

Labels & Labelling

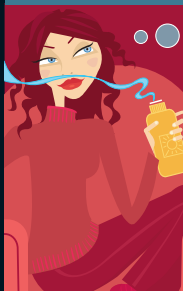
The wider world of Narrow Web

Analysis



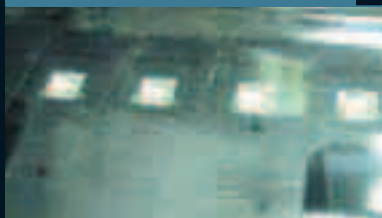
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Leader



Wet glue labels are one of the most price-sensitive areas of the labels business. This is due primarily to the high fixed cost of production involved in the sheetfed offset process, with its separate workstations for converting and finishing the label sheets. The more value added processes – embossing, bronzing, foiling – the more the work in progress and the more time spent pushing pallets of ‘dead’ stock around the plant.

Because the manual handling element is significant, and the post-print operations (relatively) low skilled, companies with lower labour costs have a significant advantage – an advantage ruthlessly exploited by the reverse auction process. This has driven numbers of wet glue printers into liquidation, or into closing their sheetfed label operations, and the work going to emerging markets like Asia-Pacific.

The only way for printers in high labour cost economies to respond is to take the higher value added ground. Firstly, take costs out of the supply chain by setting up two-way electronic communication links with end users and suppliers. Secondly, raise the technical stakes by investing in value added sheetfed press technologies such as multiple in-line flexo coaters for metallics and UV varnishing.

But there is a third, admittedly higher risk solution which could revolutionise the economics of wet glue printing. In this issue, for the first time, Robert Shimmin examines a bold experiment in rotary printing, converting and finishing of wet glue labels – in-line, in one pass. Jarvis Porter pioneered the technique at its Leeds, UK operation with a modified Nilpeter/Goebel rotary offset press feeding onto an automated Kugler-Womako converting and finishing line. After the demise of Jarvis Porter’s wet glue operations, this line was dismantled. Will anyone else take up the gauntlet?

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“ In this issue, for the first time, Robert Shimmin examines a bold experiment in rotary printing, converting and finishing of wet glue labels – in-line, in one pass ”

Andy Thomas
Group Managing Editor



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A giant step

Robert Shimmin of Shimmin Associates provides a glimpse into the label factory of the future and reports on a step change in the manufacturing of wet glue applied labelling that has the potential to transform the economics of production

In 1998 Jarvis Porter embarked upon a development that heralded a “step change” in printing and conversion of conventional wet glue applied labels. Following extensive research and evaluation, a self contained £2.5 million, 15,000 sq foot “state of the art” unit was created, alongside the company’s existing conventional labels operation in Leeds. Although the break up of the Group meant that the unit was never put into full commercial use it nevertheless proved that the technology worked and there was indeed a “better way” to manufacture.

Problems of multi-stage manufacturing

Historically Jarvis Porter produced wet glue applied labels for the drinks industry by means of a conventional multi-stage operation. The first stage of this operation was the production of sheets of printed labels by sheet-fed offset litho production. If foil blocking, embossing, bronzing, or over-varnishing were required then the printed sheets had to be passed through further separate manufacturing stages. Sheets were then guillotined, labels punched, batched, packaged and palletized.

This multi-stage method of production resulted in a high quality product, but carried a high manufacturing cost due to the fact that:

- added value waste is produced at each stage
- there is a high volume of work in progress
- the operation is labour intensive
- it required an extended manufacturing window

In addition, multi-stage production is not very responsive to modern print demands for rapid design changes, short lead times and just-in-time deliveries.

Realising a “Vision”

As Paul Jarvis, former Chairman of Jarvis Porter Group

explains ‘It was our vision to both reduce costs and better meet the demands of our customers by producing labels in a single operation by utilizing the new generation of hybrid web-fed printing machines with in-line finishing and conversion. Over three years of intense effort our development team were able to deliver this vision.’

Starting from scratch the project team lead by John Morton created a blueprint for the labelling plant of the future. For the first time reel-fed converting would be introduced into a world previously dominated by the sheet fed process.

Producing labels from the web would require:

- the production of a printed web of material on a machine with in-line operations for printing, embossing, hot foil stamping and coating
- an interface between the printed web, strip cutter and profile punching

To realise the “vision” of a single stage manufacturing process all of the above points would need to be considered. How then did the team face the challenge of combining reel fed printing with a seamless integration into an automatic finishing line that culminated in packed labels ready for delivery?

Printing was to be via a hybrid GN 520 press with a 520 mm web width capability. This was the first multi-process combination press of that width to be specified for controlled wet glue label manufacturing, unsupported filmics, paper, self-adhesives and board. The press, the result of a joint development between Nilpeter and Goebel, comprised 9 interchangeable print stations able to run offset litho, rotary silk screen, UV flexo, foil and embossing on any station. Print quality and the scope for enhanced label graphics were excellent. In addition register, repeat length and finished product to within plus or minus 0.1mm were achievable. Achieving these tolerances was fundamental to the success of the entire operation.

into the future



VCH Autobox delivers final product

Whilst the seamless transition from printed web to finished label represented the ideal in terms of automation, the line was designed to allow finishing via a number of routes. These were as follows:

- the printed web could be rewound into reel form for finishing at a later date
- the printed web could be sheeted ready for finishing at a later date
- the reel could be finished in-line culminating in labels boxed and ready for despatch

Automatic Finishing

The key to single process manufacturing was a Kuglar-Womako label line that was specially configured for use in line with the GN520 printing press. The web was fed out of the printing press



Hybrid GN520 press

via a turner bar into the Womako which then slit and cross-cut the printed web into deep-piled strips, boarded top and bottom, ready for either square cutting or profile punching. Automatic waste extraction operated throughout.

Using print mark register controls a host of previously manual operations were eliminated. Automatic waste expulsion, aeration, jogging, knocking up stacks, and guillotining were now done automatically and with startling accuracy.

Servo controls allowing cutting, at 2,000cpm, or slitting of the web at plus or minus 0.1 mm tolerance and a maximum mechanical speed of 200 metres per minute was achieved.

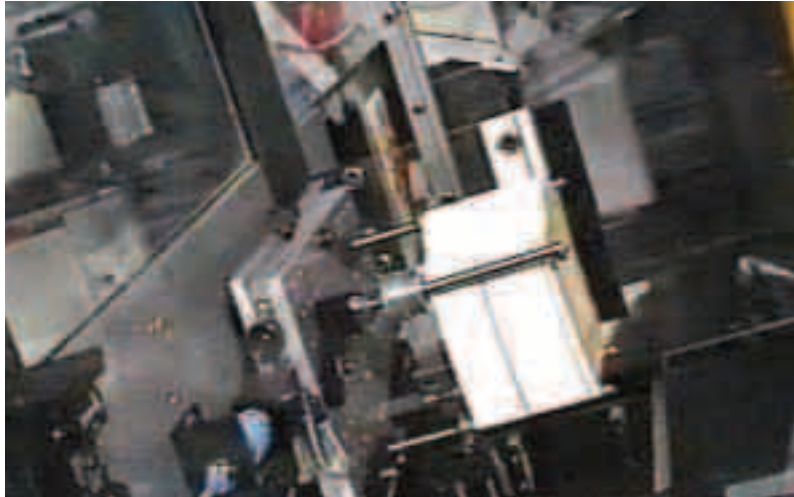
Slitting used rotary knives, registering to the marks at 0.1mm accuracy with three rotary knives, working against a bottom knife to cross cut a web into sheets. Up 1,250 sheets 90mm height, were then stacked. ▶



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Profile die cutting via Blumer Atlas

The strips for profile die-cutting were then transported automatically to a Blumer Atlas system for profile punching and they were then counted, batched, banded before a VCH autobox unit boxed and conveyor delivered the final product ready for despatch.

The Benefits

The economic advantages of single stage manufacturing were quickly apparent as John Morton, explains:

'A typical high end whisky label produced in a conventional sheet fed plant could have a manufacturing cycle of up to 10 days, with perhaps 10 people involved in the process as sheets are printed, bronzed, varnished and embossed before being jogged, stripped, punched and packed. This new line was operating with 4 people producing and finishing labels in a single high speed seamless process. Unlike conventional sheet fed manufacture there are no inherent problems of sheet movement between one process and the next and because everything is in line achieving the required tolerances was not an issue. During trials we were typically finishing at speeds of up to 200,000 labels per hour for a high added value whisky label and up to 500,000 per hour for beer labels.'

The impact on stock holding perhaps represented the greatest advantage of this method of production according to Paul Jarvis, 'The extended production window of conventional sheet fed manufacturing and the logistical complexities of multi-stage manufacturing were swept away. Rapid make readies meant that print to order and JIT manufacturing became viable even for shorter runs thereby reducing the need for large stock accumulations.'

The speed of the printing operation is ultimately deter-



Womako strip cutter interfaced to Blumer counter pressure punch

mined by the slowest process which tends to be foiling or perhaps rotary screen. In circumstances where the printing press is unable to keep up with the finishing operation there were options to disengage it.

The line was designed with maximum flexibility in mind so that all the finishing operations were able to work together or independently. This meant that printed reels or sheets could be stored for finishing later.

Significant progress was made to remove obstacles to overall press speed. Excellent trial results were achieved with cold foiling which allowed press speeds to be increased to 80 metres per minute and rotary embossing was successfully trialled using a female die only. Silk-screen too provided the key to replicating the traditionally problematic bronzing process, allowing it to be incorporated in-line.

It must not be forgotten that this development was driven by a drinks industry whose filling and packing operations are heavily populated with Krones labellers applying cut single paper labels from a stack with application using wet glue. The ability to handle and process paper facestocks such as Chromolux 60, 80, 90gsm materials was critical in maintaining tolerances throughout the operation. This manufacturing method adopted a clever way to control moisture content and paper conditioning.

During the print cycle a sophisticated conditioning system monitored and controlled moisture content. A cold cure UV system and water chilled rollers efficiently removed the infrared heat and careful control of web tensions eliminated both paper curl and lateral movement from the process.

But it didn't end there, even during the strip cutting and conversion process cold steam could reintroduce moisture back into the material to maintain critical levels. ▶

“The extended production window of conventional sheet fed manufacturing and the logistical complexities of multi-stage manufacturing were swept away”



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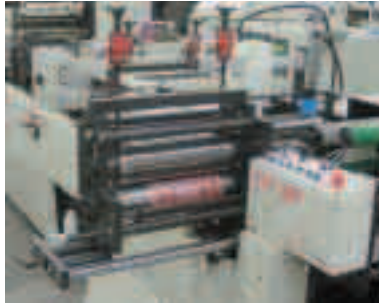
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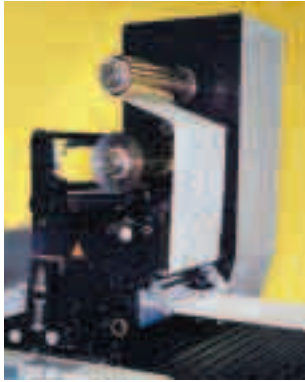
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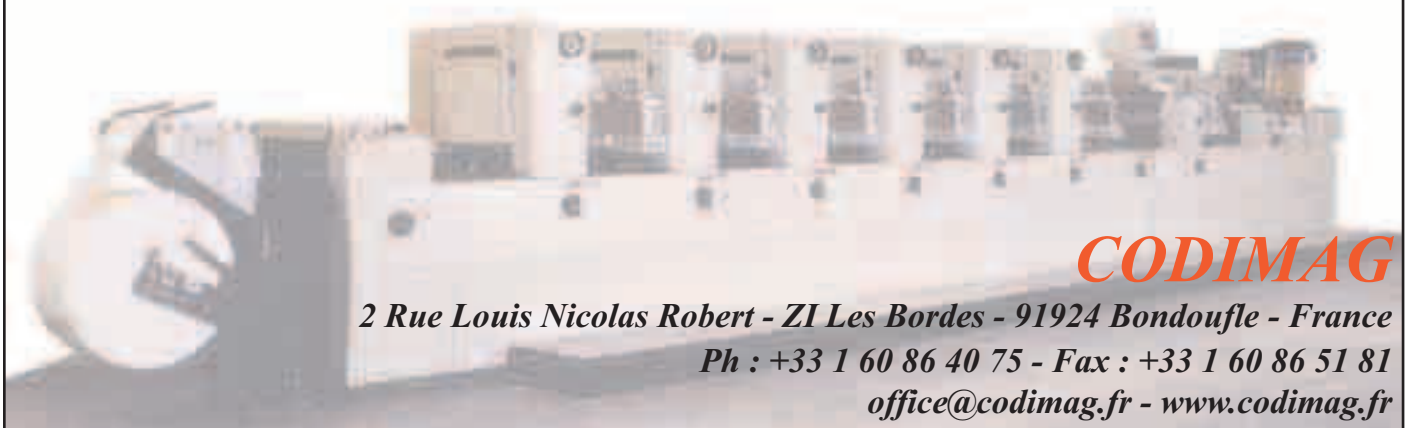
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Developments in Plastic Labelling

Whilst cut and stack labels still dominate the quality beverage sector the team recognised that there was an emerging trend away from papers into film and plastic labels fuelled by a new breed of innovative speciality drink mixtures and "ready-to-drink" products. Naturally the Nilpeter platform was ideally suited to the conversion of pressure sensitive laminates, but it could equally well handle unsupported film based materials.

As John explains, 'Our development programme extended into the processing of film based materials for cut and stack applications. Work had commenced on solving the handleability issues involved with filmic substrates and this had opened up new and economic routes to producing plastic cut and stack labels with potential for conventional and in-mould applications.'

So what can we conclude from this step into the future?

The Jarvis Porter experience proved that without doubt that the technology to produce cut and stack labels from a reel is sound and is able to produce a quality product more accurately.

Paul Jarvis, concludes, 'Multi-process manufacturing is too labour intensive and too costly and we demonstrated that automated processing from the reel is clearly the way forward for cut and stack labelling. Single stage processing provides the perfect vehicle for adding value back into the product whilst at the same time allowing significant cost reductions.'

In a market under pressure to reduce component costs the natural tendency has been to reduce the decorative content of the final product. Reel fed conversion with all the processes applied in a single pass provides a cost effective opportunity to put the value back into the label. The addition of silk screen – a process not normally associated with sheet fed label manufacture – offers new opportunities to expand decorative potential and the use of film based materials for cut and stack applications represents an exciting area for future development.

In the right hands combination printing blended with automatic finishing turns the economics of manufacturing this label format on its head and perhaps represents the only viable way forward for an industry shackled by multiple processes, high labour costs and overheads. Equally the inherent flexibility of this approach is ideally suited to meeting the needs of a demanding customer base seeking higher levels of innovation and service response. ■

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e No. 143

Tamar takes

Edale has developed a new range of servo-driven flexo presses. The first machine has been installed at Tamar Labels in the UK to convert folding cartons and a range of films and laminates. **Andy Thomas** reports



The Edale Sigma press

Edale has placed the first of its new generation Sigma shaftless presses at Tamar Labels in Tavistock, Devon, in the UK, where it is primarily being used to convert folding cartons, as well as a wide range of laminates and unsupported film.

The press has been installed in a dedicated machine hall built on a Greenfield site to the latest UK food hygiene standards, an investment worth £1M.

The press was developed in a close partnership between Tamar and Edale. Tamar md Alan Jones knew the folding carton application he wanted to run, and took his customer to Edale's factory to run print trials to confirm that the machine – then still being manufactured – could match offset print standards and cut/crease quality. Tamar was already supplying low level labels to this customer so had a proven service record.

The job is a printed grease-resistant board tray which holds a range of pastry products – the first time a tray had been used as a promotional device. The key is to be able to offer runs down to 10-20,000 cartons delivered on a daily basis – a level of flexibility that sheetfed offset printers would find hard to match.

'This was an application I had already tried in the mid-'80s on a Mark Andy press, but that was ahead of its time,' explains Alan Jones. 'Edale had already demonstrated that cartons could be produced on a Beta-series machine, but when they offered me a servo drive press then under development which could handle multiple substrates from board to foils and films, it was a gamble for both partners which we accepted.'

Design work on the Sigma started in January last year, just as construction of the new press hall got underway. 'The press was installed in just 2.5 hours and was printing in eight while the software was still being finalised!' recalls Jones. 'Our buyer was pushing us very hard and wanted us to start producing straight away.'

first Sigma

That Alan Jones was able to take such a gamble was down to the vision of Tamar Labels chairman Adrian High, a 30 year industry veteran, whose strategy is to develop niche markets where value and not price/mass production is the guiding consideration. The offset carton market was seen as particularly vulnerable to a niche player offering an innovative, service-driven product.

In operation

The Sigma press at Tamar Labels is configured with four flexo printing stations followed by twin die-cut stations using solid or magnetic shims, and has a web width of 430mm (17 inches).



In-line print station design allows easy access

The unwinder can accommodate reels up to 1.27 metres (50 inches) in diameter, handling rolls up to 800KG and is servo braked. 'The large reel reduces the number of reel-changes required during a job, increasing productivity,' points out Alan Jones.

The machine runs at up to 150 metres/minute (500 feet/minute), even when die-cutting folding cartons. Jobs requiring extra colours are pre-printed with a shorter print length and then run through the press a second time using the insetter control, which stretches the web to register the overprint to the pre-print by means of servos which regulate the speed of the impression rollers independently of the web.

'The running print register is so good that there seems no need for an automatic control,' relates Jones. 'With servos, little effort is required to achieve and maintain incredible register accuracy when insetting. As to substrates, we are converting anything which will go through the machine. If we can obtain it in rolls, we'll try to print any material, be it self-adhesive stock,

unsupported film or carton board. We're now consuming over 10 tons of carton board a week and have conducted trials with substrates down to 60 microns. With many substrates and products, the wastage is as low as one per cent.'

Tamar prints with water based IR inks, although UV is available as an option. 'We are still concerned about the safety aspects of the UV process but will adopt it in the near future,' says Alan Jones.

The Sigma is configured in-line with the web running vertically upwards out of the printing stations for drying; in those respects it resembles the company's Beta model. It differs from its predecessor, however, in being shaftless; each driven axis being equipped with digital servo drives.

Shaftless servo technology enhances control of web handling, printing and converting, providing a number of benefits when working with substrates which require skilful handling. Each driven axis can be precisely balanced to ensure that constant torque is applied to the web as it runs through the press. That results in extremely stable web tension being maintained throughout the speed range and hence very accurate registration. Automatic register control can be supplied if requested, the servo control of each print station making it relatively simple and inexpensive to incorporate the upgrade.

Shaftless technology also provides the Sigma with four independent, controllable tension zones (TTMS). Once a particular tension profile has been selected for a substrate, the data can be stored and recalled for repeat jobs. Large diameter (20in) ►



Unwinder can take reels up to 1.27m diameter



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servo-driven nip rollers isolate the unwind and converting sections from the print stations and can be under or over-paced to compensate for different material thickness, avoiding build-up of tension in the press.

Another benefit of servo technology is the modularity of the press. If a servo goes down, it can be replaced with a new plug-and-play unit, and it is easy to upgrade the control cabinet with controllers for up to another four print stations. The service engineer can monitor and trouble shoot the press in



Sigma control panel with context-sensitive menus

real time from a remote laptop computer. As an example of how sensitive this monitoring process is, a "spike" in the signal was detected when a piece of paper was left wrapped around the roll with the press running at 140 metres/minute.

Digital storage of job data for rapid set-up of repeat jobs is next on Tamar's list, with plans to integrate press data directly into an MIS system.

In line unit design

The in-line arrangement of the printing stations – with anilox, print and impression cylinders layed out horizontally – provides ease of access to each component in the print deck. After the "unload" button has been pressed, the print cylinder, anilox roller, inking roller and ink tray can all be lifted straight out of the print head. The in-line concept also obviates adjustment to the inking set-up when changing substrate thickness.

The converting cassettes are independently servo driven, providing accurate pressure setting and the optional ability to convert different repeat lengths with the same tool. It takes around 15 minutes to complete a male/female change when converting cartons. The rewinder too is servo driven within a closed-loop tension system.

Control of all the machine's functions, including inseting, is exercised through a touch screen that can be positioned at any point along the press. In addition to the standard press controls, the screen also enables access to the job storage function, from which job data can be recalled to set-up the press automatically for repeat orders, tension management and register control. ■

 No.239

● Sigma Genesis

The Sigma is part of Edale's strategy to develop a comprehensive range of machines up to 620mm web-width, or wider on request. Explains joint managing director James Boughton, 'The Alpha is a compact, entry-level machine, the Beta is a modular in-line workhorse for unceasing production and the Sigma, dedicated to flexo packaging or folding carton production, is capable of converting a range of substrates from 12 micron film to 600 micron board. The Sigma will always be a bespoke machine.'

● The great die debate – Solid vs Flexibles

A critical aspect of producing litho quality cartons is a properly specified cut/crease system. Tamar's tooling was supplied by Rotometrics, a male/female system utilizing both solid and flexible tooling. Alan Jones points out that while flexible dies are much cheaper for standard label die cutting duties on the B-250 press, for carton work solid tooling can work out more economical. 'The cost of magnetic cylinders is very high because you must buy a pair at a time. When you add in the time taken to mount and register flexible dies, solids can make sense. The issue is not wear – there is very little difference between flexibles and solids. But you throw away flexibles where solid cylinders can be re-ground. We are still looking for the break point.'

● Food grade

The Sigma press is installed in a new 10,000 sq ft (900 sq metre) food-grade press hall, which represents a £1M investment. It is built in compliance with the regulations issued recently by the British Retail Consortium (BRC) and the Institute of Packaging (IOP), and the whole factory is classified as a 'clean-room area'. Not only are there the usual wash areas, hair nets and rules against wearing jewellery, but more unusual features like anti-bacterial Tedlar walls and anti-static epoxy flooring. There is positive air pressure inside the press hall and a workflow which ensures all materials are delivered on plastic pallets and unpacked in a non-contaminated storage area. Finished labels are sealed again before exit to the loading bay.

● Next press

The second Sigma machine has been sold to an Egyptian converter of medical packaging to print aluminium blister packs. It is configured with independently servo-driven printing rolls to provide infinitely variable print-length control in the range +0.1 to two per cent.

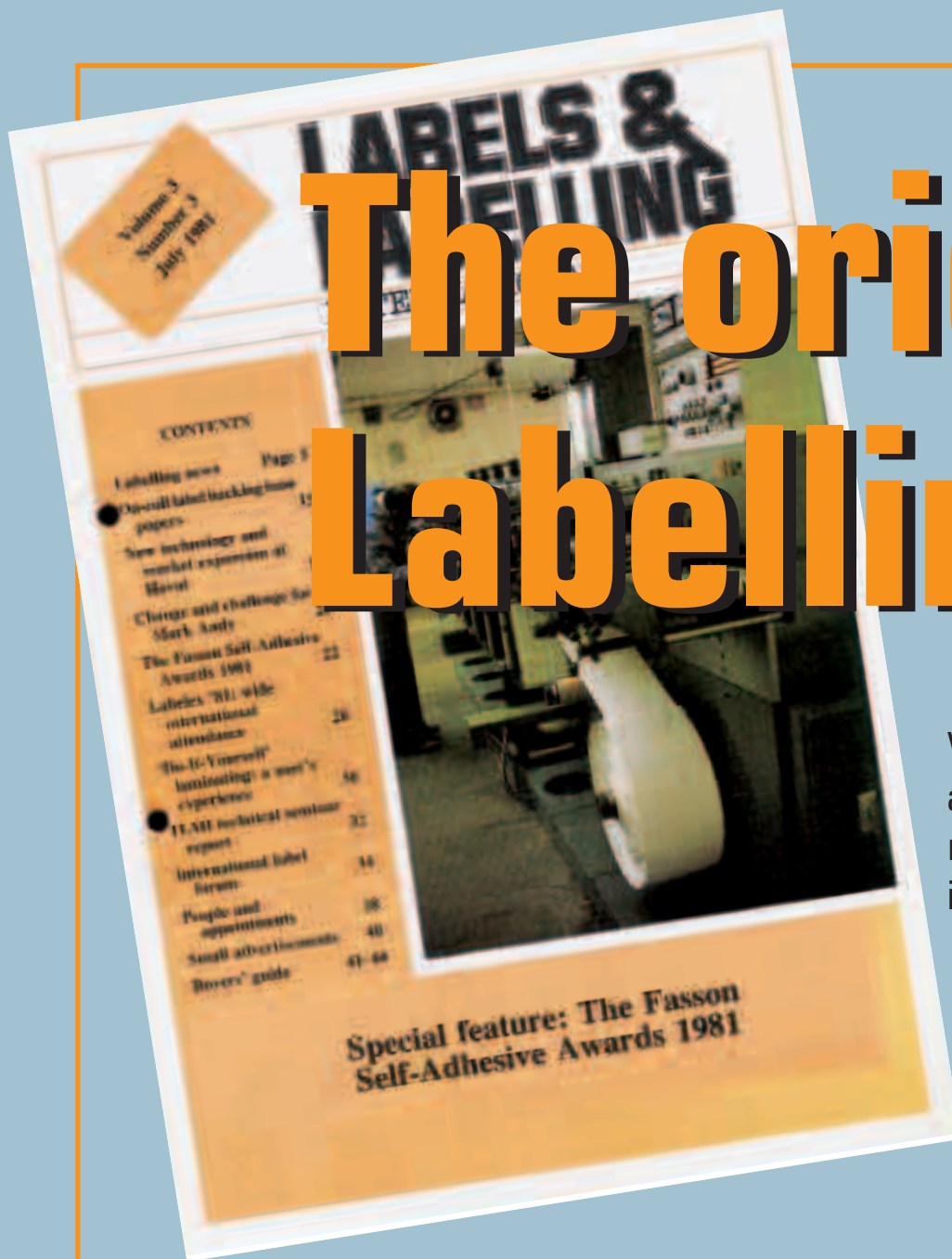
The explosion-proofed press will use solvent inks and is configured with 4-colours, roll to roll.



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The origins Labelling in



With the 25th Anniver approaching, joint four magazine was started industry in Europe fou

My entry to the printing industry was confirmed by the signing of an Apprenticeship contract in the year 1943 with a small letterpress printer located in London, quite close to Harrods. I found myself gaining a very broad based training which included everything from typesetting through to the final binding operations.

So how did I first become involved with the self-adhesive, or pressure sensitive label industry? I think it was not only a matter of being in the right place at the right time, but even more importantly, recognising the opportunities that were opening up at that time. I had been with a company called Letraset for a number of years holding various management positions, in these positions I had gained management experience of silk screen, laminating, coating, gravure, and engraving.


Around 1971 the senior management of the company realised that they were grossly 'over stretched' and that what had been a very successful company for many years was now in trouble. The outcome of the situation was that I, along with many others, found myself out of a job. Attending a

wedding, just following this shattering experience I got talking to someone I had met through various lectures I had given on behalf of PIRA and other organisations. He mentioned that he was looking for someone to take on the roll of 'fire fighter' within his group of small companies. I seem to remember I commenced work on the following Monday!

This was the early 70' s. Amongst the group of companies that I found myself working within, was one that supplied bent rule cutters primarily to the carton industry. This company had remained static for some years and I set about the task of putting life back into it.

Having commenced with a session of market research within the carton industry, I soon came to the opinion that this particular industry was very well served with diemakers. New growth would be likely to come from companies having a need for cutters, but who were, for some reason or other, outside the immediate area of existing diemakers.

This was when I discovered what was then a quite small market made up of mainly small a printers and ex-engineers who were making headway in what at first appeared to be a fringe section of the printing industry. Self-Adhesive labels.



of the dustry

sary of Labels & Labelling
der Ron Spring recalls how the
and how the self-adhesive labelling
nd its feet

Greater accuracy

This embryo industry required ruled and engraved cutters of a far greater accuracy than those that suited the carton people. The die bases were miniature when compared with those used on the enormous carton presses, and both the rule height and the shape dimensions were required to be finished to a tighter accuracy. As a result a number of these early label printers were attempting to make their own cutting dies or were, in many instances, buying their cutters from various overseas sources. Thanks largely to the demand from supermarkets, demand for these labels was growing rapidly - which in turn meant that the demand for cutters was growing. It was the obvious section of the market to develop into.

The first problem was one of sources of supply for the rule and the base material. Manufacturing equipment followed this along with the need for highly skilled people to perform the various aspects of production. It soon proved impractical to make both carton dies and label dies within the same location, using the same operatives, so a separate company was formed. We gave it the name of Label Dies, which seemed suitable for the specialised market that we intended supplying!

During the first half of the 70's the label world was divided regarding printing processes. In Europe the predominant process was letterpress whilst across the Atlantic in the US the process was flexography. This tended to mean that Europe required flat dies while the US required engraved rotary dies.

Flexography had been developed from 'Aniline' in the US during 1952, at which date the FDA had approved the process for food labelling. During this period various press manufacturers, recognising the opportunities offered by a growing industry, were rapidly improving and developing their presses. The first multi-process presses were being introduced, and in 1975 the first ►

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 No. 137





Gallus Offset Lithography label press was introduced aimed at printing a full A4 size sheet.

An important part of this development involved improvements in laminates, inks and plates, all of which pushed the quality standards attainable by the industry to greater heights.

During the latter half of the 1970's and the 80's the industry almost fell over itself in terms of expansion, with growth figures averaging out at around 20 per cent over the period. 1979 saw the beginning of the FINA T label competition, specifically for heat activated labelling, and the first edition of Labels & Labelling was published. Mike Fairley and I put in £500 each and agreed that if this money disappeared we would scrap the project.

One of the first policy statements we made would have scared some people, but we stuck to it: 'the magazine would only accept advertising from companies involved in the industry'. I still feel that this is what helped to enhance the magazine's credibility in those early days. Mind you, there were potential advertisers whom it did not please at the time!

FINAT competition

The early 80's saw the opening of the Label Information Centre in London, the first FINAT Label Competition aimed primarily at self-adhesive, and the very first Labelexpo exhibition, held in London.

It is interesting to note that the growth of self-adhesive remained buoyant throughout the later 1970's and through the 1980's irrespective of various world problems. The market was so hungry for the product, that with only minor fluctuations, a degree of growth unheard of in other sections of the printing industry was maintained. On reflection it is reasonable to state that advances in application technology and the very important introduction of electronic printing were important to the overall growth pattern.

In the early days, application of self-adhesive labels tended to be rather slow, especially when compared with application speeds maintained within the wet glue sector. Continued improvements in adhesive, face papers and backings, enabled faster application and the introduction of multi-head applicators lifted the speed even more, bringing speeds closer to those of wet glue.

The advent of electronic printing introduced not only the ability to personalise labels, but also to reduce waste, enabling economically viable run lengths at the lower end of the scale, down to one-offs.

The value of electronics did not, of course, end with overprinting. One of the key benefits came from the ability to create designs, ►

A Gallus R160B letterpress from L&L July 1981



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Members of the FINAT board of 1982 drinking a toast to the future success of Labels & Labelling and Labelexpo. Clockwise, from bottom left: MJ van Egmond, PJ Jordon, R Sondererger, DE Kember, KGE Spink, GK Glander, JEG le Jeune (general secretary), AE Hildrup and R Spring

artwork, and printing plates, or imaging capabilities – a situation whereby the label buyer was able to practically control the printing press from his office chair located some distance from the label printer.

Management attitudes

Such dramatic developments, of necessity, brought some problems along with them. Companies who were not able, or willing, to invest in new technology were getting left behind. The dramatic growth over a ten or fifteen year period made some of the established practices obsolete. This of course included management attitudes. The industry having grown largely through self-help began to require a more thrusting form of management. Takeovers and mergers became common, and despite the strong historical growth pattern some companies' profitability now proved very disappointing for investors. In a word the self-adhesive label industry had 'come of age.'

In the 1990s I decided to continue my writing and offer my services as a private consultant. In 1992 I was approached by a firm of lawyers to advise them in a litigation they were handling within the label industry. I had never been aware of the degree of litigation activity that went on with the Label industry. Patents, products, manufacturing specifications, results of incomplete specifications, etc., etc were all involved. Having accepted my first commission I found myself being 'passed around the industry'. One thing became very clear. Over the thirty year period from the 1960's it had certainly become a very international business. It was not difficult to see how, from small beginnings, Labels & Labelling had become truly an international communication medium.

Education issues

Back in 1998 I had collaborated with Robert Opie in compiling, for FINAT, a history of labelling and the development of the Self-Adhesive Label. This was one of the only reference books

“It was not difficult to see how, from small beginnings, Labels & Labelling had become truly an international communication medium”

on the subject! Since this time an Educational Handbook, and various other informative publications, have been produced. All information, along with Finat News, was readily used by the lawyers, most of whom had never even heard of a self-adhesive label prior to being offered some litigation business.

On entering the new millennium, I was once again asked to administer the FINAT Annual label competition and also to be a member of the panel judging labels for the World Label Competition, both competitions which I had been instrumental in introducing during the 80's and 90's.

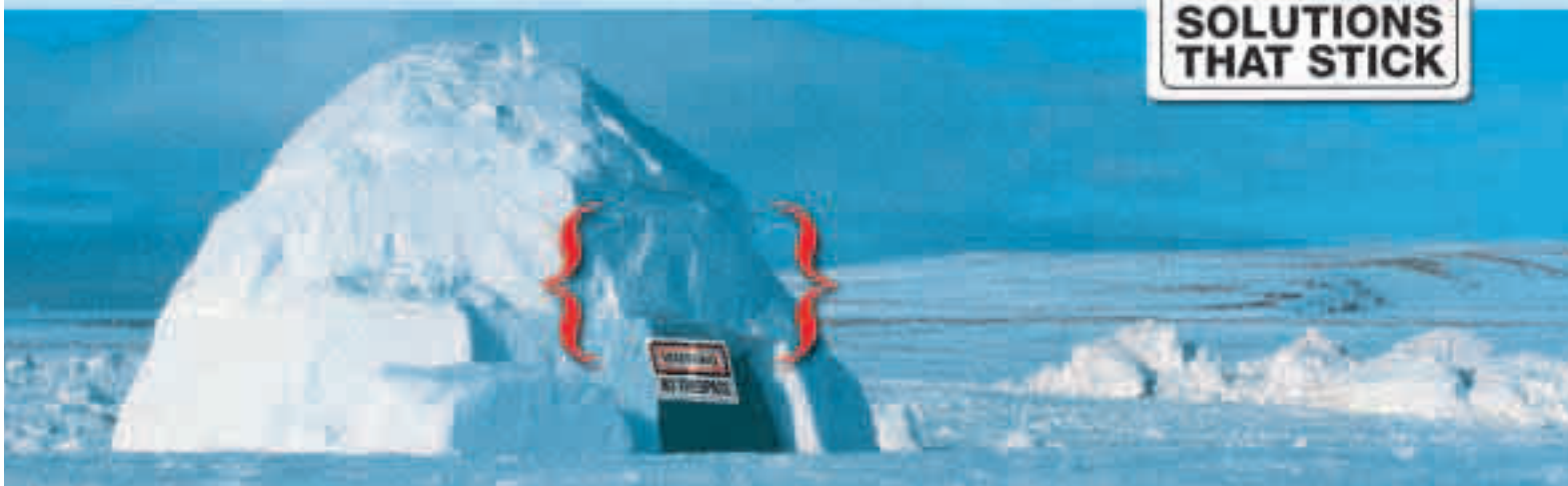
It was interesting to note the standards of quality being achieved by the various processes. I suppose that having originally been trained as a letterpress printer, this process became my benchmark against which I measured flexo, screen, litho, and gravure. One thing very apparent in the results of the 2000 competitions, was the fact that one could no longer pick between the various processes with certainty, without resorting to the use of a magnifying glass.

Various discussions on this point raged between the two groups of judges, and the general consensus seemed to be that presses, inks, plates, laminates, and origination techniques had so improved as to make it possible to reach a winning standard irrespective of the printing process. In the 70's and 80's the final quality was very much up to the skills of the press operator, whereas by the end of the millennium technology developments had removed the need for quite as much skill on the part of the press operators. Maybe a comment difficult for operators to accept, but nevertheless it appears to carry a certain amount of reality!

Going full cycle and coming back to cutting dies, in the early days of the competitions many entries were rejected partly due to poor die cutting. I do not recall one entry being marked down on this basis during the judging of the competitions for the year 2000.

I enjoyed my six decades involved in the printing industry but without a doubt the final two were the most fulfilling. I feel that this was due to the excitement of each progressive development, often originating from the efforts of small companies and the total internationality of the self-adhesive Label sector, a phenomenon greatly enhanced through the pages of Labels & Labelling International during 25 years of development. ■

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Controlling global brand consistency across a number of different substrates and printing processes is the challenge faced by Heinz Packaging in Dublin, Eire

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Heinz Packaging of Dublin is a wholly independent company, which now handles approximately 85 per cent of all repro for

Heinz brands worldwide. The company was founded three years ago with the multiple aim of gaining control of Heinz branding, ensuring print quality consistency and reducing time to market, while also lowering overall production costs.

Achieving this goal has involved selling the concept of single source expertise to each individual Heinz marketing department around the globe, using DuPont's Cromalin Digital as its quality standard.

According to Jonathan Clough, general manager of Heinz ►

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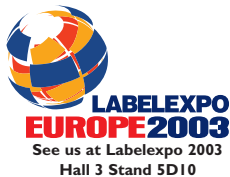
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Jonathan Clough, general manager of Heinz Packaging

Packaging, persuading marketers to give up existing relationships was difficult, but asking them to move into digital production at the same time was the real challenge: 'Whereas the publishing industry had come to accept digital as the way forward and established a gatekeeper repro network to guarantee standards, packagers were still largely unwilling to risk their branding on new technology. We had to jump through hoops to prove that we could maintain the quality they expect. In the end we proved that we could actually improve on that quality, and save them money too.'

Repeatability

Having persuaded its customers of the accuracy and repeatability benefits of Cromalin Digital proofing, prior to iCertification Heinz Packaging had been winning over each 'brand manager' on the basis of its excellent repro quality, the consistency of worldwide branding achievable through a centralised source and the reduced cost of a single provider.

'Our Achilles heel was the geographical distance,' explains Clough. 'Relying on couriers meant a delay of five days for jobs to Heinz in New Zealand or Australia and up to three days for the USA. iCertification has changed that completely. Overnight we went from sending up to 40 courier packages a day to making design changes and providing a press-ready proof within an hour.'

iCertification provides remote proofing capabilities with built-in workflow automation, file transfer and Internet based proof certification. The heart of the process is the DuPont iCertification web server which can be accessed from anywhere in the world.

In Heinz Packaging's case, a RemoteProofJob file is sent from Dublin and an iC-JDF file (iCertification – Job Definition Format) is also automatically uploaded over the Internet to the central DuPont iCertification database. It contains relevant information to allow the job to be certified, including the colour standards (SWOP for the U.S. or Eurostandard for ROW) for the particular colour match used.

As the job is output at the remote site, a second iC-JDF file is automatically uploaded to the DuPont iCertification server. Here, "iCertifier" measures the values from iCertification

“Overnight we went from sending up to 40 courier packages a day to making design changes and providing a press-ready proof within an hour”

control strips and compares them with the standard readings, which reside on the iCertification server. This ensures total integrity between local and remote proofs, facilitating an accurate match on press.

To further ensure the integrity of the proofs, Heinz Packaging uses the GE (Gamut Extended) version of DuPont's Cromalin range, due to its ability to match special and Pantone colours. This is achieved through online spectrophotometric measurement, which works in conjunction with the inks to provide accurate matches to the widest possible range of colours.

Formerly studio director for Polestar in the UK, Jonathan Clough had managed Heinz packaging printing for distribution in the UK, so knew the requirements intimately. He could also see quite clearly how consolidating the process through one repro provider would pay considerable dividends for Heinz.

Having started in 2000 with little more than a concept and the expertise, today Heinz Packaging is a \$4 million business, employing 30 people in five countries. The company now handles 85 per cent of all prepress for Heinz, producing up to 1000 iCertification proofs in a month for every different type of job, substrate and print process.

This growth in business has been stimulated by the significant benefits to Heinz's Global Procurement team of having a centralised repository for all packaging production. All Heinz packaging print is generated through e-sourcing to ensure best value for money. Using Heinz Packaging in Dublin, Heinz Procurement can be assured of rapid re-purposing of data and transmission of designs within branding guidelines to new and existing vendors, wherever they may be and whatever the application – self adhesives, pouches, cartons or flexibles.

According to Clough, without complete confidence in iCertification Heinz Packaging would not feel capable of guaranteeing this service.

'When we get the green light from the iCertifier, indicating that the proof is a pass, we may be pressing 'GO' for the production of 20 tonnes of poly bags in New Zealand. There isn't a printing process we don't deal with and with so much riding on every proof, we have to be absolutely sure that the results are reliable – offset, flexo, gravure – we haven't been let down yet.' ■

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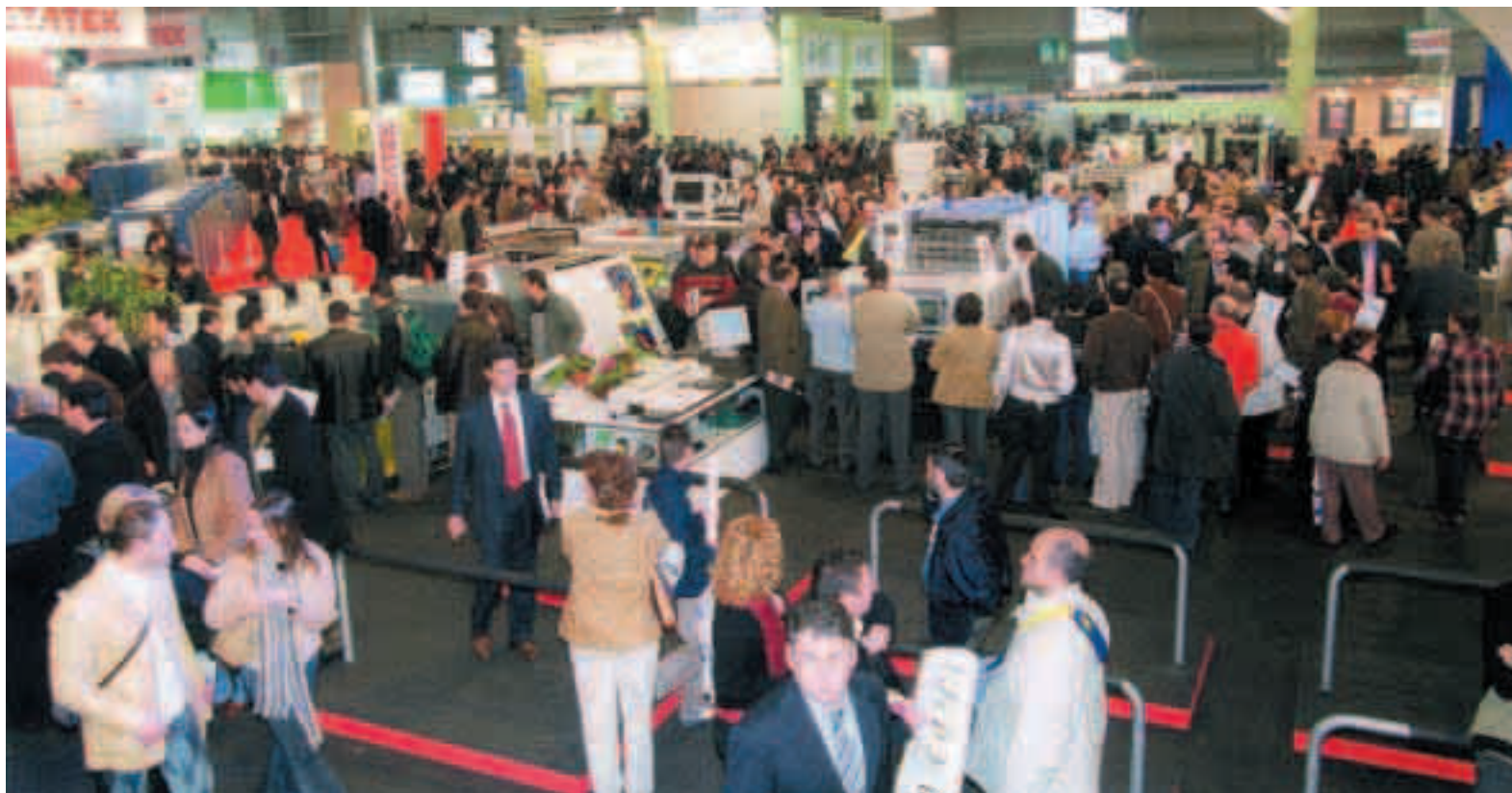


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Spanish printers look to labels



Well attended by the label industry, the recent Graphispag Show in Barcelona had much to offer in terms of presses and ancillary technology. **Mike Fairley** reports

Label printers from Spain and Portugal turned out in force for Graphispag 2003, the International Print Media Exhibition, held at Fira de Barcelona's Gran Via venue from the 10th to 16th February.

Estimates by key label press manufacturers and suppliers at the show were that up to two-thirds of Spain's 300 or so label converters visited their booths during the seven day event and that many of those were serious about purchasing new equipment in the coming months – some placing orders.

Making the show of particular interest to visitors were a number of brand new label press launches, as well as first time showings in Spain of other presses, pre-press and ancillary equipment. Especially highlighted and presented by many press manufacturers were offset/waterless offset roll-label presses targeted at the southern European converters of wine labels.

In total, over 1800 companies participated in the Graphispag Show, organised by Fira de Barcelona in collab- ►



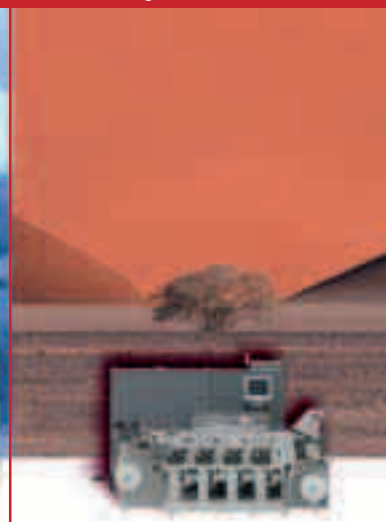
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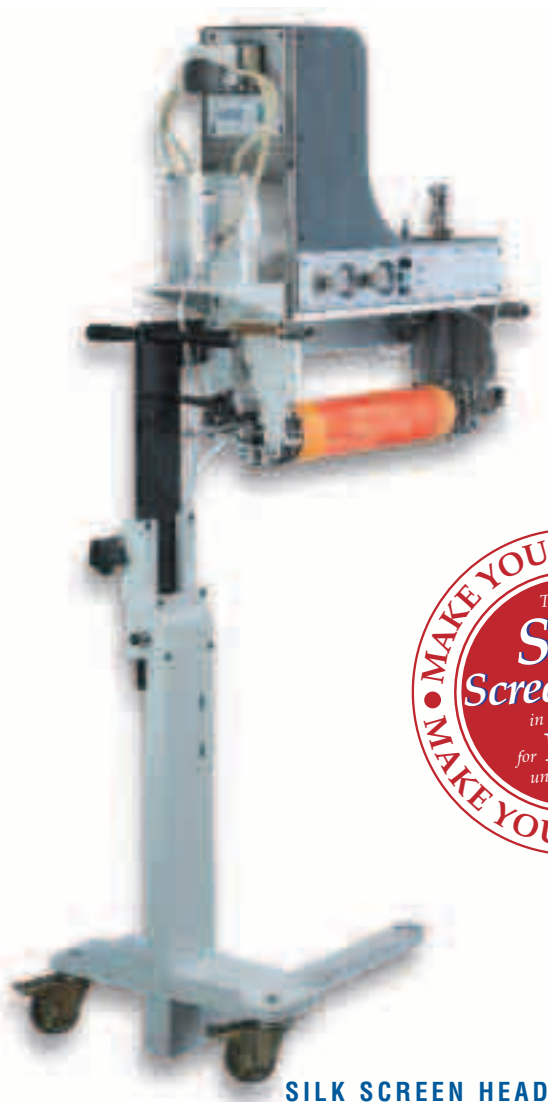
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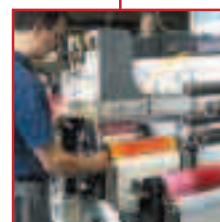
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“Flexo press prices being very competitive the process is attracting much interest from offset wine label printers, and this includes interest in the Mark Andy Scout 6-colour press”

oration with the Graphispac Association, and these companies were represented on 463 stands. Label presses were shown in hall 2, while inks and consumables were exhibited in hall 1.

Global press suppliers Gallus Group and Mark Andy exhibited on the stands of their Spanish agents. A Gallus TCS 250 on the Lapeyra & Taltavull booth, Gallus' agent in Spain for some 38 years, was operating with offset printing, rotary screen, flexo UV varnishing. Hot-foil stamping, embossing and flat-bed die cutting units.

Offering excellent quality and good economics for small to medium-sized runs in the wine industry the press was printing on self-adhesive laid paper. 'We have had a lot of interest at the Show from wine label producers' said Sergio Modamio, product manager label machinery department at Lapeyra & Taltavull. 'Short set-up and changeover times, with minimal waste, and a combination of all kinds of printing, processing and finishing means that the TCS 250 offers unlimited potential for product design – a key attraction for the wine market.'

Wine sector

Also looking at the wine sector, but finding growing interest in the potential of Mark Andy flexo presses for wine label production, Josep Balcells, executive director of Mark Andy's Spanish agent Mag-D-Print told Labels & Labelling that with 'flexo press prices being very competitive the process is attracting much interest from offset wine label printers, and this includes interest in the Mark Andy Scout 6-colour press seen running at the Show.

'Although not on show, Mag-D-Print is also taking the opportunity of talking with some of the leading Spanish label converters here about the Mark Andy SPICE digital printing press that was first shown at the Labelexpo Chicago show. They see digital ink jet with UV curing as very much a technology for their future investment decisions.'

For Spanish press manufacturer IMER Graphispac provided a platform to their recently launched (at Labelexpo 2001) F330 label press. Now selling well into the label market, the F330 is available in up to eight modules for combining offset, flexo, screen, hot foil into a press as required by the customer, together with die-cutting, electronic web guidance and a range of other features.

'With this press' says Manuel Flores, director of the label press division at Imer 'we have designed a machine from the

perspective of a label printer – easy and quick to change-over and set-up, operator friendly, fast, and built to provide high quality printed label results. We are also manufacturing some very clever bespoke versions of the press for Spanish converters.'

Imer were also demonstrating an F-330 flexo press for the production and printing of flexible packaging films. Incorporating a tension control system and new generation cool UV drying, the press can print good results on films from 25-350 microns in thickness. A 1.120.BF press for business forms and mailer production was additionally on show.

Spanish forms press manufacturer Rotatek introduced its new label slitter re-winder RTK-330 with die-cutting for the fast production of blank white labels. According to Britta Heisterkamp, marketing manager for the company, 'the new RTK-330 has been especially designed to meet the growing demands of the self-adhesive label market. Among its basic functions are roll rewind, detection of missing labels or matrix errors, length cut, label and metre counter and white label die-cutting with waste rewind.'

The potential to print a wide range of self-adhesive labels, wet-glue labels, in-mould labels, sleeves – and even narrow-web cartons – was a feature of Rotatek's Ecoflex 330 flexo press demonstrated at the show. Utilising a cassette system for fast job changeover, the Ecoflex is a modular press that permits variable choice of flexo units and other in-line printing, processing and finishing elements.

French label press manufacturers Codimag and Malbate took the opportunity of Graphispac to put on show the latest versions of their semi-rotary presses. Both reported good interest from Spanish and Portuguese label converters – and again from the wine label sector.

'Codimag's semi-rotary waterless offset press continues to receive a good response in Spain' explained Alain Demol, general manager, Codimag, 'where the company has already installed a dozen such presses.' Offset, screen, foiling and varnishing are all features of the press.

A new 350mm wide, six-colour waterless offset press from Malbate – the MECA – also attracted considerable interest. Looking much more like a conventional offset press used for wet-glue wine label printing than a roll-label press, the new machine was expected to appeal to wet-glue printers looking to move to self-adhesive roll-label production.

Continuing to do well with press sales into the Spanish ►

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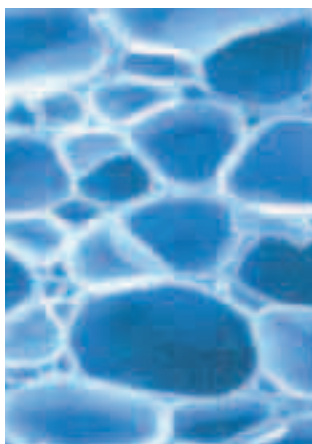
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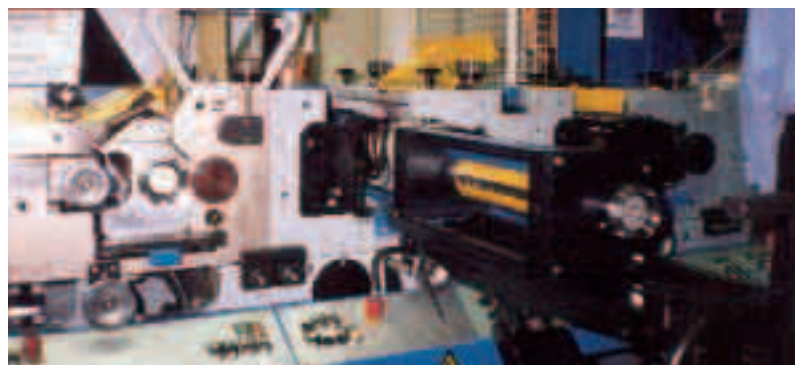


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Fast change print station on the Imer F330

market, the Margraf Group displayed Etipol and Berra equipment and represented Ko-Pack, Focus and LeoMat machinery. Tony Canudas of Margraf explained that 'the future of the Spanish label industry is very much becoming a choice between offset and UV flexo. Although offset presses are more expensive to purchase, pre-press on a day-to-day basis was lower.

'The Etipol Combi 2000 that we have on show is already selling into the Spanish wine sector and we believe we will continue to do well with this press in Spain. Similarly, we are experiencing a very good response for the two Berra presses being demonstrated, particularly for the combination of flatbed screen and hot foil on the latest 330mm wide machine which is proving attractive with converters targeting the wine and cosmetics markets.'

European label press manufacturers GiDue and KDO both demonstrated presses on the stand of their Spanish agent Imp. Exp. Enric Pont. Mainly selling 7-colour conventional flexo presses into Europe in the past year, KDO say that Spain has been a good market for them.

Outside of conventional roll-label presses it was the digital printing technology of HP Indigo that continues to attract visitors at a show. Graphispag was no exception. The ws 4000 being demonstrated, with consumables (liquid toner) costs reduced by some 50% over the past two years, is looking to take the break-even run length for digital/versus conventional to around 20,000 labels. At this level it starts to become ever-more attractive to short-run label producers.

Of the main label pre-press technology companies – Esko Graphics, Creo and Artwork Systems – it was only Artwork Systems that took advantage of the influx of some 200 Spanish label printers to demonstrate label pre-press solutions and the latest in intelligent data-driven workflow and customer data-base connectivity.

David Morales of Artwork Systems highlighted interest in ArtPro Nexus – 'an all-in-one package for label pre-press which provides access to a whole range of production tools which are necessary for high quality pre-press.'

Creo and Esko Graphics demonstrated systems for the packaging converter and user, but had no label specific demonstrations or solutions on show.

A wide range of flexible dies, magnetic cylinders and hot-stamping dies were displayed on the Gerhardt booth where



Codimag's Alain Demol aiming at the wine market

staff from Gerhardt's Spanish sales office explained the latest advances and developments in label die-cutting. Some 85-90% of Gerhardt's sales into the Spanish market are currently flexible dies, where the company is regarded as the number one supplier.

High-end video inspection development was particularly in evidence on the BST stand, where the latest BST-Genius digital system offered an extremely powerful and highly flexible video inspection system using a revolutionary digital camera technology capturing 8 images per second at web speeds up to 1,000 m/min.

'Some 40% of all the visitors on the BST stand have been from the label industry' said Dr. Paolo Tamburrini of BST Italia, who was delighted with the interest expressed in not only video inspection, but also in the web guiding, register control and web cleaning systems displayed.

Inspection systems for the label industry were also displayed on the A.B. Graphic Machinery stand, where their Omega and Vectra equipment was being demonstrated to show visitors. The Omega Digicon is particularly attractive as an offline machine for converting digitally printed webs of labels.

Other label industry suppliers represented at Graphispag included Sicpa, Rotoflex, Fife-Tidland, Tesa, Amba Lamps, Dantex Graphics, Lintec Corporation and Grafisk.

Apart from Labelexpo Europe, Graphispag is one of the Spanish label industry's main events. Made up of some 300 converters, many concentrated around key cities of Barcelona and Madrid, the Spanish label industry has steadily moved from a strong historical letterpress technology base to one in which flexo/UV flexo now dominates new press sales – but with narrow-web offset gaining increasing market acceptance and installed base.

Part of the graphics industry in Spain, the overall label, packaging, forms and commercial printing markets have experienced continuous growth in the country over the past ten years to make the graphics sector the second largest industry in Spain in terms of employment - behind furniture manufacture and ahead of clothing, plastics and bakery – with a total value of around €8,000 million.

Graphispag – and Labelexpo Europe in September – should do much to keep the Spanish label industry focus on growth, technology, performance, quality and profitability in a fast-changing environment and end-user market place. ■

Flexo 03 focus on pre-press kit



Focus Webflex press features new cold-foil unit

Barry Hunt reviews some of the narrow-web developments seen at Flexo 2003, held in March at the NEC, Birmingham

Narrow-web interest at the Flexo series of shows, now firmly ensconced in Hall 17 at the NEC, Birmingham, relates more to pre-press systems, plates, press ancillaries, plates and materials (although a few label press manufacturers were present). To put the show in context, Flexo 2003 was described as Europe's only dedicated flexo event aimed at promoting flexographic technology for printing flexible and corrugated packaging, labels, folded cartons and related applications.

Organised by Reed Exhibitions and co-sponsored by the

European Flexographic Technical Association, the three-day event attracted around 150 exhibitors from 14 countries. Nearly 2,700 registered visitors from all over the world attended it. These figures compare with the 240 exhibitors and 3,280 visitors recorded for Flexo 2001. Arguably the shortfall reflects the current economic uncertainty surrounding much of the European packaging industry, as well as the consolidations and mergers among major suppliers.

Major pre-press attractions at Flexo 2003 centred around digital platemaking, sleeve/plates and new approaches to ►



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Esko-Graphics demonstrates flexo workflow from prototype to production

workflow systems dedicated to labels and packaging, covering all origination and production levels. For example, Kodak Polychrome Graphics (KPG) featured First Check, a desktop digital flexo proofer with a "true graphic arts" RIP aimed at packaging designers. Imaging is through 13 different ribbons in cartridges, with opaque white, gold foil and metallic silver, allowing users to reproduce special colours without the need for colour calibration. It can proof onto shrink wrap and transfer films to make realistic proofs and 3D models to emulate the finished product.

First Check compliments the professional-level Kodak Approval XP system. Enhancements for packaging applications include a white "donor", allowing different colours to be laid over the white on clear or metallic stocks. Reflex blue is a new donor colour, which with orange, green and metallics, allows the creation of unlimited spot colours.

Creo Europe featured the latest ThermoFlex CTP technology to give ultra fast flexo sleeve imaging capability. It also digitally images flexo plates and films in sizes up to 132cm x 203cm, giving the option to run digital plates, plates on sleeves and continuous sleeves. Essentially it is a wide-web sleeving system, although in theory it could be adapted for Creo's ThermoFlex Narrow platesetter for the label market if there was sufficient demand.

On the software front, Creo introduced a new trapping feature for the Prinerly 2.1 workflow, which replaces the existing module. The latest Pandora 2.0 step-and-repeat function now supports the JDF (Job Definition Format) workflow standard for exchanging data and processing instructions. Creo says this makes it easier to integrate Pandora into its existing workflows, such as Brisque Pack and Prinerly Powerpack, and other workflow products. New features include bleed overlap detection and correction, as well as die station ordering with automated placement of die station number marks.

Esko-Graphics showed a flexo workflow from prototype to production, including structural design (CAD), graphics

solutions and plate imaging on a Cyrel Digital Imager. It has added a 3D animation module for ArtiosCAD v5.0 to show how prototypes will look and assemble. The latest PackEdge 3.0 on-screen imposition software runs with Windows 2000 and XP. New in this version is PDF 1.4 and DCS2 import and export, shrink sleeve distortion and ColorStitch trapping software. Along with DeskPack packaging design and trapping tools, the company introduced FlexoFIX, an image retouching module for ColorTone colour management software. Files were processed on Esko-Graphics' FlexRip 5.1 running on Windows NT, and output to a CDI Compact. A new digital plate/sleeve option allows easy removal for exposing and processing in the round.

Artwork Systems promoted upgrades to the various modules in the latest ArtPro 7.0 front-end system for labels and packaging. It was complimented by the Nexus 7.0 system, which automates all multi-format components in the pre-press workflow. Both now provide support for Mac OS X.

DuPont Imaging Technologies launched Cyrel Uptime, a digital workflow program that combines Cyrel Digital Imaging with Cyrel FAST – its dry thermally processed plate – and Cromalin Digital contract proofing with the aim of increasing flexo press utilisation. DuPont says many printers rely on repro houses for their Cyrel FAST plates, but there is no in-house provision for plate breakdowns or last-minute schedule changes at justifiable prices. With Cyrel Uptime, payment is linked to throughput, rather than capital outlay, so making the system affordable to almost any size of flexo printer. Cromalin iCertification for global remote proofing and a Cyrel sleeve plate were also shown.

Dantex Graphics introduced the Dantex 500S and Aqua-Flex 700ES vertical cabinet platemakers for Toreflex water-washable flexo plates. The latter has quick-start UV tubes and a recirculating wash system. Its VDU operator interface is also found on the Aqua-Flex E/EF series of electronic processors with automatic in-line processing for plate widths of either 480mm or 900mm.

J M Heaford featured the Gearless Flexo Drum Proofer, said to produce production-quality samples and proofs without the need to tie up a production press. The machines can be supplied configured for conventional integral print cylinders and anilox rolls or for sleeve systems with cantilevered mandrels. The machines are also available with UV curing systems.

Presses and ancillaries

Among the few presses shown, Focus Label Machinery demonstrated a 330-mm wide six-unit WebFlex with new cold-foil unit and the 250-mm wide CentraFlex, CI press with six units. Other manufacturers relied on information stands, including Chromas/Aquaflex, KDO and Nilpeter UK, which promoted the established FA series and the new US-built FB series of flexo/UV flexo presses. Rotatek displayed a unit of its new Ecoflex 250/330 press on the Stanley Press Equipment stand, while Drent Goebel featured its Variable Sleeve Offset Printing technology. ▶

“Major pre-press attractions at Flexo 2003 centred around digital platemaking, sleeve/plates and new approaches to workflow systems dedicated to labels and packaging”

Automation GmbH demonstrated a roll-to-sheet label line for laser printable data labels, comprising a 450-mm wide Somaflex flexo press with sealed chamber unit, die cutting and edge trimming module, conveyor and a servo-driven Automation BC35 dual-stream stacker offering up to 30 packs/minute of A4 sheeted labels.

Arpeco's latest sales strategy means it will now sell Cartonmaster presses in the UK and Ireland, available in widths of 407mm, 558mm and 660mm. They produce high-quality carton blanks in short runs using the Primographic process developed by the Canadian company as an advanced version of flexo. Single-pass operations include rotary embossing, hot or cold foil transfer, blister adhesive coating, flatbed or rotary die cutting and pin stripping.

Arpeco also introduced its servo-driven Injector System, which includes die cutting, creasing, embossing and stripping. The use of one set of fixed-repeat magnetic cylinders are said to balance the cost benefits of flatbed cutting with the speed benefits of rotary cutting. Operators need only to change flexible die plates and the magnetic cylinder's repeat, which reduces board usage when setting-up the cutting and creasing module.

GEW introduced the VCP-Film UV curing system as part of the air-cooled VCP series with slide-out cassettes and Varipower stepless control. It is designed for printing heat-sensitive packaging films down to 15 microns thick on UV-equipped presses up to 450mm in width that do not have chill rolls. Each compact VCP-Film unit has its own water-cooled chill roll with wrap-around contact at the point of curing, which is said to be more efficient than air-cooled heatsinks.

Intercolor introduced High Lustre Silver inks. When printed on films the ▶

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metallic effect is said to be comparable with that of foil blocking or metallised paper and substantially brighter than conventional metallic inks. Intercolor's new PC-based "Lustre Index" quantifies the level of reflective effect gained on any substrate using spectrophotometric data. The software measures and controls both colour and reflectance. New UV flexo inks include Uvaflex Y7, a practically odourless free-radical ink for food packaging.

Sun Chemical – UK Liquid Inks launched an on-line Customer Service Help Desk (www.sunchemicalhelpdesk.com). Services include problem solving, an instant ink estimation service, a guide to product applications, health and safety information and a database of technical articles.

Akzo Nobel Inks introduced Flexocure Gemini low-odour inks for printing unsupported films and wrap-around labels. Uvoscreen II CombiWhite is a new opaque white rotary screen ink for combination printing with UV flexo inks. Its higher-than-average opacity is said to allow UV flexo retain its sharp dots and perfect halftones.

Other developments included the European launch of 3M's Cushion-Mount Plus E1020 mounting tapes. Its patented construction is said to give good surface contact and consistent adhesion without air bubbles, which aids print quality and speeds up plate mounting and productivity. The medium density E1015 type for label printing has a filmic liner, while the new 1715M is intended for printing solid colours at high speeds without plate bounce.

Advanced Vision Technology gave the global launch of ProoFit, an off-line 100 per cent automatic proofing system. Aimed at demanding label and packaging applications, it allows everyone from designers to converters to check for errors on a screen against a scanned-in master PDF or other file image at all production stages. It complements the company's range of PrintVision automatic web viewers for labels and packaging.

Eltromat launched WV3000, a video web inspection system for close inspection and automated fault detection with several modular options. It uses three-chip cameras (including digital) and 16X zoom lenses to detect faults at up to 1,000 m/minute. Camera positioning, zoom and iris settings for specific web areas is through a touch-screen console. An optional module with two extra cameras allows simultaneous inspection of both sides of the web. The images are electronically superimposed for an on-screen register display. ■

● *Flexo 2005 will take place at the NEC on 15-17 March 2005, again co-presented by the European Flexographic Technical Association*

News in brief

■ After market service

Converters are offered a broad range of after market parts and an array of services from the Mark Andy/Comco after market group. Designed to provide the best in on-going support and solutions, including preventive maintenance consultations and contracts; emergency service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and custom retrofit programs. Highly qualified, dedicated customer and technical support are available with a large inventory of competitively priced replacement parts. These services are available to the largest installation base of flexo presses in the world. **e No.200**

■ Coating

Adlamco, Inc. announces it has successfully laminated Exxon-Mobil Chemicals, Bicolor 90 gauge BSR-One film at 500 feet per minute on a Dri-Tec direct gravure laminating station using Adlamco's McSTICK 136 (patent applied for) two component, 100 per cent solids adhesive using Deneka Printing Systems doctor blade. The coating gave superior clarity and destruct bonds within 24 hours after lamination. 'This new process represents an attractive alternative to traditional five roll 100 per cent solids coating systems,' said Peter Stelling, senior process specialist at Dri-Tec. **e No.201**

■ eXact unit

Jim Kadlec from Advanced PrePress Graphics has just purchased his second order for the newest, latest and what he claims to be the greatest flexo plate exposure unit to hit the flexo industry, the eXact unit made by Cortron. This is a liquid cooled mercury plasma exposure unit that exposes most flexo plates in less than 10 minutes (front & back automatically) with High Definition quality '1/3 the time from Olec's units'.

Mac Dermid is extremely excited about this technology since their plate material was heat sensitive. See the FPPA story on page ? **e No.202**

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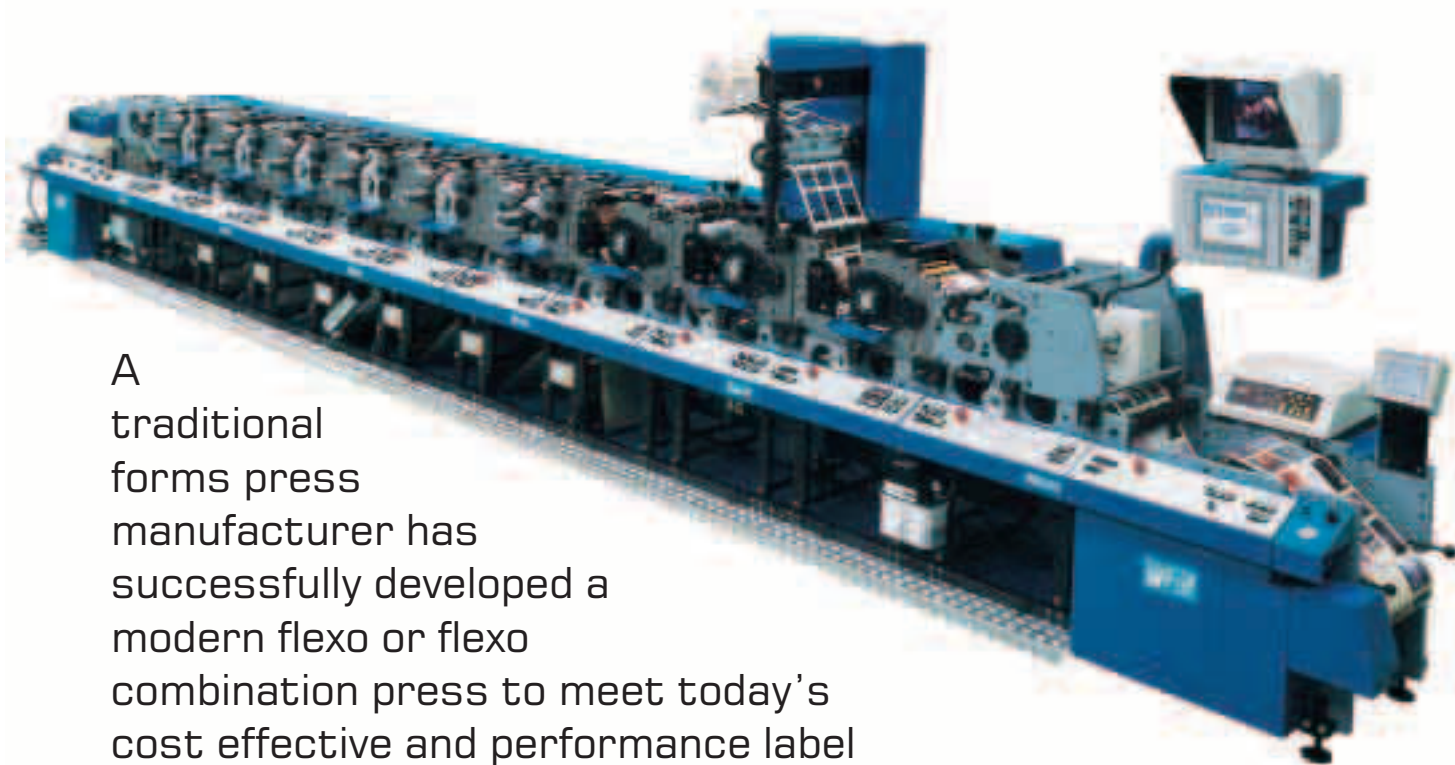
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A traditional forms press manufacturer has successfully developed a modern flexo or flexo combination press to meet today's cost effective and performance label market. **Mike Fairley** reports

Imer's F-330 Flexo press

Imer builds on label success

If you want to create and build a successful roll-label printing press, then you have to think like a label printer' says Manel Flores, Director of the Label Division at Imer S.A. in Barcelona. 'What do they need to get high quality labels at a good running speed? How can you make the press quick and easy to changeover? What is the best way to make the press simple and safe to operate?'

Such was the thinking behind Imer's development and launch of a rotary flexo press just two years ago. Obviously a successful approach, the company is now selling about one machine a month to the label industry, with forecast indicating a high level of exports.

For Manel Flores, who joined the company from a leading European label converter to head up the label division, the Imer F.330 flexo press incorporates concepts and technology ideas drawn from his many years in the label printing industry

– easy changeover, simple splicing, highly consistent running speeds, quickly in register, ease of roll handling, a chamber doctor blade for high speed printing and a mechanical concept designed for high quality production.

'We have been able to develop a good quality flexo press in a relatively short timescale. Based on over 30 years of forms press design and rotary press manufacturing expertise, we have been able to rapidly adapt to the label industry's needs.

'And because we manufacture everything – from machine parts to electrical design – we have been able to respond rapidly to innovations and make quick decisions. All production and supplies are thoroughly checked and recorded and we manufacture to CE guidelines, as well as paying special attention to environmental issues.'

Built as standard into the F 330 are an unwind unit incorporating hydraulic reel lift, electro-magnetic braking, ►

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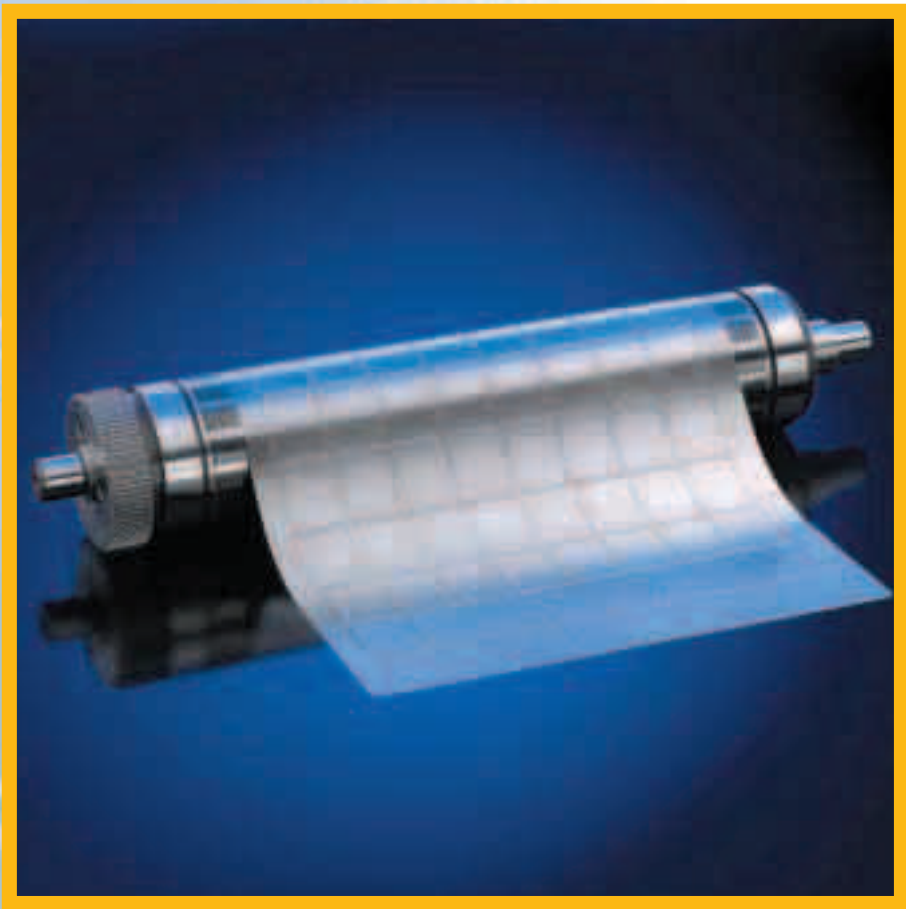
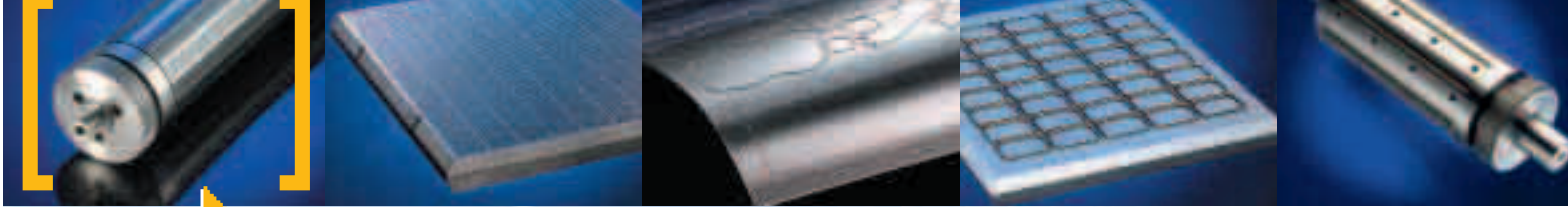


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Imer's recently-built 6,000 sq metre factory near Barcelona

electronic unwind control and an in-feed roller with servomotor. Automatic tension control, web splicing and electronic web guide are also standard elements.

The flexographic print heads at the heart of the press incorporate a closed chamber doctor blade, printing cylinder cassette system to give high running speeds and quick changeover, in addition to motorisation of the ceramic anilox roller during stoppages, UV inks and curing and a peristaltic pump with an ink flow control system.

Size change

Cylinder size change is easy. The printing cylinders go to zero each time the press stops and, following plate cylinder changes, a small plate-to-plate variation can be easily adjusted by the operator to give complete registration of all colours in little more than 30 metres of web pass. 'Indeed,' says Manel Flores 'we can change a set of 4-colour plates and be running again in register in as little as six minutes for a skilled operator. To help speed up plate cylinder change we have also designed and built our own accurate plate register system.'

'Similarly, die cutting is also a cassette system using a magnetic cylinder and flexible dies. So, even if the operator changes a complete job – from plates and dies to matrix rewind – and gets the new job in register, this can still be undertaken in perhaps 10 to 15 minutes.'

Even the finishing end of the process – waste handling and rewind – have been developed with the operator in mind; air core shafts, electronic tension control, matrix waste rewind unit or waste extraction for compression – and a special web trolley to take away any operator strain when taking rolls off the end of the press.

'The F 330 flexo press is very solidly built and is designed for high running speeds' added Manel Flores 'as well as quick changeover. Also, it is not necessary to adjust the pressure in the printing cylinders, as they remain adjusted automatically when a new size is inserted into the press. Consequently, we have achieved further improvements in set up time.'

Due to the modular construction of the F 330, the press can incorporate a wide range of options and printing processes into a press to meet customers' specific demands: offset printing units, rotary screen, foiling, embossing, semi-automatic web splicing, remote control web guiding, corona treatment, web

cleaning, sheeting or folding. 'We can also add holograms or undertake sequential numbering,' comments Mr. Flores. 'Being a very modular machine we can provide a press that will just undertake roll-to-roll die cutting, or a press that can print up to 6, 7, 8, 9 or 10 colours by several different processes, and then build in clever added-value label features. Also, we can incorporate turner bars in almost any part of the press; length cutting, longitudinal perforation and cross perforation are other options.'

Of the F 330 presses sold to date by Imer the average print head construction is for 7 colours, with some two or three die-cutting units. However, Imer's technical, design and R&D offices are able to analyse and develop a solution to suit almost any label industry requirement.

One unique self-adhesive offset printing security press built by Imer is currently printing pressure-sensitive tax seals for alcoholic beverages, using a split duct inking system (to add on another independent process), secure numbering and hologram application. In manufacture at the moment is a further 'special' being built for the application of leaflet and promotional labels, while an Imer built added-value direct mail press has some 10 offset/flexo units with a roll delivery output and sheeter.

But it's not only self-adhesive label production where Imer presses are creating growing interest and application. Versions of the F 330 have also been created for the unsupported film markets of flexible packaging, shrink or stretch sleeving and wrap-around film labels.

To print and convert web-fed materials – which may range from as little as 25 microns up to 350 microns in thickness, Imer incorporate additional tension control capabilities – including between print heads so as to control colour-to-colour tension – and the latest generation of cool UV-drying units for use with heat-sensitive films. Variations of the F 330 have additionally been used for the printing and converting of carton-board.

First shown as a label press at Labelexpo Europe in 2001, then at shows in Moscow and at the NEC in Birmingham – as well as at numerous in-house demonstrations, for label and packaging applications – Imer are expecting sales of some 15 or so F 330 presses in 2003. Quite some achievement in just 18 months from first showing. ►

“Versions of the F 330 have also been created for the unsupported film markets of flexible packaging, shrink or stretch sleeving and wrap-around film labels”

From its foundation in 1969 by the Giralto brothers – Pedro, Juan and José (and now the second generation family) – the company has come a long way, from forms presses to presses for labels, direct mail, A4 sheets, flexible films, cartons and even security printing. Originally offset only presses for business forms, then in 1995 into offset/flexo combination machines for more commercial applications and, most recently into flexo or flexo combination for labels and packaging applications.

Business forms press models with installations worldwide (in more than 25 countries), with a strong installed base in Europe and the U.K. includes the variable format the I-90-BF machine, the I-115-BF and the I-120-BF and I-125-BF for forms, commercial printing and labels. In addition there is also a pack-to-pack collator (the AP.100) and a roll collator (the C.300.BF) models available. There is also a rotary letterpress machine for some specific applications, as well as twin or triple unwind machines (multi-web machines) for special applications, among them the siliconising, adhesive coating, die-cutting and sheeting of white labels.

Numbering, length gluing, cross gluing, pinwheel infeed, cross perforation and snap-out sets are just some of the options on the roll collator, which can be used for labels and commercial products as well as forms.

Turnover today for all applications is in excess of €10 million (up from €7 million in 1999) from two production sites, and a near 80 employees.


To meet production demand and the forecast (at that time) growth potential in label and packaging press production, Imer moved into a new 5,400 square metre factory in 1999. ‘The philosophy of the company has always been to invest’ said Mr. José Giralto, one of the general managers at Imer ‘although not to grow faster than our means. With the new facilities we have been able to create new press models, increase our production capability and add additional specialist staff. Now we are looking forward to entering new markets and to achieve reasonable and consistent growth.’

Already present in five continents, in more than 25 countries, Imer looks set to capitalise on its hard work and investment in recent years.

The F 330 flexo press should go a long way to helping them achieve their aims of becoming a key player in the world of labels. ■

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Delighting the End User:

TLMI Converter Meeting

Delegates to the TLMI's annual Converter Meeting entered into debate with end users and took advice from industry figures on re-engineering their labelling operation to cope with the challenges of globalisation. **Natalie Martin** reports

Do you enjoy your job? If not, simply quit. This 'expert' advice comes from Larry Winget, a speaker who kick-started the TLMI presentations at the Converter Meeting, held in Arizona, March 5-7th. Although this statement may sound controversial, his presentation, 'The Simple Way to Customer Service' set the tone for the theme 'Delighting your customers'.

Winget told the audience he applies his philosophy to all industries and businesses; how do you expect your customer to buy into what you're selling, if you lack enthusiasm. If you enjoy your job and have fun with it, this creates the 'feel good factor' which inspires trust and confidence in your customer. 'Excellence comes from enjoyment. Customers tell stories. You want your customers to tell the right stories about who you are and how you've treated them.'

End User Crunch

The end user meeting, 'Consolidation Crunch, The Impact on Strategic Partnerships and Packaging Innovation' sparked off a heated reaction from the audience. David Luttenberger, CPP, director of Packaging Strategies, chaired the meeting. In his introduction he stressed delivery of 'total solutions' thru collaborative partnerships. Think B.I.C.E.P; Brand; Identity; Communicate; Educate; Protection.

Glen Flook, sr vice president operations and manufacturing for Poore Brothers – a \$70 million snack company whose biggest customer is Wal-Mart – stressed the extremely competitive nature of his market sector, and the critical

importance of building brands. 'We need to be intensely different in order to compete with the giants,' he says. 'We do not have a lot of technical resources, so we want our label suppliers to bring us mock-ups, new design ideas. We also require lower inventories, we want you to manage our inventories.'

Ed Lerner, manager of R&D Package & Process Development for Welch's – a \$700 million sales operation of juice, jam and jelly products – told TLMI members that Welch's breaks down its label suppliers into three categories: commodity suppliers, preferred suppliers and alliance partners. The third category of label suppliers is considered critical to its business success. 'These suppliers are a strategic part of our business and help plan company direction for the next one, two or three years.' Spelling out exactly how the alliance partnership works, Lerner said the company expects only the best, to get priority supply and access to new technology. 'It's not a one-way street; we're willing to give long-term contracts. We don't want to see service levels fall,' Lerner adds. Welch's also looks worldwide for label suppliers to guarantee they are getting to the cutting edge.

Lerner said he is worried by consolidation within the label industry and is willing to take risks with smaller companies who tend to be more entrepreneurial. 'We rely on our strategic partners to help us commercialize and have actually funded suppliers with new ideas in technology.'

One major downside of consolidation is that several key suppliers are now in the hands of financial companies, which ►

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“Rapid prototyping was identified as the most valuable service a converter could offer. 20 per cent of end users felt their label suppliers measured up to this service”

Dean Scarborough, ceo Avery Dennison



could change the nature of the business relationship. ‘Some don’t know a label from the back end of a Buick.’ Lerner’s biggest concern is that label companies are cutting out R&D and field service, which he considers short-sighted and creating a negative effect in the relationship between end user and label supplier.

The very mention of “Reverse Auctions” had TLMI members shifting uncomfortably in their seats. From the floor came the question why Welch’s felt the need to go to auction if they were happy with their current strategic partners. Lerner conceded that holding auctions for labels and packaging was a “pricing down” exercise, although the incumbent was at an advantage.

‘There’s no glory in changing our suppliers every six months or every year,’ argued Lerner. Welch’s invites all its bidders into the plant and will share all its company information. ‘We’re not experts in print handling. We want a supplier that doesn’t take no for an answer. A label is critical to our branding, it’s a high tech item, not a commodity. Our strategic partnerships is like a marriage and we will reward longer term contracts.’

Avery Dennison recently conducted a major survey of end user requirements among 40 packaging and data management companies. The results were presented by company president and COO Dean Scarborough. Respondents considered Rapid prototyping – *rapid prototyping* – the most valuable service a converter could offer, and just 20 per cent felt their label suppliers measured up to this service.

Scarborough acknowledged concern in today’s business environment, but challenged converters: ‘You have to uncover your customer’s needs. Don’t be afraid to ask what keeps them awake at night. Ask them, where do they see their business in three years time or even if you could grant them three wishes, what would they be?’ You have to engage your customer and get them to open up. ‘Make yourself a part of their business hopes,

visions, dreams, and then react to their needs to find/develop the solution(s)’.

Scarborough enthused, ‘You should be able to delight your customers in just a few weeks. You’ll also have ownership of your customers by solving their problems. Companies purchase labels but people buy them.’

He suggested sending out ‘cross functional’ sales teams to customers and ‘cross section’ their business - so they don’t deal with just purchasing or operations. Other departments may be able to give you insight into what goes on behind the scenes so you can help drive your customer’s business. Scarborough also talked about supply chain management. Converters have to be ‘supply chain experts’ these days and electronically adept to lower, or even wipe out the need for inventorying.

John Eulich, president of Mark Andy, said label converters should see themselves as ‘a custom manufacturing business responding to frequent changes in production requirements’. The challenge is to innovate and develop ‘entrepreneurial’ products, because although the industry is maturing, it is still growing and there are lots of ways to make money if you can take out costs and increase revenue.

This can be achieved by a renewed focus on people, technology, quality, process improvement and customer service, said Eulich. Outside the business, concentrate on innovation and channels of distribution. ‘The best way to improve profitability is to improve on the production floor. The easiest way to take out cost is to go after the supply chain.’ Look to eliminate non-value added time, add off-line inspection and reduce set-up times. ‘Know what to do before committing resources. Focus on employee driven improvement; continually train everyone for their new roles; expand reward, recognition and pay.’

Investing in new technology – in itself – isn’t going to ►



“Excellence comes from enjoyment. Customers tell stories. You want your customers to tell the right stories about who you are and how you’ve treated them”

Larry Wingit, motivational speaker



improve your operation: you've got to look at the way you operate your business. If you have old or obsolete technology, try dedicating it to a single product, or upgrade old technology with new capabilities. Only if this can't sensibly be done, upgrade to new equipment, said Eulich. At the same time, learn to operate close to customer's rate of demand: deliver smaller volumes, more frequently and on time.

Today's environment requires you to be both a label converter and a packaging consultant, Eulich noted. A label converter needs to focus on quality, cycle time, flexibility and value. Being a packaging consultant requires a trained sales force, able to present new marketing opportunities and add value to your customer – not just a simple quote. Equally, utilize the flexibility offered by narrow web equipment: multiple processing in-line, flexibility of processes and materials.

The subject of digital printing was raised. Eulich estimates digital will make major inroads within the next five years, and within a further five digital will have a healthy portion of the business.

Other TLMI news

The latest North American Label Study (NALS), due to be published in February 2004, has been awarded to research company Label and Packaging Communications, Inc. (LPC). John Bankson, president of TLMI noted: 'We have a commitment to ensuring that the very real benefits of TLMI membership include access to tangible market information that will positively contribute to the strategy and planning of our converter members. We also encourage our members to participate in this study to ensure that its results are of the widest possible breadth.'

The NALS 2004 will focus on issues including the threat of reverse auctions, margin erosion, vendor consolidation and globalization. The study will also closely examine those forces driving pressure sensitive label growth, and market barriers to entry.

Jennifer Dochstader, editor of *Labels & Labeling Latin America* and managing director of LPC, Inc, said, 'We poll and speak to more than 1,200 converters, suppliers and end-users to develop the latest trend, growth and market data.' Jeff Nyman, chairman of the Study for TLMI added, 'The 2004 study will have a particular focus on the end-user. It's critical that our membership has access to the latest information on market drivers and barriers, from the standpoint of people involved in the day-to-day business of label procurement and design, and brand management.'

In addition to the label converter and the end-user, the NALS 2004 will focus on specific durable and consumable goods sectors, supply chain management, security labeling and a special section will focus on the Mexican PS labeling industry. ■



Duane Huberty,
president of Advanced
Web Technologies and
chair of TLMI Converter
Meeting

Eugene Singer awards

These awards recognize excellence in business management, measured by defined business ratios calculated through the TLMI Management Ratio Study. Tech Tag & Label was honored for the first time in the 'small company' category (with sales of less than \$6 million). Consolidated Label, another first-time winner, was honored in the 'mid-range' category (sales of \$6 million to \$15 million). 'Consolidated Label employees have been working hard for the last 18 years to grow and continuously improve the business,' said Joel Carmany, president of Consolidated Label. 'We have seen many changes in the market and industry over the years and have made strong efforts to adapt our company accordingly.' Graphic Solutions was honored for the third time, this year in the 'medium-sized' category (annual sales of \$15 million to \$35 million). Suzanne Zaccone, president of Graphic Solutions noted the company's growth has been organic. 'It has been developed through an expansion of our core business products, not through an acquisition.' CL&D Graphics was honored in the large company category (with sales of more than \$35 million).

World Label Awards

Held by TLMI, the Japanese Federation of Label Printers (JFLP) and FINAT, winning TLMI members included: Spectrum Label Corporation - which won two awards - Collotype Labels, CL&D Graphics, which won in the Plateless Printing category for its 'Mr. Krispers' label; Dow Industries won in the Multi-Process Line & Screen Tone category with its 'Gillette' entry, while Label Aid Systems won in the Screen Line & Screen Tone category with its 'Heart Center' label; Tape & Label Engineering won for its 'Phone Card' entry; and 'Whitlam Label was honored in the Flexo Line & Screen Tone category. National Label Co., a member of both TLMI and FINAT, also was honored in the Coupon - Any process category.

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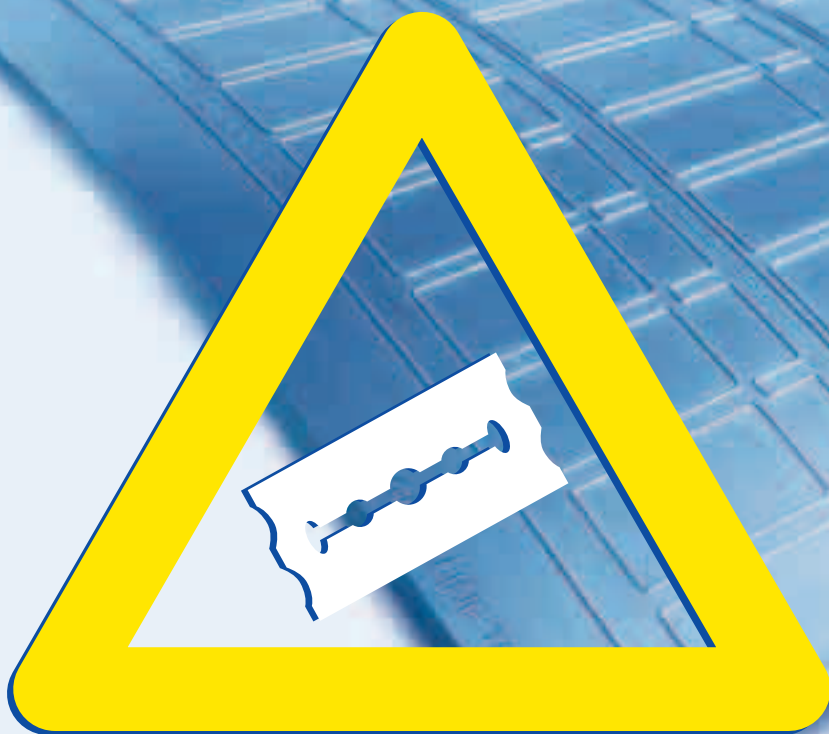
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Fed up with intrusive sales staff handing out testers, or spraying yourself silly with different fragrances in the store? Well, Driscoll Label, Fairfield, NJ, has the answer with its scratch and sniff label applications. Pick out a fragrance from the shelf, and you could find a scratch and sniff label that allows you to rub your fingers over the label to release a fragrance, not just once, but many times. The package is not interfered with, so it also has 'package integrity'. There is no need for customers to break into the package to test-spray the fragrance.

'It's cheaper than hiring out sales staff, or giving away sample vials that can be costly for the product manufacturer,' says Bob Biava, president at Driscoll Label. 'What's more, the consumer is interacting directly with the product, to help them make that impulse purchase that all brand managers strive to achieve.'

End user Robert Luke, vp of marketing at Advanced Research Labs, is always looking to printers to bring him new ideas. 'We short circuit problems by making sure the design can be executed consistent with our expectations,' says Luke. 'Sometimes a test of the end product is the best course of action before actually printing the entire job. Personal interaction with the label manufacturer representative is critical, because both sides grow to understand each other and each others' capabilities.' Luke looks for responsiveness, quality, and consistency of performance (timing response, flexibility and quality innovation) from his printer.

In a period of low consumer confidence, discretionary spending is scrutinized, says Luke. 'Consumers tend to shift their habits to buy premium products that are not big ticket items –

Beautiful solutions

Key drivers in the beauty and healthcare sector include shorter product life-cycle, brand differentiation and high added value. All of this presents the label convertor with both challenges and opportunities, as **Natalie Martin** reports



“Because printing lead-times are generally short, the end user can adapt to shifting market patterns without carrying a tremendous amount of inventory”

“The theory of Small Pleasures”. One will buy a premium item that is a personal treat for \$9.99 versus popping for the new SUV.’ He especially refers to spa products where people can focus on the ‘self’. Talking about inventory, Luke firmly believes that labeling suppliers can help manage inventories. Because printing lead-times are generally short, the end user can adapt to shifting market patterns without carrying a tremendous amount of inventory.

The average life cycle of a health and beauty product depends not only on whether it is well established, but on whether it identifies and responds to a long-term consumer need. The shallower the need, the shorter the life-cycle. ‘Hit those hot buttons and you have a hot product,’ says Luke.

Right now, consumers are responding to clarity and ►



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“West Pack only uses digital workflows and printing plates, and currently 40 per cent of its projects are conducted via e-mail – without a printed proof”

sharpness of color. His job as a marketer is to break through the clutter of competing colors on shelf and he feels that too frequently colors get washed out and do not have sufficient contrast. He identifies use of metallic inks resembling foil hot-stamping as the most innovative labeling that's being introduced into this market but is also looking forward to greater flexibility for label application to angled surfaces.

Short run

In response to these end user demands, Paul Ferron, president / CEO, West Pack Label LLC has engineered his company for just-in-time, short run printing and converting of labels. West Pack produces labels exclusively for the personal care, beauty and cosmetic market. Explains Ferron, 'Our process was engineered from day one to be in the position to be responsive to our clients' immediate needs. In fact we chose our location in large part to be close to the (base) material manufacturers' distribution centers. We have an agreement with one of our clients to print and ship custom label orders within 48 hours.'

West Pack only uses digital workflows and printing plates, and currently 40 per cent of its projects are conducted via e-mail – without a printed proof. He sees this trend continuing, and possibly growing to 60 per cent by the end of 2003. As more of his clients become comfortable with his work, he believes they will become more confident that West Pack will produce their labels as they envisioned, without a hard copy proof. 'Three years ago, an overnight proof (or 24 hours) was commonplace; it took two to three days to proof a job. We now proof labels and have sign off in as little as two to three hours.' Cycle times for products from 'concept to shelf' can be as short as one month.

Ferron continuously experiments to come up with new decorating techniques for this market. His staff regularly play around with new products like inks and coatings to create new solutions as well as keeping ahead of what the end users are demanding. Like Robert Luke, Ferron identifies 'Spa' as a growth product line and gets the impression marketers are trying to convey the feeling of the vacation/retreat experience at 'home'. Labeling helps to enhance this experience through use of iridescent inks and coatings, foil, tactile coatings and other high end decorative techniques. The key concept is not only to differentiate the product on-shelf, but to enhance the experience after it has been in the home, to promote return purchases. ▶



In the future Ferron says Soft-Touch coatings and bottle finishes plus bottle and product colorants will continue to evolve – and present fresh challenges and opportunities to label converters.

Personal Care

Harlands Labels, Hull, England, serves end user customers such as Avon, L'Oreal, Body shop International, Meller Beauty, and Marks and Spencer. Seventy per cent of its business provides labels for the personal care sector, both for





primary decoration and custom products such as multi-layers and security solutions including RF tagging and holograms. Ian Wright, managing director, describes the company as providing solutions not just product. He views this whole sector as a prolific user of pressure sensitive labels which will grow as customers start to take advantage of improved quality, less exposure to high stocks, more versatility, shorter runs and more frequent design changes. Other key trends include larger amounts of information on-label to satisfy customers' growing expectations, legislative requirements and multiple languages. In terms of materials, there are trends towards higher quality, clear material substrates, PE and PP films, multi-layer options and clear materials printed mirror image.

Custom press

Harlands operates six Gallus presses. 'Our presses are narrow web combination process, offering screen and letterpress primarily with flexo for special varnishing,' says Wright. In addition Harlands offers in-line foil blocking, laminating and embossing as value-added features. Wright mentions, 'Our equipment has all been developed beyond its initial capability to allow unique constructions to be produced. Such development is done through our internal R&D program with our own engineers.'

Logistics management is important. Harlands' agreements with clients include close monitoring of their forecasts to be able to print well in advance and deliver from stock. 'We would work with customers on stock management systems, alternatively we may find print partners with whom to share our technology on a licensee basis.'

Seal-It, Inc. meanwhile, has come up with a solution to assist retailers with accurate pricing and inventory control through offering shrink sleeves with printed bar codes. A spokesman for Seal-It said, 'Retailers are requesting this form of packaging for its usefulness and customers know they are enjoying a fresh and unused product. A testing instrument is used to test scannability of the code after the printing process. Sleeves with printed bar codes are frequently used on products like pencils and lipsticks.' ■

Peel and Read

Harlands developed the Peel and Read label (3 surfaces for text) in response to requirements for large amounts of text to be carried on small containers, mainly for use in the cosmetics and toiletries markets. The construction of the label works in the same way as a book with a hinge on the left-hand side, allowing the pages to be opened and closed. Since the initial product was launched, the development process moved on to the design of Dry Peel labels. These work in the same way as the standard Peel and Read, but adds full deadening of the adhesive between the two layers so the top layer can be peeled off and kept as a token or redeemable coupon.

The Wrap and Peel label is designed to wrap around the outside of a cylindrical container and overlaps itself. The overlapped section of the product can be peeled back to varying degrees to reveal additional product information. This label can be printed in full color on all areas and is an ideal way of creating a great look to a product needing additional space for text. It also negates the need for more than one label applicator on a filling line.

The most recent developments within the range have been the Tri-Peel label (5 surfaces for text) and the Quad-Peel (7 surfaces for text). Producing labels of this configuration assists in driving out costs in terms of reducing production downtime by negating the need for multi-sort manufacturing, and reducing the label inventory.

Steve Barber, head of packaging development at The Body Shop comments, 'We need our suppliers to be proactive and devise solutions which help us to develop our business, Harlands have proved their commitment to us through constantly working to improve their product range as a direct response to our requirements. Harlands make many visits to our site every week to try and assist in any way possible and provide an ongoing consultation service for labels.'

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E No.151

Converter focus

On the leadin

Given the overcapacity in the flexo food packaging market, printers have to reinvent themselves as total service suppliers. In the case of Leading Edge Labels this has meant offering end users a complete design-to-print service

LLeading Edge Labels & Packaging, now six years old and one of the most successful flexo label printers in the UK today, has just completed its latest round of investment with an extension of its Gravesend premises and further press investment. The company's policy of continued expansion has resulted in phenomenal growth in a highly competitive market – the £3m turnover with two presses in 1997 has now reached £16.5m with seven presses. Annual growth rate is currently running at 35 per cent. The eighth flexo 13 colour press is due to be installed in April 2003.

There is no one secret to the success of Leading Edge Labels: using solely UV flexo presses enables all origination costs to be kept to a minimum, while print runs up to one million are extremely economic.

The company has specialised in packaging for the food market where it aims to produce quality directly competitive with gravure printed work.

Leading Edge's key offering is a design service for products as diverse as salad film bags, drinks labels, promotional packs and booklet labels. Explains Ian Barwick, joint managing director, 'For the retailer operating in the food market it's an extremely competitive time, and they look to companies like us to help them create designs and packs that will sell their products. Most of what we produce is also very time critical, with 30 per cent of all jobs often expected to be turned around with 24 hours of receipt of artwork.'

Barwick says the company is seeing 'huge growth' in sectors such as drink wraps and roll-on sleeves, much of this for the flavoured drinks market. 'There's also a big increase in the

use of coupons and in linking one food to another. For example, someone buying a packed salad may want a dressing to go with it, and so the film pack for the salad has a money-off coupon for the bottle of dressing. It's a move away from the "buy one get one free" scenario that has been so popular in the past.'

Continues Barwick, 'We can have the job printed and delivered to the food packer faster than the traditional big advertising agency would have produced a few creative visuals, and without the big agency fee.'

Key to that quick turnaround, and included in the latest £2.5m investment, is a third seat of ArtPro, FlexoCal imagesetter calibration software and a Nexus workflow management module from Artwork Systems.

'ArtPro is an excellent package for allowing us to handle the repro side of a design, offering a wide range of sophisticated functions for areas such as trapping, nesting, step and repeat and colour manipulation,' says Barwick. 'The level of automation in the package makes it extremely fast and the latest version gives us even more functions.'

ArtPro enables the studio to have interactive links with Macintosh operators at customer sites, allowing remote proofing of work and a significant reduction in time, materials and amendments. 'A customer can send a file over in the evening and when they walk into their office in the morning there is a printed colour proof ready for them to view. The system allows last minute proof changes, and also provides a safe method for corrections.'

FlexoCal imagesetter calibration software has proved itself as an effective alternative to investing in CTP, says Barwick:

g edge



'We're obviously well aware of the development in CTP for flexo plates, but the investment required is massive. We were immediately impressed when we saw what Artwork Systems had achieved. FlexoCal enables us to produce a plate for any of our flexo presses which is equal in quality to a CTP plate, at a fraction of the cost and we can make a film and plate within one and a half hours. To produce a comparable plate on a CTP system would require two and a half hours. Also, we have great flexibility in which plates we use and the latest versions dry within 20 minutes, which is another important time saving.'

The FlexoCal system was put to the test soon after its installation when it was used to produce the plates for the packaging in Sainsbury's "Taste the Difference" campaign. 'This was a job that pushed UV flexo to its limits and we were certainly glad that we had FlexoCal up and running by this point,' says Ian Barwick. 'The system gives us enormous control over dot size and shape on the final plate, allowing us to print fine reversed out text as well as providing excellent highlights and shadow details in the image. The print we produce is now sharper than anything I've seen before by any flexo printer.'

Close partnership

Leading Edge has developed a close partnership with Artwork Systems, including making a joint pitch to a major retailer shortly after FlexoCal was installed.

Artwork Systems has supplied a Nexus workflow module, which speeds up production time on the Macintosh by automating certain processing tasks in background mode. This has enabled an additional two to three jobs every day to pass through the pre-press department.

As part of its recent expansion Leading Edge Labels now has an entire site which includes 60,000 square feet of modern factory and office space. The studio works closely with design houses used by its customers, as well as providing design services direct to clients. An increasing number find the benefits of using a studio with repro experience very attractive.

With seven flexo presses, ranging from six to 13 colours in web widths of up to 22 inches, the company is in a good position to



A selection of food labels and packaging converted by Leading Edge Labels



meet the print needs of virtually any flexible packaging or labelling job and much of what the plant produces is shipped to food packers abroad, typically Holland, Spain, Italy and Ireland.

'A lot of the reels we send abroad come back into the UK once they have been used to pack the food,' says Barwick. 'With so much overcapacity in the UK flexo market, printers have to define themselves within a market and prove that they are doing something that others are not. With the capabilities we have here in Gravesend we've been able to seriously attack the gravure market and win work traditionally printed by that process.' ■

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Inks feature

Silicone free Screen inks



Silicone-Free screen inks are a growing trend in the Narrow Web market, and Coates Screen is among the leading developers. The company's **Steven Presutto** outlines the technology and its exciting applications

At Coates Screen, our area of focus is in the screen printing market, and this includes rotary screen applications used in narrow web printing.

From this perspective, one ink trend stands out: Silicone-Free Technology.

This has been an important issue for printers that use screen printing in combination with flexo, letterpress, and offset printing. The primary benefit of this type of technology is enhanced color strength when printing over silicone-free whites. About one in every two printers we talk to have expressed interest in this technology. Before we address the details of silicone-free inks, let's talk about some basic ink technology.

There are two main reasons screen inks contain silicone:

- **Ink Deposit.** With UV screen inks we routinely print ink deposits of seven to 7-15 microns. With ink deposits this high, inks need flow additives to yield a smooth print. Small amounts of silicone-based flow additives have traditionally been the most effective way to accomplish this goal.

- **Screen Mesh.** When inks are transferred through a mesh, air can be entrapped in the ink, resulting in bubbles in the ink film. If the bubbles don't dissipate, they will show up in the cured print as pinholes. Silicone additives are also effective bubble-breakers.

Ever wonder why gloss inks are more susceptible to print imperfections than matte inks? The pigments used to formulate matte inks microscopically protrude through the ink film, mechanically breaking any bubbles. Gloss inks don't get that ►



Rotary screen unit

benefit so we must rely on having to do it through chemistry to solve the problem.

Looking at alternative printing methods

Flexographic, letterpress, and offset inks are not typically formulated with silicone-based additives. These printing methods yield ink deposits of approximately two to three microns. Since they, and because these printing methods do not use a mesh, air entrapment problems don't occur to the same degree. The challenges arise when a printer uses these silicone-free technologies to print over screen inks that contain silicone. The largest hurdle is color strength. Color strength is adversely affected in these applications because silicone-free inks don't readily wet the surface of inks that contain silicone. This basic incompatibility results in colors that are weaker than one would hope to achieve.

It is not unusual for printers to add silicone to UV flexo inks to increase color strength when screen inks are used as a first-down white. Because of the low viscosity of flexo inks, they tend to be most affected by poor wetting over a screen ink. Poor wetting can result in poor intercoat adhesion between flexo and screen inks. Silicone-free screen inks can offer a benefit for intercoat adhesion as well as color strength.

Developing Solutions

Screen ink manufacturers realize how important this issue is to printers, especially when one considers the increase in UV flexo inks being used in narrow web applications. Silicone-free screen ink technologies are now available, eliminating the need for printers to modify inks press-side. Suffice it to say, this was no small challenge for ink companies. Combining this challenge with the ever-present requirement to print faster with increased opacity, screen ink technology has had to reach new levels of performance.

Are there any down sides?

Silicone-free technologies can be more fragile than inks formulated with silicone. That is to say, we need to consider surface tension of substrates. Silicones can help compensate for low surface tensions of substrates – at least as far as printability is concerned. We are more likely to see pinholes if substrate surface tension is low with silicone-free inks. Corona treating is usually a good way to raise surface tension.

Perhaps a second point to consider is compatibility with inks that contain silicone. Typically these technologies are incompatible with silicone. From a printer's perspective, we need to ensure the equipment (screens, squeegees, etc.) is properly cleaned when changing between these technologies. Interestingly, silicone-free inks can be overprinted with inks that contain silicone, but the inks are not compatible in the wet state.

There is little doubt that this new technology offers benefits to combination printers in the narrow web market. While a driving force for this technology change was once limited to flexographic printers, printers using letterpress and offset techniques also may achieve enhanced color strength when printing over silicone-free screen whites.

About Steven Presutto

Steven Presutto is global marketing manager for Coates Screen, St. Charles, Ill., one of the world's largest manufacturers of UV- and solvent-based inks for a wide assortment of graphic, industrial and textile applications. In his 22 years with Coates Screen, Presutto has held the position of chief colorist, technical manager and product manager. In his current position, he is responsible for the North/South American container-decorating market, the narrow web roll label market, the glass market and color-management equipment. ■

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No.141

Inks feature

Optimizing supplier relationships

The relationship between Custom Printed Products, a premium label printer in Bossier City, LA, and ink supplier Arcar Graphics, demonstrates just how a good converter/supplier relationship should work, *reports Natalie Martin.*

'We wanted to grow our film label business, but our supplier's product and service were deteriorating,' says David Groves, quality assurance manager at Custom Printed Products. 'The inks were difficult to run and dried too quickly. Arcar Graphics came in and presented its Phase 70 flexographic ink system which was easy to run and eliminated drying problems. It was a relief to find an ink manufacturer that had a good product and believed in a close, long-term relationship.' Custom Printed Products also used the Phase 70 ink system for paper label applications.

As label films evolved, Custom Printed Products' customers presented more challenging BOPP substrates that required greater adhesion for successful laminations. 'For a while we used a primer to improve Phase 70's performance and it worked fine. But we were running out of ink stations on more complex seven- and eight-color jobs,' explains Groves. In particular, Custom Printed Products wanted to bid on a very important new piece of business for a dairy label application on a BOPP film. The Phase 70 ink system was not strong enough for the new film application.

The converter put Arcar Graphics and other ink manufacturers to the test, requesting new formulations and competitive trials. In August 2002, Arcar sold Custom Printed Products on its new UltraForce water-based ink system. 'We saw good bonding on the first run and we wanted to go forward with them,' says Groves. 'But there were some printability features that needed to be enhanced,' he adds.

Arcar Graphics went back into the lab and promptly returned with a 4-color process formulation and Custom Printed Products landed the new dairy label business. The company ran the job for three days on its Mark Andy 4150, 20-inch press with Harper 800 line 1.7 bcm anilox rollers.

'It ran beautifully,' says Groves. 'The UltraForce ink systems had excellent strength and provided a great bond. We got a nice, clean print. Even smaller, finer dots held their shape. And the color had great intensity.' Custom Printed Product's operators were also impressed. 'It was a brand new ink system, so our operators weren't sure how to handle the UltraForce ink system. But it was practically maintenance free. They just poured it in and ran it,' states Groves.

Custom Printed Products also discovered it used less ink with the UltraForce system. 'We achieved the right color with much less ink,' says Groves. 'This new ink system solved an ink adhesion challenge, helped gain important new business, improved press performance and print quality, enabled increased press speeds and practically eliminated downtime.'

Arcar Graphics is now a division of Flint Ink Packaging North America. When an ink manufacturer is acquired, printers naturally question the consequences. Despite assurances, they wonder if their supplier's product quality will decline or if service will be interrupted. Custom Printed Products, had already been down that path:

'We got burned once before when our ink supplier was bought. It was not an experience we wanted to repeat,' says David Groves. 'Running between 30 and 40 jobs a day, we need a stable ink partner. When Arcar Graphics was acquired by Flint Ink, we were skeptical.'

But Groves' concerns were quickly allayed. 'Throughout the transition and in the two years since, our experience with Arcar Graphics has remained strong. We were impressed with Flint Ink's supportive role,' states Groves. 'Arcar has been very responsive to our needs. We're confident it will continue to help us gain new business and uphold our image as a premium label printer.'

Custom solutions

Custom Printed Products was founded in 1971 under the name Custom Labels Inc. In 1998 owners Robert Waddell and Richard Nicholson wanted to recognize the company's expanded capabilities and product lines and gave the company its new name. Over the years the company grew from a two-color press shop into a multi-million dollar enterprise with 100 employees and a second location in Edinburg, VA.

Today, Custom Printed Products' operations in Bossier City prints polypropylene and polystyrene films and paper, producing PS labels, IML, flexible packaging, pouches, polywraps, tags and coupons. Label applications include food, beverage, dairy, pharmaceutical, personal care and automotive products. The company operates its four Mark Andy presses, five Webtron presses, and its original 1-color CIP Allied Press two shifts-a-day, five days-a-week. Short runs average 5,000 to 100,000 impressions, longer runs are between 100,000 and 1, 000,000 impressions.

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FPPA announces Award winners

The Flexographic Pre-Press Platemakers Association (FPPA) recently presented its annual awards during its March 2-4 meeting held at the La Quinta Resort in Palm Springs, California.

The platemaker recipient of the 2003 Technological Innovator of the Year award is NPP Packaging Graphics Specialists, for its Compressible Photopolymer Printing Plate. The Foto-Flex Printing Plate System was developed by a joint research and development project of NPP Packaging Graphics Specialists and Conversion Technology Graphics. The system is a patent-pending process for inserting a cushion material inside of a liquid photopolymer printing plate.

Cortron Corporation was the supplier recipient of the award for its High Definition Plate from Film Exposure System. The system controls the angle of light to make optimum 30-degree shoulders. The focused light range and light concentration produces high definition plates in less time with virtually no heat buildup.



Cortron Corporation wins the Technological Innovator Award



Trinity Graphic USA wins Excellence in Flexo Prepress Awards



FPPA elects new Board

In addition to the annual Innovator awards, FPPA distributed its Excellence in Flexo Prepress Awards. The winners of the 2003 Awards included: Trinity Graphic USA in the Narrow Web, Tag and Label category and Trinity Graphic, USA in Folding Carton.

The FPPA also introduced its newly elected president and board of directors for 2003; Jack Fulton, Printron Engravers, as president; immediate past president, Laura Wright, City Stamp Works; vice president, Lee Grantham, Mark/Trece, Inc.; treasurer, Bill Ruch, NPP Packaging Graphics Specialists; and secretary, Chris Horton, Southern Graphic Systems. Tom Underwood, OEC Graphics; Greg Platt, GMF Flexo Prepress; David Newberry, United Engravers, Inc.; William Ceperich, The Pitman Company; and Ian Hole, Esko-Graphics are also serving on the 2003 board.

FPPA will hold its next Annual Convention at the Westin Regina Resort, in Puerto Vallarta, Mexico, March 13-16, 2004. ■ **e No.240**

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Improving adhesion on film substrates

Ciba Specialty Chemicals has developed an alternative solution to primers and temporary surface treatments to help UV inks anchor to filmic substrates

UV printing technologies allow high imaging qualities to be achieved without the use of solvents and with very low energy consumption. However, adhesion of UV inks on plastics is sometimes poor, making it necessary to use primers. In these cases additional procedures are required, most of which involve the use of solvents and/or less environmentally compatible chemicals.

The problem is that materials such as plastics, which have no polar functional groups on the surface, have very poor wettability and adhesion properties, making it difficult to apply other functional layers such as inks, adhesives and varnishes.

To enhance polarity on the surface, surface treatments such as flame, corona or plasma can be applied to improve wettability and adhesion. However, treatments such as these are not stable and are rapidly impaired by ageing effects. Furthermore, surface modification is uneven, resulting in variations during printing or coating processes.

Effectively, these processes introduce polar groups to enhance surface energy. The improved adhesion of the functional layers is due to a purely physical interaction or to the formation of weak bonds. For these reasons, adhesion is fairly weak and cannot withstand strong mechanical loads and/or high temperatures.

To tackle these issues, Ciba Specialty Chemicals has developed a patented technology – Prime IT – to ensure maximum adhesion of UV-curable Inks, coatings and adhesives on plastics.

Here's how it works. The polymer surface is first activated by plasma or corona treatment. A reactive photoinitiator is then applied by grafting onto the polymer surface (figure 1).

Thanks to the chemical and physical properties of the photoinitiator, the surface tension of the treated surface is enhanced and wetting improved. Moreover, grafting of the photoinitiator prevents it from migrating into the polymer mass. For this reason the treatment has 'practically unlimited storage stability', according to Ciba, provided exposure to UV light is avoided. The substrates can therefore be stored and subsequently printed without any further treatment.

Another advantage of Prime IT is that it modifies the

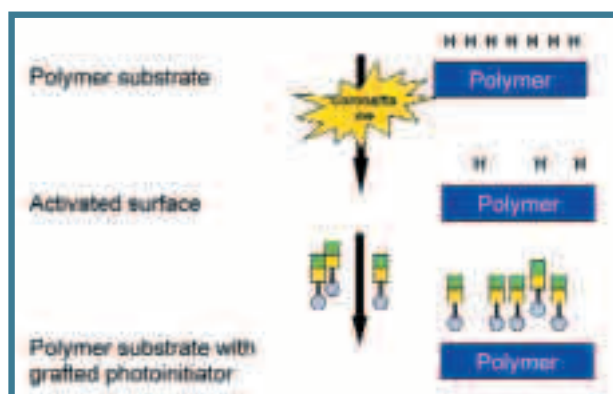


Figure 1

polymer surface only: the polymer structure remains unchanged and the chemical and physical properties of the polymer are therefore not altered. The photoinitiator grafted using Prime IT technology actually reacts during polymerization, forming a chemical bond between ink and polymer surface. In this way satisfactory adhesion can be achieved on a number of critical substrates (figure 2).

Prime IT is suitable for use in printing on film laminates, flexible packaging and smart cards. Ciba says it improves adhesion on all plastic substrates, including OPP, PVC, PET and PE. ■ **e No.242**

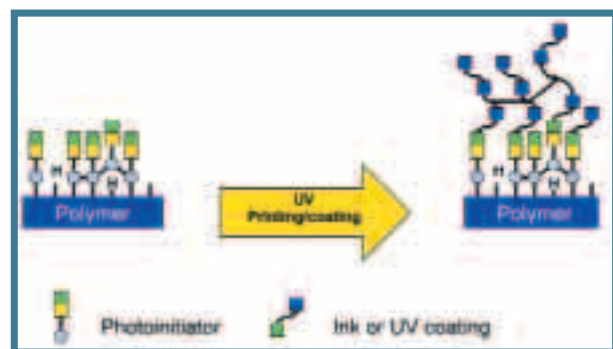


Figure 2

IN A CLASS OF ITS OWN



An economical compact flexo press with expensive big press performance, the Edale Alpha comes in 3, 4 or 5 colour formats with a wide selection of drying and converting options.

Designed for ease of operation and incorporating the latest in flexo technology, the Alpha is ideally suited for short runs that may not be profitable on larger machines.

The perfect introduction to flexo printing or a reliable back-up machine for experienced printers.

Labelling news

Clondalkin adds to US portfolio

The Clondalkin Group has acquired the business and assets of Spiralkote, formerly a division of Peoria-based Fleming Packaging Corporation.

Spiralkote claims to be the largest North American supplier of flexo printed spiral labels for composite canisters and a leading producer of die-cut lids for the food and beverage markets.

Through collaboration with Clondalkin's European packaging operations including Vaassen Flexible Packaging, Spiralkote will introduce to the North American market a wide range of technically sophisticated products currently available to European customers and provide those customers with a local US supply base.

Located in Orlando, Florida, Spiralkote's ISO Certified manufacturing operations include state-of-the-art

flexo printing with capability to print up to 8 colors combined with a modern in-house pre-press department. Finishing operations include slitting, die-cutting, which is performed in an AIB approved environment, combined with an extensive Quality Control function.

Clondalkin is a management-owned international group of companies producing flexible and specialist packaging products that is backed by Candover PLC, a London-based equity group. Following this acquisition the Group has some 40 operating subsidiaries in Ireland, the U.K., Netherlands, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland and the United States – including Connecticut-headquartered Fortune Plastics.

Clondalkin is also parent company of The Boxes Group.

Nashua strikes deal with Bunzl

Nashua Corporation, a manufacturer and marketer of labels, thermal specialty papers and imaging products, has acquired the assets of The Label Company from Bunzl Distribution and signed a multi-year agreement to supply Bunzl with label products.

The Label Company, located in St. Louis, MO, has primarily been a supplier of supermarket, promotional and product identification labels for Bunzl. Financial terms of the cash transaction were not announced.

'This is an excellent addition to our current Label Products business which adds flexibility to our label manufacturing operations and enhances our relationship with Bunzl, a valued and long-standing customer,' said Andrew Albert, Nashua's chairman and chief executive officer. 'The acquisition also provides additional volume to the Company's coating facility and is expected to positively impact our overall business performance.'

Labelexpo now in Russia

Labelexpo, the series of international labels and narrow web-packaging events, has formed a partnership with Etiketka, the Russian LabelShow. The first annual Etiketka Labelexpo Russia will take place in March 2004 at the Sokolniki Culture & Exhibition Centre in Moscow. The partnership was launched at this year's Etiketka in March.

The Labelexpo international portfolio currently includes events in Europe, America, South East Asia and China. 'By extending Labelexpo into Russia, and thereby incorporating another of the world's fastest growing label markets, Labelexpo is further positioned as the only brand developing in both mature and emerging markets,' says Roger Pellow, Labels division md at Tarsus

Group. 'It will attract press manufacturers and materials suppliers to Russia, where the demand for western label technology is very high – last year the Russian label market grew by 30 per cent.'

Etiketka has been running in Sokolniki, Moscow for nine years. It is claimed the biggest show of labels machinery, equipment and materials in Russia and the Baltic States, with over 350 companies exhibiting, including a combination of manufacturers and distributors, and small to medium sized local enterprises.

'Etiketka will continue building on its success in growing the local Russian aspect of the new partnership,' says Pellow.

S+E certified for release liners

Schleipen & Erkens AG (S+E) has received the Forest Stewardship Council's Chain of Custody Certificate for its silicon paper line. Traditionally, this seal of quality has been applied primarily in the furniture industry. Now, it is also to be found on selected paper from the S+E product range. FSC is a global certification system for the forestry and timber industries.

S&E says it is now the only silicon paper producer in Europe using FSC papers for the pressure sensitive industry.

PISEC targets label converters

Following the success of the PISEC (Product & Image Security) conference held last year in Dublin, the 2003 event has been confirmed in Prague, Czech Republic between 20-22 October.

PISEC brings together end users and printers to learn about new initiatives to protect products from threats such as piracy, tampering, diversion, dilution and pilfering. The conference also deals directly with securing sensitive documents and data. Attention is also given to automated product identification such as Radio Frequency ID and smart labels that provide product status data.

Subjects covered will include:

- Security Labelling and Packaging Issues including Tamper Evidence
- Biometrics in document, label and product authentication
- Low and median cost RFID in security document protection and labelling

- Product Protection in supply chain management
- Security inks, coatings and materials for document and brand protection
- e-commerce solutions that include innovative print related products
- Covert coding and encryption for embedding in labels and documents
- Holographic foils and OVD products for authentication and alteration protection
- Taggants and tracers
- Legal and consumer protection
- Why international criminals see the world of piracy and counterfeiting as an opportunity

The organisers have issued a call for papers of a research or educational nature. Further details from [jeremyplimmer @aol.com](mailto:jeremyplimmer@aol.com) or dphillips @tarsus.co.uk.

L&L now in 9 languages

As part of Labels & Labelling's strategy to make information regarding the worldwide labels market more universally available, labelsandlabelling.com is set to become available in nine languages. Already available in English and French, the online version of Labels and Labelling International – the bi-monthly journal for the label industry – will also be translated into German, Italian, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Chinese and Japanese, using exciting new software for online magazine publication that Tarsus Group plc has been developing over the past two years.

Labels and Labelling International, and Labels and Labelling Asia Pacific, distribute to over 100 countries and have a global circulation of over 25,000. They are also sponsors of the global Labelexpo shows.

Raflatac Spanish plant operational

The SICPA Group of Lausanne, Switzerland and Flint Ink Corporation of Ann Arbor, MI, have exchanged key parts of their respective businesses.

SICPA has acquired Flint Ink's worldwide business for security inks on currency and other documents of value, and Flint Ink has acquired SICPA's

worldwide heatset and coldset ink business. The Closing occurred took place on Friday March 14, 2003.

The transaction reinforces both companies' business strengths as leading providers in their different fields: SICPA in the field of security printing and Flint Ink in the field of news and publication

printing inks.

The sale of its heatset and coldset business will also allow SICPA to accelerate its specialisation in packaging inks in partnership with converters, end-users, retailers and industry suppliers.

SICPA says it remains fully committed to its sheetfed publication business, where the company is an established player.



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Press installations



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Nilpeter

European FB support

Nilpeter UK is now responsible for the installation and service support of the US-built FB-Line of modular narrow-web presses in Europe and many other parts of the world.


FB-Line flexo and UV-flexo presses for producing labels and packaging comprise three models: The FB-2500 with a maximum web width of 273 mm (10 3/4 inches); the FB-3300 with a web width of 350 mm (13 3/4 inches) and the FB-4200 with a width of 425 mm (16 3/4 inches).

Nilpeter Inc.'s manufacturing plant in Cincinnati (formerly RotoPress) will continue to be responsible for installations and service support in the USA, Canada, Central and South America, as well as the Caribbean.

Nilpeter Ltd. is currently building up a stockholding of essential FB-Line spare parts at its headquarters near Hull in East Yorkshire to reduce shipping times and speed-up responses to service calls. The company has eight engineers based in the UK, six of which already have in-depth experience and knowledge of the FB-Line. Provision has been made to employ additional service staff to meet any increase in demand. It has already sold four FB-presses in the UK and has had hands-on experience on five other installations.

FB-Line presses were developed jointly by R & D teams in Denmark and in Cincinnati, Ohio. Each model can convert a wide range of paper and filmic substrates at speeds up to 228 m/minute (750 feet/minute). They compliment Nilpeter's existing flexo and flexo/combination presses.

The new service support arrangement also includes the new FBZ-4200, a 420-mm (16 3/4 inches) wide platform press. It includes many of the features of FB-Line models, but additionally converts a wider range of substrates. These range

from 25-micron film to 400-micron cartonboard. 

Aydon Silver

Edale E430



UK label printer Aydon Silver has installed an Edale E430 six colour, full UV, flexo press to add to its Mark Andy and two Comco machines, all fitted with UV systems.

The press has been trialled with a variety of substrates, including 38 micron OPP film. UV systems were supplied by Vti International and trials were carried out at 100metres/minute.

The machine was delivered with a cold foiling unit fitted to the final station and video inspection system. The converting unit utilises heavy duty removable die cassettes, with large diameter support rolls and anvil rolls making it possible to convert up to 600 micron board. The machine's take-off assembly removes finished product from the converting unit and delivers it in shingle form onto the end of the press conveyor.

The rewind, which is independently driven for total tension control, is suitable for 1m diameter rolls.

Mike Edmonds, Aydon Silver's production manager, comments, 'The machine's press-of-a-button quick release facilities on both print and anilox rolls and automatic cassette load and unload help us keep set up to an absolute minimum.'

Part of the brief required the machine to be installed in Aydon's production ►

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New golden opportunities for the M-3300

Nilpeter's gravure unit brings a wealth of new opportunities within easy reach of all Nilpeter M-3300 users. It's the ideal tool for printing metallic effects – such as gold – producing stunning innovative designs. It lets you use gravure for inline printing so you don't need to rely on pre-laminated substrates. And it even lets you achieve a "no-label" look – cost effectively and hassle-free.



Boost production capabilities of the FA-3300

If you use a Nilpeter FA-3300, gravure is the perfect way to expand your production capabilities within flexible packaging. Now you can print solid opaque white colours on both oriented polypropylene reel fed wrap-arounds and shrink sleeves for beverage products. What's more, you can apply the adhesive required for cold sealing products such as chocolate, popsicles and sweet wrappers.

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Press installations

area over a weekend. 'Bearing in mind the size of this six colour 430mm wide web press and the relatively restricted space we had available to accommodate it, we were delighted by the fact we were in production, as planned, on the Monday,' says Edmonds. 'The machine was delivered with two Edale die stations, to which we have subsequently added a further station.'

Edmonds subsequently worked closely with Edale to increase the versatility of the press by adding cold foiling and scissor slitting units designed and built by the press manufacturer.

● *Ainsworth Print and Design, of Stockport in Greater Manchester in the UK, has installed an Edale Alpha flexo press. With a schedule which can include printing wide mono or two-colour labels for the chemical industry in the same shift as high quality four colour process work, production manager Steve Perry says he was looking for versatility and ease of operation.*

e No.220

The Label Makers TLMI award winners



The Label Makers is to expand its Bradford, UK operation by moving into a £400,000 office and studio extension. The company recently won four first places at TLMI's 24th Annual International Print Awards, demonstrating a continued commitment to rotary offset technology.

Three of the four winning labels were printed on the company's Gallus T 250, which has gained a lot of high quality wine label work printed on textured substrates. One of this year's designs

required fine register to be held on screen-printed varnish to give the label a tactile effect. Another of the Company's first place awards went to a label produced for Edinburgh Crystal, which combined close register with heavy embossing.

The Gallus T 250 is highly specified. In addition to a rotary screen head, six offset units and a second movable screen head, the line includes varnishing, hot foil stamping, separate embossing, flat bed die cutting, and two-spindle rewind with a storage loop for non stop reel changes. The press line is servo driven, offering motorised set up and a modem link with the Gallus' Swiss factory in St Gallen.

The Gallus is a new challenge for The Label Makers recently appointed production director, John O'Brien, who brings a wealth of printing expertise from a pharmaceutical label background. 'With its intermittent drive system, which obviates the requirement for expensive format change tooling, the Gallus T 250 is ideally suited to runs up to around 50,000 labels,' comments O'Brien. 'Flat bed embossing and hot foil units also offer low tooling costs – the result being that it prints the best quality we produce here.'

e No.221

TW Parker

Nilpeter FA-3300

T W Parker Ltd. of Liverpool has installed two eight-unit Nilpeter FA-3300 UV-flexo presses. They join an existing FA-3300 installed in May 2001. The 52-year-old company specialises in high-quality self-adhesive labels for the food and dairy industries. In recent years it has developed a thriving business producing various items of flexible packaging in short-to medium runs for food products sold by large multiples.

Two years ago the company signed a technical partnership with VAW, a high-volume packaging converter with gravure and flexo plants throughout Germany. Parker is contracted to handle

VAW's short-run jobs required with quick lead times. The company uses photopolymer plates made with computer-to-flexo plate technology for the highest reproducible quality. 'The quality of UV-flexo printing has improved significantly in recent years, aided by improved inks, plates and anilox rolls. Our experience with the first FA-3300 has enabled us to grow in the highly competitive and demanding flexible packaging sector', said director Toby Parker. He added that the main factory, located in Aintree, was recently expanded to its full capacity of around 2,500 sq/metres, but more space was needed. It has since opened a new factory a few kilometres away with 930 sq/metres of space to house finishing equipment. Current turnover is £7 million-plus and there are 80 employees.

Parker's two new Nilpeter FA-3300 presses have a web width of 330 mm and a top rated speed of 175 m/minute. Both were specified with inter deck UV-curing modules and the press will have water-cooled chill drums fitted to each print unit. This arrangement allows the fast conversion of thin-gauge polyethylene and PVC packaging films, as well as paper or filmic self-adhesive laminates. An open modular design facilitates fast changeovers and gives easy operation, while the web tensioning system and helical gearing are designed to prevent gear marking.

e No.222



Southern United RP250/3 hot foil unit





Nameplate and label production specialist Southern United in East Sussex, UK, has installed an RP250/3 hot foil machine from Rapid Machinery, via its UK agent Magnum Materials and ▶



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Technology

Lakeside Engineering. With traditional UK machinery manufacturing in decline the consequent need for steel, aluminium and brass nameplates has slowly reduced. Southern United decided that hot foil was key to breaking into future markets. **e No.223**

Ineta S.A. Rotatek Newflex 250

The Cerdanyola del Vallès (Barcelona-Spain) based self-adhesive label manufacturer Ineta, S.A. has purchased a Rotatek Newflex 250 flexo press. With the new machine the Catalonian company – which specializes in stationary and office supplies – will be able to increase productivity in blank label production. The Newflex has a maximum web width of 270 mm and has been built to meet the specific production needs of Ineta, S.A. The press is equipped with two die cutting units with matrix rewind, a length cut and a cross cut cylinder, and a collection table on the outfeed side to receive the finished label sheets. Thanks to the GP Tinter module Ineta can dye the whole sheet or, if required, print shapes like, for example, a logotype. **e No.224**

Camis Irisleeve Sleeve change machine

Camis Irisleeve, claimed 'an operator intuitive gearless sleeve change machine', is now being targeted at the new generation of narrow/mid-web presses using plate sleeves, including narrow web CI and in-line machines.

The smaller Irisleeve system is designed for sleeves up to 600mm wide and from 240mm in repeat. The machine is designed to mount single width and multiple plates quickly, to mount the tape without recourse to mechanical assistance and to accurately change sleeves.

The user can, by aligning the plate manually against the sleeve, or by

working from the side or centre of the sleeve, while using the digital indicators to advise of the exact camera position.

The plate-mounting table allows full width plates to be positioned without interference from the adhesive. The table also features a small 'cut flap' that ensures that the tape is cut perpendicular to the sleeve.

The Irisleeve is a two-camera system and sleeve change can generally be achieved in 20 seconds. A dividing head ensures that split repeats are accurately positioned around the sleeve. Carrier and support sleeves can be accommodated on the Irisleeve. **e No.225**

Tri-Tronics Label sensor



Tri-Tronics has introduced a photoelectric sensor designed specifically to sense labels on a roll. The LABEL-EYE is a special purpose gap or slot sensor that is optimized to sense adhesive labels adhering to a roll of backing paper and can be used for rotary die cutting and converting, unwinder/rewinding, label counting, edge guiding, splice detection as well as label hot-printing and high-speed dispensing.

Since the LABEL-EYE is an automatic one-touch sensor, not the conventional 'teach mode' sensor, set-up is simple. Position the gap between the labels directly under the sensors sight-guide and push the Autoset button. The sensor does the rest, adjusting itself to the perfect setting.

The web of labels is directed from a 'roll' across a peeler plate and around a sharp edge. As the web passes around the sharp edge of the peeler plate, the adhesive label dislodges from the backing material. The function of the LABEL-EYE is to look through the backing paper to detect the 'gap' between the labels and signal the labeling machine to stop the dispensing mechanism before the label is completely dislodged from the backing material. With the next 'up' label protruding off the end of the peeler plate, it is now perfectly positioned to be applied to the next product as it passes by on a conveyor. The Label Eye operates on 10 to 30 VDC and is pulse-modulated to prevent problems from ambient light. **e No.226**

Rad Cure Cold foil adhesives

Rad Cure has launched two component adhesives for cold foil applications, designed as a lower cost alternative to hot stamping. The adhesives can be applied over wax free inks, including water based, on either film stocks or good holdout paper stocks. The adhesive hardens and post cures over a 12 to 24 hour period. **e No.227**

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Time is Money: The New Gallus RCS 330

Maximum efficiency, total flexibility, and top quality. The new Gallus RCS 330 combines all three with our ongoing determination to satisfy market trends. Smaller print runs and more frequent repeat orders demand shorter set up times, greater automation and minimum waste. Competition pressure demands extremely high productivity, while the call for ever more individualisation in printing and finishing processes can be satisfied only by flexible, modular systems. The Gallus RCS 330 meets all these requirements in a single system. It represents a quantum leap forward in labelprinting technology.



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Ritrama

Slit coil service

Ritrama (UK) Ltd has added self-adhesive polypropylene materials to its stocked range of pre-cut coils as part of its ongoing commitment to further enhance service levels.

Ritrama Ready Roll, as the service is known, operates from the company's distribution centre in Manchester and ensures the most popular paper and filmic materials from the company's worldwide production plants are held in stock in a variety of different coil widths and lengths. Any full pallet order placed before 4.00 pm will be shipped to any UK destination the following day, says the company.

The Ritrama Group of Companies specializes in the production of self-adhesive materials for a wide range of applications, including roll label conversions, point of sale and display, digital and screen printing and sign making. 

Daetwyler


Flexo CTP debut

MDC Max Daetwyler AG, Bleienbach/CH can now offer a variety of products for flexo plate preparation (Computer-to-Plate) after signing an OEM agreement with Flexo Laser GmbH.

In addition to the Schepers-MDC Digilas system, with an imaging width of more than 1,600 mm for large formats, the company can now offer the new Digilas E, with an imaging width of 762 mm, 1,270 mm and 1,650 mm.

Beam splitting technology allows 1, 2, 4, or 8 beam systems with imaging from 0.8 to 5 m²/h. MDC says the compact, modular design of the machine makes upgrading to future technologies – for example direct gravure – 'very easy'.

The semi-automatic QuickSleeve system has been designed for sleeve imaging, with tool-less sleeve changing

in one minute. To change between plates and sleeves or vice-versa, requires approximately 10 minutes with the hybrid version. The Digilas E is driven by PixFlow software for operation in an automatic workflow, while the MultiPlate function allows optimum usage of plate material. 

Dry pak


Temperature Indicators

Dry Pak Industries has developed a range of reversible temperature-indicating labels designed to be placed in refrigerated locations. Called Label Safe, the program is designed for businesses where temperature control of perishable foods is crucial to food safety.

As part of the Label Safe program, Dry Pak also offers on-site HACCP audits of restaurant and other food storage facilities and foodservice distributor practices, and then recommends actions that assure foodservice HACCP compliance by eliminating temperature abuse problems; such audits can help maintain "A" ratings by health department inspectors.

Dry Pak's labels employ liquid crystal ink technology which, when encapsulated in an indicating label, can quickly indicate current temperature conditions to an accuracy of plus-or-minus one degree Fahrenheit. The current temperature displays as a bright green bar on a black background of the label. These low cost indicating labels are manufactured on a flexible material with magnetic or sticky backings and can be placed easily inside deli cases, walk-in coolers, freezers and near cold-stored foods in supermarket displays.

The labels are guaranteed to last one year from date of manufacture, and are FDA approved for use near food products.

To provide information on food storage temperatures all through the distribution system, Dry Pak also 



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e No.101


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e No.118

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e No.126

Technology

supplies irreversible labels that indicate if a critical temperature threshold has been violated. **e No.230**

ExxonMobil Static-free label films



ExxonMobil Chemical Films has introduced a new range of Label-Lyte Lithor Anti-Static Label films. The new film range comprises the following:

- 70 μ LTR 742 (formerly LX002) White opaque matt, two-side coated anti-static film printable via most technologies including offset, UV, gravure and flexo.
- 65 μ LTR741 (formerly LX001) White opaque glossy multi-layer, one side anti-static, one side corona treated film, suitable for rotary printing applications.
- 50 μ LTR702 (formerly XA002) Transparent one-side modified acrylic (humidity and alcohol resistant), one side anti-static coated. Printable in UV offset (not traditional), gravure and flexo.
- 47 μ LTR247 (formerly LL247 supplied with Label-Mate) Super-white opaque with two-side anti-static lacquer.

'Well established cut & stack technology and the abundance of low cost

machines make the use of Lithor anti-static films highly attractive, while varied printing possibilities including high quality offset and short-run printing mean more potential for flexibility and creativity in label design,' says Tarquin Crouch, product manager for ExxonMobil Chemical Films in Luxembourg. **e No.231**

Anderson & Vreeland Water wash plate

A new water-wash plate designed for dry offset and letterpress features an aluminum-based ablative layer that washes out in plain tap water to simplify plate processing. Offers ink acceptance and transfer, sharp halftone resolution up to 150 line screens and long press life. Available in standard sizes up to 30" x 40", with special sizes available upon request, in thicknesses up to .080".

● Anderson & Vreeland has been appointed distributor of Matan digital printers. The thermal transfer multi-color printers are designed for a wide range of applications, including labels and decals. **e No.232**

Spinnaker Tough VIP films

Two new Kimdura brand products have been added to the Spinnaker Coating Roll Products line. Now available are Kimdura UV (Ultra-Violet resistant) and Kimdura MP (Multi-Purpose). Kimdura UV is a premium, coated film with UV resistance of 18-24 months. This product is slower to degrade in sunlight and other tough environmental conditions compared to other polyolefins. Features include a smudgeproof top coating, 97 per cent opacity, compatibility with thermal transfer, flexo, offset, screen, letterpress, rotogravure, dot matrix, and Indigo printing methods, and is water and chemical resistant. This film is ideal for all-weather labels and demanding

applications. Kimdura MP is a smudge-proof coated film with excellent optical properties, reliable physical attributes including high MD/CD tear, MD tensile, and Z directional tensile, chemical and moisture resistance, and excellent thermal transfer printing capabilities, says the manufacturer. Both products have been thoroughly evaluated for thermal transfer printing and have received excellent ratings from IIMAK, a leading supplier of thermal transfer ribbons. **e No.232**

CPFilms Optically clear liners

CPFilms has added an optically clear, thin gauge polyester release liner to its Clearsil release film product line. This liner offers a total haze of less than 2 per cent, and is available on 1, 1.5 and 2 mil PET with easy, tight or differential silicone release coatings. Produced in a clean room where there is no dust or fiber contamination from paper liners, this liner is intended for use in applications requiring clear, clean liners.

The Clearsil product line consists of film-based release liners with chemistries including thermally-cured tin and UV-cured silicones, as well as S10 fluorosilicone release. **e No.233**

Loparex Internet liner search

Launches an Internet-based search tool that assists customers in choosing an appropriate release liner for their particular end use application or processing condition. By answering a series of questions relating to temperature, color and adhesives, the Product Selector provides recommendations on release liner products that meet the selected criteria. Sessions can be saved for future reference. By registering and setting up a profile, the visitor has on-line access to data sheets that can be downloaded and printed. www.loparex.com **e No.234**

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 No.156

Technology

Raflatac

HP digital substrates

Raflatac has introduced a range of roll-to-roll digital label printing substrates targeted at the HP Indigo Press ws2000 and HP Indigo Press ws4000 users. Good toner anchorage is critical when working with HP Indigo's digital offset printing system, and Raflatac's range of digital labelstock products are formulated with a proprietary topcoating to ensure extended shelf life.  **No.235**

Enercon

Low friction roll



Continued development in films has put the pressure on many converters to handle thinner and more lightweight films. These films are more difficult to handle than their thicker predecessors and can easily wrinkle and pucker throughout the line. If the web is not properly handled the problem intensifies at the corona treater. Material handling in and out of the corona treater is critical. Too much tension and the web breaks. Too little tension and the film will wrinkle or pucker, uneven treatment will result and the surface treatment process will amplify the wrinkling and puckering issues. To help alleviate this problem Enercon has developed the ELF- Enercon low friction roll. The ELF's light-weight design significantly reduces momentum and inertia. The roll turns more freely than conventional rolls, which adds to production stability, especially during

starts and stop. The ELF is available for new treating stations and in many cases can be retrofitted onto existing stations in the field.  **No.236**


Picon

Funding help for Expo

Trade Partners UK (part of British Trade International) has confirmed its award to Picon of up to £120,000 in support of exhibitors attending LabelExpo in Brussels this September. The Support for Exhibitions and Seminars Abroad (SESA) funding will be available to both Picon members and non-members.

This marks the third consecutive SESA grant Picon has secured for LabelExpo. The association attracted significant funding for LabelExpo 2001 in Brussels with assistance from the British Embassy and led a significant group to Brussels in 2001 and LabelExpo, Singapore in 2002.

Says John Brazier, chief executive of Picon: 'The labelling sector is very important to Picon and its members and we're delighted to be able to offer financial support for LabelExpo for the third year running.


Eligible companies attending LabelExpo in September 2003 as part of the Picon overseas group will receive a refund of 60 per cent on the costs of space and construction up to a maximum of £2,300. For further details, contact Helen Heaphy on 01483 412 000.  **No.237**

GRE

Desktop VIP system


GRE has expanded its offering into the desktop digital label printing market, distributing the VP2020 inkjet printing system along with its own in-line converting system. The VP2020 is powered by a Hewlett Packard inkjet engine.

The GRE Digital Converter solution is optimised for short run, fast turn-around work. It consists of an unwind, rewind, Digidigital die cutting system, lamination and sheeting station, all in a compact unit. GRE can also integrate other converting functions into the Label Converter on customer request.

● *Lakeside Engineering and GRE Engineering are launching on 20-21 June the VP2020 and the GRE in-line Digital Converting Line in Europe. Digital labels will be printed and converted live and on demand at the demonstration. The venue is the Scotch Corner Hotel just off the A1 near Darlington, England. For more details contact Keith Robson on sales@lak-eng.com*  **No.237**

Arpeco

Web carton seminar

Arpeco will host a technical seminar on production of folding cartons on narrow web flexo presses. The seminar will examine alternatives to traditional folding carton production. Scheduled for May 28, 2003. Contact: + 44 (0) 1925 754172.  **No.238**

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Albert Groen

Avery Dennison
Director, Specialty Product
Line Team, Fasson Roll
North America.

Groen will be responsible
for creating custom solu-
tions for customers.

Brian Verkuilen

Contract Converting LLC.
Sales representative



Verkuilen will develop
national accounts and new
products for the company's
Roll Express program,
offering 24-hour slit-to-
order tag and label
materials.

SATO America, Inc.

Two additions: John
Hutchens as key account
manager and Andrew
Wright as western regional
sales manager.

Dennis Carew

Enercon
Sales manager
Carew will support
Enercon's Canadian sales
representative network.

Magnus Mighall

Mark Andy UK Ltd
Northern Area Sales
Manager

He will be responsible for
the narrow web inline flexo
systems for label, carton
and flexible packaging
applications.

MaryEllen Goodwin

Harper Corporation
Marketing manager
Goodwin joined Harper in
1986. She assumes respon-
sibility for all international
marketing.

Spinnaker Coating, LLC,

Announces the promotion
of Stuart Postle to director,



Stuart Postle



Sharon Malone

Coating Operations and
Sharon Malone to director,
Materials and Supply
Management and the addi-
tion of newcomers James
L. Severs as vice president,
Human Resources, Aelisa
Yanko, process engineer,
James Slavens as field



James Slavens



David Montgomery

sales representative for the
MidAtlantic region, David
Montgomery as field sales
representative for the
Great Lakes region and
Larry Schnieders as
manager, Product
Development.

Chromas/Aquaflex

Additions: Dave Paularena
as US West Coast regional
sales manager and John
Estefan who will manage
Canadian sales from
Ontario westward.

Ross Feehrer

Plymouth Printing
Director of operations
His experience is in offset
sheet fed and web. He has
also established and
managed digital prepress
operations and diverse
finishing operations.

Maxcess International

Has added two factory-
trained sales engineers
within the North American
territory to its local sales



Jay Kopetka

force. Jay Kopetka will
service customers in
Oregon, Washington,
Idaho, Montana, Alberta
and British Columbia while
Oliver Kemenczky will be



Oliver Kemenczky

the local representative for
all customers in New
Jersey, Long Island and the
boroughs of New York City.



Sean Craig

Sean Craig has also
joined Tidland Corporation
as product manager. Craig
will head the product lines
of core shafts, chucks,
safety chucks and all other
winding accessories.

William J. Malooly

elected to PCMC Board of
Directors.

Paper Converting Machine
Company of Green Bay,
Wisconsin announces the
election of William J.
Malooly to its Board of
Directors. Malooly's elec-
tion fills the vacancy on the
Board created by the
retirement of James C.
Christoph.

Seal-It as leading L.I Company

For the second year in a row, Seal-It was named to Newsday's list of 100 Top Private Companies based on Long Island.

Driscoll Label Company takes Gold, Silver and Bronze

The Foil Stamping and Embossing Association (FSEA) awarded all honors to Driscoll Label Company's entries in the Rotary Cold Foil category at its 7th Annual Convention, Wyndham Hotel, New Orleans. Using its StarBrite Cold Foil Transfer process-developed in-house in 1992, Driscoll's entries took the Gold, Silver and Bronze awards. Bob Biava, president of Driscoll Label Company says, 'The use of cold foil transfer affords packagers of products a less expensive opportunity to gain brand recognition and shell appeal on shorter runs. Customers like the opportunity to vary foil design on different size labels and SKU's within the product line for only the cost of a flexo plate.'

Labelsco net nine Top Awards

With over 600 entries, Labelsco collected nine awards in the 2003 European Flexographic Association ceremony held at the NEC Metropole on 5th March 2003. Two Golds, one in the "Labels – Film Process Printed" category, for its Tesco Italiano Carbonara Sauce label and the other for Clearasil Total Control labels in the "Labels – Paper Line Printed" category. Other awards included two Silver for Crest Rejuvenating Effects label and Miracle Grow Shake and Feed. Also collected were four Bronze and one "highly commended".

75th Year Anniversary

Plymouth Printing Co. Inc., a pharmaceutical printing company based in Cranford, New Jersey, is celebrating both the company's 75th year and the 5th Anniversary of its manufacturing plant in Winston-Salem, NC. Plymouth President H.D. Auerbach remarked how proud Plymouth Printing is of this accomplishment.

Paper Supplier for Ohio Stamp

Spinnaker Coating, LLC is the sole supplier of PS paper for the new commemorative Ohio Statehood Stamp released to the public at a recent Bicentennial celebration in Chillicothe on March 1, the day in 1803 that Ohio became the 17th state to join the Union. The first-class Ohio stamp is a photograph of a peaceful farmland setting in Washington County, north of Marietta. The Postal Service plans to print approximately 50 million of the stamps.



DIARY DATES

23 April, 2003, USA Web Seminar

Its key focus will be how counterfeiting, piracy and diversion crime affect brand value and what companies can do to protect themselves. The seminar will address how counterfeiting, piracy and diversion crime affect brand value for companies of all sizes, most notably multinational companies and its global markets. This seminar is targeted to individuals responsible for brand management, marketing, legal, quality assurance, packaging, security and executive management functions.

Registration is available at www.appletonideas.com/security423.

14 May, 2003, Cincinnati, Ohio Comco Pre-made Pouch & Flexible Packaging seminar

Glenroy, a leader in narrow web film and film label substrates, is co-sponsoring the event with key educational topics covered by their best technical and market advisors. Designed to be an intense day of market education and technical demonstration, the one-day event features: Pouch Market Overview – Trends and Opportunities, Pre Made Pouches, Technology of Pouch

Making and Pouch Filling, Ink Technology on Film Substrates – UV vs. Water-based, Flexo Economics – Maximizing Your Return on Investment – 3MR Consulting, An Expanded Look at Other Flexible and Film Container Decorating Markets. A special presentation will look at the recent conference held in Melbourne, Australia.

The goal is to give the converter and end user a full understanding of the valuable Pouch market segment, the printing and converting technologies that support it, and all of the other necessary components that support the market.

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

28 May, 2003, West Midlands, UK Arpeco technical seminar

This seminar will explore the growing trend in the production of folding cartons on narrow web flexographic presses. Examining alternatives to traditional folding carton production, compare printing and die cutting methods, Arpeco will showcase its Injector System for inline or offline cutting and creasing.

For further info. call Fred E. Zinnbauer on + 44 (0) 1925 754172.

Appointments

Jeff Wroblewski,
H.B. Fuller



Formerly the North American sales and marketing manager for H.B. Fuller Global Coatings Division, Wroblewski will lead Fuller's solutions alliance with CODACO. Under an agreement signed with CODACO, H.B. Fuller will market bonding solutions using CODACO's new Radio Frequency (RF) bonding systems.

Steve Whitham

DuPont Imaging Technologies, UK
Technical sales representative, North East England for Packaging Graphics
Whitham joins the company with knowledge of digital workflow and has previously worked in a similar role for BASF. His experience includes eleven years of technical, sales and digital workflow experience in the packaging sector of the printing industry.

Whitham's responsibility will be to focus on the new Cyrel Uptime programme.

Kazem Samandari

Scitex Digital Printing
Vice president of Global

Marketing and Product Management

A newly created position for the company, Samandari will have worldwide responsibility for marketing, product management and sales support activities.

Geoffrey Symanek

RDP Marathon Inc.,
Southern region sales manager



Located in Florida, Symanek will be promoting

RDP's variable size perfecting and non-perfecting web presses to printers based in the southern U.S.

Margie Harper Kluttz

Harper Corporation
Executive vice president



Kluttz has 32 years with the company in various management positions. She is now responsible for all divisions and phases of the business.

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Designer labels

VIN labels bring big auto savings

A UK-based printer and label systems specialist has won contracts to supply track-side label printing systems for vehicle VIN plates across Europe, bringing huge savings to manufacturers. GSM Printer and Label Systems has supplied systems for VIN plates, visible VIN and compliance plates to automotive manufacturers in the UK, Germany, Spain, Italy and Belgium.

General manager Martin Cameron said: 'Our system is the only real alternative to industrial laser marking equipment and is a fraction of the size and just six per cent of the price. It can be used in any industrial manufacturing plant where bar code labels or labels with customised information are needed, for example where product traceability is an issue.'

The VIN plate systems use two thermal transfer printers in specially designed industrial enclosures. These are linked to a dedicated industrial workstation connected to the customer's manufacturing system. The workstation runs GSM Printer and Label Systems software which interrogates the manufacturing system for the relevant information and ensures the right label is produced at the right time for the right car. The printer dispenses the label for the operator.

The special small footprint industrial enclosures for the VIN plate systems, which are crash tested against forklift trucks, were made by sister company GSM Valtech based in Wetherby, West Yorkshire.

Martin Cameron said: 'Our system costs around £15,000, compared to £250,000 for an industrial laser marking system, and a label is about 25 per cent of the price of an embossed aluminium plate and much faster to apply, reducing line-side time. We did a great deal of work on determining the correct combi-

nation of label and ribbon to use to ensure that the VIN plates will pass the most stringent "under bonnet" tests, for example for resistance to heat and brake fluid. We were also able to install with no downtime on the line.'

The tamper-evident labels also conform to the automotive industry's requirements for Thatcham security, another benefit over an aluminium plate which can potentially be removed. The systems are supported by GSM Printer and Label Systems across Europe and the company also offers a multilingual helpline.

GSM Printer and Label Systems specialises in providing label printing, bar coding and data capture solutions to a wide range of industries. The GSM Group is one of Europe's largest manufacturers of printed labels and nameplates in metal and plastics and has manufacturing sites in Wales, Oxford and Yorkshire. The Group holds tier one vendor codes for most of the major automotive manufacturers in Europe. **e No.215**

Aerosol sleeve first for lubricant

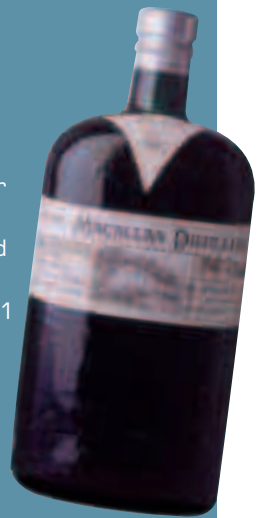
The shelf impact, flexibility and cost effectiveness of sleeves compared with pre-printed cans has led automotive chemicals and cleaners manufacturer Wynn's to adopt full body sleeves converted by ITW company Decorative Sleeves. They are printed 8-colour flexo. 'The sleeves' combination of bold colours and an excellent finish has ensured a quality image,' comments Howard Lloyd, Wynn's general manager. **e No.216**



Classic malt

Single Malt Whisky distiller The Macallan have replicated the taste and look of an 1861 brand. The labels were converted by Labelgraphics, Glasgow, using a wood-free writing quality Fasson

Vellum Extra paper labelstock to achieve an untreated, 'antiquated' look. A high initial tack and good adhesion were required from the acrylic-based S660 adhesive to cope with the irregular surface of the glass bottle - which mimicked the bubbles and blisters typical of 19th Century glass blowing - and the complex shape of the neck label applied over a complex curve. 6-colour flexo printed on a 9-unit Gallus. **e No.217**



Harlands Knows How in hair care

Harlands has been chosen to handle Hampshire Cosmetics' 'Know How' hair care range.

Labels were produced for twelve different products and included both silkscreen and peel and read labels.

Colette Barrie, Hampshire Cosmetics, commented; 'The successful launch of a new range is dependant upon positive, proactive packaging supplier partnerships. We chose Harlands as our label partner because we knew we could rely on them to satisfy our requirements to produce a high quality label.' **e No.218**



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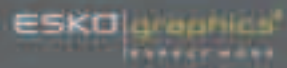
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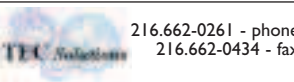
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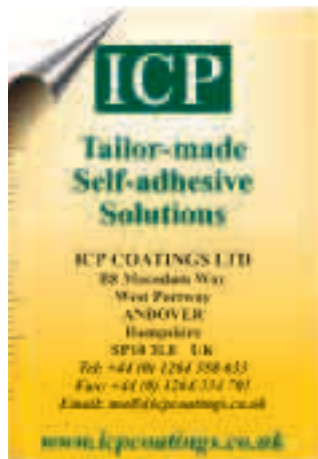
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