new printhead has been specifically developed to withstand the rigors of industrial printing. In addition, it has a 53.6mm print swathe for increased coverage which serves to cut down actual printing time.

Toshiba TEC in Japan will undertake the manufacturing of the new greyscale printhead with Xaar taking responsibility for its branding and route to market. Xaar will continue to manufacture its successful XJ128, XJ500 and XJ126 printheads at its Swedish facilities in Järfälla near Stockholm, Sweden.

Xaar has also announced a new UV curable inkjet ink designed specifically for use on non-porous substrates, developed jointly with SunJet. Providing almost instant curing of the ink film following exposure to ultra violet light, the Crystal UFX ink has been developed exclusively for use in the Xaar XJ500 family of high performance printheads.

The new ink is claimed to offer excellent adhesion properties and high scuff resistance which, combined with its flexible properties, makes it suitable for output onto materials such as PVC, polycarbonate and polypropylene, ideal for package printing applications.

Crystal UFX ink is available in all standard process colours (standard and light shades) as well as a custom spot colour base system. e No.229

Greyscale Inkjet heads claim to deliver photo quality

Smart cards for transport industry

In an new development created in partnership with Philips Semiconductors, Magnadata International, the manufacturer of bespoke tickets, is to produce 'smart cards' for the transport industry. The aim is to provide a ticket that combines a unit-cost low enough for single use as well as the durability required for multiple usage. e No.230

MDC upgrades B-series engravers

Max Daetwyler Corporation has upgraded its Ohio B600, B710, B720 and B722 engravers, eliminating the control cabinet and replacing it with a PC-based digital interface. This offers extended system longevity, an easy-to-use Graphic User Interface (GUI), reduced circuitry and increased overall reliability. The DTG700 is compatible with both CCS or COLLAGE file formats.

MDC has also added the Renzmann washing machine Type 50 to its product line, a compact cleaning unit specifically designed for Label printers. The wash cycle is automated. e No.231

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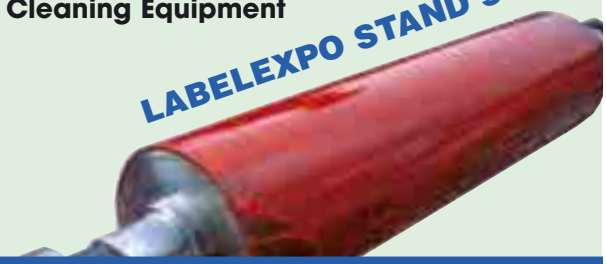

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Label life

Appointments

Walter Morgan
Enerconís International Sales Manager will lead the newly established Latin American Committee for the Flexographic Technical Association. 'Our goal will be to promote the education of the industry throughout Latin America, ensuring that the region is kept up to date on the latest technologies and trends that impact their business,' says Morgan.

Anthony L. Parker
Smyth companies
Chief operating officer.
Smyth Companies, Inc. is pleased to announce the appointment of Anthony L. Parker
to Chief Operating Officer of Smyth Companies - Bedford, effective with the retirement of James A. Vest. Smyth Companies is the third largest sheet-fed label manufacturer in North America. His first assignment was to manage the transformation of the prepress department from an analog to a digital environment. Shortly after Smyth Companies acquired Piedmont Label in 1998, he was appointed director of Digital Technology for all Smyth Companies. Parker will assume the duties of COO on September 1, 2002.

Cathy Pittman
Harper Corporation of America
Technical customer service supervisor.
Pittman has been employed with Harper for over 17 years and has continued to be an asset to the customer service department.

Ton Onstenk
JM Heaford Limited
European sales manager.
Onstenk will be based in Holland and was previously sales manager with AV Flexologic. He has over twenty three years experience in the industry.

Correction

Due to an unfortunate production error in the last issue of Labels & Labeling, the captions accompanying Mike Fairley's Avery Dennison interview were transposed. The correct pictures and captions appear below. Apologies to all concerned!


Jurgen von Bahrfeldt


Dean Scarborough

If you have any interesting photos that you would like to share with us, please post or email (below) them to the L&L team for possible inclusion.
athomas@tarsus.co.uk nmartin@tarsus.co.uk

Semi retirement

Following the successful move to new and larger premises in Coalville, Leicestershire, Kocher & Beck UK Ltd, manufacturers of flexible cutting tools for the label and envelope industries, have announced the semi-retirement of John Tanner from the post of managing director. He was succeeded on 1 June by David Morris. John Tanner will remain on the Board as financial director and company secretary.

First Flexo School of the Year Award winners

Charlotte, NC – Harper Corporation of America proudly announced the first Flexo School of the Year winners at the 2002 FTA Annual Forum held May 5-8 in Washington, DC. In the High School category, the Applied Technology Center, Rock Hill, SC took the honors, and Dunwoody Institute of Technology, Minneapolis, MN won in the college category.

The Flexo School of the Year Awards were established by Harper to acknowledge the outstanding performance the FTA/TLMI Flexo in High Schools/Colleges are doing in the industry and to continue to encourage excellence in flexo education, at both the high school and college level. Criteria for participation was the entry of a flexo notebook including print samples, pictures of students and activities, and student perspectives. All schools of the FTA/TLMI Flexo in Education programs were invited to participate. The following schools submitted notebook entries: High Schools; Applied Technology Center, Rock Hill, SC; Garinger High School, Charlotte, NC; South Mecklenburg High School, Charlotte, NC. Colleges/Universities: Appalachian State University, Boone, NC; CalPoly State University, San Luis Obispo, CA; Clemson University, Clemson, SC; Dunwoody Institute, Minneapolis, MN; Pennsylvania College of Technology, Williamsport, PA.

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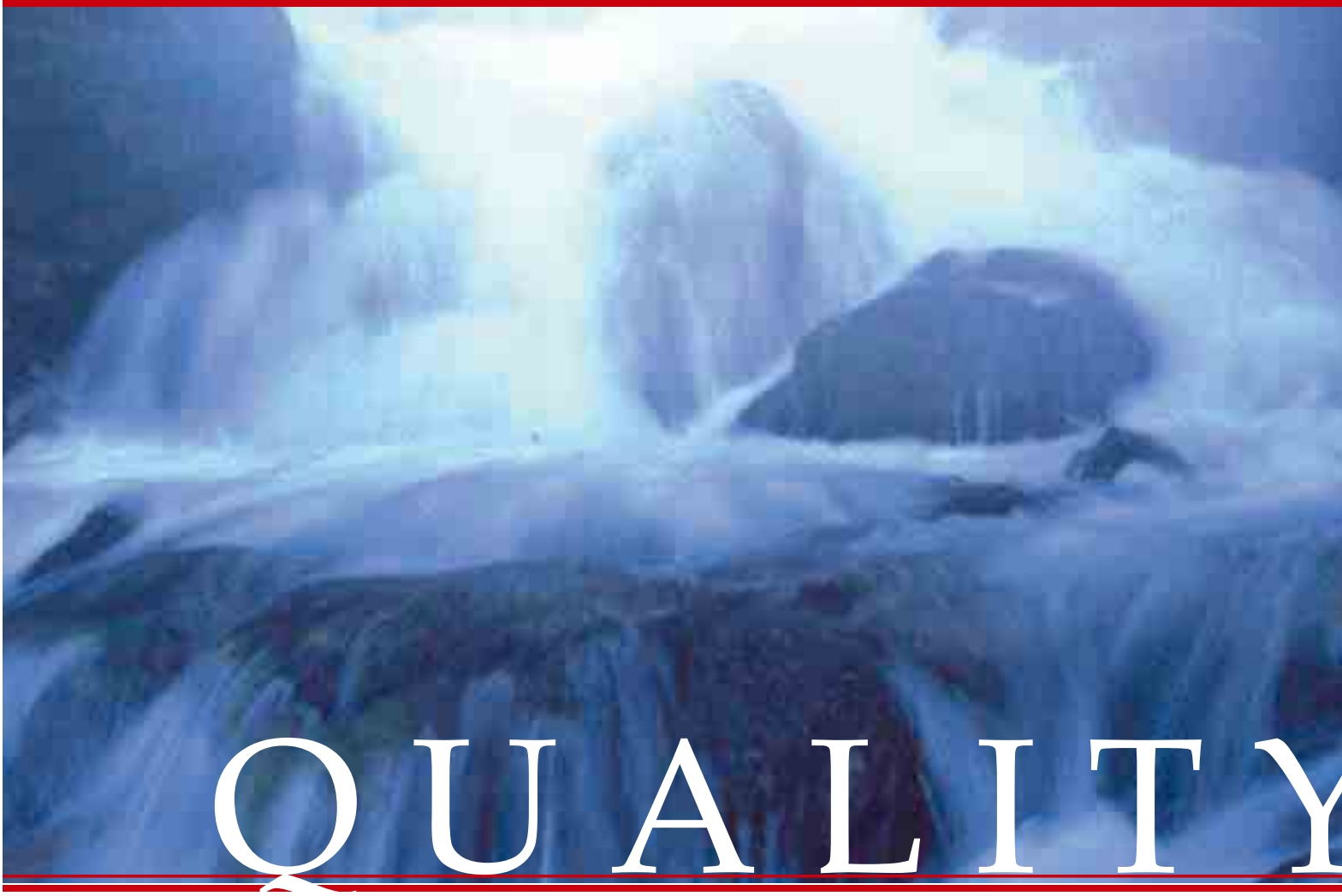

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