

Labels & Labelling

World of labels and web technology

Volume 25 Issue 1

Analysis



Marketing and technology support for new global Lenticular label project

Branding



OPP film technology creates new branding possibilities for end users

Technology



Flexibility drives narrow/mid-web developments

Labels and Labelling

Feb/Mar 2003

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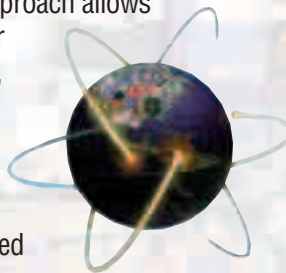
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Leader



Welcome to the first edition of Labels & Labelling in 2003 – the Chinese Year of the Year of the Ram. Another significant milestone we will celebrate this year is the 25th Anniversary of Labels & Labelling magazine, which falls on the 3rd Edition of the magazine (June-July).

We will be marking the anniversary with a Special Edition of L&L in which the top executives of global label industry suppliers and converters will give their views on where this industry is going in the next quarter century, building on the trends which have shaped the last 25 years. In this issue of L&L, the magazine's founder Mike Fairley considers the results of a survey carried out amongst a large sample of converters at Labelexpo Chicago on what they see as the main challenges facing the industry. Consolidation amongst industry suppliers, globalisation, e-commerce were all picked out as key concerns and this will provide significant feedback for our anniversary magazine.

In November, L&L will host a 25th Anniversary conference which will pick up on these themes and provide a major platform for the industry to move forward with confidence into new applications, new geographical markets and new technologies.

As part of this project, L&L embarks this month on an ambitious project to gauge the number of companies involved in printing all types of labels worldwide. We are uniquely positioned to do this. Each issue of L&L is now available for download over the internet in a searchable PDF archive (visit www.label-sandlabelling.com), and some 6,500 readers world-

wide now read the magazine on-line in addition to 13,500 reading the hard copy in Europe and the US, 5,000 reading L&L Asia-Pacific (from this month translated into Chinese) and another 5,000 L&L Latin America (in Spanish and Portuguese).

No converter today can be insulated from the global trends reshaping our industry – even if you think you only serve customers in your own district, state or country. With the growth of internet-ordering, global digital workflows and consolidation amongst converters and suppliers, the World is coming to your corner of the planet with frightening speed. Time to start preparing.

“ Consolidation amongst industry suppliers, globalisation, e-commerce were all picked out as key concerns ”

Andy Thomas
Group Managing Editor

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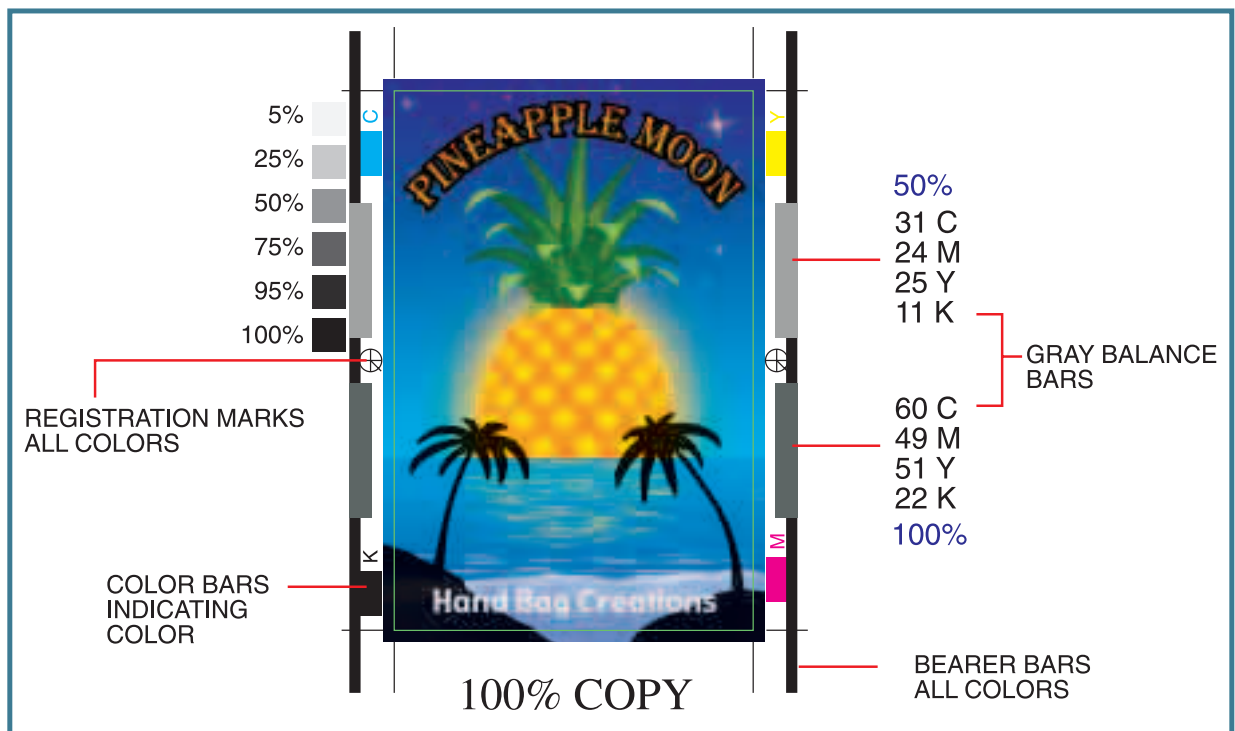
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Tooling up

The tools exist to take much of the guesswork out of 4-color process damage relationships with end user customers. **James Kadlec** lay



I'm actually sitting in a meeting for which a new customer is having a disaster of a time working with another trade shop. Going through my mind is that there are tools available for starting out in process printing, not "just fingerprint & go". Many of these tools were not used. WHY I ask myself?

Basic rules and tools to begin the quality road of 4/c process printing starts with understanding how ink is transferred to the substrate, and what the color density and hue is. A fingerprint test in my experiences is nothing more than an expensive pretty picture printing day. Why? Information is not retained, or necessarily utilized each time a process project is put on press, or not all substrates are properly tested. Does the fingerprint test guide prepress with dot gain information? Yes. But when this information is incorrectly applied – wrong sub-

strate for example – press side, nothing can usually be compensated. So, I back-up and start to look at the big picture.

The basic tools for 4/c process printing

Retaining information is required from every 4/c process run and/or fingerprint test

- Write down anilox roll line ruling, bcm & serial number of anilox if available
- Was a blade or metering roller used? What type of blade is important
- Order of ink lay down (press rotation)
- Maintain bearer/color bar including gray balance bar samples with final printed samples. This will become a guide for future runs showing densities and hue

for color

printing. Failure to use them can result in costly mistakes and out some basic guidelines

- Average run speed
- Ink type and brand along with any additives made at beginning/during the run including transparent white
- ALWAYS use the same ink manufacturer for consistency within the project. Different manufacturers typically have different anilox requirements to balance color within a single project
- CLEAN anilox rolls are imperative
- Laminates and U.V. Varnishes WILL change the final printed result from the proof
- Type of plate mounting tape used (softness of cushion tape or hard vinyl?)
- Plate material, and how the plate was exposed (bank light, High definition or digital)
- Dot gain curve being applied for the plates based on above variables

'All I need are register marks! Right?' NO!!
'Bearer/color bar, and gray balance? Do we really need them? What are they?'

These are common questions constantly asked by pressman and owners of flexo shops. These are tools of the flexo trade that should be built right into the plates.

■ Bearer Bars

A bearer bar is a narrow strip of plate material running parallel with the web direction used to maintain constant contact between the plate and substrate along with the anilox roll. The bearer typically is included on the plate with varying widths depending on application, waste allowance and press size (.0625, .125, .1875 are common widths). So why is constant contact so important? Think of driving down the road with hexagon wheels. Every time you hit a high point you feel a bounce, or hard contact at that point. Each hard contact distorts the image's edge. Additionally constant bouncing is believed to help cause gear marking.

■ Color Bars

Color bars? Who needs them? Any flexo printer intending to produce quality 4/c process or better quality printing needs color bars. The main purpose of a color bar is to aid in color

quality control. For example, I mentioned earlier the new customer and their disaster. The trade shop that provided 4/c process plates did not include color bars, or gray balance bars. This customer had been trying to set-up the project for several days without these tools and consistently was printing the image too dark. How did I help? Simple, I worked with the pressman having them print progressives (single color printed samples of each process color). Once the progressives were produced, we were able to compare the solid bearer bar to the analog proof for color hue, and density. A typical color bar is .125" x .250" along the side of the bearers, and should be included on ALL process projects. Utilizing color bars on non-process projects helps to provide a consistent color "swatch" to match colors to. Sometimes the subject being printed is merely thin lines and/or text, making color harder to match. Utilizing this tool color can be more readily matched and maintained.

■ Color Hue & Density

Color hue and density matters? Absolutely. Why? Color is created in balance, where too much of any single, or all colors will shift the final printed image toward darkness or the dominant color. Matching the color bars and gray balance bars starts the press operator with a baseline guide to make color adjustments. This baseline is more important in flexo, since in general we do not have the ability to "key" or adjust colors in selected areas as the litho printers do.

■ Gray Balance Bars

Gray balance bars? What are these? Gray balance is simply when the three colors (cyan, magenta, yellow) in proper proportions appear gray. When gray balance bars are provided in a dot generated proof, the "optimum" hue and densities have been achieved. Once on press, these bars help the operator identify which color is going out of balance during the press run. Gray balance is very much a tool that when watched during the run will help provide consistency. A typical gray balance bar is .125" x 1.000" along side the bearers.

■ Registration Marks

Registration marks? We all know we need these to help ►

“ Matching the color bars and gray balance bars starts the press operator with a baseline guide to make color adjustments ”

mount and align plates into register. Just use a simple circle with crosshairs inside? No! Lets make these register marks work for us. I have experienced many times press operators claiming that the plates provided do not register when they are on press “in register”. It is clearly possible to squeeze a plate enough to allow one mark to smash over another, making them look in register. This scenario can be avoided by adding another tool to the already common circle with crosshairs inside. Simply by adding another line at a 45 degree angle from the center of the mark outward – preferably extending past the outer circle by .0625+”. This “tail” will never be able to be smashed into register. The out of register color will always peek out from underneath the other(s), showing which color is the culprit of misregistration.

■ Dot Gain & Curve

Dot gain and curve? Dot gain and curves to be applied for flexo printing are initially reviewed and calculated from the infamous fingerprint test. Stepping back a moment, dot gain needs to be clearly understood. Dot gain can be created in many facets. To name a few:

- Film image setter not calibrated for density and/or linearity
- Plate exposure equipment (See “Flying Hi” February/March 2001 Labels & Labeling Bank light source versus single light source)
- Press condition
- Mounting tape used
- Impression pressure plate to substrate
- Impression pressure anilox to plate



In a banded anilox roll trial, non-overprinting gray scales are used for all four process colours, showing dot gain expected during the print process

- Doctor blade/roller type/style
- Anilox roll cell count and BCM
- Type of ink and grind of pigments

Considering there are so many variables that are contributing factors in dot gain from the prepress to initial impression on press, procedures need to be in place.

Technical associations around the world have published many guidelines for flexo printers to follow. These publications are expensive and unfortunately cater more toward ISO certified organizations than the average flexo label printer desiring to improve quality, consistency, and maybe even break into the 4/c process market. Many of these guidelines require expensive tools. These guidelines truly work, however they work best in environments that have the basics pretty well mastered. Once the basics are mastered, consider the investment.

Use the tools that should be built into the plates by comparing color bars to the color swatches on the supplied proof. This MUST be done in a neutral lighting environment, preferably in a light corrected viewing booth. Many printers do not have booths, so the next best is to utilize 5,000 kelvin white fluorescent lamps in an area of neutral gray. A white room will reflect some light, whereas a colored room will skew the color comparison toward the room’s color. Soft white lamps actually have a red tint to them, causing obvious color changes. Look for color hue (cyan and process blue are different) to match the proof.

Density is a very critical subject, since too dense inks will provide dark results on press. Utilizing a color densitometer is the most accurate way to match color density to a proof, but even without a densitometer, matching color density can be achieved the old fashioned way, visually. The human eye can distinguish millions of colors and hues where scanners, proof, and presses can achieve only thousands. The densitometer is a tool to aid the less trained “eye”, or enhance the trained “eye”. Starting with the cyan matching the proof, the gray balance bars will help guide the yellow and magenta to proper strengths. Since the hue of the ink will change the “flavor” of the subject being printed, the density will show in the balance of colors. If the magenta is too strong, the gray will look red, whereas if the yellow is rather weak, the balance bars will look purple. Gray balance bars specifically guide the press operator toward the imbalance. Once balance and hue have been established with a specific set of anilox rolls and inks, this becomes a baseline starting point for successful process printing. ■

James Kadlec is president of Advanced PrePress Graphics Inc, and a member of the advisory board of the DiTrollo Flexographic Institute.

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Next genera

National Graphics, in Brookfield, Wisconsin, has developed a global lenticular production with the support of a marketing and technical

So, 3D-lenticular. 'What's new? Been there, done that, no thanks' – is a common reaction. Take a high quality ultra thin high definition lens Crystal™ with a .007" thickness and a line count of 200 LPI (refer to insert) and suddenly it's a viable product for IML, pressure sensitive roll labels and a strong contender for other packaging work, including folding carton and flexible packaging. Great, but where's the payback? And who's willing to pay for the cost of lenticular?

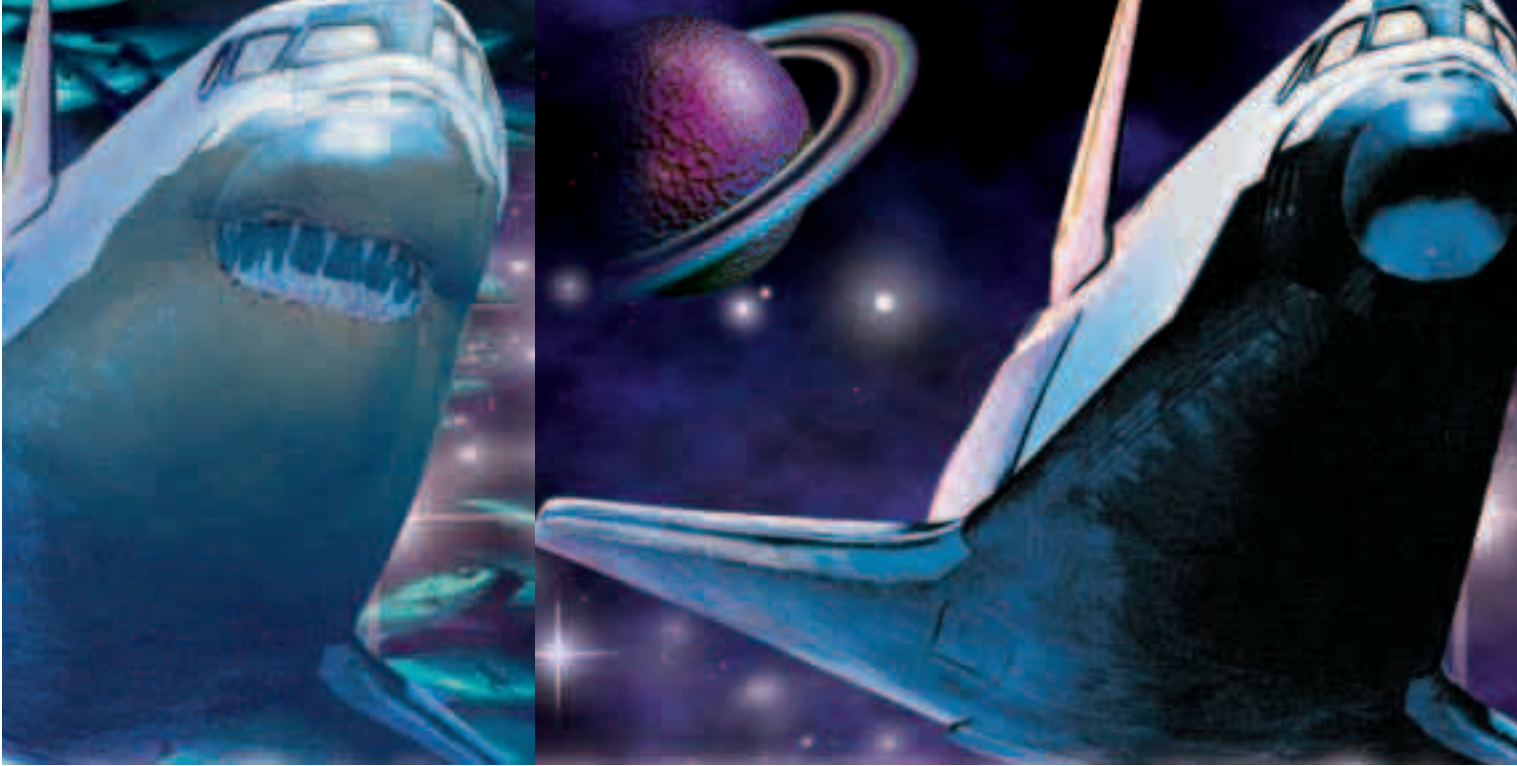
National Graphics and its authorized printers now claim an innovative solution. Michael Brooks, chief marketing officer for National Graphics (NG), came up with a business model whereby a printer could purchase mastering, interlacing and lens materials for a period of time. In exchange, authorized printers are educated on how to print sheet-fed litho lenticular using NG's print methodology, pre-press and proprietary lens designs.

NG started out as a conventional pre-press provider, but in the early 1990s, lead scanner operator Timothy Goggins had an

idea to produce pre-press which would enable the printing of 3D images. After presenting his idea to president Donald Krause, the patented 'Extreme Vision®' mastering and interlacing software was born. Goggins based it on emerging desktop digital software/hardware. Parallel to this was the creation of a 75 lenticule per inch (LPI) lens, .018" thick (refer to insert).

'Prior to the development of this lens there was no commercially available lens,' says Brooks. 'Now, this lens is the worldwide standard for lithographic lenticular printing. Goggins and those around him were central to creating a product that is in line with what a printing press can do.'

National Graphics is one of a handful of lenticular companies who actually design their own lenses, producing a custom-built lenticular solution. 'Our layout of the sheet has devices built in ensuring tight resolution on press,' continues Brooks. 'When a job is going to press, we match up the lens with the individual press and our designers in imaging resolve to that particular lens material so there is very tight quality



tion label?

business model which allows converters to enter 3-D network. **Natalie Martin** reports

control. We only accept lenses within the 90 percentile of the profile on the cylinder.'

All authorized printers are extended new capabilities and enhancements as they are developed, including educational materials and referrals to customers. 'Our goal is to create a worldwide network of printers and converters working and sharing 'Extreme Vision' as the common denominator,' comments Brooks. 'This frees us to advance the technology, create new applications and find ways to reduce the cost of the lenticular lens which increases volume and grows the lenticular market as a whole. We reduce the time to market for those printers who wish to offer a high-quality lenticular product while maximizing return on the technology we created.'

With this in mind, NG developed the patented 'Crystal' lens, part of the Extreme Vision brand, which has the ability to hold very small point sized type. For example, language can be flipped from one to another or hold scannable barcodes. 'Its flexibility and thinness make it a natural for application to curved surfaces. The ultra fine resolution allows a smooth texture to the

final printed piece and shows minute details in an image,' enthuses Brooks.

Wallace Computer Services

That's why Wallace Computer Services, the parent company of Post, West Bend, Wisconsin, turned its attention to the work NG was developing with lenticular back in 1994 to help prove out the Extreme Vision technology. Wallace, now taken over by Moore Corporation (see News p.2), is the seventh largest printer in the U.S.

Jim Nordquist, president of Wallace, Post Printing, identified the Extreme Vision product as an innovator and a leader in the lenticular product category. 'It's extremely effective, very powerful, and you can let your imagination run wild with what can be achieved with this medium for advertising and marketing campaigns. The technology, being a matched process to the lens optics, just stands alone. There is a noticeable difference in dimensionality, sharpness. The effects are cleaner and crisper than other lenticular technologies and the Extreme Vision ►

“Our goal is to create a worldwide network of printers and converters working and sharing 'Extreme Vision' as the common denominator”

product gives us cutting edge interlacing and mastering, in turn reducing our internal R&D costs.’

So where does this fit into label applications? Wallace, Post Printing created eight Extreme Vision IML (in mold label) designs using 3D alone and with a variety of motion effects. ‘The cup is an example of IML where the lens is put into an in-mold cavity and then we inject plastic – the lens and plastic then become one. We’re trying to sell IML technology as a whole, taking it to the market and educating our client base to create new applications within the IML and blow mold product

categories. Our intent is to drive IML and web applications using lenticular.’

The products Nordquist is developing will be specifically for retail and prime labeling applications, where it is important to understand the end application and be involved with the project from conceptual design through production. ‘You have to understand that we’re pushing the medium as far as it will allow us to go. For someone used to doing two-dimensional design, switching over to three-dimensional design isn’t extremely difficult, but it does take education and insight by someone experienced in that area. Once our client is happy with the graphics, we work with NG to achieve a powerful lenticular presentation of the graphic, then NG will master/interlace and calibrate to the appropriate lens.’

IML developments

Zipseam is a trademarked name and a patent pending technology for In-mold labels (IML) developed by idesign LLC (www.imlbyidesign.com) located in Medina, Ohio USA. Designed originally for conventional IML films, it has evolved into applications including lenticular materials, as well as composite boards for the injection molding industry – in particular, thin wall molding.

A typical in-mold label die cut is an arc or a straight line. Whether the label edges meet together in a wraparound configuration, or form a cross-shaped label or panel design, the seam (label to plastic edge) creates a flow pattern that directs the plastized resin to follow the contour. This creates a weakened or fault area that can create a latent fracture along the line of the label during handling of the product. Zipseam contours the die line in a variety of patterns, such as zig zag (zipper), waved and saw toothed, which increases the strength of the labeled area to allow for thin wall applications. Altering the conventional die strike pattern ‘slows down’ the flow of material during the injection molding process in a manner that tightens the molecular structure of the molten resin, binding the resin together for strength.

A molder can utilize a number of resins to counteract such problems, but these non-standard resins require separate storage and are more expensive to stock. Zipseam, with its inherent strength enhancements, also allows the molder to use a higher melt resin that will flow easily in the molding process, reducing cycle time of the total operation by as much as 15 to 20 per cent overall.

Outlook Group

Outlook Group Corporation based in Neenah, Wisconsin, one of the largest publicly traded printing companies in America, partnered with NG in 1994, and sells Extreme Vision under the private label ‘Lenticular Solutions’. Now with the Crystal lens, Outlook can help take lenticular to a new level. Using in-house R&D together with the NG partnership, they’re also looking for ways to bring down the cost of lenticular. Tim Traub, lenticular business unit manager says, ‘That’s why we’re now working on a pure flexographic solution to try to print the labels flexo, convert them inline on a flexo press. That R&D initiative has been worked on over the past six months or so and I would say we probably have 80 per cent of the solution – we’re in the process of fine tuning that now.’ Michael Brooks expands on the features which can be built into the product on the web: ‘You’re dealing with lenticles that are going top to bottom to create a dimensional effect. The other thing you can do with the lenticles is tilt from left to right. What Traub can do is take the sheeted product, and when orientating to the web, can put the lenticles on in either direction, so that when applied to the product, the label can move from left to right or top to bottom. By converting it as part of the overall label he lowers the cost of the application and makes it viable – you don’t even have to adapt your equipment that much.’

Currently the material is printed sheet-fed, taken to Outlook’s web facility, put onto a moving webstream, where adhesives and other substrates are applied to it, die cut and the finished product turned into lenticular label roll stock. Traub continues, ‘We want to hit the primary label identity markets. Every time you hand someone a lenticular piece, the first thing they do is look at it for a very long time – five or six times longer than a typical label. You’re going to take that product and ►

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Outlook Group is pioneering in-line flexo production of lenticular labels in a joint venture with National Graphics

hand it to someone else and they're then going to look at it. The labels can be designed to be a walk-by label so they trigger left to right as people move down the aisle. The labels could be nodding, winking, blinking etc. It's the wow factor. If you place NG's imagery next to someone else's, a person will pick up their product off the table every time – we want to be a part of that.'

While lenticular's roots have traditionally been in a promotional setting, the goal of NG and its authorized printers is to market lenticular as a mainstream label product. Says Traub, 'Lenticular plastic has the opportunity to be the new generation of packaging material, and we're taking our presses way beyond previously imaginable tolerances.'

An efficient IML in-line capability is also under development. Michael Brooks is enthusiastic: 'Outlook has a huge flexible packaging division, so what's to say Traub can't take the product and marry it to polyester to form flexible packaging? That flexo unit then has 10 different product lines coming off it depending upon how you manufacture it. That's the internal R&D effort which will define many different markets.'

Quad Graphics

Describing it as a marriage of sorts, Bill Grove, manager, from Quad Graphics has joined forces with NG. 'We're a printer, and we've been using lenticular technology that allows us to print on paper in a web format, roll to roll. We then take that pre-printed paper with the lenticular image on it and marry it to a lens on a laminator that we built in-line,' says Grove. 'Now with the Crystal web, it's just a different lens configuration. But where it gets real exciting is that we'll provide the manufacturing services where we can supply the thinner lenticular substrate, change and tweak our specs to deliver the product in sheet or in a roll, and give it to someone to post-manufacture. The end user focus now could be labels, packaging, anything you want.'

The joint venture matches up Quad's patented ability to make a lenticular web product and NG's Crystal lens and Extreme Vision imaging technology to make 'the ultimate' lithographic web-produced lenticular product. Outlook's work in flexo is paralleling NG's work with Quad. Outlook is able to work in the flexo web area because of a license from Quad allowing them protection under Quad's patent.

Michael Brooks concludes, 'There isn't the awareness of the possibilities of lenticular right now, there's such a disparity of quality in this business. Also, people often confuse lenticular images with holographic ones. The benefits of a lenticular image are more tangible for a brand manager than the 'on-off' nature of refractive metallized materials. This is true for prime as well as authentication labels. If someone is exposed to a poor lenticular product, lenticular as a category suffers. Our authorized printers are taking lenticular and executing it. They're the apostles. The more you educate brand managers and they get involved in the research, the more lenticular is going to take off. It starts with a few people who are intuitive and it ends up being a landslide because of results. We're really at the beginning of it right now. It's just a matter of which marketer is brave and bold enough...' ■

Image on opening spread (p10-11) shows 3d Lenticular transition

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Challenges ahead

In this first part of a review of the label industry based on near 1,000 interviews at the recent Labelexpo USA, **Mike Fairley** looks at some of the key issues facing the industry and highlights its investment confidence for 2003

There can be little doubt that the label industry has been going through a period of considerable change in recent years, with both industry and external pressures on industry suppliers and printers/converters alike.

Certainly it is difficult to remember an earlier time when so many issues and pressures have come together to impact on the performance and operation of a label business – many of them without any apparent end in sight. Yet the industry appears to remain largely optimistic, certainly over the period of the next one to three years.

To try and better understand the key issues of concern to the industry and how it views its expectations for the future, Labels & Labelling and the Tarsus Group added additional questions to the regular visitor questionnaire undertaken at the Labelexpo USA Show in Chicago last September.

This analysis, now available, makes interesting reading. Perhaps of no great surprise (Fig.1) is that the near 1000 Labelexpo visitors that completed questionnaires regarded declining margins and profitability as the major issue facing the industry today. Nothing particularly new there of course. Margins have been under pressure for some time – perhaps more so historically in Europe than in the States – but margins have now very much become a global issue for the whole label industry.

The introduction of e-auctions in the past year or so has not made things any easier. In fact, quite the reverse, and particularly for the wet-glue label industry where e-auctions appear to have driven label prices down by as much as 20%. Consolidation by label buyers, who then have more purchasing

and negotiating power, has also been a factor in the downward pressure on margins – which brings us to the second major pressure on the label industry.

Over 40% of those questioned at Labelexpo cited industry consolidation as one of their major issues. This figure rises to around 50% amongst industry suppliers, who themselves have been involved in major consolidation in the past year or so.

A number of key points arise from this issue of consolidation. Major consolidation amongst labelstock suppliers has significantly reduced the choice of supplier in the past year, but has been necessary to meet end user expectations of a global source of supply. Press manufacturers, ink producers, ancillary suppliers – all are going through consolidation and globalisation programs.

Consolidation amongst the major label end user groups has already been mentioned leaving most converters as relatively small in size and squeezed between big suppliers and big customers.

Third in the order of priority amongst show visitors was the issue of sales performance. Undoubtedly, selling is more difficult than it used to be. Well at least for the right price it is, and it's certainly more complex. Shorter runs, more variations, frequent changes, specific brand colour issues, electronic communications, e-ordering, etc., are just some of today's requirements. Frequently the buyer will even dictate the price he is prepared to pay.

One third of the expo visitors cited the pace and nature of technology change as an important issue – much more so amongst converters than industry suppliers. Almost every ►

“Consolidation amongst the major label end user groups is leaving most converters as relatively small in size and squeezed between big suppliers and big customers”

Mike Fairley

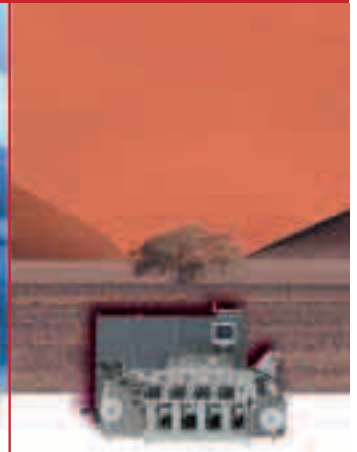


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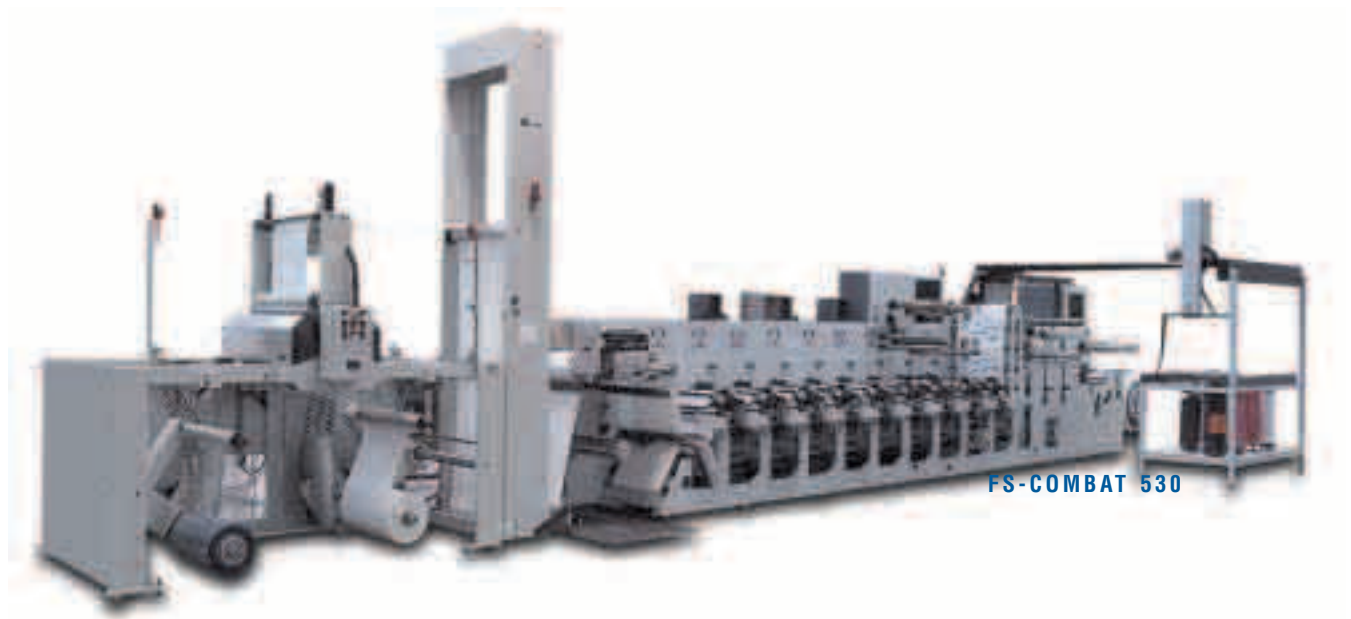
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Data summary



Fig. 1

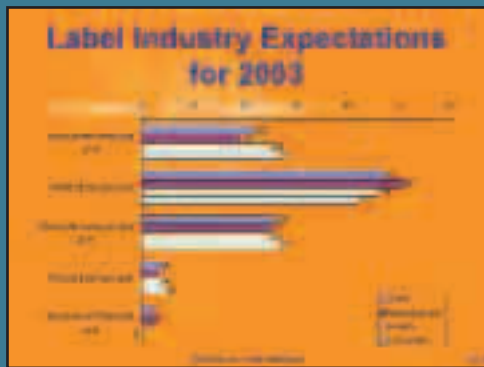


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

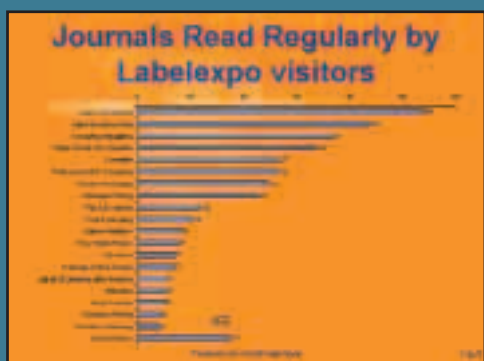


Fig. 5

item of technology that the label producer uses today is fast evolving. Faster, wider and quicker change-over presses, more options, more add-ons, improved capabilities. What do you invest in and when? Will it be superseded almost before you have used it? What about digital?

Well, certainly digital printing is a major issue for over 30% of the industry, while for printers the figure rises to nearer 40%. It's a question that both the industry and end-users constantly ask. After the initial growth of digital printing in 1997/98 the level of installations slowed considerably and did not meet any of the forecasts that had been made.

Now, after a couple of years of slow performance, digital printing press installations are once again on the move. HP Indigo is moving ahead rapidly. Yet there are still many question marks over digital printing technology. End users still regard it as expensive, with costly consumables. Not all special colours can be matched, and consistency of results is not always assured. Nevertheless, digital is a key technology option for the future.

Global sourcing

What of global sourcing and purchasing? This now makes up more than a quarter of the responses and has been growing in importance in recent years. The challenge for converters in one country or region is how – if possible – they can become a global supplier.

A range of other issues were also highlighted – from investment decisions to personnel and training, e-commerce and e-procurement to packaging. Perhaps the key pointer here is that e-business is not given as high a priority by the label industry as it currently is by end-users. That is probably one mis-match that the industry needs to address.

Having looked at the major issues facing the industry, Labelexpo visitors were asked about their expectations for 2003 and also about their patterns of investment in capital equipment (Fig.2). Interestingly, although the industry has many issues of concern about the future, most – whether manufacturers, printers or converters – expected 2003 to be a better year than 2002. Only a very small percentage thought that the coming year would be 'worse' or 'much worse' than last year. Let's hope that this optimism proves to be correct.

As far as the buying of capital equipment is concerned, printers/converters mainly see this as an annual or at least an every two-three years exercise – which would seem to make the timing of the two key Label Expo shows in North America and Europe on about the right timescale. Buying intentions can be seen in Fig. 3.

And talking about Labelexpo Shows, some 53% of all converters surveyed said that their spending on products seen at the Show was increasing (Fig.4). Very few see their spend declining.

Perhaps to further emphasise the combined effect of the Labelexpo Show and 'Labels & Labeling' magazine resources provided by the Tarsus Group, an impressive 54% of visitors highlighted Labels & Labeling as the magazine they most regularly read. ■



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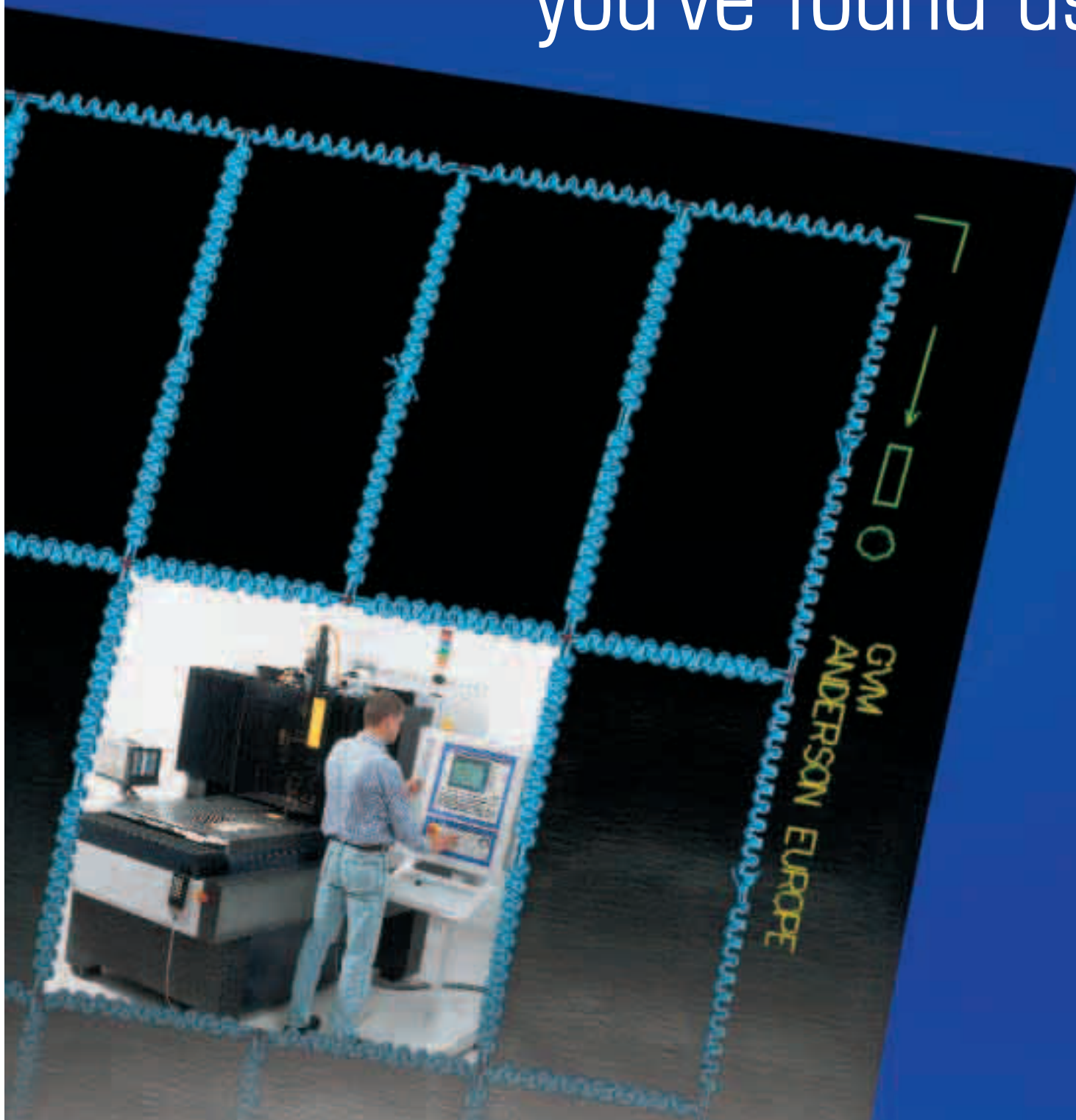
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Understanding UV ink systems

Although UV inks are well established in the narrow web sector, an understanding of the underlying technology can help converters fully exploit the process. **Robert Waddington**, VP Sales, UVitec Printing Ink, explains

The rise of more dramatic, colorful and complex labels has paralleled the increased use of UV inks in the label printing marketplace. This is not coincidental, as UV inks and coatings offer the most effective means to achieve the bright colors, glossy finishes and otherwise overall high-quality look and feel found in many of today's labels. Despite the increased use of UV inks, and its expected continued growth in the near-term, there remains a degree of unfamiliarity with UV inks.

Most printers understand the benefits of UV inks. Among the most well known are the instantaneous curing process and environmental benefits because UV inks and coatings are virtually free of volatile organic compounds, commonly referred to as VOCs. While there are many similarities between UV inks and their water-based counterparts, there are some distinct differences. Recognizing those differences and taking them into consideration will allow printers to achieve the desired look and feel for their labels.

Similar to water-based inks, UV inks are evaluated based upon their viscosity, through cure, and color shifting. To determine the flow characteristics of UV inks, there must be insight into the ink's rheology, which is the science of deformation and flow of matter. A UV ink with the proper rheology will result in strong flow cohesiveness and ink-to-roller transfer. Improper flow characteristics will result in the ink balling up or splitting apart, affecting print quality.

Ingredient Ratio and Mixture Critical

The key to the viscosity is the ingredient ratio and mixture. Many of the ingredients found in water-based inks are also found in UV inks. For example, all UV ink systems are comprised of two key ingredients – oligomers and monomers. In UV inks, the oligomer is a viscous compound that is typically one of the ►

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UV inks have greatly contributed to increased print quality for narrow web converters

following – epoxy acrylate, urethane acrylate or polyester acrylate. Determining which acrylate is correct requires an understanding of the printing application, as each oligomer has its own benefits.

For example, epoxy acrylates are known for their rapid cure speed and excellent film hardness. Urethane acrylates typically exhibit strong pigment wetting characteristics and are hydrophobic, making them the smart choice for use in UV inks developed for lithography printing applications. Having a broad range of properties, polyester acrylates are excellent modifiers for epoxy acrylates. Inks with these oligomers account for most of the UV inks used in the offset, letterpress, and UV flexo markets, and are commonly referred to as “free radical” systems.

UV inks that will be printed on exotic synthetic substrates may require the use of a different oligomer that utilizes cationic curing. Typically, these oligomers fall into three categories – certain aliphatic urethanes, cycloaliphatic epoxides, and vinyl ethers. All of these oligomers have a very low degree of film shrinkage because the cationics transfer electrons that form “acid radicals” that facilitate polymerization.

The selection of the oligomer will also influence which monomer should be used. UV inks that have free radical resins should also have reactive monomers as an ingredient. Monomers impart a wide range of properties to both the wet ink and cured ink film. The selection of the proper monomer will reduce ink tack and viscosity, as well as alter the cure speed, film hardness and flexibility, and chemical resistance.

In inks that utilize synthetic substrates, ingredients such as glycol are typically used. These diluents are not reactive on their own yet participate in the reaction when mixed with other reactive materials.

Another key ingredient in UV inks is the photoinitiator, which starts the chemical reaction induced by light. Sensitizers are closely related to photoinitiators in that both absorb and transfer energy. The difference is that sensitizers do not change during the process, whereas photoinitiators form

free radicals during the process and so undergo a change.

There are plenty of photoinitiator-sensitizer combinations, each of which affects the cure performance and shelf life of a UV ink. How the photoinitiator and/or sensitizer is mixed determines the overall cure response, post cure time, surface cure, and through cure rates. It also affects film hardness and flexibility, chemical resistance, and yellowing.

Given this background, it is apparent that the ink supplier must have a thorough understanding of UV ink ingredients. Of equal importance is a thorough knowledge of the application in which the ink will be used. As outlined earlier, particular oligomers are more appropriate for certain applications. The ink supplier should know all aspects of the press run to correctly mix the UV ink so that the proper mixture and ratio of ingredients can be determined. That is why it is important for printers to select an experienced UV ink supplier that is familiar with not only the inks but also the printing processes.

Experience in UV inks is also important after the ink has been formulated. UV inks may have a fast cure time but that does not mean they can be rushed through the development process. They must be given the proper “wet out” time so that the particles don’t separate. This applies to all UV inks, whether they are used for flexo, offset, or letterpress.

Summary

UV inks are expected to increase market share, which is not surprising given the trends in label printing and the advantages UV provides in these applications. Selecting the proper UV inks, therefore, becomes extremely important. A greater understanding of the properties of UV inks and the experience behind those suppliers making the inks will lead to the use of the best UV ink for each printing application.

Robert Waddington is vice president of sales for UVitec Printing Ink, headquartered in Lodi, NJ. For more information, visit www.witec.com

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Awards showcase label opportunities

OPPack Gold Labelling Award for Duphalac pharmaceutical labels, produced by Germark S.A., Spain



The recent OPPack labelling awards for OPP films and also heralded the network centred on the FMCG

The prestigious OPPack Awards 2002 Ceremony, which was held at the 'Al Thermen' room at Mondorf Le Domaine Thermal in Mondorf-Les-Bains, Luxembourg, on the evening of Wednesday 11th December, saw Spanish label converter Germark S.A. win the coveted Gold Labelling Award 'for an innovative label approach that combines a reduction in packaging materials with the latest technology.' Some 200 guests attended the prize-giving ceremony and gala dinner.

Produced for Solvay Pharma S.A, part of the Solvay chemical and pharmaceutical group, the award winning pharmaceutical label for Duphalac medicine combines two printed labels stuck one onto the other using a special adhesive which enables the upper label to be peeled off, so revealing another printable area and further important user information below. An additional feature made possible by the clever self-adhesive label is a detachable part of the outer label which contains information for the pharmacist to remove and keep for his own records.

Printed and constructed by Germark – a pioneer in the field of self-adhesives in Spain – the Duphalac label was said by the selection jury to 'illustrate a new opportunity for films (in this case 60 micron Label-Lyte LL536) in a variety of market segments with a winning concept that opens doors in many other label applications.'

Of the ten labelling applications nominated for the 2002 Awards and presented to the jury, the Duphalac label was the only self-adhesive solution, all the other nominations being either cut-and-stack film or reel-fed wrap-around film applied to bottles or jars – predominately for bottles of water or soft

Transparent reel-fed wrap-around labels replacing paper in the Lurisia Mineral Water bottle



ase OPP ities

demonstrated new opportunities
launch of a new packaging business
company. **Mike Fairley** reports

drinks. All however, presented new or novel applications for film labelling.

Reel-fed wrap-around Label-Lyte film labels for Lurisia mineral water for example, replace a paper label, with the high gloss film setting off the original design in three variations to differentiate the different water types. Printed by Cellografica Gerosa, Italy on the reverse-side using 10-colour rotogravure printing, the transparent film partly provides a no-label look which enables the design on the inside of the label to be viewed through the bottle.

Premium water

Another mineral water application for ExxonMobil Label-Lyte film was for a new reel-fed, wrap-around label to complement a recently adopted clear PET bottle on Gerolsteiner Brunnen, the best known mineral water in Germany. The label offers excellent appearance, as well as high-speed application on Gerolsteiner's new KHS high-speed labelling line. The labels were converted by Beucke & Söhne, a family-owned German converter specialising in the supply of synthetic labels for the mineral water market.

A cut-and-stack, wrap-around labelling application nomination – again for mineral water – is one of the first clear label film applications in the UK and follows a complete product redesign for Strathmore mineral water, where the Lithor film replaces a metallised paper label. Application speeds are identical to those achieved with paper at around 1600 bottles/hour. The converter is Gavin Watson of Glasgow.

Sheet-fed printing by UV offset on Lithor cut-and-stack clear film provides a replacement for 60g paper labels on a new range of lemon flavoured Staropolanka mineral water and offers a fresh, see-through look – with added scratch resistance. ▶

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Clear cut-and-stack, wrap-around label for Strathmore mineral water – one of the first clear label film applications in the UK. Labelled at 1,600 bottles per hour



Clear cut-and-stack film labels provide a see-through look for lemon flavour mineral water



This is the first time that UV sheet offset printing has been applied to filmic label printing in Poland and was undertaken by Drukarnia Cezar for Zespol Uzdrowisk Klodzkich, the biggest producer of natural and flavoured waters in Poland.

The final nominated mineral water label – for Coca Cola South Pacific Pty – was offset printed by Labelmakers, Australia, for the first ever application of transparent cut-and-stack Lithor on a mineral water bottle resulting in a shiny no-label appearance. The stiffness of the 50 micron labels allows for ease of application on a Krones Canmatic machine at speeds of around 600 bottles per minute.

Paper to film

A flexo-printed cut-and-stack application for Pepsi Cola offered Atlas Bottling Corporation the possibility to switch to Label-Lyte Lithor film labels from paper labels without any major investment, and in doing so improved the glossy look of the labels and additionally made them scuff and humidity resistant. The existing Krones Canmatic labelling machine applies the film labels at around 10,000 bottles per hour. The converter is Flexoprint sarl, Algeria – a two year old company mainly dedicated towards the labelling market.

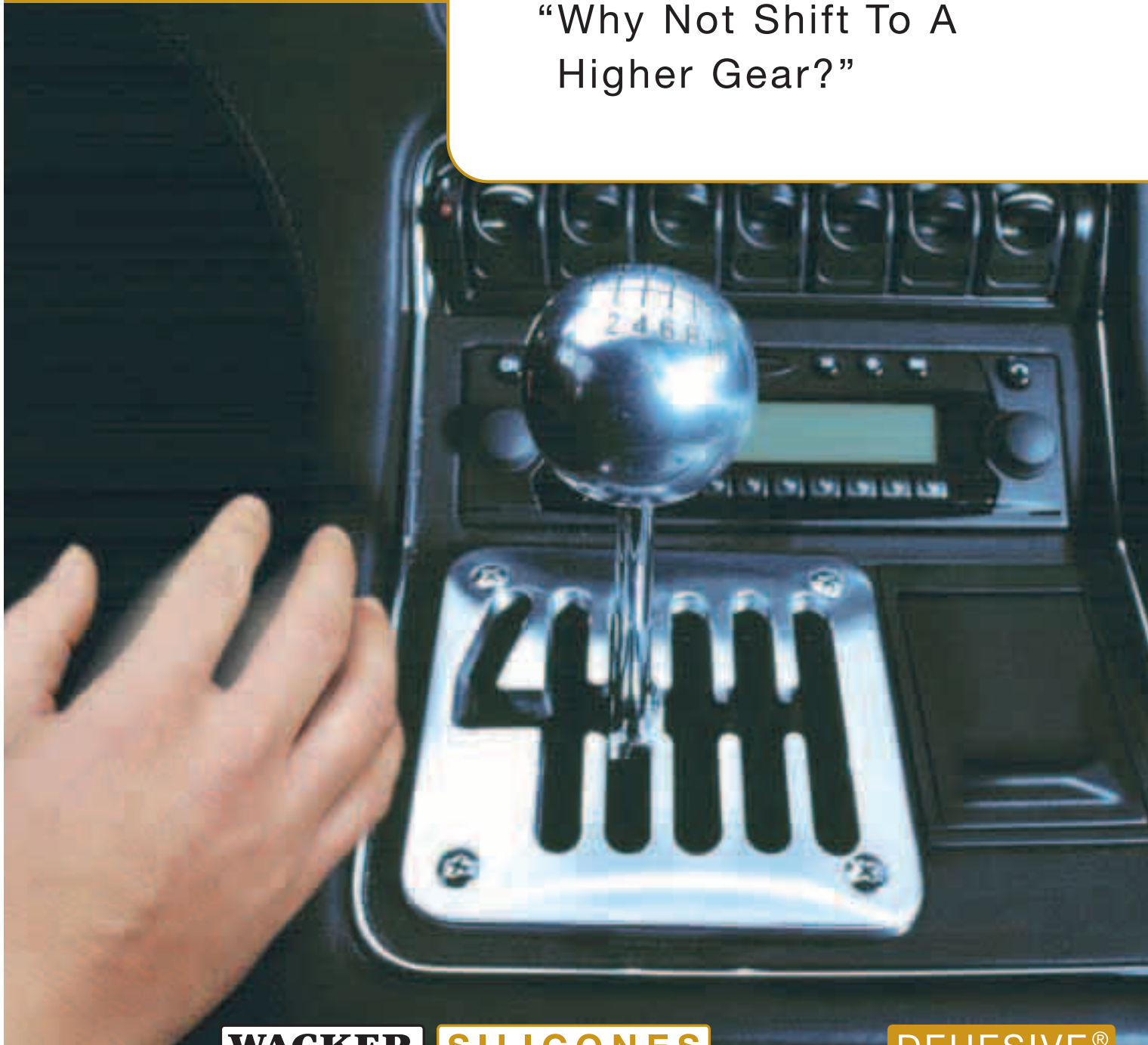
Labels for two litre and one litre PET bottles of beer from innovative Ukrainian brewery company Sarmat, were printed on Label-Lyte film by Novy Mir, Ukraine, using modern flexo equipment. The reel-fed wrap-around film labels offer a particularly glossy appearance and high yield and are applied using a Krones labeller at 18,000 bottles per hour.

Outside of the drinks market, nominated labels for the 2002 awards included a transparent film used in an innovative technique called Spinformation for which the Sealex Corporation has the sole manufacturing and selling rights in Japan. It allows two labels (one white paper, one transparent plastic) to rotate over each other around a Nescafé Excella jar so as to provide the maximum amount of consumer information, which appears through windows in the transparent Label-Lyte film.

The first Lithor cut-and-stack application in China sees 70 micron Label-Lyte offering high stiffness and 2-side anti-static coated labels for the labelling of a milk drink for Friesland Tianjin Dairy Foods at 16,000 bottles/hour using a Krones Controll machine. Surface UV offset printed by Shanghai Embossing Printing Co. on the latest Heidelberg and KBA offset presses, the labels provide excellent opacity and a matt finish.

Judging for the OPPack Awards took place in the regional headquarters of ExxonMobil Chemical Films Europe in Luxembourg on December 11th. The jury comprised five experts within the packaging/labelling industry: Nathalie Scieux, Packaging Buyer from Auchan based in France; Simon King, Managing Director of PCI Films Consulting based in the UK; Werner Gessner, Head of International Operations and Business Development for SIG based in Switzerland; Julian Carroll, Director of the European Organisation for ►

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e No. 125

Produced by Labelmakers, Australia, this pump mineral water application is the first ever use of transparent cut-and-stack Lithor on a mineral water bottle



“The aim is to integrate all players in the value chain to generate a service level that would be impossible for one company alone”

Packaging in the Environment based in Belgium and Fabrice Peltier, President of P'Référence packaging design agency based in France.

Prior to the evening awards ceremony guests were able to attend a Time to Market workshop at the Hotel Hilton, Luxembourg, at which ExxonMobil, pre-press firm Saueressig and converter SIT announced the launch of a new project and alliance in packaging aimed at speeding up the time to market.

An internet-based project, Time to Market utilises tools and systems that create real-time networks amongst players in the production, distribution and promotion of packaging for Fast Moving Consumer Goods (FMCG). The aim is to integrate all players in the value chain to generate a service level that would be impossible for one company alone.

Flexo printed cut-and-stack film labels that replace paper and are applied on existing Krones Conmatic labelling machines



Packaging chain

These systems focus on several aspects of the packaging chain. For example, they will help companies to digitally manage the design process and then link that with materials planning and ordering, as well as colour repeatability possibilities. From concept to approved artwork and from artwork to delivered packaging, all involved parties will be able to interact in a simultaneous collaborative mode. The artwork, pre-press and printing can be integrated into one digital workflow, providing reliable colour matching and mock-up production and ensuring packaging material suitability and availability.

The systems developed will enable the packaging industry and FMCG manufacturers to reduce time to market, make effective planned and unplanned promotions and eliminate waste, creating a valuable business network centred on the FMCG company.

To develop the project, ExxonMobil has joined forces with experts along the value chain, in colour management, graphic design, image management and printing. ExxonMobil has co-founded and is co-operating on the project with Saueressig and SIT, two entrepreneurial companies who share its vision of the future for packaging.

Following the workshop and awards dinner, guests were able to take an optional site visit to the ExxonMobil manufacturing capabilities at Virton, Belgium, on the morning of the 12th December. ■

Nescafé Excella. Label-Lyte film enables two labels (one with white paper, one transparent plastic) to rotate over each other so as to present consumer information through a clear window





Baumgarten LABEL

A fourth M-3300 for Baumgarten

A fourth Nilpeter M-3300 offset platform press has helped consolidate Baumgarten Label Division's position as the leader in the Latin American market for self-adhesive labels. The company's M-3300 presses are put to use producing high-quality filmic labels for cosmetics and toiletries as well as paper-based products for the home-care label market.

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Baumgarten achieves exceptional production quality with M-3300 presses that are equipped with up to nine value-added printing units. Process and spot colors are produced with UV-cured offset, special graphic effects are supplied by UV-rotary screen and hot foil stamping units, and superior finish is achieved by UV-flexo varnishing. High volumes of short/medium-run jobs are made possible by the ability to interchange print and rotary die-cutting units, while the quick-change cassettes greatly reduce make-ready times.



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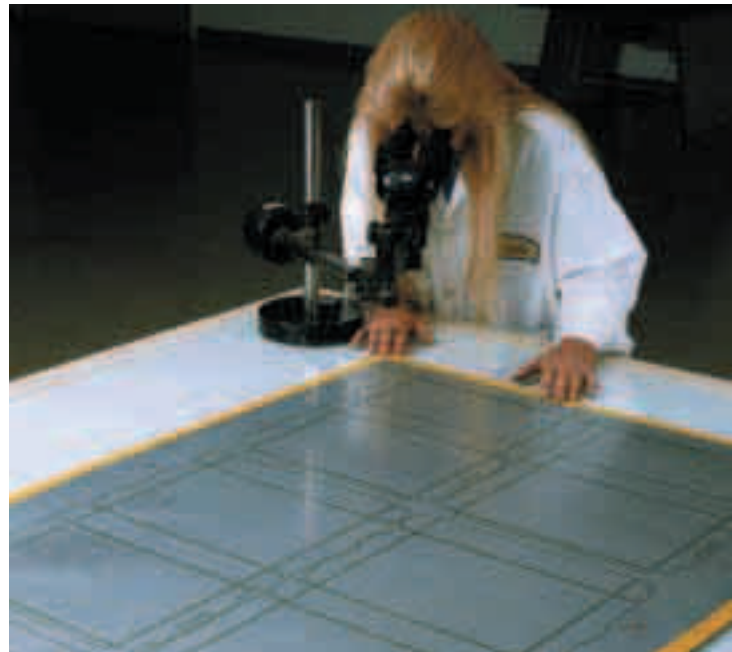
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Converting inline cartons

With more sheetfed offset carton printers investigating an in-line flexo solution to the challenges of shorter run lengths, and label converters eyeing offset's carton markets, rotary cut/creasing is emerging as a key issue. **Natalie Martin** reports on converters who have settled on Xynatech's solution



JIT manufacturing has reduced run sizes and made short-run carton printing a hot item. Label printers looking for more lucrative markets are moving into folding cartons. Sheet fed offset printers seeking to reduce costs of short run work are moving into inline printing. But in-line carton conversion demands a better understanding of rotary die cutting/creasing and raises the question of whether flexo can compete with offset quality.

Larry Patterson, director of product and process development, Jones Packaging, a provider of premier packaging solutions (cartons, shrink sleeves, leaflets and PS labels) based in London, Canada, recalls, 'We had a customer who wanted us to run water-based inks for folding cartons and flexo

was the only way to meet that customer demand.'

So Jones Packaging purchased – in addition to its sheetfed offset, rotary letterpress and narrow web flexo machines – a 22-inch Comco Proglide flexo press (equipped with UV/hot air drying and a roll in and roll out die cutting station) back in 1999. Three years on and Patterson is using it as a platform for both short and, surprisingly, long runs. 'In some cases, you do realize that if you're preparing for a short run with one repeat across using narrow width stock and small plates, it makes sense to use narrow web flexo. But, alternatively for us to do a pretty short run, we'll also still print litho because you can automatically re-set your fountains for a repeat job. You're up to colour very quickly so waste is quite small.' ▶

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“Equally though, if you have long runs where embossing and/or hotstamping is needed, it’s more economical to do this in one pass on the web”



Xynatech’s rotary cut-crease solution

He gives the advice that you have to be job specific, do your homework, and firmly believes that each job must be looked at, ‘on a case by case basis’ depending on how well the cartons fit on the offset plate size. ‘You can’t just say that short run is going to work better on flexo. It depends on the number of cartons you can get across and the repeat on your web (web utilization) vs. the number of cartons you can get up on your sheet’ Patterson argues. Equally though, if you have long runs where embossing and/or hotstamping is needed, it’s more economical to do this in one pass on the web.

The modular die cutting station on the Comco enables the cutting make-ready to be completed before the preceding order is completed. The moving in of the die cutting module and locking it in place takes less than five minutes. The off-line make-ready requires less than 10 to 20 minutes. Xynatech was chosen for the die tooling because it was considered an early leader in pressure-cut magnetic dies.

‘We were looking for a technology that would take us away from engraved cylinders,’ says Patterson. ‘We run eight different cylinder repeats (with a ninth on its way) on the Comco. These run from 17 and a quarter to 29 inches.’

Graph Pak

In 1995 Graph Pak, traditionally a sheetfed operation, located in Chicago, bought its first narrow web flexo press, a 16” Chromas machine. Dale Hannaford, VP of Operations, reasons that the decision to go narrow web flexo was due to cost efficiency on tooling. Although the die cutting was initially solid crush cut using a single station combination die, in 1999, pressure cutting with flexible dies was initiated. Over the years more magnetic cylinders have been added. Currently five repeats are available. While the majority of jobs are recy- ▶

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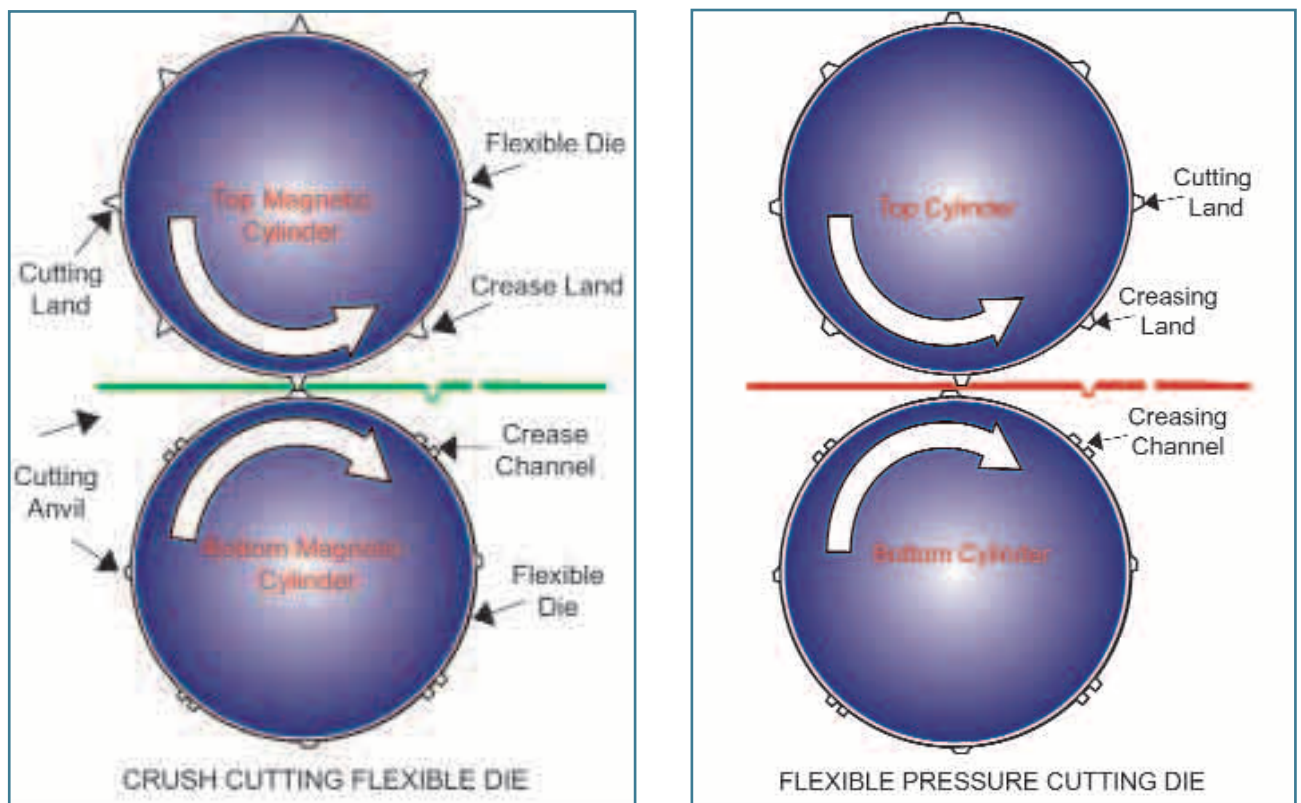
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Comparison between crush cut and pressure cut flexible die systems

cluded stock, there are long runs on SBS. Die life runs between three and five million repeats on the SBS. Die cutting make-ready runs between 10 and 20 minutes.

'I turned to Xynatech so I could put more work on the web,' says Hannaford. 'Using the magnetic dies is tremendously cheaper than using cylinder dies if you, for example, compare \$2000 (magnetic dies) versus an upward cost of \$5-6000 dollars (cylinder). In the long run, once you've paid for the magnetic dies, every job gets exponentially cheaper, as you can use the mag cylinders over and over again, which gives us a competitive edge and gives us the opportunity to break into new applications. Price is all that matters. Service and quality are givens.'

Hannaford believes that there is a shift towards narrow web flexo, but there is still a place for sheetfed. 'On certain types of jobs, sometimes the graphics are such that it just does not fit flexo, but with new techniques in plate making and advances in press design that difference is getting less and less every year. There's definitely a marketplace for narrow web flexo.'

HJ Jones

To perfect printing folding cartons using flexo, HJ Jones, another converter that started out in offset, had to journey through a steep learning curve. In the early 90's the decision was made to purchase a 1618 Webtron flexo press with a flat bed die cutter from Kemp Smith to produce folding cartons and paperboard packaging. This opened the door to inline process-

ing and gave HJ Jones the confidence to purchase a 28 inch wide central impression flexo press from PCMC in 1999 which was combined with a stand alone Bernal die cutter.

Two repeats of magnetic cylinders have been installed, 39 and 48 inch. Mike Jones, president, is considering a smaller repeat set of magnetic cylinders. He feels that once equipped, the business will follow. The order size at HJ Jones is somewhat shorter run than the typical flexo carton printer. Their product mix includes food, retail packaging as well as liquid packaging.

'Our move into flexo has been successful and has allowed us to take business that we could not have picked up from sheet fed.' Jones does not foresee the time when they move entirely away from offset printing. He says, 'We find inline with flat bed die-cutting seems to be better for short run work and then the PCMC using the magnetic dies for long runs works well for us.'

Though the PCMC press is not as busy as they'd hoped, the press is starting to fill up and it's brought in new lines. 'We would never have got into liquid or bacon packaging. We estimate every job and some won't run flexo depending on the complexities of vignettes, or some of the repeats don't work if you're running reverse tuck cartons. It's often easier to run litho and sheetfed. We find litho still economical for longer runs. If we can do more in-line if we're printing, coating and die-cutting then it really pays to put on the larger runs, but we also find that sometimes high volume work will run better on flexo. It just depends on the job.' ■

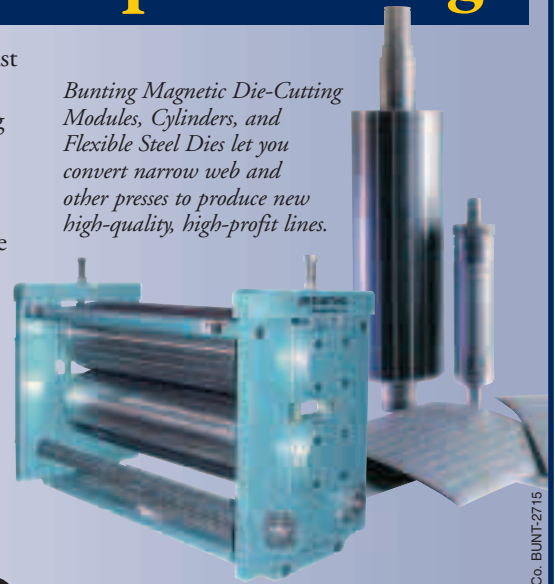
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e No. 128

Developments in

Matt McCardell, president of Graphic Systems International, systems targeted specifically at narrow web printers. Are they

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Automatic ink dispensing systems were first introduced in North America approximately 12 years ago. The early systems required elaborate electronics to control the precise flow of inks through them. The software for these early systems was also quite elaborate. Due to the complexity of the early dispensers, only high volume Wide Web users could afford them. All this has changed in recent years. Not only are there Wide Web ink blending systems, there are also smaller more economical ink blending systems that meet the needs of the Narrow Web market.

Like the Wide Web dispensers the Narrow Web dispensers also use digital I/O boards that virtually eliminate the need for costly and elaborate electronics in system automation. Precise dosing of inks can now be controlled with a board that simply plugs into a personal computer. PC based operating systems became more stable with the release of Windows NT, Windows 2000, and Windows XP. The application software developers became more tuned in to what Narrow Web ink users wanted and have since developed a specific Narrow Web system.

A major advantage to using an automated ink blending system is that progressive ink users have drastically minimized ink-related downtime and reduced their return ink inventories. Return ink inventory is promptly reused by the system.

ink Dispensing

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Ideally, an ink supplier furnishes the formulas and base components, and the automated ink dispenser simply blends the desired color. The system automatically calculates the precise amount of each component required, then blends the color desired and doses each component with precision.

An ink blending system can contain databases for formulas, supplier information, base component information, substrate, orders ink usage, cost and VOCs. These databases enable the plant to have a complete bookkeeping system for all flexo inks.

Evaluate Software Capabilities

When evaluating a computerized ink blending system, it is important to carefully review its software capabilities. Many systems on the market today do not have their own return ink software, but depend on the spectrophotometer's software for handling press return ink. Color reformulation with a spectrophotometer can be useful inside a plant, but is not the best solution for everyone. The spectrophotometer is an aid, and still requires a strong knowledge of color formulation. With a spectrophotometer, an ink technician repeats a process of formulating, correcting and reformulating until the desired shade is obtained. In other words, reformulating color with a spectrophotometer requires decision-making by a trained color-

On the other hand, ink blend- ▶

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“Whether or not in-house formulation software and spectrophotometers are the right solution depends on each specific situation”

ing systems with integrated press return software are very easy to operate. If the operator wants to blend a particular color, the system informs the operator that there is rework ink in inventory with some of the necessary components. If more than one press return ink is available, the computer displays the ink in both chronological and cost-of-ink order. The operator can then choose whether or not to use the rework ink. A key benefit of the automatic ink blending systems is the Windows based software providing easy link-up with any Windows-based or spectrophotometer color formulation system.

Whether or not in-house formulation software and spectrophotometers are the right solution depends on each specific situation regarding tonnage, handling, reuse of press return inks, and color-matching capabilities available in-house.

Evaluate the Hardware

Automatic dispensing systems are available in many different configurations. By calculating average batch size and number of batches per shift, you can determine the correct size system for your needs. Most reputable dispensing system manufacturers offer systems that can accurately dispense in 5-gallon buckets to 55-gallon drums generally used for the Wide Web market. Today we also have automatic ink dispensers that fill one-gallon containers designed for Narrow Web printers

Valve design is critical when evaluating a dispensing system. Flow speed, accuracy, reliability and design of the dispense valve should help determine the best dispensing system for your needs. There is a direct tradeoff between speed and accuracy of most dispenser valves—the faster the flow, the less accurate the valve. Many dispenser manufacturers in the wide web sector offer multi-flow valves that allow a coarse flow to dispense the ink until it is close to the desired weight, and then a very fine or drip flow to finish. Manufacturers have now designed a revolutionary valve with two-stage flow for accurate, high-speed dispensing for Narrow Web printers.

Many dispensers are available with an automatic cleaning



Matt McCardell, president of Graphic Systems (right), and a LabelExpo Americas 2002 booth visitor

system attached to the valve assembly. Since cleanup is one of the most overlooked procedures in a dispensing operation, an automatic cleaning system is extremely useful. Whether the system has automatic cleaning or not, you can determine how easy a system is to keep clean by observing it in operation. Before deciding on any manufacturer, ask yourself a few simple questions:

- Are the valves clean, or easy to clean?
- Is the valve assembly smooth, or are stalactites of ink hanging off?
- Is the control cabinet made of sheet metal, plastic or stainless steel?

These simple observations will help you determine the quality of the dispensing system you are reviewing.

Gravimetric vs. Volumetric

The heart of an ink blending system is the dispensing unit, which accurately dispenses all basic inks – inks that may have different viscosities and rheologies. Historically, gravimet-



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“The ink blending system must be closed and continuously circulating to eliminate waste due to wrong viscosity or lack of homogenous composition at press-side”

ric blending systems have proved to be more accurate than volumetric-based systems. Gravimetric systems typically operate within an accuracy range of 1 gram. Volumetric dispensers typically operate within an accuracy range of 2 per cent. However, each component needs to be calibrated all the time. Air entrapment in the ink causes a dispensing error in volumetric dispensing systems, whereas with the gravimetric system, the weight is constantly checked.

The ink blending system must be closed and continuously circulating to eliminate waste due to wrong viscosity or lack of homogenous composition at press-side. It also is important that the ink circulate through the entire system.

In-house ink blending offers the following:

- Just-in-time (JIT) ink production. The ability to immediately blend inks for a press run, and blend only the ink that is needed.
- Exact Quantity of ink per order. Historically, more ink was ordered than was needed to avoid an ink shortage during the production run. (An ink shortage would cause expensive downtime, resulting in either pulling the job off the press or waiting for a rush delivery of ink from the ink supplier.) With in-house ink blending, less ink can be blended than is required, because at any time, more ink can be produced accurately with the push of a button. This practice eliminates the constant buildup of excess inks.
- Constant quality. With a computerized ink blending system, 100 per cent reproducibility on repeat orders is possible. The color produced for a job last week or last month will be exactly the same color when it is blended the next time. Ink buildup is again eliminated, because wrong colors and rejected orders are eliminated.
- Environmental compliance. Dis-posing of inks through

normal waste channels is becoming more expensive and difficult. The trend toward stricter environmental regulation is making in-house ink blending systems more popular.

While controlling ink quality and reducing environmental stress, general cost savings also are realized with in-house ink blending. Normally, initial ink costs are reduced because a partnership is formed between the ink supplier and the user. The ink supplier most likely supplies 100 per cent of the base components. The savings in handling costs may be passed from the ink supplier to the customer. These cost savings can vary, depending on the situation. The reduction or elimination of return ink inventory puts more money toward the user's business and less toward the warehouse floor. Turning present inventory into black or dark brown is an expensive way to utilize unused ink.

Other internal cost savings experienced with in-house ink blending are:

- reduced ink-related downtime on presses;
- reduced order-processing time for inks; reduced material cost when starting a press run
- reduction of returned or discounted orders due to wrong color.
- in-house ink blending affords the plant more control in terms of consistent, reliable, repeatable quality. ■

Matt McCardell is the President of Graphic Systems International, Inc. in Phoenix, AZ. He has been actively involved in the promotion of automated dispensing systems for the past 12 years. Matt can be reached at phone number (602) 716-0300, fax number (602) 258-2279 or via E-mail address: matt.mccardell@graphicsystemsintl.com.



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Gillette Company signs RFID deal

Alien Technology Corporation has won an order from The Gillette Company for 500 million low-cost radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags. This is the first major commercial order for products incorporating the electronic product code (EPC) developed by researchers and member companies at the Auto-ID Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The multi-million dollar order will support large-scale testing of EPC tag technology through Gillette's supply chain and in retail stores over the next several years.

Leading the initiative at The Gillette Company, vice president Dick Cantwell said: 'We are proud to be at the forefront of the introduction of Auto-ID technology and we hope our leadership will help enable the wider consumer packaged goods industry to open a new era in its relationship with retail customers.'

Chief Executive of Alien Technology, Stav Prodromou, commented: 'This is a landmark agreement. Alien's partnership with The Gillette Company not only signals that EPC tags will be in commercial production at an affordable price but also heralds the widespread adoption of next-generation Auto-ID technology across the consumer packaged goods industry.'

Alien Technology's patented manufac-

turing approach, Fluidic Self-Assembly, allows tiny integrated circuits to be cost-effectively handled and packaged into EPC tags in huge volumes. This enables Alien to achieve low cost in making tags, and also to meet market demand expected to grow rapidly to tens of billions of units per year.

Alien has developed the first EPC labels that operate according to the open specifications drafted at the Auto-ID Center (www.autoidcenter.org). Alien and several other vendors have developed and are offering for sale readers for this system. This worldwide standard for EPC labels will ensure interoperability of tags and readers wherever they are operating.

EPC labels can contain individual item serial numbers and other information such as manufacturing location, date codes, and other vital supply chain data. Manufacturers also expect dramatic reductions in counterfeit branded products due to the use of EPC.

Shipments of the first Alien EPC products to Gillette are expected to begin within the next few months.

Alien is a privately held company with a list of major investors familiar to the roll label industry, including Avery Dennison, UPM-Kymmene, the Dow Chemical Company and Philips.

Screen solution for RFID antennae

DuPont Electronic Technologies has launched its Polymeric Thick Film (PTF) technology as a solution for screenprinting antennae onto Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) 'smart' labels.

The polymeric inks are based on silver conductive particles and achieve low resistivity values of 4-12 mOhms/square. According to DuPont, the read/write distance is less than or equal to 10cm. The inks can only be used for 13.56 MHz (or higher frequency) RFID systems, as it is only possible to screen print 5-6 loop antennas with this method.

PTF materials can be screen-printed on a wide range of substrates.

Flint commits to Conductive Ink

Flint Ink Corporation has announced a multimillion-dollar commitment to become 'the leading provider' of conductive and advanced printing inks and printed electronics technology and processes. The commitment includes staff expansion and plans to develop a state-of-the-art development and resource center. Jim Rohrkemper, VP Emerging Business Segments, remarks, 'Intelligent packaging, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), and printed electronics technologies and applications are quickly developing. Our new commitment will allow us to more quickly transform concepts into 'Smart' inks, printed electronic solutions, and RFID technologies for next-generation intelligent packaging and supply chain applications.'

RFID labels for M&S

Marks and Spencer has revealed plans to apply radio frequency identification (RFID) labels to individual high-value food products. According to the retailer's intellectual property director James Stafford, labels could incorporate information for consumers such as

ingredients or even suggestions on what wine goes best with the food product.

Consumers will be able to access the information via readers located in stores, or even through their mobile phones.

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e No.116

Gillette Company signs RFID deal

Alien Technology Corporation has won an order from The Gillette Company for 500 million low-cost radio-frequency identification (RFID) tags. This is the first major commercial order for products incorporating the electronic product code (EPC) developed by researchers and member companies at the Auto-ID Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. The multi-million dollar order will support large-scale testing of EPC tag technology through Gillette's supply chain and in retail stores over the next several years.

Leading the initiative at The Gillette Company, vice president Dick Cantwell said: 'We are proud to be at the forefront of the introduction of Auto-ID technology and we hope our leadership will help enable the wider consumer packaged goods industry to open a new era in its relationship with retail customers.'

Chief Executive of Alien Technology, Stav Prodromou, commented: 'This is a landmark agreement. Alien's partnership with The Gillette Company not only signals that EPC tags will be in commercial production at an affordable price but also heralds the widespread adoption of next-generation Auto-ID technology across the consumer packaged goods industry.'

Alien Technology's patented manufac-

turing approach, Fluidic Self-Assembly, allows tiny integrated circuits to be cost-effectively handled and packaged into EPC tags in huge volumes. This enables Alien to achieve low cost in making tags, and also to meet market demand expected to grow rapidly to tens of billions of units per year.

Alien has developed the first EPC labels that operate according to the open specifications drafted at the Auto-ID Center (www.autoidcenter.org). Alien and several other vendors have developed and are offering for sale readers for this system. This worldwide standard for EPC labels will ensure interoperability of tags and readers wherever they are operating.

EPC labels can contain individual item serial numbers and other information such as manufacturing location, date codes, and other vital supply chain data. Manufacturers also expect dramatic reductions in counterfeit branded products due to the use of EPC.

Shipments of the first Alien EPC products to Gillette are expected to begin within the next few months.

Alien is a privately held company with a list of major investors familiar to the roll label industry, including Avery Dennison, UPM-Kymmene, the Dow Chemical Company and Philips.

Screen solution for RFID antennae

DuPont Electronic Technologies has launched its Polymeric Thick Film (PTF) technology as a solution for screenprinting antennae onto Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) 'smart' labels.

The polymeric inks are based on silver conductive particles and achieve low resistivity values of 4-12 mOhms/square. According to DuPont, the read/write distance is less than or equal to 10cm. The inks can only be used for 13.56 MHz (or higher frequency) RFID systems, as it is only possible to screen print 5-6 loop antennas with this method.

PTF materials can be screen-printed on a wide range of substrates.

Flint commits to Conductive Ink

Flint Ink Corporation has announced a multimillion-dollar commitment to become 'the leading provider' of conductive and advanced printing inks and printed electronics technology and processes. The commitment includes staff expansion and plans to develop a state-of-the-art development and resource center. Jim Rohrkemper, VP Emerging Business Segments, remarks, 'Intelligent packaging, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), and printed electronics technologies and applications are quickly developing. Our new commitment will allow us to more quickly transform concepts into 'Smart' inks, printed electronic solutions, and RFID technologies for next-generation intelligent packaging and supply chain applications.'

RFID labels for M&S

Marks and Spencer has revealed plans to apply radio frequency identification (RFID) labels to individual high-value food products. According to the retailer's intellectual property director James Stafford, labels could incorporate information for consumers such as

ingredients or even suggestions on what wine goes best with the food product.

Consumers will be able to access the information via readers located in stores, or even through their mobile phones.

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e No.116

Label focus for packaging show



While there was no major narrow web presence at French packaging show Emballage 2003, there was much of interest for label end users, as **John Penhallow** reports

First held in 1947, Emballage claims to be the second biggest packaging show in the world after Interpack. This year's show took place in the midst of an economic downturn – France's 2002 growth will be around one per cent – and the consensus at the show was that if major machinery purchases are being put off, updates and small-to-medium investment projects are still going ahead. The 'twinning' of Emballage and IPA (World Food Processing Exhibition) undoubtedly benefited both shows – a successful piece of synergy of which the forthcoming joint production of Labelexpo and the Bottling, Packing and Canning show (Brussels; October 2003) could prove to be one more example.

The show's organisers decided this year to group all the label-related exhibitors into the same area. The parties affected did not always appreciate this. The reaction of Michel Guinot (PacList/Techmay, one of France's best-known label printers), was unequivocal: 'We get to see the people who know

us and are looking for labels, but in our case we've got new products in other fields, and as far as the Emballage show is concerned we might as well have left those products at home'. Other exhibitors in the same Label Village also felt that being corralled in the 'labels only' area was a mixed blessing.

The French label association UNFEA was highly visible in the Label Village area of the exhibition. UNFEA organised a label competition, a first-time event at Emballage, which is perhaps why the number of entrants – just 36 – was disappointing. Top prizes overall went to Pago for a flexo whisky label printed on an Arsoma press. Other winners included Etiq'Roll, Berson and Stic'Image.

Alone among the big label press manufacturers, Gallus chose to exhibit at Emballage. On demonstration were an RCS 330 and an EM 510. Market communication manager Gerda Gerschwiler explained the decision to come to Emballage: 'Firstly, we want to spread the word that Gallus presses are not just for labels, but for many kinds of packaging. The RCS 330 can handle a wide range of complex applications in both ►

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
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“We're showing the EM 510 offset label press mainly to attract the wine label business, which of course is very big in France and increasingly looking to self-adhesive labelling”

label and package printing. We're showing the EM 510 offset label press mainly to attract the wine label business which of course is very big in France and increasingly looking to self-adhesive labelling.’

Patrick Salhofer, boss of Gallus' French agent TMT, concludes, 'It has been a surprisingly good year for Gallus in France; we have installed two RCS 330 presses which are top-of-the-range models, and we're confident that the coming months will bring in more orders.'

The Hewlett Packard stand was showing videos of the ws4000 digital press - first launched at Labelexpo Europe 2001 - in operation at French beta-test site Imprimerie Adesa, where it has been running since March 2002. This medium-sized French label converter, based in the South of France, installed its first digital label press (a Gallus DO330) in 1998.

HP's Marketing Director Philippe Govart, pointed out that the ws4000 is running at 16 m/minute and can print 85 per cent of Pantone colours. 'It's now one of two HP Indigo label presses operating in France and we're confident that more will follow.'

Spanish narrow web press manufacturer Rotatek and their Italian competitor Omet were both present at Emballage but Omet's presence this year was with an information booth only.

Label Converters

Among the 20 or so label converters who exhibited at the show was Kenilworth Products of Dublin. This specialist in high value-added label solutions has developed a range of products for the medical/pharmaceutical sector, including Data Replication labels, booklet labels and tamper-evident closures. A first-time exhibitor at the show, Kenilworth is concentrating on the French and Spanish markets, aiming to repeat its successful conquest of the UK.

In the label village, a surprisingly large stand was occupied by label converter Alesta Etiket from Istanbul. Said Alesta's Gökhan Savas, 'We specialise in filmic self-adhesive labels for food, drink and household goods. With our modern presses and

low wage costs we can now compete on equal terms with French label printers.'

Sleever International, one of the world's biggest sleeve labelling specialists, recently opened two new plants in Europe and one in USA. Sleever is said to be investing heavily in R&D for new applications, particularly in the food and beverage sectors. On show were a number of impressive luxury sleeve decorations for prestigious perfumes and champagnes. Other innovations on the Sleever stand included the use of thermochromic inks and pigments (colours change in response to temperature fluctuations) and fragrant inks (lavender, chocolate, mint, orange and rose). This highly colourful display was pulling in the crowds, as was the company's new "Powersleeve" machinery - yet more evidence that sleeve labelling is gaining ground.

Application equipment

In terms of labelling equipment, there was lots to see, but no major breakthroughs.

One of the more impressive stands in the "label" section of the show was that of Eticoncept, a major provider of labelling and traceability software/equipment. The company works in partnership with several big names including Zebra and Label-Aire, but as Eticoncept's Dominique Le Corguillé said, 'Business was bad at the start of 2002 as our customers delayed their investment projects due to the business climate. Since the middle of the year it has picked up quite well and 2002 as a whole will be not nearly as bad as we had feared.'

It was no surprise to find Herma Labelling Machinery at the show. Well established in France, Herma was launching its H362M system, a high-speed fully automatic labeller with 100per cent servo drives and able to handle complex labelling operations with high accuracy and a top speed of 2000 labels/minute. Company director Michael Albrecht was bullish about Herma's continued expansion in France, despite the present economic downturn.

From its base in Antwerp, Bopack has expanded to cover Benelux and France. A series of acquisitions over recent years has put the company among the leaders in France both for labels and for labelling systems. Jean-Jacques Schormans, General Manager of Bopack France, had reason to be satisfied with the Emballage show. His stand was regularly one of the most crowded in the 'Label Village', with many foreign visitors, in particular from Eastern Europe. Booklet labels are the up-and-coming product at present, reckons Schormans, whose company recently doubled its production capacity for booklet labels. ■

Innovations

Turning conventional cut-and-stack labels into self-adhesives has been the dream of many an inventor. Now it seems Dubuit Reeltech (a subsidiary of France's Machines Dubuit) may have turned it into a reality. Their 'Labelroll 150' prototype demonstrated at Emballage applies conventional labels onto a continuous siliconised backing paper, and runs at an impressive 20 m/minute. Reeltech's Eric Rouly sees an immediate market in the wine labelling business

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Variable offset sleeves on
Drent-Goebel prototype unit



Next genera

Barry Hunt places some major narrow and mid-web press developments into context

The evolution of the basic roll-label press into a sophisticated production tool has created today's highly fragmented industry. It has allowed many companies to reduce their dependency upon commodity label products and broaden their business horizons into more added-value products, including flexible packaging and folded cartons. As recent trade shows and new product launches have shown, press manufacturers are not short of ideas when it comes to introducing automated features intended to increase productivity and improve overall efficiency. Backing them, of course, are the various innovations linked to pre-press and post-press finishing.

There are many influences on how presses are designed and built, but they all stem from changes in market demand, or more specifically the needs of packaging buyers. They in turn reflect changing retail patterns and distribution methods and cannot be ignored. Jakob Landberg, Nilpeter's sales director, exemplifies current trends when he affirms how firmly the

multi-product philosophy has taken hold: 'We recognise that our customers' services are now less single-product driven, but instead increasingly involve a mix of different products. These in turn reflect their clients' "product branding" demands'. Consequently, he considers the demand for multi-process combination presses with interchangeable print and in-line conversion devices will increase because they are so versatile.

Suitably modified, they have certainly played a key role in establishing flexible packaging and its variants on the narrow-web scene. To a lesser extent it has created a residual interest in single-pass production of folded carton blanks in short runs using UV flexo or offset to compete with sheet-fed operations. While sharing the same product-branding synergy as labels and flexible packaging, it is widely appreciated that carton printing demands specialised sales and marketing skills.

Of course, label converters entering the film market, with its accent on shrink wraps, wrap-around films, in-mould labels, pouches and the like may also find it hard to develop new

markets. The incentive to succeed, however, is prompted by prospects of solid growth. Narrow-web converters are well placed to offer quality graphics, digitised pre-press economies, networked digital proofing and fast turnarounds. They can also meet buyers' demands for the smaller run length patterns associated with regional or seasonal sales campaigns for consumer products. Interestingly, there are several reports of film converters offering trade services to wide-web flexo and gravure printers who cannot efficiently handle short-run jobs. Some have developed partnerships with large print and packaging organisations who offer a 'one-stop shopping' service for their customers.

Technically, there are several modular platform presses capable of converting unsupported films, but we are now seeing

developing countries around the world. Other buyers include letterpress-based firms wishing to move into flexo and perhaps those label converters who require a short-run facility to augment larger press installations.

Newer entrants to this market includes Mark Andy's Scout and Edale's three, four or five-colour Alpha (of which over 45 have been sold since the 2002 launch). Gi Due's new four-colour Quadra series is available in widths of 280mm, 370mm and 430mm and three hot air or UV configurations. It is said to retain the performance features of the Combat series, but cannot be fitted with additional colour or die cutting units. The press is only 3m long and less than 150cm. deep, in any configuration. ▶

tion label?

more dedicated models due the nature of the job in hand. For example, varying substrate thicknesses will effect feed lengths, but adjustable impression cylinders can compensate for this. Servo-driven web guides, tension controls between individual print units and automatic register controls are other distinguishing features when handling thin substrates at optimum press speeds. Such presses usually combine both hot-air drying systems for working with solvent-based inks, as well as UV curing systems augmented with water-cooled plates or servo-driven chill rolls to facilitate the handling of heat-sensitive materials.

Other high-end features may include centralised controls with touch screen panels and job data storage/retrieval. Fault detection is even more critical with such expensive materials, which has led to some advanced forms of video web inspection. Some modules will inspect both sides of the web simultaneously, while coping with reflective substrates and metallic inks. Another option is to inspect the relative position of transparent varnishes and cold-seal liquid adhesives, as used for pouches.

Away from this peak of print technology, the greater number of global press sales still come from far more compact flexo work-horses. On one hand they are obviously 'entry level' presses, usually offering a limited choice of colour capability. But their appeal to start-up companies increasingly includes those in the



Mark Andy LP3000 press

Giga Information Group has joined forces with Tarsus – the organisers of Labelexpo and publishers of Labels and Labelling – to launch the

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PCMC Deckx2 print module. Note CI drum between two print decks

Press markets

While keeping sales ticking over, it is not surprising that the overall press market is hardly buoyant at a time of economic uncertainty. Many converters have consequently deferred their investment plans, which in Europe has led to trading conditions best described as 'patchy', according to at least one salesperson. The consensus is that sales in the UK, Ireland, France and Italy have held up relatively well, but those in central Europe have declined markedly, especially in Germany. The North American scene has also been quieter than normal and most manufacturers have laid off staff.

On the other hand, several press makers are developing far-reaching sales strategies - just like the materials suppliers - by establishing sales and service facilities in parts of South East Asia, eastern Europe, India, Russia and China. From a small base, these areas now show the most dynamic growth for self-adhesive labels and packaging within an increasingly globalised marketplace for branded consumer goods.

While hardly a trend, there have also been some interesting mergers among manufacturers, which in some cases have prompted some new presses. An example is Paper Converting Machine Co, which acquired the Webtron range and ZigZag carton presses from the troubled Didde Group to set-up PC In-line Systems. Its wide-web pedigree is evident in the Evolution, an innovative servo-driven flexo press for multi-substrates in

widths of 460mm, 560mm and 660mm. The Deck x 2 two-colour print heads use a single common impression cylinder that operates in-line between two colour decks to give an extremely short web path. The company has also developed the X10, a 250-mm wide flexo press that emulates the short web path and cantilever design of the Webtron 650/750 models, including interchangeable cylinders and tooling.

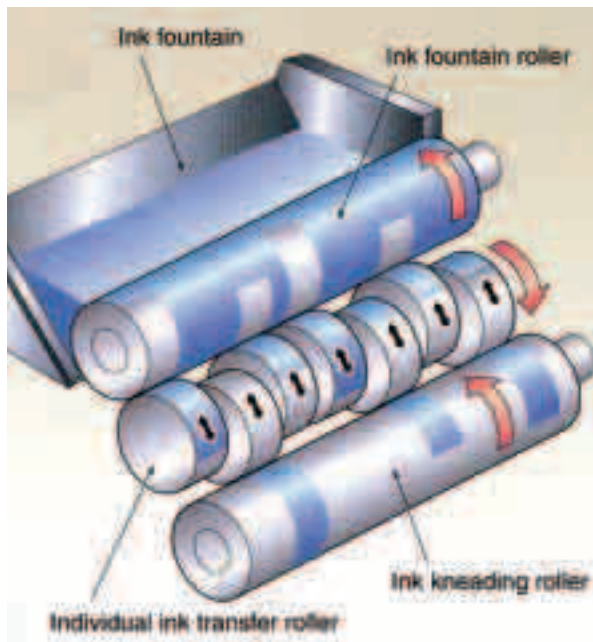
Nilpeter has introduced the FB-Line of flexo/UV flexo modular presses, which are built in the US at the former RotoPress plant in Cincinnati. The three models with web widths from 273mm to 425mm compliment Nilpeter's existing flexo and flexo/combination presses. There is also the FBZ-4200, a new 420-mm wide servo-assisted packaging press with slide in rotary screen and hot-foil units. Chill drums at the base of the Z-shaped frame create a 180-degree surface contact to assist in running heat sensitive films and maintaining tight register. Also new is the FBX line with web widths from 477mm to 680mm, which marks the company's entry into the mid-web packaging market.

Within the Mark Andy organisation, Comco concentrates on its multi substrate ProGuide MSP press line in Ohio. The latest offering is a gravure unit within a 'solvent safe' press, used in conjunction with water-based or UV-curable flexo options. Gravure (also an option for Nilpeter's M-3300 offset press) is sold as a cost-effective method of printing metallic inks on high quality labels and packaging as an alternative to foiling or off press bronzing. For its part, Mark Andy has introduced the LP3000, a flexo/UV flexo press in the Model 2200 mould. It converts a wide range of label materials at up to 230 m/minute based on a combination of new plate loading, ink cassette and press set-up features. ▶



Flying Imprinting stations on Gallus RCS330

“As to the pros and cons, it is generally agreed that shaftless models use more power, but as to whether they cost more than a similarly-configured conventional press depends on individual models”



Letterpress stays in the game – Lintec's Automatic Control Roller System

Shaftless

Mark Andy builds the LP3000 with ground helical gears, which are claimed to eliminate gear marking. Obviously, this is not a problem with shaftless technology, which uses direct AC servo drives instead of mechanical drives, gear trains and gear boxes. It is already established on wide-web flexo and gravure presses, where it tends to be combined with some type of sleeve plate and anilox system to give infinitely variable repeat lengths.

It is also found on several offset-based presses. In fact Drent introduced the shaftless Vision SMR narrow-web series as long ago as 1996. In January 2001 it acquired Goebel's web division and with it the shaftless Novaprint in widths of 680mm and 760mm. Both models spearhead Drent Goebel's activities in the label and packaging markets. A strategic alliance with RDP Marathon means the Montreal-based company will market and support both ranges in the USA and Canada. In turn, Drent Goebel will market RDP's larger web-offset presses in Europe.

Last year Drent Goebel introduced the VSOP (Variable Size Offset Printing) unit with UV curing. It uses a fixed impression cylinder and variable size plate and blanket cylinders fitted with air shafts to accommodate lightweight sleeves to affect

changes in printing sizes. Print lengths are set without steps from 381mm to 762mm, much in the manner of flexo sleeve technology. A Vision with VSOP units is currently being beta tested at Pechiney, a Dijon-based flexible packaging printer, and five similar presses are on order.

Following lengthy evaluations over four years, Gallus is now installing its servo-driven RCS 330 UV flexo combination press at various sites in Europe and the USA. At the last Labelexpo it featured a flying imprinter station for making frequent text changes. Two would be used, allowing text changes in the idle print station while maintaining full press speed. Omet's shaftless Varyflex, intended for the folding carton market, features quick-change sleeves for both the anilox assembly and flexo plate cylinders, giving variable repeats from 292mm to 838mm. The latest entrant is Edale's new flagship, the Sigma packaging press in web widths from 330mm to 620mm. It offers an additional axis as an upgrade allowing independent control of the print cylinder for infinitely variable print length control. The first has gone to Tamar Labels in Tavistock, Devon, for carton printing, while Arab Medical Packaging in Egypt is installing the second to produce mainly printed foils for blister packs.

As to the pros and cons, it is generally agreed that shaftless models use more power, but as to whether they cost more than a similarly-configured conventional press depends on individual models. The presses use a lot of sophisticated electronics, which implies the need for sound maintenance schedules and readily-available service back-up. Operators must also ensure that all servo drives are electronically synchronised to obtain the benefits associated with precise web tension and 360-degree print registration on everything from thin films to cartonboard. 'Once set-up you gain more functionality. For example, by using the touch-screen control you input the settings for web tension and register, but once stored they can be retrieved for repeat jobs to increase overall productivity', says James Boughton, Edale's joint managing director.

To end with a brief note on print processes, it is clear that water-based flexo and UV flexo are striding ahead, despite their known limitations in respect of printing standards. UV rotary letterpress refuses to be written off as a premium-quality label process, although new presses tend to be sold to existing users of the process. Offset units have become firmly established, mainly as part of combination presses serving premium label and packaging markets and augmented with rotary screen and hot or cold foiling methods. With the need for temperature-controlled plates, waterless offset is a much rarer process, but it has certain niche markets, notably among Australian wine label printers. ■

Computer-to-Plate

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e No.135

Merger creates print colossus

Moore Corporation Limited and Wallace Computer Services, Inc. have announced the signing of a definitive merger agreement to form one of the largest providers of print management solutions in the world. The combined company, to be named Moore Wallace, would become one of the world's largest integrated providers of commercial print, direct mail, outsourced customer communications, forms, labels, fulfillment and distribution services. The merger is subject to approval by Wallace shareholders and regulatory approvals.

When the merger is completed, the company will have approximately US\$3.6 billion in annual revenues and over 18,500 employees worldwide. The company expects to generate synergy savings of at least US\$50 million on an annualized basis from asset rationaliza-

tion, elimination of redundant overhead and duplicate IT expenditures, procurement savings and the opportunity to leverage a more comprehensive product offering to a broader customer base.

Moore operates in three complementary business segments: Forms and Labels, Outsourcing and Commercial. The Forms and Labels business designs, manufactures and sells paper-based and electronic business forms and labels and provides electronic print management solutions.

Wallace is among the largest label converters in the United States, specializing in all narrow web print technologies, including Flexo and UV Flexo, Letterpress, Offset, Screen, Combination and Digital printing. The company runs seven label converting plants.

Avery Dennison invests in new coating capacity

Avery Dennison's European operation is to invest €60M in two new coaters in Champ-sur-Drac, France and Luxembourg, along with major new investment in slitting operations throughout the continent.

The announcement came as the company laid out its post-Jackstädt acquisition structure in Europe. The new company name is Avery Dennison Roll Materials Europe, but visibility of the Jackstädt brands will be retained in the FassonJac materials range.

Okke Koo, vice president-general manager at Avery Dennison Roll Materials Europe told journalists in the

Czech Republic that the 'overwhelming majority of customers are very satisfied with the integration up to now.'

The company also has a new organizational structure which will allow it to focus on the fast-growing areas of Eastern Europe and 'International South,' which includes Turkey, Greece and the countries of the Middle East and North Africa. General manager of these two divisions is Angelo Depietri.

Depietri was appointed Adespan's general manager in 1985. When Avery Dennison acquired Adespan in 2000 Depietri joined its European management team.

E-Combat launch set for LabelExpo

GIDUE and Siemens have announced a technical partnership to develop a new series of presses called the E-Combat line. The E-Combat will be unveiled at the LabelExpo Europe show in Brussels in September 2003 and will build on the proven servo-drive concepts of the existing Combat presses.

The agreement covers a number of service and technology related issues. Gi Due and Siemens will develop a program which allows control from Italy of every function of the press, getting on demand instant 'pictures' of the press at any time, for remote diagnostics and servicing.

For full digital management of the press, Gi Due and Siemens' software designers will develop more open and flexible electronic architectures, at the same time getting a more reliable result than with traditional analog configurations. Siemens and Gi Due will guarantee that each servo part will be available in stock for 10 years after it goes out of production.

PCMC In-line launches in Europe

PCMC has launched its In-line Systems division products in Europe. The key press systems are the X-10 – merging and improving upon the designs of the Webtron 650 and 750 HQ machines, to which PCMC bought the intellectual property rights in 2001 – and the innovative multiple substrate Evolution press system, which combines features from PCMC's CI presses with in-line press design.

The Evolution can be seen in action at PCMC's Open House, which will be held at the company's Green Bay HQ between February 18-19, 2003.

European joint venture for CCL

Canadian-based CCL Industries Inc is to form a 51 per cent controlled European joint venture with Pachem AG, a leading, privately held provider of pressure sensitive, shrink sleeve and in-mold labels.

The company will operate as CCL-Pachem, headquartered at Pachem's existing facility in Honehems, Austria. Its focus will be on providing global consumer companies with package decorating solutions for their premium European brands in the food, beverage and battery categories. CCL will continue to operate its 100 per cent owned, European label company that focuses on the personal care, pharmaceutical and chemical markets.

CCL-Pachem will initially operate from three plants in Honehems, Austria, Avelin, France and Rhyll, U.K., providing a full complement of printing capabilities with 'significant' production capacity. Sales for 2002 are expected to have exceeded Cdn\$45 million and plans call for a 50 per cent expansion over the next three years.

Technology from the European operations will also be transferred to CCL

Label's wholly owned subsidiaries to serve customers in North and Latin America and Asia. This includes a Cdn\$8million investment in its South Dakota facility that will bring CCL-Pachem technology to the United States.

Geoffrey Martin, president of CCL's Label Division, said, 'We have long admired the management of Pachem and their rapid growth in the plastic container decoration business. Their expertise in the area of in-mold, off-mold and shrink sleeve systems, coupled with our pressure sensitive and heat transfer label expertise in glass bottle decoration will position us strongly in this growth area of the label industry.'

CCL Industries investment to acquire 51 per cent of the business is approximately Cdn\$20million including assumed debt. The Rotogravure label plant in Avelin, France, acquired earlier this year, will be part of the new joint venture. CCL and Pachem expect to close the transaction during the first quarter of 2003.

IntelLabel acquires Double S Systems and Customark from Renaissance

US-based Renaissance Mark has sold its Customark and Double-S Systems businesses in the UK to newly formed company IntelLabel.

Customark has operated as a division of Stampiton since acquisition in 1999, servicing the industrial labels markets for OEM and logistics companies. Double-S Systems has been working closely with Customark to

provide precision application solutions to the electronics industry.

The sale of these two businesses follows a decision by Renaissance Mark to focus investment on the core UK businesses of Stampiton and Double-S Labels.

The company will continue to trade under its existing name and John Walsh will remain general manager.

2D barcode solution

In a deal worth around £5M over five years, Hovat Ltd, the UK's second largest stationery label manufacturer, has acquired Wydata Ltd, a leading innovator in barcode stationery and digital printing.

The vertically integrated combined entity will be able to supply a total barcoding solution including labelling and point of sale material.

Hovat md Bill Habbergham comments: 'Wydata has joined the Hovat family of businesses that already includes Ascom Addressing Ltd., and which will continue to grow aggressively in the next few years. This acquisition opens up a whole new market. Barcoding is already worth around 10M euros each year and Wydata is not only the foremost supplier of barcoding technology, but also the knowledge leader.'

L&L supports digital workshop

Giga Information Group in association with Labels and Labelling Magazine is launching the Digital Label and Tag Printing Workshop on 19 March 2003 at the Grand Hotel Krasnapolsky Hotel in Amsterdam, Netherlands. This new event precedes the 26th Global Ink Jet and Thermal Printing Conference.

L&L editor Andy Thomas will address the workshop on digital printing developments from Labelexpo Chicago 2002, while Mark Andy expands on the possibilities offered by its in-line conventional/digital press system. Other papers include a comparison between thermal transfer and ink jet technologies and an insight into digital technology from the view of label converters.

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Labelling news

UCB consolidates Solutia activities

UCB has acquired Solutia's Resins, Additives & Adhesives business for 500 million USD, plus a 10 million USD exclusivity fee. The new entity will become a strong global player in resins for industrial and specialty coatings, graphic arts and adhesives, focused on 'environmentally friendly' technologies.

The activities taken over by UCB from Solutia are complementary to UCB Chemical Specialties' activities and cover liquid coating resins - including waterborne and high-solids - technical resins, additives and adhesives. These activities are mainly geared towards high-end industrial coating applications.

The acquisition will include approximately 1,700 employees, located in a number of research facilities and sales offices, and 10 production sites. These

facilities are situated in Europe, as well as in the Americas and Asia.

UCB will take advantage of the opportunity offered by the acquisition of Solutia's activities to integrate its Film sector with its Chemical sector. This will combine all the Group's non-pharmaceutical activities in one entity. UCB's Film Sector is one of the world's largest specialty BOPP film producers and the world's largest cellulose film producer.

Like the Chemical Sector, UCB's Film Sector is focused on specialty applications, such as coated packaging, overwrapping, labels and security films. Synergies are mainly related to the development of new coating technologies/markets and to the customer interface.

ExxonMobil project aims to reduce time to market

ExxonMobil Chemical has joined forces with leading European pre-press house Saueressig and converter SIT in an internet-based project to integrate all players in the FMCG value chain.

The study focusses on integrating different elements of the packaging chain - for example linking digital management of the packaging design process (image storage, computer emulation, remote location proofing) with materials planning and ordering, as well as colour repeatability possibilities. Artwork, pre-press and printing will be integrated into one digital workflow, providing colour matching and mock-up production and ensuring packaging material suitability and availability.

Saueressig is already well advanced in "e-services", providing workflow management and order tracking, and will provide expertise in on-line colour management. SIT, a converter based in the Republic of San Marino, is working on the colour repeatability part of the project to guarantee design colour consistency across all communication mediums including the design of the finished packaged product.

A Pilot Project should be completed early this year. ExxonMobil expects other companies to join the network at that point, including designers, pre-press companies, print form producers, converters and producers of other packaging materials.

Sericol Inks under new ownership

New York-based Saratoga Partners, together with Sericol management, had signed an agreement with BP plc to acquire Sericol.

Since its founding in 1984, Saratoga has made investments in 29 companies with a value of over \$3.4 billion. Sericol is a world leader in the production of inks and other consumables for the screen-printing industry, and recently moved into the production of UV flexo and digital inks.

Sericol's existing management team led by Chief Executive Ed Carhart, will remain with the company and are participating in the transaction that is expected to close in the first quarter of 2003. Carhart commented: 'We now have a partner in Saratoga that is fully aligned, supportive and committed to providing the resources necessary to further grow and expand our business.'

Kroenert acquires B&M

Max Kroenert GmbH & Co has acquired Bachofen & Meier AG, Bülach, Switzerland, from Jagenberg AG. Bachofen & Meier AG is a leading supplier of machinery to the paper/ board, film and foil converting industry and will continue operating as a stand-alone enterprise within the Kroenert organization, trading under its name BMB. The Kroenert group of companies incorporates Kroenert Corporation, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, USA and Drytec Trocknungs- und Befeuchtungstechnik GmbH & Co in Germany. Kroenert and BMB will continue operating out of their existing locations.

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Press news


Direct Labels

Mark Andy Scout



Direct Labels in Cannock, UK, has installed a Mark Andy Scout press. The machine is specified as a six-colour 10" machine, with full UV curing, and delam/relam facilities with turner bars. It joins a battery of similarly specified Mark Andy presses.

Direct Label was founded by Chris Dodd and Phil Wright in 1985. Jobs are drawn directly and indirectly from the food, chemical and electronic sectors, which demand a degree of all-round competence and flexible working practices. Most work – including a lot of trade jobs – is one to six-colours, with varnishing or lamination as 'added value' items.

Direct Labels operates its own studio, as well as a Slitter/Rewinder and Fanfold unit for finishing. The company will shortly move into a new 7000ft² unit. 

Label Converters


Mark Andy 4150

Label Converters has installed a Mark Andy 4150 8-colour UV flexo press configured to produce complex label constructions at high speed. Operations director Steve Wilder, comments: 'This latest investment allows us to create further new complex products and will now enable the company to target a number of new markets. The higher operating speeds of the 4150 and 406mm web width will make the machine far more cost effective on large production runs.'

The press configuration includes two

unwind units, allowing the press to operate two different substrates simultaneously.

The machine also incorporates in-line hot melt coating with the ability to produce multiples of glue strips as required. This together with a multi-die station, independent tension control system and back print facility will allow Label Converters to produce labels in a wide variety of unusual formats.

Following this investment, production at Label Converters has now fully switched to UV printing. 

Märkische Etiketten

Nilpeter FA-4200

Märkische Etiketten GmbH, Müncheberg, Germany, has installed a Nilpeter FA-4200 flexo-based label press configured with nine printing stations. Its platform-based cassette system makes it easy to combine flexo printing with other printing methods, such as gravure and screen.

The press was initially configured with screen printing units and subsequently will be equipped with units for hot foil stamping, glue printing and laminating.

Märkische Etiketten is an experienced player in the film printing market and will primarily use the Nilpeter FA-4200 to print on film substrates from 40 µm, but also for pressure-sensitive materials. One of the main reasons for selecting the FA-4200 is its ability to offer significantly increased capacity, particularly in film printing jobs.





Femaprint

HP Indigo ws4000

Femaprint NV in Belgium is installing an HP Indigo ws4000 digital press,


which joins an existing Omnibus Webstream 50 (now the HP Indigo ws2000). This is the first ws4000 in Belgium.

Femaprint specializes in computer form/labels, personalised digital label printing and laser diecutting.

● HP has also announced the sale of a ws2000 digital press to Eclipse Marketing Solutions in the UK, a leading supplier of product wrap prototypes on multiple substrates to the UK confectionery industry. The Hull-based pre-press and digital company was also the first European company to adopt the Indigo Omnibus web-fed packaging and label press in 1995, and changed its previous trading name from Brand Central to Eclipse towards the end of 2001.

Said Eclipse managing director Brian Cooke, 'Our previous Indigo system, the Omnibus WebStream, enables us to print direct onto over 1000 different substrates – from say a tea-bag to 600 micron board. Shrink sleeve and metallics are particularly key to our specific customer base, and being able to utilise these materials at a pre-launch stage is of immense value. We are confident that our decision to upgrade on the technology will enable us to triple our current turnover within the next five years.'

Printing at running speeds up to 7m/min for four colours, the HP Indigo Press ws2000 allows for higher definition imaging, full variable-data personalisation in up to six colours, the capability to re-register, and a wide variety of in-line finishing solutions including electronic collation. It can also produce large format images for sampling by tiling several frames together.

'The market can be developed rapidly. We're already working with packaging design consultancies such as JKR and Impactt. There are plenty of ad agencies that would use the service but just aren't aware that there is a web digital press that can handle so many different substrates,' says Cooke. 

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Press news

LABEL GRAPHICS

Gallus EM280



Labelgraphics, in Clydebank, Glasgow, has installed a third high spec Gallus EM 280 flexo line, one of the most highly specified of its type in Europe. The latest Gallus, a 10-colour machine, is, like its two 9-colour predecessors, a flexible machine. Equipped with a corona treater, two rotary screen units, delam/relam facilities, turner bars, hot-foil embossing, and varnishing capabilities, and twin slid away die heads, it also has full UV curing.

Work at Labelgraphics spans 1,000 to 10 million labels on a variety of substrates from self-adhesive paper stocks to filmics. The company devotes 50 per cent of its time to the premium spirits industry, including many of the independent Scotch whisky producers. The company currently employs 70 on triple-shift working, and generates a £5m annual turnover, making it well placed to fill this role.

e No.204

Gi Due

60 Combats

Gi Due has announced that 60 Combat presses were delivered and installed worldwide by the end of last year. The range of configurations shows the

increasing need for multi-functional presses in the market, according to joint owner Federico D'Annunzio. 'Over 20 per cent of the Combat presses have been delivered with 8 colours or more, and over 20 per cent of the presses have been delivered to produce flexible packaging and carton.' All available widths have been manufactured (280, 370, 430, 530 mm.), and the full range of flexo inks are being used (UV, solvent, water based). Both line shaft and servo driven presses have been delivered. 'This trend is confirmed by the incoming orders of 2003, where Gi Due confirms its success in the label market, and establishes a solid presence in the market of high-tech presses for the packaging industry,' says D'Annunzio. 'Labels and packaging - carton and film - are the reference markets for the Gi Due strategies of 2003.'

e No.205

Taglil

Edale Alpha

Label printer Taglil, Israel, has installed an Edale Alpha press through local agent Gold-Chem. Due to his growing Tel-Aviv based business, Taglil owner Ron Cohen required a 5-colour press that was economical, compact but gave excellent print quality. Said Cohen, 'Due to the Alpha's clever design, the machine will not take up much room in my factory and yet the print quality is as good as any other larger flexo machine.' Quicker set up and change-over times were other important factors for Cohen.

● Another Alpha has gone to Wakefield Labels, of Barking Essex in the UK.

The all UV, four-colour machine with additional varnish station was installed at Wakefield's factory in August 2002. Wakefield says the Alpha provides 'excellent registration at both high and low speeds and gives a good sharp colour finish.'

e No.206

Mark Andy UK

Change at the top

Mark Andy Inc has announced a change of leadership at its UK subsidiary with the promotion of Paul Briggs to managing director. The appointment follows the retirement of Michael Richardson, who co-founded Mark Andy UK Ltd in 1993, having previously enjoyed great success with the marque at Stanley Press Equipment. Paul Briggs joined the company in 1993 and has been responsible for sales of Mark Andy and more recently Comco equipment in the North of England. Mark Andy Company President, John Eulich remarked: 'The contribution made by Michael Richardson cannot be over-estimated. We wish him a happy and healthy retirement and take this opportunity to assure all our UK customers that Mark Andy is in very safe hands with Paul Briggs.'

Bobst Group

Buys Metso

Bobst Group SA, based in Prilly, Switzerland, has signed a Memorandum of Understanding about the acquisition of the converting activities of Metso Corporation, Helsinki, Finland. The main activities of Metso's Converting group are located in England (Titan, Atlas, General) and in Italy (Rotomec). Net sales of the business group totaled Euro 176 million in 2001. Metso's Converting group manufactures rotogravure and flexographic printing presses, coating and laminating machines, slitters and sheet cutters. Bobst Group is an important supplier of products and services for the folding carton, corrugated board and flexible packaging industries, with a dedicated sales and service network with offices in more than 50 countries.

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Technology

Total Register

FoilSaver drive

Total Register's recently introduced FoilSaver drive is claimed to produce foil savings of 50-95 per cent in typical applications when compared to a one-to-one process. Foil stamping speeds are now in the 200 – 400 feet per minute range, depending on substrate, foil, and die layout.

Says the company, 'Until recently, online rotary stamping was restricted to products where the foil area is a significant part of the printed image – wine labels with a continuous border are a typical example – and foil consumption was inherently on a one-to-one basis with the web, i.e. one foot of foil used for each foot of web.'


The FoilSaver foil drive technology manipulates the foil to minimize waste by feeding the amount of foil required for each image regardless of the repeat size of the foiling cylinder. Foil is unwound and rewound on individual spools, each with their own clutch mechanism, enabling the Foilsaver to handle multiple streams of foil, giving further foil saving in the cross web direction.

The drives are also capable of stamping registered holograms, allowing up to four streams of pre-imaged holographic foil to be registered to the die. Additional hologram registration drives – up to six, depending on machine width – can be fitted.

An additional benefit of rotary hologram application is that documents having different repeats can be stamped using hologram foil of the same repeat, thus avoiding the need for multiple inventories and having to have a new hologram embossing run for each document pitch. It is no longer necessary to match the hologram pitch to an even sub-multiple of the document pitch.

The TR has the option to accommodate the unequal image repeats often found in sheeted work requiring glue flaps or binding margins.

These drives are now available in a variety of forms: as drop-ins into a rotary die cutting frame; as servo or gear driven modules for incorporation into web flexo, litho or digital printing presses; and as stand-alone converting presses incorporating a range of other finishing options.

The FoilSaver is not restricted to hot stamping – variations have been produced for cold stamping, dieless stamping, and in combination with digital printing. 

Kurtz


Cold foil

Kurtz has launched its own 'cold foil' stamping process utilizing dedicated foil and adhesives combinations to achieve high stamping speeds.

Cold foiling is a process of transferring a stamping foil to a substrate by means of special adhesives on web fed label presses with lamination or rotary foil stamping units. Cold foil stamping does away with the need for engraved cylinders, opening up shorter run applications on heat sensitive substrates. It is also easier to control register tolerances. Applications include self-adhesive and wet-adhesive labels, folding boxes, commercial displays, as well as flexible plastic materials – as used for instance for toothpaste tubes.

Kurtz has formulated its Luxor/Alufin 22884 foil specifically for the cold stamping process. The construction features a specifically adjusted easy release for transferring the foil onto different stamping surface materials. In the flexographic printing process onto non-absorbent substrates 22884 is applied onto a cationic curing UV-adhesive. In litho offset the adhesive is a radical curing UV-adhesive or a conventional drying adhesive.


Kurtz says that results are dependent on the printing and laminating station and the UV – adhesive that is being used. Kurtz has tested a number of UV-

adhesives specifically designed for cold foil stamping from different suppliers in its laboratory and performance information is available on request. The company recommends a test run before starting a production run. 

Klöckner

High shrink film

Klöckner Pentaplast's Pentaprint line of standard and high-shrink transverse-direction oriented (TDO) films for full body sleeve labels has been extended to include the new high-shrink Pentaprint E749/50 AS7 PETG film. Pentaprint E749/50 AS7 film has 78 per cent shrink properties and is designed for products requiring uniform shrinkage on very narrow neck glass and plastic containers, such as liquor bottles. The film is available in 45 microns, rather than the standard 50 microns, giving a claimed 10 per cent yield advantage in the production process.

Available in PETG, Pentaprint E749/50 AS7 offers a low heat-initiation temperature allowing the shrink sleeve to adjust during the early stages of label application in a steam or radiant heat shrink tunnel. The manufacturer says this film has 'superior print resolution, proper ink adhesion, and excellent processing capabilities on high-speed rotogravure and flexographic printing presses.' 

Coates Screen

Opaque white



Coates Screen has added Vioroll SF-W70 Screen Opaque White to its range of flexo, screen and offset inks for the

narrow web label printer. Aimed squarely at the rotary screen user, Coates the formulation's silicone-free technology makes it much more receptive to overprinting with any flexographic, letterpress or lithographic ink than previously possible, without any prior modification. It exhibits excellent adhesion to most label substrates, as well as rapid cure, good flexibility and resistance to edge curl, says Coates.

All Vioroll inks are specifically formulated for high-speed decoration of top-coated and corona-discharge treated polyethylene and polypropylene, as well as most other roll label substrates.

When fully cured, Vioroll inks are claimed resistant to nearly all detergents, personal hygiene and personal care products, including aqueous solutions and alcohol-containing materials. These resistance properties make the inks suitable for use on labels intended for a wide variety of toiletries and liquid soap products.

Complementing this silicone-free opaque white, Vioroll inks are also available in the C-Mix 2000 colour range, consisting of 9 strong, bright, mono-pigmented shades together with white, black and mixing clear to form a complete blending system which allows for the matching of virtually any shade, including simulations of all Pantone colours. The C-Mix 2000 colour range is compatible with both Formulator and Formulator Ink Dispensing Systems for total ink room management.

e No.210

Rhodia

Solvents release

Rhodia has developed a new mono-component UV/EB-curable epoxy silicone low-release solventless system. Silclease PC-605 is pre-blended, so there is less chemical handling and reduced mixing errors for release liner manufacturers. 'Silclease PC-605 brings minimized backside silicone transfer to the liner and improved release stability over traditional multi-component UV systems,' says Rhodia. It consists of an optimized low-release pre-blend of Silclease PC-600 UV/EB silicone polymer and Silclease PC-670 UV/EB CRA-minus release modifier, and is pre-catalyzed with Rhodorsil Photoinitiator 2074. This monocomponent product is claimed to bring faster and more complete polymerization for tandem coating operations, and is intended for use as a release surface on a wide selection of papers and films and against a wide range of adhesive materials.

e No.211

Sensor Products

Force indicator

Sensor Products Inc's Pressurex a tactile force-indicating sensor allows users to assess compression magnitude and distribution between any two mating or impacting surfaces. Applications include measuring nip pressure and roll contact pressure in coating machines, where Pressurex reveals inaccurate roll alignment and roll skewing. The film is also ideal for determining crown correction, revealing damage to roll coverings and indicating roll wear.

The Pressurex sensor comes in the form of a thin sheet. When placed between impacting or mating surfaces, the sensor film instantaneously and permanently changes color. The intensity of this color is proportional to the amount of force applied, allowing the user to quantify the stress characteristics across the surface. Precise PSI (kg/cm²) can be determined by

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e No.129

Technology

comparison of the sensor film to a color calibration chart – conceptually similar to interpreting Litmus paper – or by using one of several systems that the company supplies. **e No.212**

Dunmore **Plant expansion**

Dunmore Corporation has announced plans to expand the Bristol, PA facility. Past improvements at the Bristol location include the purchase and installation of a new coating line, metallizer, slitter rewinder, along with a major office renovation that was completed in early 2002. The next phase of expansion includes the addition of slot die coating capability, a new 5200 square feet research and development department, and the integration of the Newtown, PA facility into the Bristol site. The expansion is scheduled to take twelve to eighteen months to complete. At the completion of this phase, the Bristol plant will house three solvent and aqueous coating lines, two with in-line laminating capability and two with UV coating capability, two vacuum metallizers, three slitter rewinders, one dry laminator and a pilot coating/ laminating line. **e No.213**

Rohm and Haas **Price increase**

Rohm and Haas Company has announced a general price increase for all its adhesives and related products sold in Europe, Middle East and Africa to the packaging and converting, construction, transportation and pressure sensitive industries. The increase, which ranges from 5 to 20 percent depending on the product, will take effect on March 1, 2003 or as contracts allow.

This increase is driven by escalation in the costs of raw materials and energy, increasing costs related to regulatory

compliance and increased infrastructure and transportation costs.

Rohm and Haas, a worldwide producer of specialty chemicals, is a \$5.7 billion company with more than 100 plants and research facilities in 25 countries. **e No.214**

Coast Controls **Displacement guide**

The new RDG Displacement Guide from Coast Controls is powered by Coast's All-Air control system. With no electricity or electronic components to contend with, the guide consistently operates effectively and efficiently in dusty (even dirty) production conditions, says the manufacturer.

A new Outboard Sensor Adjustment provides easy access to the sensor when repositioning is necessary. **e No.215**

Rid-der Data **Service**

Flame retardant
Rid-der Data Service based in Rotterdam, The Netherlands, informs L&L that it has jointly developed a polyester fabric, NCP001, used as label material for thermal transfer printing in automotive applications such as seat belts, seat covers and airbag indicators. It has been approved by major safety systems and seat manufacturers for two years. NCP001 is certified FMVSS 302 material, delivered under ISO 9001, 9002 conditions. It is recognized as a non-hazardous material and contains no bromide. **e No.216**

Cheshire **Engraving** **Laser engraver**

UK-based Cheshire Engraving has purchased a Meridian Hercules twin laser anilox system, which offers both Yag and

CO2 technology to provide the full spectrum of screen specifications.

The system incorporates custom cell design and graphics anilox function. Special patterns as well as standard engravings including tri-helicals can be produced. **e No.217**

Avery Dennison **OPS shrink film**

Avery Dennison Corporation has added OPS (oriented polystyrene) Shrink Film to its Fasson Rapid-Roll product line. These transparent, oriented polystyrene films are reverse printable and used for product decoration in medium shrink applications.

Narrow-web converters can now select from CD Shrink OPS 45 or CD Shrink OPS 55 products. These shrink film products offer excellent contoured package decoration with 360-degree printability, says Avery. They maintain a high degree of shrinkage in the transverse or cross directions making it ideal for shrink sleeve and tamper-evident applications. OPS photoluminescence Shrink Film products are available upon request providing a luminescence effect when stimulated. **e No.218**

SATO **RFID kit**

SATO America, Inc., has launched an RFID kit for the SATO CL408e (2) and CL412e (2) printers. The RFID Kit is compatible with CL408e and CL412e printers with serial numbers higher than 20390000. The SATO RFID Kit offers a convenient and inexpensive way to produce labels and tags with RFID capability. Utilizing high frequency chips embedded in the labels, the RFID Kit enables the appropriate printers to print on the label and program the chip inside the label simultaneously. **e No.219**

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DIARY DATES

26 March, 2003, Broadview, IL, USA DiTrollo Flexographic Institute, Third Annual Open House

Have you ever wondered about tax incentives, grants and other government benefits and how they apply to your business? We have brought together the professionals to answer your questions. Speakers include Vincent DiTrollo, DFI, Tom Tyndall, Mark Andy, Suzanne Zaccone, Graphic Solutions.

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12 March, 2003, Cincinnati, Ohio Comco Cut-N-Stack Flexo Focus Educator Seminar

Held at the Comco Advanced Training and Technology Center, the Cut-N-Stack Flexo Focus Educator Seminar will cover market information and the trends in the Cut-N-Stack arena. The seminar will provide an in-depth look at traditional wrap-around cut-n-stack labels as well as both cut-n-stack shrink and new developments in wrap-around roll fed labeling markets and technology. The day's event will take converters and end users through existing and potential cut-n-stack markets, the film materials for these markets, printing and converting of cut-n-stack applications and the final application of labels to a finished package.

For full program details, visit www.comcointl.com or contact Julie Martin at 800-UVFLEXO.

14-17 May, 2003, Las Vegas Printcafe's 4th Annual Users' Conference, Connect 2003

Connect 2003, Printcafe's fourth annual gathering of customers, industry opinion leaders and Printcafe staff, is designed to provide Printcafe customers with the answers they need to better leverage their information technology to improve profitability and gain a competitive advantage. With sessions for both executive management and system users, the conference covers the latest technologies, industry trends, and solutions to help users get more out of their existing software. More than one hundred Printcafe technical, development, training, and customer service personnel will lead the conference, armed with years of experience in the printing industry and success stories to share with attendees.

Online registration is now available at www.printcafe.com/connect2003

27 March, 2003, Skokie, IL ABC's of IML: A Basic Course

This seminar is an introductory in-mold labeling (IML) course designed for those considering entry into the IML market as well as a refresher course for more experienced current participants in the field. The seminar, updated yearly, provides a basic grounding in in-mold labeling as well as the fundamentals of extrusion blow molding, injection IML, the in-mold process, production of in-mold labels, current markets and future growth opportunities. The seminar was recently expanded beyond packaging to include in-mold decoration of durable products.

For additional details contact Ronald Schultz at RBS Technologies, Inc. by phone to +1(480) 473-0301, FAX to +1(480) 473-0456 or e-mail to info@rbstech-nologies.com.

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Appointments

Michael Knight
Picon Chairman

Knight Organisation chairman Michael Knight is the new chairman of the Picon Council. He succeeds Tim Webb in the post, which brings with it a two-year tenure as head of the governing body of the leading UK supplier organisation, and owners of IPEX.

Dan Charney
Direct Recruiters

Director of the Material Handling & Packaging Division. Charney will spearhead all search efforts in these areas.



Max Price
Water Ink Technologies

Technical sales staff.
Price will provide sales and technical support for Water Ink's complete line of 'Safer' UV and water-based flexo products.

Steve Yurich
Effective March 28, 2003, Yurich will become CEO of **Mitsubishi Polyester Film Group (MPF)**. Yurich is currently president & COO of Mitsubishi Polyester Film, LLC and will continue to serve in that capacity. He will be replacing Kosuke Kanaya, who has announced his retirement from MPF. Yurich will oversee Mitsubishi's global polyester film business.



Mario Leonardelli
Enercon

Vice-president Engineering
In his new position Leonardelli will guide Enercon's engineering team in developing solutions to meet the requirements of end

users while seamlessly integrating Enercon equipment into OEM equipment.



Brian Ivens
Arpeco Engineering Limited

Manager - marketing and sales support, finishing equipment.
He's back, previously with Arpeco from 1977 to 1993.

Ivens says, 'It is great to be back with such nice people and it is a bonus to be part of such a strong technical group.'

Fred E. Zinnbauer
Arpeco Engineering Ltd.

Fred will be responsible for sales of Arpeco's Cartonmaster System printing press and new Injector System for die cutting, creasing, and embossing and stripping of cartonboard.

Robert Saari
Contract Converting

Plant manager
Saari has bottom-line production operations responsibility for the company's Roll Express™ program, which offers 24-hour slit-to-order tag and label materials to the narrow web industry, and custom converting, which serves leading paper and film manufacturers with outsourced slitting, packaging and distribution services.



Born to Soldier

When L&L founder Mike Fairley came across an old wooden trunk containing dozens of faded photographs, dusty diaries and exercise books of handwritten notes, he little realised he would end up writing an exhilarating autobiography on his grandfather's life and army career, and also on the background history of five family generations of career soldiers.

Mike's newly published book incorporates army and other photographs dating back to 1869 - over five generations of soldiers, who between them participated in seven wars dating back to Napoleonic times and ending with World War II. All sur-

vived into old age.

Family members saw action in the Crimean and New Zealand Wars, and there is a particularly vivid account of the brutal conflict in South Africa during the Boer War from Mike's grandfather's diaries. He ended up fighting in World War I in France and Salonika from 1914 to 1918.

The book - *Born to Soldier* by Michael Fairley is published by Mifair Publishing at £11.95 (US\$18.65) and is available through www.militaryhistorybooks.com, 27 High Street, Hythe, Kent (Tel: 01303 237 883).

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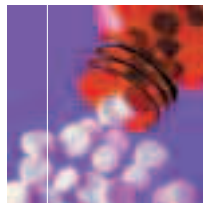
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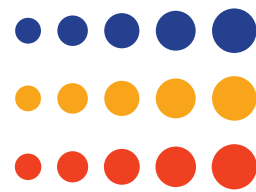
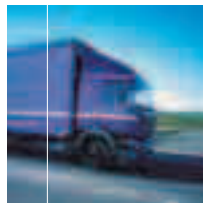
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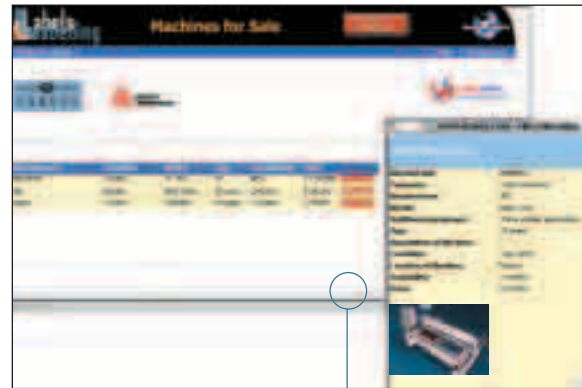
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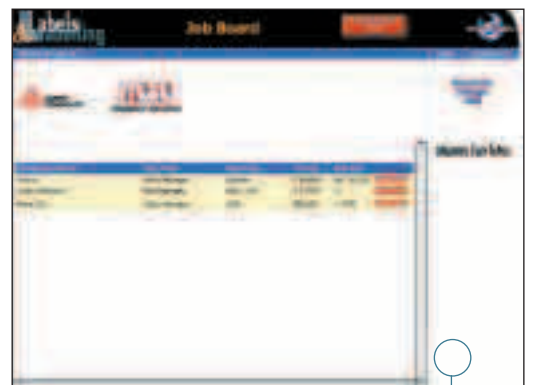
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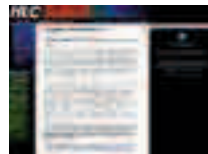
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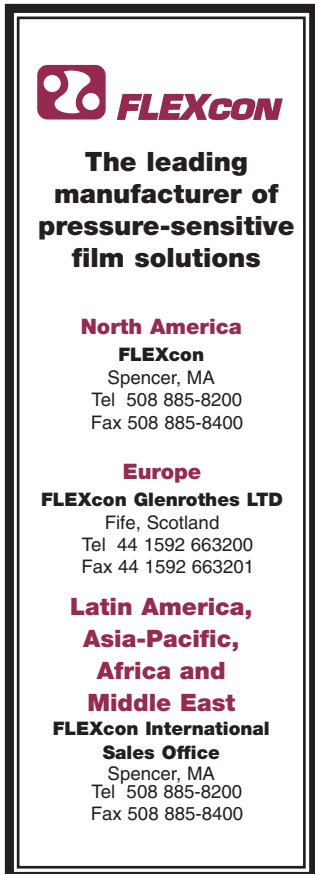
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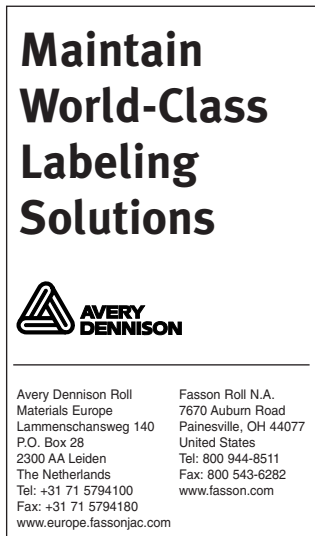
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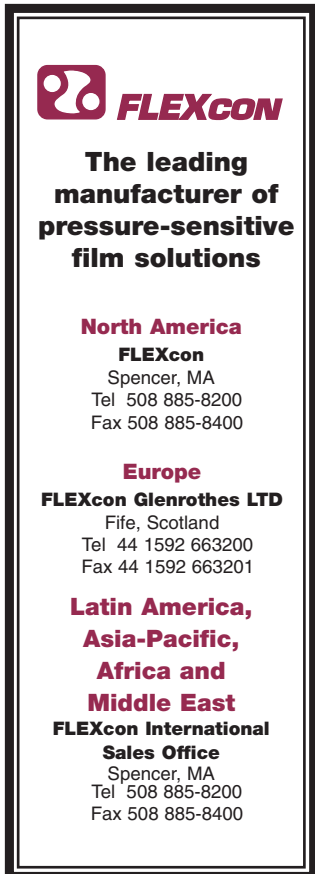
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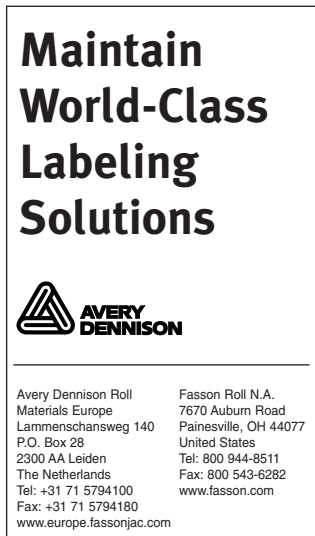
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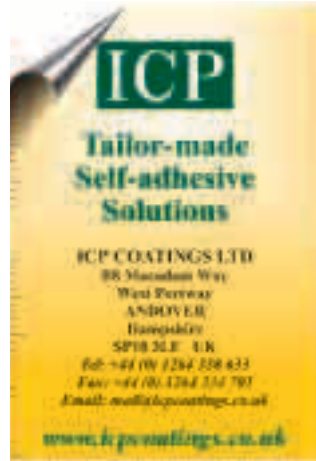
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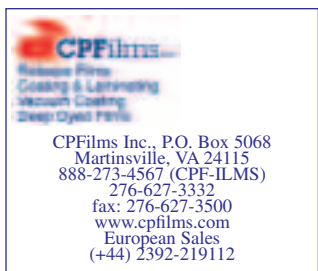
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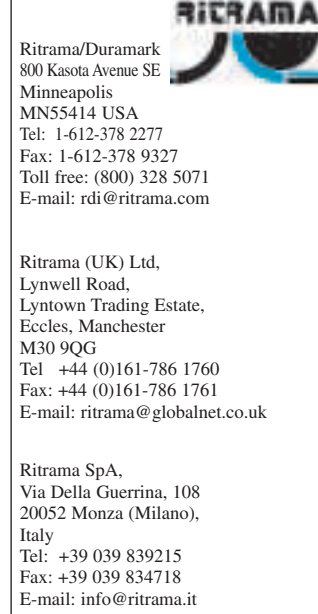
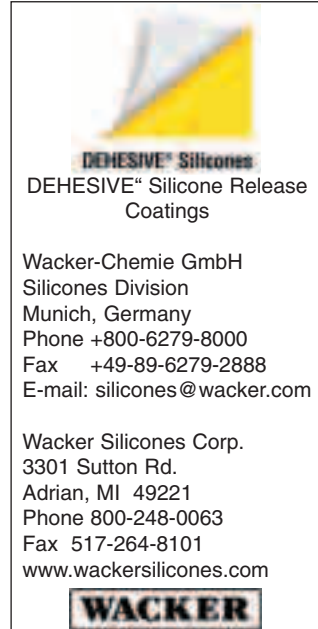
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