Labels & Labeling
The wider world of narrow web
Labelexpo special edition
Aug/Sep 2004
Volume 26 Issue 4

Labelexpo

The latest innovations in narrow web technologies at Labelexpo Americas

Analysis

Electronics labeling makes intense demands on leading edge convertors

Case study

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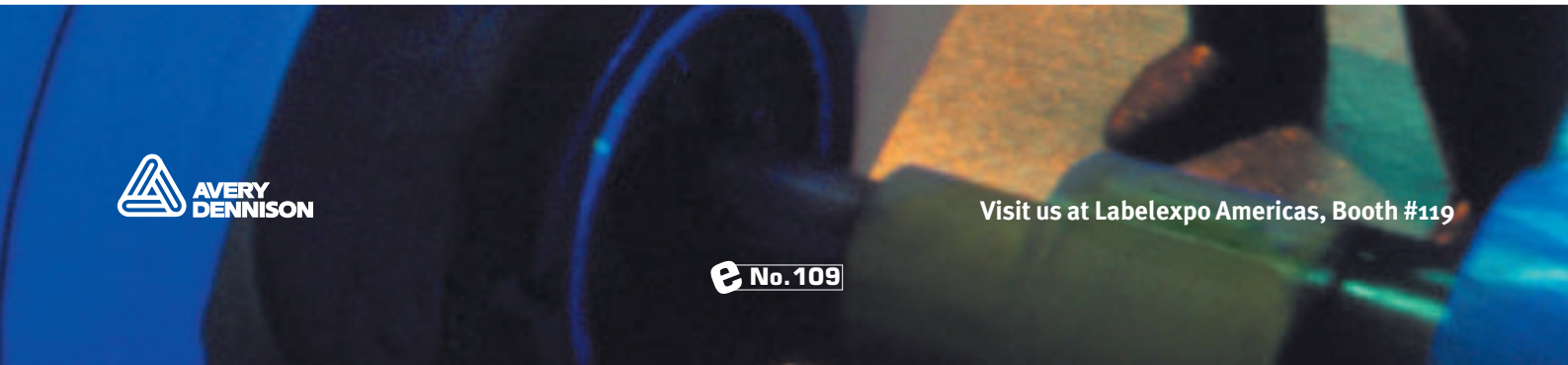

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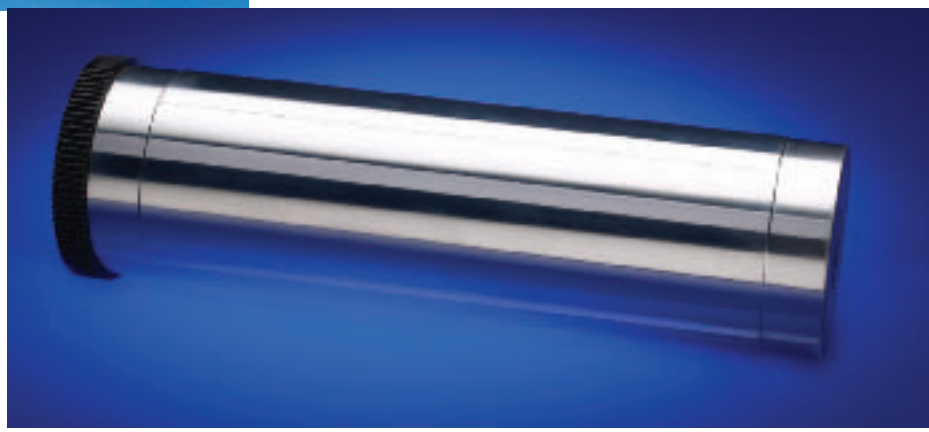

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Leader

The labels industry today is primarily one based on craft skills. But if we are to survive in the longer term against ruthless competition, globalisation and consolidation at both ends of the supply chain, we must undergo the transition from craft to industrial production.

Labelexpo Americas in September will provide a showcase for automated production in the labels industry. At the moment, all the elements are present, but have yet to be fused into a comprehensive automated workflow.

The digitisation of data and the ability to save and restore a wide range of production information is seeing the press transformed from a craft tool into an industrial manufacturing system with minimised human intervention. More extensive use of servo drives will allow us to set the press up just like a machine tool from stored data on repeat jobs, and will allow us to get close to register and color on new jobs by predicting the press settings necessary and making the adjustments automatically.

But press automation is just one aspect of the digital workflow revolution. The new generation of JDF-enabled management information systems will link the press-as-machine-tool to the rest of the converter' workflow, both upstream towards the end user, and downstream to suppliers, as well as meshing together all the operations within each plant from estimating to planning and stock control.

"Labelexpo Americas in September will provide a showcase for automated production in the labels industry"

Orders or estimates taken on the road can 'knock on' a series of cascading processes including searches of the die database and automatic ordering of new dies where necessary using data already contained in the pre-press system. Similarly with inks and materials. MIS systems based around JDF will give the possibility of creating 'just-in-sequence' production flows which allow short run jobs to be fitted into optimised production sequences.

New communication protocols like CIP4/JDF will not only facilitate a two-way flow of data to and from the press, but the same information will set up the parameters at the rewind/inspection end of the workflow. There are some very exciting automated inspection systems to be seen at Labelexpo which take their master templates from the actual job file rather than from – or as well as from – from a 'camera master'.

These technologies, properly integrated, will allow converters to leap forward in terms of productivity, of customer service and ultimately profitability.

Andy Thomas
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Staying ahead of the game –

The label converter guide to a successful future

With Labelexpo Americas approaching from September 13 – 16, **Mike Fairley** examines the requirements for success for today's label convertor

With the North American economy now rather more positive than in the recent past, the label industry can perhaps begin to consider how best it should be investing in new added-value technology, in innovative product solutions and in extending relationships with customers. Label buyers are certainly looking for all of these things, but do label converters really meet their needs?

Brand managers, retail groups and consumer products companies certainly all want value for money from their suppliers – and that includes their label suppliers. The packaging and label is usually what sells the product to the consumer at the end of the day and this must give maximum impact within ever tighter marketing budgets – and be delivered when required. The label producer must therefore be a key partner in helping them to achieve these requirements – but not all are successful.

So what do label buyers, brand managers and marketers want from their label suppliers? Proactively working together to cut costs and be a more efficient producer is one requirement; providing a trouble-shooting service is another; advising on the latest materials and technology solutions is also important. Then there is the whole issue of supply chain management, inventory control and managed delivery of labels. Indeed the list could go on: more design input, remote proofing, job file archiving, total quality management.

Yet, as the recent TLMI North American label study shows, only just over 60 per cent of end-users see their label suppliers as

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being true partners that meet their needs. Other label converters are slow to react to problems, are not as efficient as they should be, do not work to the highest tolerances or are not knowledgeable enough about other labeling technologies and solutions – from sleeving to RFID.

Perhaps not unsurprisingly in the recent economic climate, some end-users have looked to solve their cost and supply issues through reverse auctions where suppliers bid against each other to push prices down. While undoubtedly reducing price, this process does little to build the long-term supplier partnerships that users desire. And how far can prices be depressed before they start to destroy the label industry?

The successful label converters today are the proactive ones. They implement the latest management techniques to control costs (statistical process control), improve quality (total quality management or Six Sigma), manage waste or organize their business systems (MIS). They have the technology that allows customers' to access their computer files, receive electronic 'soft proofs' or communicate electronically at all stages of job formatting and production.

As for keeping up-to-date with the latest label materials, technology, application methods and labeling solutions, the label converter now has more options than ever before. Technical features in 'Labels & Labeling', as well as news in association and industry newsletters and publications now provide ongoing information on almost every element of the changing world of labels.

Handbooks on Test Methods, technical manuals and books complement these sources.

In addition, Labelexpo Americas in September, provides the biggest ever US showcase for label materials, label printing technology, label processes, new products and solutions. Which together with the comprehensive conference program this should enable every label converter to rapidly position himself at the forefront of change, and be in a position to talk knowledgeably with almost any customer.

> "Other materials developments that need to be followed for the future include the whole area of nano-technology that is being rapidly developed to provide nano-coatings, nano-taggants and nano-codes on labels"

So what are some of the new things that are exciting end-users that converters should be keeping up-to-date with through magazines and the Labelexpo shows?

Undoubtedly Radio Frequency Identification technology (RFID) is at the forefront of the major brand owner and retail group thinking. Many, such as Wal-Mart, are now moving beyond trials to implementation of RFID/Smart Label technology in their supply chains. Eventually this is likely to come down to the use of Smart Labels in many areas of unit packaging – particularly for the more higher-value products where diversion, theft and counterfeiting are most likely.

RFID technology does not require line of sight for reading data, as bar codes do, and will start to replace bar coded labels in the future. How many label converters have assessed the

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"Installations of digital label presses in the past 18 months is already half as many as in the first seven years of the technology coming to the market"

implications of such changes for their business? Or evaluated the routes to supplying Smart Labels to their customers? New developments that should be reviewed include printable antenna (being development by companies such as Flint Ink) and roll-label materials incorporating RFID chips (Avery Dennison, Rafsec, etc).

Other materials developments that need to be followed for the future include the whole area of nano-technology that is being rapidly developed to provide nano-coatings, nano-taggants and nano-codes on labels, as well as rapidly advancing solutions in food freshness labels, anti-microbial labels, gas indicator or gas scavenging labels, etc. Food supply chains, authentication, anti-counterfeiting, process control and other major benefits will flow from many of these new evolutions.

In the fields of pre-press technology the ability to input files, transfer files, manipulate files, 'soft proof' files, output and archive files is evolving rapidly as new standards and procedures are developed - with benefits to converters and end-user customers alike. Labelexpo, through exhibitors such as Esko-Graphics and Creo, will certainly provide a key opportunity for the label industry to assess and review the impact of these developments on their operations, and customer service capabilities. The latest computer-to-plate and computer-to-sleeve technology takes these developments through to press production and enhanced quality performance – and can be integrated into the latest MIS systems.

Digital printing too, is now once again moving ahead rapidly, with installations of digital label presses in the past eighteen months already being nearly half as many as in the first seven years of the technology coming to the market. Presses have become more industrial and durable, improved inking and color matching systems have been implemented, the price of consumables has been reduced, and file downloading is more sophisticated – all leading to digital label press technology now being a viable economic solution for run lengths up to 20,000, 30,000 or even 50,000 labels.

With around one digital label press a week now being sold into the global label industry, the initial promise of on-demand, quick response, high quality color digital printing is at last being fulfilled. More than that, digital has the capability to now become just another label production technology which competes effectively and economically alongside flexo, letterpress or offset – and also gives the benefits of incorporating sequential coding and numbers, variable text or graphics, anti-

counterfeiting images or invisible messages in the one press pass. Off- or on-line die-cutting options provide the ultimate in finishing options.

No longer just a show about pressure-sensitive labels, Labelexpo is fast becoming a showcase where label converters can also see and discuss narrow- to mid-web converting solutions for shrink sleeve labeling, wrap-around film labeling, in-mold labeling – or combinations of all these technologies. With the latest modular applicator machines now able to label with all the key labeling options on the one line, converters will increasingly be looking to supply some of their major customers with more than one type of labeling solution.

Apart from labels, some converters are integrating other print and converting capabilities into their facilities. Narrow-web carton production or unsupported film printing may be complementary products or services that converters can supply to the same customers that use their pressure-sensitive labels. Then there are new developments in extended text labeling, or label form combinations, non-label pressure-sensitive converted products and increasingly sophisticated indicator products.

The world of labels is now probably evolving faster than ever before, with more pressures on converters to meet tight deadlines, color and quality performance, solve problems, provide information and support, customer training, assist supply chain management and much more. What converters have to increasingly understand is that their business is no longer just about printing labels, it is about servicing the needs of end-user customers.

Indeed, sophisticated levels of service to customers is becoming more critical to success than the print element – and will continue to be so.

> "Labelexpo Americas provides an ideal opportunity to see what is available to become a pioneer label industry converter, and a partner to label-user customers"

Fortunately, the tools to meet sophisticated levels of service to label user customers are available. They are being developed by materials suppliers, pre-press and press suppliers, through the fast-evolving computer industry, by ink and color management companies, through the latest Management Information Systems (MIS), by support companies implementing SPC, TQM, Six Sigma, and many others.

Labelexpo Americas provides an ideal opportunity to see just what is now available to become a key label industry converter, a partner to label-user customers, a cost-effective supplier and an innovator and pioneer for the future. The proactive converters will be those that that have a long-term future, will meet their customers' expectations, can position themselves in new technology or solutions sectors and stay ahead of the game. Time spent at Labelexpo will certainly be worthwhile in achieving these aims.

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Mining the past to shape the future

TLMI's North American Label Study explores the ever shifting label converter – enduser relationship. **Jennifer Dochstader** reports

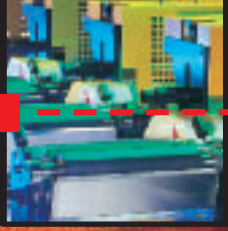
The Tag & Label Manufacturers Institute recently released the association's periodically published North American Label Study 2004 (NALS '04). The 136-page report examines the current state of the North American label-printing industry including detailed information on subjects such as trends and niche opportunities for label converters; current market barriers; product decoration methodologies competing with PS; digital printing and RFID technologies; inks and press systems. The study additionally takes a close look at the shifting enduser label converter relationship, and the challenges, and opportunities, that label converters are facing as they try to add value to their products and services at a time when the pressure sensitive label has become more commoditized that ever before.

Pressure sensitive labels are under increasing levels of scrutiny in today's complex packaging supply chain. The more-for-less paradox lies in Brand Managers wanting consumers to achieve more of an emotional connection with their products which places more performance emphasis on product decoration; while cost-cutting attempts across the supply chain continue to result in margin erosion for label printers. The study reports, "Brand Managers are citing that packaging is becoming more emotional. In compiling the NALS '04, the essence of the following statement was repeated by consumer product companies' marketing and design personnel: 'We're not manufacturing products any more. We're creating packaged solutions for our customers.' And within this matrix of cost cutting mania and consumer behavioral psychology lies the packaging element that, heretofore, was rarely separated out of the overall packaging structure by Brand Managers and CPC marketing departments, but is now garnering more attention as a last-chance marketing push to consumers: a.k.a. the label."

Does this label-as-celebrity focus mean converters are not only receiving some long overdue respect for the products they produce; but can also incorporate a premium pricing structure for their goods? Not in this lifetime, according to the NALS '04. The study reports that myriad pressures are increasingly chipping away at label converter profit margins, which include some of the following:

● Loyalty threat/open bid scenarios:
Label converters frequently mentioned that currently one of the biggest threats their businesses face is the 'open bid scenario' – customers for whom they have been supplying labels (sometimes for a decade or longer) suddenly contact a converter explaining that said enduser is going to place all label demand in an open bid scenario, i.e. a company is going to allow a number of label converters to bid on pieces of business, and in turn awarding the business usually to those converters asking the lowest prices for that business. Label converters cite that often a change in either brand management and/or print procurement precedes a company deciding to open up a bid proposal situation, and that in these situations the tenured label converter often loses the business to a lower-bidding company, unfamiliar with the service / process / quality demands central to a particular application.

New Flexo Line



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● Reverse Auctions:
Similar to the above mentioned scenario, however the bidding takes place on-line.

● Vendor Consolidation:
A threat particularly affecting smaller-sized pressure sensitive label converters is the increase of consolidation activity occurring at the enduser level and is viewed as a significant barrier to future growth. As regional CPC's [Consumer Products Companies] and institutional packaging buyers are acquired by national conglomerates, purchasing is consolidated into the headquarters facility, and the label converter who was supplying the regional entity is phased out as purchasing becomes centralized and managed by the acquirer's procurement team, already doing business with other, usually larger, North American label converters.

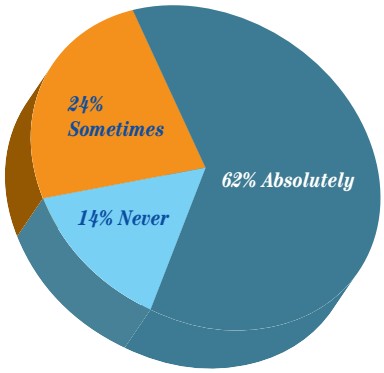
● Technology Creating Capacity:
The advent and growing utilization of new substrates (including non-PS) and print techniques can demand the acquisition of new press technology. However, as applications migrate across the end-use sectors to a more sophisticated level, and press manufacturers are able to meet requirements with new press systems, converters are reporting an increase in excess capacity on older machines.

Label converter as supplier-partner
One area that the NALS '04 explored in depth with endusers, was the label converter / enduser partnership and the shifting role of that relationship in the current pressure sensitive marketplace. The study pointedly asked endusers, "Are your label suppliers true partners to your business?" The way endusers answered this question divided them into two groups – those that commented on the label converter's invaluable place within the supply chain partnership structure; and those that responded that their label converter suppliers have much to do in terms of more effectively partnering with their enduser customers to meet heightening market demands.

The NALS '04 asked endusers to answer the following question – Do you feel that your label supplier organizes their business well, adds value to their services, and responds to your requirements? In answering this question, endusers were asked to choose one of the following answers:

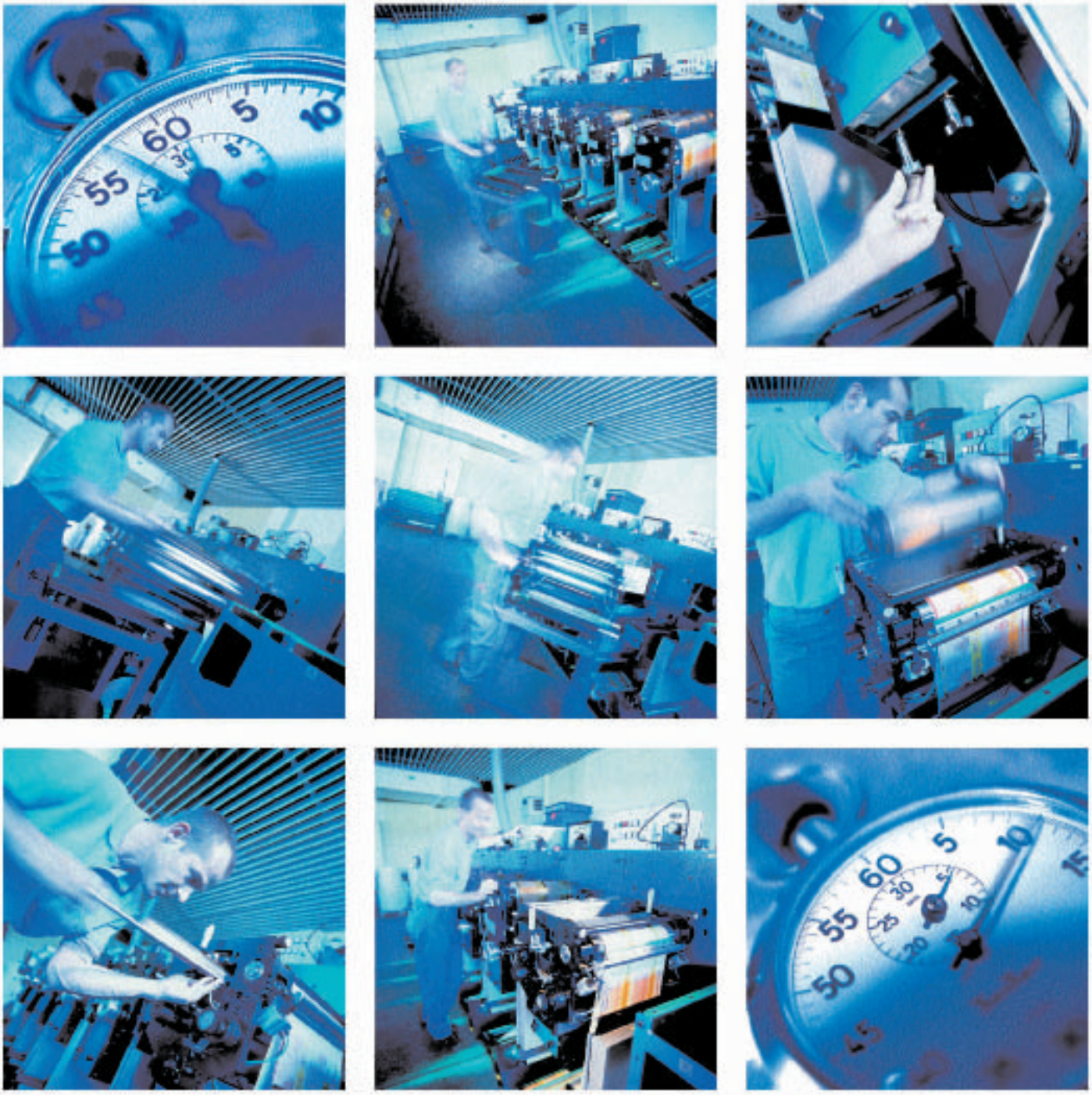
1. Absolutely. They are a true partner and strive to serve our needs.
2. Sometimes. They need to be more proactive vs. reactive.
3. Never. They just provide me with labels.

The following graph illustrates how endusers answered this critical question:



Once endusers gave their responses they were then contacted in an attempt to better understand the reasons they chose the answers they did. For those endusers who responded that label converters are, absolutely, true partners and strive to serve end-user demands, the following factors were cited in relation to those values that label converters are implementing to further support the partnership:

- Label converters are increasingly delivering labels on accelerated timelines when required.
- Label converters are implementing trouble-shooting strategies when it comes to solving labeling application issues at the filling and bottling sites.
- Label converters are more effectively recommending material alternatives, and printing process options to save costs.
- Label converters are increasingly offering vendor-managed inventory practices.
- Label converters are increasingly offering to take over some of the design requirements.
- Label converters are beginning to offer promotional sample production on short notice.
- Label converters are effectively positioning themselves as core vendors for worldwide manufacturing locations.



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For those endusers that responded that label converters sometimes organize their businesses well, but need to be more proactive versus reactive, the following responses were given:

- Label converters' capacity is not always well assigned, and that they believe their label suppliers are not running as efficiently as they could be.
- Some endusers reported that their label converter suppliers are slow when reacting to adhesion issues.
- Some endusers reported that standard industry tolerances are currently not at the level they need to be in order to ensure label applications systems can run at necessary production speeds.

Those endusers who indicated that they feel label suppliers rarely, if ever, add value to their services reported the following:

- Label converters are not educating themselves effectively in other labeling decoration arenas (Note: This was cited most often by endusers in the beverage and food sectors)
- Label converters need to be more proactive with the newest substrates, printing processes and technologies (RFID was frequently mentioned)

The enduser label converter relationship is examined in-depth throughout the NALS '04, and the study goes on to explore the following issues, central in this evolving relationship:

- Consumer trends that affect packaging
- The new product development process
- The current position of the label market niche under the package decoration umbrella
- Enduser 'hot buttons' including price, delivery times, graphics quality, R&D, customer service and supplier tenure
- Vendor consolidation

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- Packaging industry outlook
- Innovation
- The growth of unsupported substrates (non-PS)

Over the course of the past few years, it has been a rocky ride for the North American label converter. Many converters are reporting that they feel the most challenging times are behind them, and that they're running at full capacity and are strategizing short-term equipment procurement decisions.

To many of these label converters however, the recent past feels too close for comfort, and as they forge ahead into an increasingly maturing, cost-driven marketplace; the fine tuning of their business they've had to undergo in order to persevere becomes the very foundation on top of which they construct new and innovative ways to better serve their customers.

How to order NALS '04:

The report is available to TLMI members for $495. (The cost is $750 for FINAT members, and $4,000 for non-members.) The 136-page report examines the latest trends in raw materials, converting methods and end-user markets for the tag and label industry. A copy of the study can be ordered from the TLMI website at www.tlmi.com, or contact TLMI headquarters at 800/533-8564.

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ALDEN & OTT PRINTING INK
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ALLEN DATAGRAPH
ALLISON SYSTEMS CORP.
ALPHA INNOVATION, INC.
AMAGIC HOLOGRAPHICS, INC
AMERICAN DIE TECHNOLOGY
AMERICAN WATER GRAPHICS
ANDANTEX
ANDERSON & VREELAND
ANI PRINTING INKS
API FOILS
APPLE/ASHWELL LABEL DIE
APPLETON PAPERS, INC.
AQUAFLEX
ARC INTERNATIONAL
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ARPECO
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ASAHI
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AVERY DENNISON - FASSON ROLL DIVISION
AVERY FASTENER AMERICAS
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C.A. LITZLER CO., INC.
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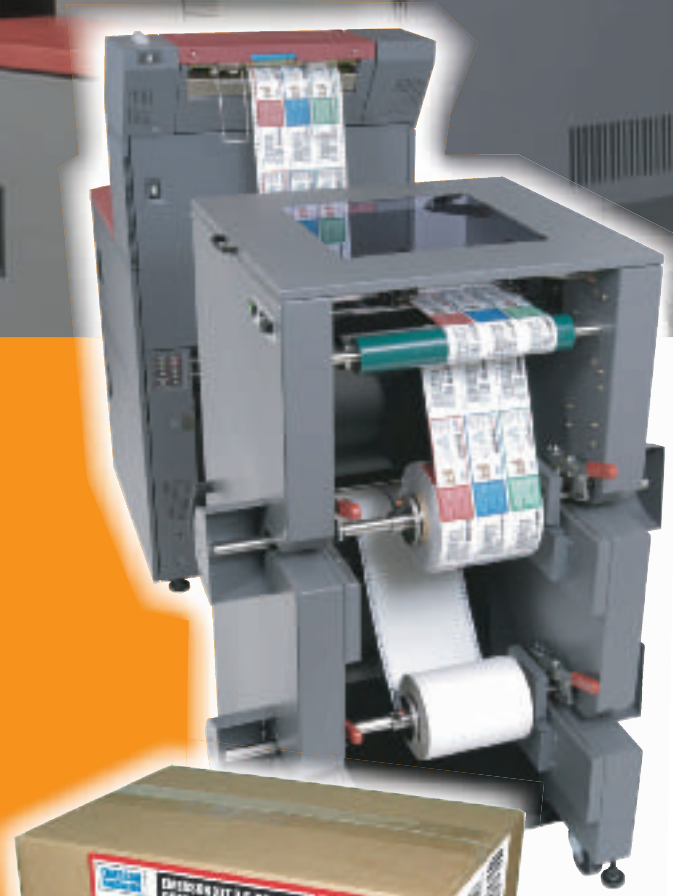

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New at Labelexpo Americas 2004

The biggest ever Labelexpo Americas, held between 13-16th September in Chicago, includes the first sight of a range of new technologies, including presses, inks and materials. **Andy Thomas** and **Katy Wight** take an A-Z view of the highlights

AAA Press International

AAA Press International will be showing its new Lightouch slim-line UV lamp cassettes with QC bulb features, along with the new Micro-step, Versiflex and Pro-cure line of UV controllers. Visitors will also see the new Maximizer compact infra-red drying system, the Viper 100 per cent defect detection system, Servo 3000 digital reregister system and Enercon corona treater.

AB Graphic International

AB Graphic International introduces Sabre Extreme, its new laser die-cutting system on its booth and also and on the HP booth. Optimized for digitally printed webs, Sabre Extreme claims to offer many benefits over conventional die cutting. No tooling is required and the die line is downloaded from pre-press, the image stepped across the web and the power rating selected.

The laser die-cutting technology offers on-demand label converting without the drawbacks of handling and storing conventional tooling. AB Graphic also claims that Sabre Extreme enables job changes in seconds with minimal material waste and real-time tracking to ensure perfect register of print to cut, The system can also store up to 16 jobs on press, kiss-cut/through-cut and perforate, and has lasers that can typically last up to 20,000 hours MTBF.

The system will be demonstrated on ABG's Omega Digicon, a converting machine for digitally printed webs capable of processing a wide variety of substrates. Servo-driven web tension control permits a wide range of substrates to be converted from self-adhesive labels to folding cartons, shrink films and even novelty items such as fridge magnets and mouse mats. The Digicon is available with hot foil stamping, varnishing, over laminating, cold foiling, semi-rotary die cutting, sheeting, slitting and rewinding capabilities.

AB Kelva

AB Kelva launches its new Compact Web Cleaner (CWC), specially designed for the label and narrow web industry. The new CWC model is based on the company's proven 50mm polymer rollers for web speeds up to 300 m/min and web width from 250mm to 760mm. A pull-out function gives side access to the adhesive rollers. As an option for the Food, Pharmaceutical and Healthcare industry the cleaner is also available with Kelva's new FDA approved polymer rollers.

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Absolutely Micro*Clean Int.
The company will be exhibiting three machines designed specifically for the narrow web industry including the new 16A. This anilox roll cleaner uses soft-plastic media to clean anilox cells all the way to the bottom. The recyclable, nonabrasive material deep-cleans the geometrical valleys in anilox rollers, gently removing dried ink pigments and adhesives without eroding or impinging on the ceramic surface.

Developed and manufactured by Temple Associates in Sacramento, CA ,the polyethylene beads can penetrate the twenty three microns on a 1,000 line-screen roller, without damage, even after 400 cleanings. Absolutely Micro*Clean claims that five years of testing, including microscopic analyses and liquid volume measurements, support the system's damage-free claims.

AET Films
AET Films is a developer and manufacturer of oriented polypropylene (OPP) films. AET has expanded its label films portfolio to include cut and stack label films, pressure sensitive facestock, and the newly developed TOppCure Labeling System.

Aetek UV Systems
Aetek UV will be introducing the UV Genie and Ultrapak II UV systems. Both have been designed with optics for maximum cure speeds on press and modularity offering expansion to 14 lamps. The Ultrapak UV curing system has a compact footprint and can be installed on new or existing narrow web presses.

The UPK II lamp housing was designed for ease of maintenance with quick cassette removal, changeable liners, and the new QCD bulb.

AirTrim Inc
AirTrim will be introducing the Chopping Diverter and the Matrix Twister process, which is now patented, will be highlighted again.

Alden and Ott
A manufacturer of both water base and UV flexo printing inks, Alden and Ott will be introducing its new Galaxy Waterbase ink system for both paper and film substrates. It also supplies computer blending and dispensing equipment. Some ink systems manufactured are HiRez paper process inks, multigrip surface and laminating film inks, direct and indirect thermal inks, fluorescent and metallic inks, UV flexo and screen printing inks.

Alpha Innovation
Alpha Innovation, manufacturers of the original Static String, announce a new Stick-On Static Bar. The new ion360 Stick-On Static Bar can be mounted and removed from one side of the converting machine. It eliminates all the symptoms of static without contact by ionizing the static to its microscopic points. Alpha claims that static cling, dust attraction and static sparks are eliminated.

AMAGIC Holographics
Cold Foil For Dummies, the first 'For Dummies' book published exclusively for the flexographic industry will be available at a discounted price at the AMAGIC Holographics booth. Following the standard For Dummies format, Cold Foil For Dummies is a handbook for the cold foil printing process. It contains all you need to know about the cold foil printing process including the basic principles of cold foil printing, comparison between cold foil and hot stamp, press set-up and it has an extensive troubleshooting guide. The company also introduces a cold foil hologram system.

ANI Printing Inks
For the first time in North America, ANI will exhibit under the new company name and logo. Extensive information about the "new company" that is focusing all its efforts on inks for Narrow Web applications will be provided.

Featured will be a comprehensive product offering including UV and water-based flexo, UV screen, letterpress and offset ink systems for labels, tags, folding cartons and flexible packaging applications. New ink systems featured include Hydrofilm ACE, Flexocure S, CombiWhite, and UvoNova.

In addition to featuring new products, the ANI stand encourages interactive learning as it will present InfoBank, an educational source of information for stand visitors who may individually access information on a number of hot industry topics. InfoBank contains in-depth

information on various print technologies, along with the products, services and solutions offered by ANI Printing Inks. The aim is to offer guidance to converters that will enable them to retain the competitive edge in the marketplace.

ARC International

Arc International will exhibit OptiCell, Univercell and LazMec laser-engraved ceramic anilox rolls and OptiLox laser ceramic anilox sleeves, produced on both its own solid state and Thermal YAG lasers. It will also exhibit its new seamless laser engraved printing plates and OptiSleeves, suitable for direct plate mounting or continuous digital engraving. OptiFlex rubber rolls and LaserBoss male and female embossing rolls, made from advanced elastomeric materials, will also be on display.

Artwork Systems

Artwork Systems will demonstrate version 8 of ArtPro and Nexus, which now integrate extensive PDF/JDF functionality. They support editability for transparency and blend modes, incorporate the new 4Stage trapping technology, a native PDF 1.4 RIP, flattening technology and JDF-driven step and repeat solutions. Enfocus Certified PDF technology is now incorporated within ArtPro and Nexus 8.0 for sophisticated automated pre-flighting. The company also shows an asset management system, Mnemo, which keeps track of pre-press production files, and Symphony, which harmonizes output devices through device calibration and press compensation technologies.

Avery Dennison

Avery Dennison celebrates the 50th anniversary of the Fasson brand with a look at innovation in labeling technology across the past 50 years, coupled with a focus on emerging markets and opportunities that will position the future.

A key growth area for the industry, Avery Dennison has expanded its pharmaceutical labeling portfolio with the introduction of Fasson S4140. The new clear, permanent acrylic adhesive has been designed to address both performance criteria and pricing needs for pressure-sensitive labeling in the prescription drug packaging industry. Fasson S4140 is compatible with paper and film facestock. It adheres well to low surface energy substrates providing exceptional stability while reducing migratory risk.

Avery Dennison now has a range of labeling solutions for the pharmaceutical industry, to suit every application – from wraps for narrow syringes or vials to extended content labels that display more critical information.

Visit the Fasson Idea Zone for tips on new markets that can grow your business. Avery will be outlining how its new technologies, new services and new products featuring Fasson-brand pressure sensitive and non-adhesive papers, films and foils work hand-in-hand with market growth opportunities including RFID, digital printing and flexible packaging.

AVT

AVT will demonstrate new features such as PrintFlow and PrintFlow Manager Software that extend the reach of AVT's systems to the managerial level.

PrintFlow provides comprehensive job information including the ability to study defects by type, frequency, duration, and even view images of the master and defect images. Operators can edit the report, accepting or rejecting detected defects, can print the report and keep it as a file for further use.

Also new is WorkFlow Link, an add-on feature which places a mark on the web at pre-determined intervals. These marks can be numbers or bar codes printed in the trim area, or on the reverse of the web, or self-adhesive labels that are applied to the web. The WorkFlow Link information is sent to the rewinder where a reader ensures that the physical web is synchronised with the defect information contained in the roll report.

AVT will also demonstrate a closed loop option for its PrintVision/Helios inspection system which compares on-line the printed image to a previously captured or produced reference, such as an image from a previous run of the same job or information (file) from the pre-press.

By automatically tracing and highlighting the differences, the closed loop capability of the PrintVision/Helios assists the press operator to verify the correct job and to quickly get the press into the right settings of register, color, etc.

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LABELEXPO

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Pitman Company, AVT's distributor in North America for labels applications systems, will show the PrintVision/Helios with color camera, mounted on a Rotoflex rewinder, and the ProoFit solution. Rotoflex, Canada will show the PrintVision/Helios with b/w camera and PCMC will show the PrintVision/Jupiter-Compact on its Evolution press.

Aztech Machinery

Aztech Machinery is introducing the new BSR line of slitters and rewinders that start at $12,900, offering many standard features, 40" rewind and widths up to 16 ". The dual rewind SR-4010 will also be shown with bar coding and sequential numbering. The DieMaster DM-4013 rotary die-cutter will be shown. It is 13" wide, with three rotary die station die cutter/slitter and dual rewind, plus many upgraded standard features and re-registration capabilities. The DT-4010 unwind stations – 10" wide by 40" diameter – will also be exhibited. Unwinds are available in widths up to 20" and diameters up to 50" and powered rewinds are available in widths up to 20" and diameters up to 40". Also shown will be the MH-80AE, the new electric material handling cart.

BASF

Infinity direct engraving system for flexographic plates will be introduced to North America. The Infinity uses triple-beam laser technology to burn rubber and polymer at up to 18 metres per second. Three lasers pass along the plate in quick succession to create the printing dot in stages. It achieves up to 80 dots per mm (2032 dpi) resolution, with rasters up to 60 lpc.

Benton Graphics

Benton Graphics will be exhibiting both steel and plastic blades along with some other pressroom products including safety supplies. A variety of edge shapes lamella, beveled and rounded are available. Materials include three types of plastic and seven steels including Ultimete, which was recently awarded a patent. Benton will also show a new composite blade, which it claims outperforms standard steel blades.

Beta Industries

The latest generation of the Betaflex 334 system now operates in full color, analyzing all flexo and letterpress plates, films, halftone proofs, and press sheets for true dot area, ruling, angle, mottle, donuts, and more. Beta also supplies maintenance-free densitometers, colorimeters, and dot meters for film, press, and CTP. Visitors will also see magnifiers, microscopes, micrometers and other quality control tools.

BST PRO Mark

BST Pro Mark will introduce the SUPER HANDYScan 3000 web inspection system, the sixth generation of this product. System includes an all new user interface and features including variable picture in picture split screen, dual camera, UV viewing capabilities.

Bunting Magnetic Co

Bunting is introducing the Cerface Converting System, a die cutting system for retrofit on existing narrow web presses. The system consists of a die cutting module custom built for existing presses, a set of Cerface magnetic cylinders, and flexible die cutting plates. Bunting believes that narrow web printers will be able to expand their customer base by producing low volume runs of custom die cut labels, direct mail and folding carton products. Bunting Magnetics also manufactures a complete line of magnetic printing cylinders, flat bases and hot stamping bases.

Cartes Equipment

Cartes Equipment has launched its laser die-cutting system for webfed materials, the Laser 350. The shape to be cut is programmed into the inbuilt computer to prepare the image, which can be imported from any software. It has a cutting speed of 1700feet/minute with a web width of 14". The CO2 semi-sealed laser system, means it requires virtually no maintenance and minimal operation costs.

Ciba Specialty Chemicals

Ciba will present live demonstrations of Prime IT, the first durable surface modification technology for high-quality printing on all plastic substrates. Ciba claims that it

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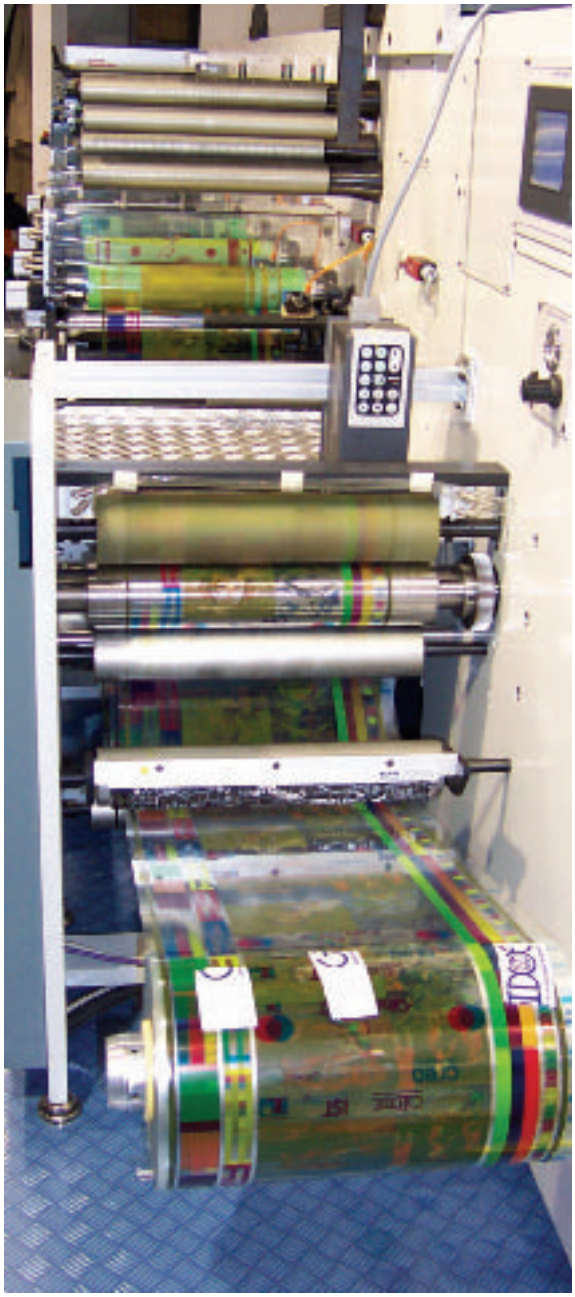

In-line application of Ciba's Prime IT coating on GiDue E-Combat press

improves adhesion of UV-curable inks, coatings and adhesives, and is designed for a wide variety of applications including labels, flexible and rigid packaging, smart cards and commercial printing. The technology ensures a more reliable printing performance and improved print quality.

GIDUE will also partner Ciba Specialty Chemicals in a presentation of Ciba Prime IT technology. A four-color E-Combat UV flexo press from GIDUE can be seen on the the Ciba Specialty Chemicals stand and will be used to run live demonstrations with Ciba Prime IT, a novel surface modification technology to improve printing and facilitate coating and adhesion on plastics. Prime IT is designed to ensure maximum bonding of inks, coatings and adhesives on all plastic surfaces.

Codimag

The VIVA 340 series will be demonstrated, an intermittent-feed press on which it is possible to print all repeat lengths between 50 mm and 305 mm without changing cylinders, making short run work feasible. The VIVA 340 is available in letterpress and in waterless offset, with hot-stamping, screen-printing, flexo varnishing, laminating, die-cutting and embossing – all in-line.

Comco

The Comco division of Mark Andy introduces a new configuration of the Comco ProGlide, the ProGlide FLX – 'film label expansion' – press. The ProGlide FLX is designed specifically for the converter looking to expand their operations more into film substrate applications. Comco claims that the heavy-duty designed press is also capable of servicing traditional application designs with high productivity. The model has been designed to allow a converter to invest in markets without overwhelming risk in their capital expenditures.

The ProGlide FLX is now being used in live demonstrations at the Comco Advanced Technology & Training Center located in Cincinnati, Ohio, where an 8-color, 16" ProGlide FLX is fully loaded with Comco's shuttle deck print stations, "S" wrap web path and the latest hot air drying capabilities.

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Stand 5502

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Hot Off the Press

Bunting Announces Big Savings for Your Rotary Hot Stamping Operation

Go for Value and Quality

Our new Gold Series Magnetic Rotary Hot Stamping Cylinders (Patent Pending) provide unequaled operational economy and foil transfer performance. They're solid brass and combine high heat tolerance with rapid heat transfer and fast on-press setups. We can even transform almost any obsolete brass cylinder you have that is in good condition into a top-performing Gold Series Magnetic Cylinder ready to use with flexible steel-backed rubber dies.

SEE US AT LABELEXPO AMERICAS 2004 BOOTH #5809

Get High-Speed, High-Definition Results

You can achieve exceptional foil transfer quality at press speeds from 200 to 600 feet per minute. Fine details stay crisp and clear. Our flexible rubber dies are available on 48-hour turnaround and offer an ideal combination of zero distortion and high heat transfer – without meltdown. They run direct to anvil, eliminating the need for cushion rolls. Yet these economical dies provide a clean foil transfer even on very thin films and plastics and avoid crushing adhesives in label stock.

Cut Your Costs . . . Increase Profits

The Bunting Solution

Annual Prod. Run (New Jobs)	Bunting Brass Magnetic Cylinder	Flexible Dies*	Bunting Solution Total Cost	Solid Brass Tooled Dies* Total Cost	Brass Segment Tooled Dies* Total Cost
1 Job	$3,600	$530	**$4,130**	**$2,400**	**$1,200**
5 Jobs	$3,600	$2,650	**$6,250**	**$12,000**	**$6,000**
10 Jobs	$3,600	$5,300	**$8,900**	**$24,000**	**$12,000**
15 Jobs	$3,600	$7,950	**$11,550**	**$36,000**	**$18,000**
20 Jobs	$3,600	$10,600	**$14,200**	**$48,000**	**$24,000**
50 Jobs	$3,600	$26,500	**$30,100**	**$120,000**	**$60,000**

* Avg. New Flexible Die price is $530 each, Avg. Tooled Die cost is $2400 each, Avg. Segmented Die cost is $1100 each.

Compare the Numbers

Along with reduced tooling costs, you get faster setups, reduced spoilage, and 48-hour turnaround on dies, giving you the competitive advantage you need to win more bids.

Call today and discover all the reasons why Bunting gives you a competitive edge in foil printing quality, economy, and profitability.

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Labelexpo Americas 2004
Show Preview

Corotec Corporation
Corotec Corporation will exhibit a line of corona treating equipment and accessories designed specifically for the narrow-web converter. It will be introducing its new Track-Free electrode switching system and its new power density control system designed for systems treating either or both sides of the web.

Cortron
Cortron is displaying its latest version of its line of eXact exposure devices. The eXact 3040 debuted at Labelexpo 2002 and at this year's expo, Cortron is introducing the eXact 2430. It controls the angle of light enhancing shoulder formulation, resulting in less dot gain in all aspects of platemaking and printing.

Creo
Showcases the ThermoFlex CTP with HyperFlex-ready imaging for flexo printing and the new Exactus thermal gravure system with for gravure printing. Also new versions of the Prinergy Powerpack and Brisque Pack workflow systems, Pandora step-and-repeat tool, and the new Prinergy Evo workflow system. Creo will also show the new Spotless printing system, which softens the 'hard edge' of a flexo vignette by selectively removing printing dots.

CTC International Ltd
CTC's products include automatic turret rewinders, automatic butt splicers and automatic waste matrix winders. At the show it will demonstrate its latest glueless rewind technology, matrix winders and butt splicers.

Deco Chem Inks
Deco produces UV Flexo and Rotary Screen printing inks for a variety of applications including label and folding carton, with complete lines of UV Flexo and Rotary Screen Printing inks. Deco's new Products include HVF (High Viscosity Flexo) inks.

DiMS! Organizing Print
DiMS!, the supplier of Management Information Solutions for the printing and packaging industry, will feature a new label business template at the show. Designed for mid to large label printers, the new label template includes a comprehensive wizard enabling point-and-click label construction, a label-specific estimation desktop and an enterprise-wide view of all the production and administrative processes for the label segment.

Using the label wizard, the user can easily define product characteristics, including:

- Die information, such as label size, die kind, die cost, die availability across all plants
- Forms and colors, including plate details (such as number of intial plates and plate changes), front and back color specifications, subtrates, standard and specialty inks, and coatings such as laminates and varnishes
- Operations, including perforations, numbering, variable imaging, die cutting, special processes (such as foiling, embossing, hot stamping), piggybacking and coupon construction, in addition to run rates, makeready, employee resources and waste
- Materials/finishing, including paper specifications (type, size, roll width, price, folds) and allocations, rewind directions and technical fit requirements
- Packaging Pricing

Through the estimation desktop, calculation of resources including make-ready hours, materials, run time and waste is automated based on customer-defined rules. This feature also makes it possible to view the price-building process in several succinct ways – per Process Step Object (PSO) or per group type – in addition to determining sales prices, which can be saved in the database. The estimation desktop also enables estimates to be split out by designated work centers.

As part of the DiMS! 640 release, the label template includes a comprehensive enterprise functionality, encompassing the breadth of processes (such as enterprise planning, production, purchasing and inventory management, and accounting) across multiple plants, divisions and countries. The system also offers a way in which to manage complex, often disparate financial transactions across the entire organization. It includes a new setup table enabling the user to link profit centers, company profiles and financial companies to each other. In multifaceted transactions involving multiple plants, contact persons, shipping addresses, or inventory items

(such as changes in stock quantities or prices), the appropriate information will be extracted and linked to the relevant profit center. In addition, profit and loss sheets can be split for several profit centers within one company.

Direct Recruiters Inc. (DRI)

Direct Recruiters, a search firm in North America specializing in the labels, flexible packaging and converting industries, is launching its newly designed web site at Labelexpo. Visitors will be able to quickly view available candidates and current job openings in North America as well as submit a current job opening or resume in confidence. The new site will also provide an in-depth look at DRI practice areas, present testimonials from respected industry names, and offer e-Articles on hiring and recruitment issues.

Domino Amjet Inc

The recently launched Domino-ON-Demand system comprises estimating, prepress, proofing and high-speed variable printing modules with Pantone matching color capabilities and a wide range of low VOC solvent and UV curable inks, particularly suited for web applications. In addition, the highly successful BitJet + for high-speed graphics, logos, text and barcodes will also be showcased.

Dover Flexo Electronics (DFE)

DFE, a manufacturer of web tension control equipment, is introducing several new products at LabelExpo Americas. The WebHandler tension controller is a closed-loop controller which delivers automatic, full-featured digital tension control with a simple touch-panel interface. Dover claims that its new low-profile THN tension transducer can be installed where other transducers will not fit. And the TI17B tension amplifier (and TI18B powered by 24 VDC) is a compact card component that amplifies the tension signal output from any of DFE's tension transducers for connection to a PLC, drive, or controller.

Dow Corning

Dow Corning introduces a new line of platinum-catalyzed, solventless silicone release coatings. Advantage Series coatings have significantly reduced platinum levels and help to reduice costs in high-volume paper coating operations. They are suitable for use with a wide range of adhesives and applications. The series includes base polymers, crosslinkers, release modifiers and catalysts that enable flexible control of release, cure and cost without compromising release stability, anchorage or line speed.

Doyle Systems

Doyle web cleaning systems are designed to remove dust and contaminates from substrates before printing. Doyle claims that cleaning the web with its system can reduce downtime, improve print quality and increase productivity. With over 80 years of experience, Doyle has custom designed systems for all web presses. Doyle Systems will also present the latest technology in anilox roll cleaning, blanket wash module cleaning systems and video web inspection.

Drilling Technical Services

DTS provides customized pre-owned press and parts solutions; inline RFID printing, assembly and testing systems. It aims to help customers define and integrate unique process strategies by providing total project management.

Dynic USA Corporation

Dynic is an ISO registered manufacturer of premium quality thermal transfer ribbons and Cetus coated textile labels, for the barcode, industrial labeling, packaging, printing, and clothing care label industries. Dynic USA Corporation will be showcasing both product lines in real-world applications, such as unit-dose bar coding and RFID-enabled label printing.

Edale Ltd

Edale's latest flexopress is the 13"-24" wide shaftless Sigma, which employs sophisticated servo technology. The Sigma is ideal for flexible packaging and cartons, ranging between 0.5 and 27.5 mil thick. Edale's range includes the Alpha, a 1-5 color, 10"-13" wide press and the Beta, which is a 0-14 color, 10"-13" wide modular press.

The no cost way to get better results.

Paul Hasemeyer, the new Senior Vice President of Coated Products Operations at Green Bay Packaging has a no cost way to get better results: hire a vendor who takes a genuine interest in your business.

No matter what your business, the relationship a vendor has with you makes a tremendous difference. The interest they take and the effort they give is the foundation for the quality of product and service you can expect to receive. And when you find a vendor who you can trust to always give you an all out effort, there's a confidence and a relationship that can't help but make business more efficient and effective.

"I think Green Bay Packaging has always differentiated itself from most of our competitors by establishing genuine relationships with our customers," explains Hasemeyer. "We work hard to get to know and understand the needs of the people who represent our customers. We want to make it easy for our customers to do business with us."

And for Green Bay Packaging, that takes many forms, but first and foremost it means service and support. Keeping promises and doing right by customers every time. But it's more than that, too.

Paul Hasemeyer / Senior Vice President
Green Bay Packaging Coated Products Operations

"I think our customers and prospects are looking for us to provide them with much more than just a product line," explains Hasemeyer. "They're looking for advantages that allow them to succeed in an extremely competitive industry. Product innovation, consistent quality and of course competitive pricing have always been extremely important, but they don't mean much if service isn't a top priority." Hasemeyer's arrival has brought several key additions to Green Bay Packaging's approach and capabilities. The additions allow Green Bay Packaging to step away from the everyday group of pressure sensitive producers and really offer a tangible difference that helps our customer's business.

"We joined forces with Esamex and became the majority owner of our newly formed corporation, GB Mexico, in September of last year. Our ownership in GB Mexico has allowed us to make a deeper penetration into the Mexican market," explains Hasemeyer. "We now offer an expanded product line with inventories to service our Mexico based customers with the products they want when they want them."

The focus of any vendor should not just be to deliver a product, but to help a client grow their margin and their business. A smart vendor can solve problems or help you avoid them altogether.

"We recognize that it is extremely important for us to find ways to help our customers to grow their business," said Hasemeyer. "We have a number of initiatives in the works to expand our support to our customers. Some are as diverse as expanding our e-commerce capabilities and others as specific as our bolstering product offerings to our customers."

Out there is a number of vendors wanting your business. Most trying to sell you pretty much the same stuff, and all say pretty much the same thing. Demand more from them. Demand that they don't just deliver products but ways to help you compete more effectively.

"We've invested in the people and equipment necessary to be a true asset to a customer and not just another vendor," offers Hasemeyer. "There is a renewed enthusiasm throughout our organization, an enthusiasm generated by our commitment to make changes necessary to deliver the services and products that our customers absolutely need in order to compete."

Enercon Industries Corporation

Enercon will be promoting its latest range of surface treatment solutions for label applications. Traditional tag and label converting requires corona treatment to raise the surface energy of substrates. Enercon claims that its TL Max and XL corona surface treaters offer an economical alternative to top-coated material. For difficult to treat materials and surfaces requiring stringent surface specifications, Enercon offers its Plasma3 surface treater. The company claims that Plasma3 improves hydrophilicity and surface coating performance, and can also improve the performance of adhesives.

Enercon will also exhibit three-dimensional surface treaters which can be used to treat objects prior to decorating and labeling. The company's line of air plasma and flame plasma three-dimensional treaters raise surface energy on objects to promote adhesion. The three-dimensional treaters are designed to allow clear, readable markings on polymer surfaces and improve the adhesion of labels and coatings. Enercon says these systems are ideal for all types of thermoformed and thermoset plastics.

Envionmental Inks and Coating

Environmental Inks and Coating introduces the Envirocure series of energy curable inks and coatings. The inks and coatings are available for flexo, letterpress, rotary screen and combination printing. The Envirocure UV Flexo inks are high strength and low in viscosity.

Esko-Graphics

Esko-Graphics introduces its Scope packaging workflow system. Scope covers a wide range of functions, from job and product specification, through graphic and structural design and automated pre-production operations, to platemaking and tool-making for converting. Scope adds capabilities for project coordination, digital asset management and distributed proofing and approval, enabling stakeholders across the supply chain to communicate and collaborate globally, in real time.

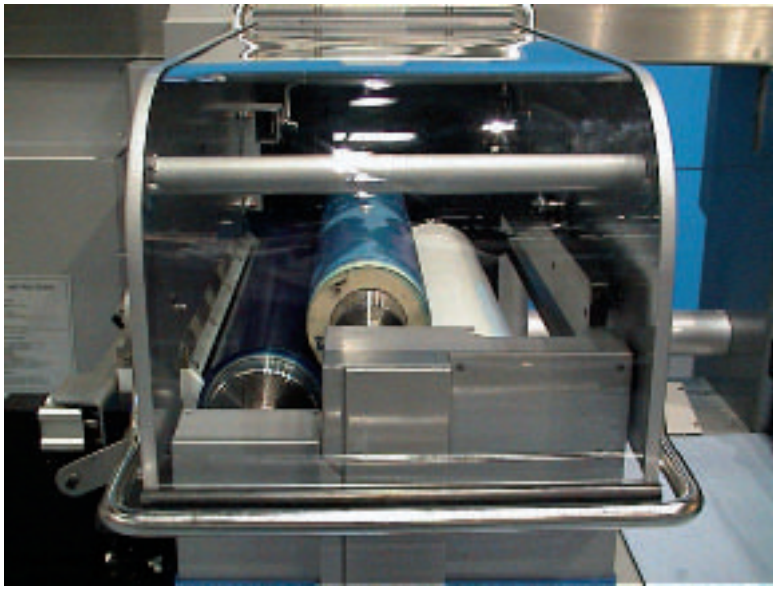
ExxonMobil Chemical

ExxonMobil Chemical will showcase several additions to its portfolio of Label-Lyte labeling solutions. Visitors will learn of an exciting development in hot melt and cold glue application for cut and stack technologies and a new coating technology for pressure sensitive labels. Many other Label-Lyte products for cut and stack, pressure sensitive, roll fed and shrink labeling will be on display.

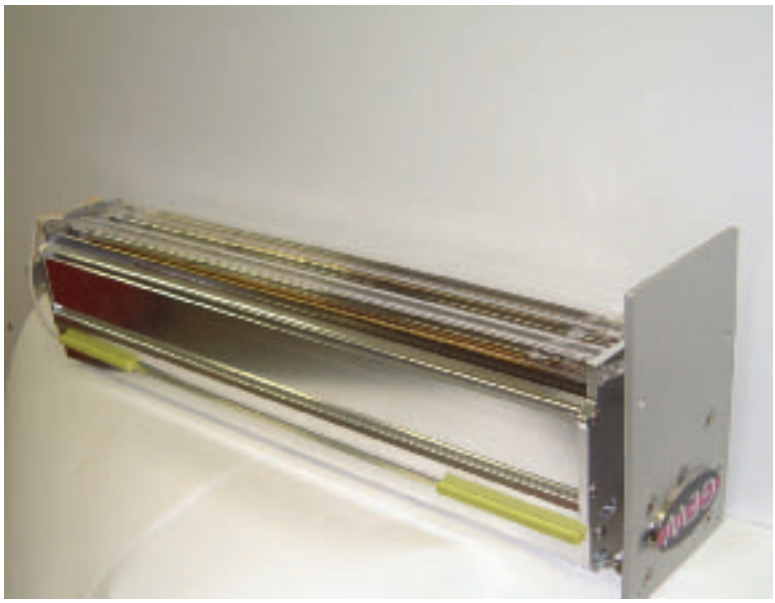
Flint Precisia

Flint company Precisia LLC is promoting its ability to produce fully functional radio frequency identification (RFID) tags with high-

Enercon technology modifies surface tension of containers for correct label application



Gallus EM510'S print unit



GEW launches range of curing systems

speed printed antennas in one location. Its tag production system assembles the individual components of an RFID label as the first step toward complete high-speed antenna printing and chip attachment in a single production process.

Gallus

The new Gallus EM 410 S line, making its American debut at the show, is based on the EM 260/410/510 series. It features direct drive to the print cylinder with no gears or bearer rings, front loading of the sleeve based print cylinder and anilox roll, and chambered doctor blades. Gallus claims that it produces faster job changes through pre-setting of register and web tension, and greater substrate and process flexibility. The press will be demonstrating a job change from shrinkfilm to bottle wrap, highlighting its capabilities with monofoil substrates.

Also on display at the show will be a new variant of the best-selling Gallus EM 280 'plug & print' press with a number of new features.

General metal engraving

GME is a manufacturer of rotary dies, male/female crease dies, printing cylinders for all size presses and rotary hot stamp and brass rolls. GME will be demonstrating vacuum die cutting on several different types of material.

GEW Inc

GEW Inc will exhibit the latest versions of the VCP 'Cold UV' curing system. VCP offers a combination of compact size, high cure rate, cool running and modular construction with low capital and running costs. Available in power ratings up to 400W/in (160W/cm), VCP can be supplied to suit print widths up to 18" (45cm). GEW will also be showing the film version of the VCP, with integrated water-cooled chill rolls. It enables UV curing on heat-sensitive films down to around 0.6mil, on presses not originally equipped with chill rolls.

In its high performance range, GEW will introduce NUVAplus to the American market. NUVAplus has been optimized for curing heavy lay-downs of both traditional and cationic inks and coatings on thermo-sensitive substrates at high press speeds. It has a unique 'clean cool' airflow system with integral filter in the lamp head that eliminates dust or ink mist contamination and any disturbance from airflow to the web. Its power rating is up to 600W/in (230W/cm) and print widths up 59" (150cm) can be supplied.

The company will also launch its new Infrared drying cassette that is inter-changeable with its VCP and NUVAplus range of UV curing systems to permit IR drying of water-based inks and varnishes. The system is designed to meet the needs of companies that may want to alternate printing of both UV and water-based inks and coatings without having to re-web the press.

Also featuring will be the company's JETCURE UV curing system. Designed specially for the needs of the ink jet market, JETCURE is compact and lightweight, with adjustable power up to 500W/in (200W/cm) and an integral fan in each lamp head.

GIDUE

GIDUE will be showing a printing module of its new UNIPRO 730mm wide, in-line, mid-web packaging press. Designed as a full packaging press using print cylinder sleeve technology the UNIPRO is capable of converting virtually any kind of substrate from PE BOPP, PET to paper, aluminum and laminates, up to 450gsm carton board without changing configuration.

The UNI-Lock printing head featured on the UNIPRO is an enhanced version of the GIDUE Flower flexographic printing head. This concept will be demonstrated on a UNIPRO print module equipped with two flexographic printing heads.

GIDUE will also exhibit an E-Combat module equipped with two flexographic printing heads. The press design uses servo-driven controls for all press functions and is available in web widths of 280mm (11") 370mm (14.5") 430mm (17") and 530 mm (21"). With the benefit of electronic drives the E-Combat design enables the customer to print and convert substrates in

GiDue will be showing a print unit from the UniPro film press

the region of 15 micron film to 350 grams per square meter carton board without changing the mechanical configuration of the press. The press can be supplied with IML-EDL delivery system, equipped with a batch counting and final long 'buffer' delivery table where the stacked piles of in-mould labels printed face up can be easily collected.

Goldschmidt

Goldschmidt supplies radiation curable silicones to the PSA release market that can be cured via UV or EB. Its TEGO RC silicones provide a wide range of release levels (easy to tight release). Goldschmidt will be featuring TEGO RC 1002, a one component reduced penetration silicone to be used with lower holdout papers, additional new products, plus PSA Additives for water-based adhesives.

Granwell Products

Granwell Products will feature two recently introduced Polylith products. Polylith GT-1 film has been developed specifically as a PVC film replacement product for high temperature resistant pressure sensitive label applications. A white mineral reinforced polyolefin film which doesn't contain any vinyl chloride or plasticisers, Granwell says that GT-1 meets or exceeds the dimensional stability, dyne level, cold crack protection and UV resistance properties of printing or label grade PVC film and has a 40 cent higher yield .

Developed for those critical applications where a very high tear strength material yet economical material is needed, Polylith GC-3 has a bright, white matte surface with excellent opacity for superior printing. Targeted high performance applications include POP materials, banners, labels, tags or any heavy-duty application where a high tear strength material is needed.

Green Bay Packaging

In addition to offering its line of quality coated papers, films, foils, direct thermal, thermal transfer and piggyback technologies, Green Bay Packaging will be showcasing several new products. Window-Lites is an alternative to static clings; Ultra Jet is a laser inkjet paper that dries quickly and won't smudge or smear when used immediately after printing; Microsphere is a repositionable, re-usable, yet high-tack removable adhesive; Starcatcher is a unique clear facestock utilizing holographic pigments; and Green Bay has also developed new pasteurizable and non-blushing container labeling for beverages;

HP Indigo

HP Indigo will announce partnerships with Esko Graphics and Artwork Systems to provide a direct link to the workflow software on its ws4000 digital label press.

Another important announcement is a dedicated 'Pharma Validation' report for the ws4000 which contains all the necessary FDA compliance documents, test reports and guidelines to support a validation of the press for the pharmaceutical industry. To further aid approval, HP Indigo has partnered with AVT web inspection systems to provide a watertight proofing system. Running in-line with the ws4000 will be the Sabre Extreme laser die-cutting system (see ABG International entry above).

Inspection Systems Inc. (ISI)

ISI specializes in the design and manufacture of high speed bar code inspection equipment. It will be featuring its two new Compliance-Pro Inspect and Report models. ISI claims that these new-technology systems offer the speed and inspection of earlier custom models, at prices comparable to laboratory/desktop inspection units. These products can be installed on any rewind system, printing press, production line or print/apply machine, and offer the following capabilities:

- Inspects to ISO 15416 / ANSI X3.182 standards
- ISO 15426 compliant
- 200 codes inspected per second
- Archive data for reports or quality system logs
- Interfaces and shares data with existing software systems
- Speeds up to 1500fpm
- Programmable output trigger events

The Labelexpo Americas Review continues on P.137

The Jarvis Porter story

Paul Jarvis talks exclusively to Labels & Labeling about the rise and fall of one of the world's largest and most successful label groups, ending with the Group's self-adhesive companies being acquired by CCL. **Mike Fairley** reports

Paul Jarvis

It is now some 75 years since Herbert Jarvis and Thomas Porter set up a small printing business in Leeds. With Thomas Porter leaving the company shortly after to form a wine and spirits business, Jarvis Porter were soon using this connection to produce wet-glue applied drinks labels using, initially, letterpress machinery and, later, offset litho presses. This link with the wine and spirits trade was to remain throughout the group's history and formed the basis for its expansion and acquisition activities over many years.

Under Herbert Jarvis and his team – including the grandson of Thomas Porter, Hugh Porter – the company expanded the late 1950s/early 60s, when aflexible packaging division was set up to produce wrappers, again for the wine and spirits trade. This division, headed by Linden Jarvis, the eldest son of Herbert Jarvis, developed rapidly and by the early 1980s accounted for approximately one-third of the group's total turnover.

In 1964 a small jobbing printing company was acquired in London. Herbert's other son, Paul Jarvis, turned this company into the group's Self-Adhesive division on the basis that much of the wet-glue label turnover coming from the wine and spirits trade could also have gone self-adhesive – depending on the equipment for applying labels, which had still largely to be developed.

'One of the first breakthroughs in this division was in achieving major contracts with Castrol' said Paul Jarvis. 'Then, in the early 1970s, we moved into pharmaceutical labels – in particular with Glaxo. Within 10 years of moving into the self-adhesive business we were turning over £3 million a year.' By the early 1980s the Self-Adhesive division was also accounting for a third of the group's total turnover.

In 1976, Linden Jarvis, who was then managing director of the group, had a serious car accident and, with their father no longer very active in the company, Paul was now forced to spend a lot of time in Leeds. This meant that by the late 1970s/early 1980s, Paul Jarvis was effectively running the business.

With Paul now spending less time in London a board meeting was held to decide how to expand the Self-Adhesive division, for which the existing premises in London – already producing labels for a variety of industries, including wine and spirits and pharmaceuticals – were becoming too small. The proposal put to the Board, with Paul as chairman, was that the Self-Adhesive division should be moved from London to Leeds. With the vote split 50/50, it was the casting vote of Paul Jarvis as chairman that voted to move to Leeds, effectively taking the decision to close London. Later, it was decided to keep the London factory open as a specialist pharmaceutical label plant, so avoiding closure and redundancy.

It was in 1978 that the Self-Adhesive division, excluding the pharmaceutical business, was moved to a facility at Ingram Row, Leeds, where the company continued to market self-adhesive technology to wet-glue customers in wines and spirits. All elements of the self-adhesive division were now operating very successfully.

Jarvis Porter Baulip located on the outskirts of Paris

The growth of the Self-Adhesive division, and of the group's other activities, soon led to the acquisition - in the late 1970s – of another factory in Leeds and, in 1981, to the acquisition of a small printing company in Glasgow. This was to again strengthen the group's links with the wine and spirits industry. In the following year the printer of the 'Blokaid' note pad was also acquired, while in the mid 1980s, the pharmaceutical label business was moved from London to new and larger premises in Croydon and was soon producing all Glaxo's worldwide Ventolin labels.

By the early 1980s, Linden Jarvis was back running the Flexible Packaging division. Apart from board meetings, he had no involvement in the rest of the group's business. Paul Jarvis at this time had taken on the role of CEO and, in 1982, also became chairman on his father's death.

By 1985, the group was turning over in the region of £25 million. This was split fairly equally between the Wet-Glue Label division – almost exclusively serving the wine and spirits trade – the Flexible Packaging division, serving the beverage and food markets (including labels such as sleeves and Plastishield – both of which were an integral service to the beverage market) – and the Self-Adhesive division serving, mainly from

"One of the first breakthroughs in this division was in achieving major contracts with Castrol. Then, in the early 1970s, we moved into pharmaceutical labels – in particular with Glaxo"

The Right Stuff

A product is only as good as the service that supports it. That's why we at Raflatac want to be sure that your entire customer experience with us meets all your expectations.

Our company's front-line is the group of professionals who make up our Customer Relationship Team. They take pride in knowing you and what you need, and investing themselves where they are most needed.

It's a hands-on approach. It requires a close cooperation with each of our customers.

These service professionals are committed to customer satisfaction in the true spirit of the Raflatouch. This is the stuff of a progressive partnership, our company's core values and our enduring mission.

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Nilpeter combination press located at Ingram Row, Leeds, producing home and personal care self-adhesive labels

Leeds the home and personal care market, and from London, the pharmaceutical market. The Self-Adhesive division also supplied labels to the wine and spirits trade to back-up wet-glue labels for major brands. These labels mainly related to miniatures and short runs.

In the same year, and after several Board meetings, it was agreed that the group should be taken public. Discussions opened with Hill Samuel, the merchant bank, to achieve this. Three weeks before flotation, due for March 1985, Linden Jarvis had second thoughts. As he held over 25 per cent of the company's shares he was able to abort the flotation, which needed an extraordinary resolution.

Linden then proposed either substantial management changes, with himself becoming CEO or, failing that, the demerger of the Flexible Packaging division. Both options were opposed by Paul Jarvis and the other Directors as they felt that the future of the business depended on the success of the whole, rather than its parts. 'In particular', say Paul, 'I was keen to keep the labeling systems (sleeves and Plastishield), which Flexible Packaging were producing for the beverage market.'

Both proposals were put to the shareholders, and both were turned down. In view of his disagreement with the Board and the majority of the shareholders, Linden left the business and, later that year, sold his 27.3 per cent shareholding to the company.

With the directors believing that the management of the flexible packaging division had been successfully re-organized, they decided to proceed with their intention of obtaining a stock market quotation. 'This was aimed at providing the company with greater flexibility in financing its future growth', explained Paul Jarvis, 'and in enhancing its status as a leading label and flexible packaging printing group. It would also enable the company to raise around £2.9 million of new capital with which to refinance a substantial part of the cost of purchasing the shares from Linden Jarvis and his family.'

Jarvis Porter finally became a public company in 1986. The market capitalisation of the company after flotation was £20 million. The price the shares were issued at was £1.05 and the offer was 96 times over-subscribed as it was at the height of the stag market.

Jarvis Porter continued to expand within its three divisions, but with the wine and spirits trade remaining the driving force behind the company's growth. Other acquisitions followed: Spreckley & Evans – whose main product was tags and swing

tickets for the drinks markets – for a cash consideration of £1.2 million, and the pre-cut beer label business of R. B. Macmillan in Derby.

However, consolidation within the wine and spirits market – the group's key driving force – was already starting to reduce the number of customers and was beginning to result in greater purchasing power in the hands of fewer companies. In 1989, following further consolidation and mergers, the Flexibles division lost a key major profit contribution account. Turnover dropped considerably. Shifts were reduced from 3 to 2. This had a substantial effect on the division's profitability and highlighted to the Board the risk of being dependent on a small number of large customers. In view of this the Board took the decision to divest the Flexibles Operation, which was eventually sold to employees in an MBO.

Subsequently, the division was called Parkside Flexibles and was sufficiently successful to go public in the early 1990s – but again fell foul of a small customer base which, in effect, was the result of globalization. This resulted in them being bought by British Polyethylene Industries with whom they remained until the late 1990s. The management again bought them out and they are now trading successfully having expanded. 'Although no longer a Jarvis Porter company' says Paul Jarvis, 'it shows that a solid foundation for the success of the Flexibles business had been laid. All credit must go to Linden Jarvis and his team.'

The Jarvis Porter Group without flexible packaging, now had a turnover in the region of £27 million and it was obvious that it needed to expand faster than by organic growth to remain successful as a public company. On top of this Paul had a substantial shareholding in the business which was viewed unsympathetically by the City. In other words too much power was in the hands of one person.

The City together with certain of the non-executive directors on the Board pushed for his roles as chairman and chief executive to be split and this resulted in 1991 in the appointment of Richard Brewster as CEO. Richard had joined from David S. Smith where through a series of acquisitions he had taken the company with a market cap of £5 million to one of £341 million. Paul Jarvis remained as Executive Chairman.In August 1992, Jarvis Porter acquired the Promotional Print division of James Wilkes PLC, which consisted of four companies – the largest of which were John Quarmby in Huddersfield and Waterlomat S.A. in Brussels. Both companies specialised in drip mats and other items for the drinks industry. It also provided a foothold in Europe for the group.

By 1994, turnover had risen to £55.6 million (profits before tax, PBT, of £6.8 million), with sales being enhanced by the acquisition in 1993 of Dolphin Labels and Irwin Packaging – between them adding £7.7 million to the top line – and in May

"The Jarvis Porter Group without flexible packaging, now had a £27 million turnover and needed to expand faster than by organic growth to remain a successful public company"

1994, the acquisition of Nederlandse Grafische Groep BV in the Netherlands which, in turn, owned three specialist label companies. Also in 1994 Donprint, the leading Scottish manufacturer of variable data information labels for the computer and electronics industries, was acquired for £27 million. The Donprint acquisition added another dimension to the Group in that it served the fast-growing electronics market which previously Jarvis Porter had not been involved in.

May 1995 saw the acquisition of Baulip in Paris, a company specialising in the production of self-adhesive labels for the personal care and cosmetics markets, thus giving greater geographical spread to the Ingram Row, Leeds, operation which was already serving this market.

Continued growth saw Group turnover rise to £91 million (profits before tax £14 million) in 1996, and to £95 million (and profits before tax down to £10 million) in 1997. By the end of the 1998 financial year turnover had risen to £101 million and profits of some £14 million before tax, with a market capitalization of some £140 million. The Group also by now employed 1,600 people in 22 plants in seven countries.

Despite this, the late 1990's was seeing continuous consolidation within the wine and spirits trade with players such as Diageo and Allied becoming increasingly important customers to the wet glue label business. This effect of globalization was affecting all companies and making it extremely difficult for suppliers to remain profitable. Nevertheless as Jarvis Porter was the leading supplier of labels to this market, they were still successful due to their expertise and the back-up that they offered to these major companies.

Profits, however, were beginning to fall in the wet glue, self-adhesive and promotional businesses – apart from Donprint, which was still driven by the success of the electronics market. Paul felt that this tended to mask the reduction of profit elsewhere, and the fact that none of the small businesses, which are an inherent part of label production – were successfully being integrated to serve pan-European customers. As he said on many occasions, label printing is a "cottage industry" and only a very few will ever be able to supply on a global basis.

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Prior to this, at the end of 1996, Paul Jarvis had put to the Board a possible merger with one of the major carton producers in Europe. This company had no label interests but was serving the same markets, particularly wine and spirits, as Jarvis Porter. The offer being made was, in his opinion, an excellent one giving a good premium to the then share price. The Board decided to turn down this approach and Paul offered to resign, although he was persuaded not to on the basis that a valuation of the business would be undertaken by Warburgs in conjunction with Richard Brewster, the CEO. The valuation they put on the group was higher than Paul believed that achievable. Ultimately he was proved correct.

In 1998, with the market beginning to look increasingly difficult, a decision was taken to acquire Wace Corporate Packaging in Hinckley. Paul reluctantly agreed to this on the basis that it contained the business of Ripley, who were the major competitors to Jarvis Porter in the wine and spirits market. "The business, although acquired cheaply, was expensive as it was losing money", commented Paul Jarvis, "and subsequently proved to have been an unwise acquisition". Shortly after this acquisition Richard Brewster stepped down as chief executive and Hugh Donaldson, formerly with Zeneca and Dalgety, took the role of CEO.

After leaving the business Richard Brewster attempted a management buy-in at the same time as Paul was endeavouring to achieve an MBO as he felt that the business should no longer be in the public arena. Both offers were turned down by the Board and in view of this and the publicity it received Paul stepped down from executive chairman to non-executive chairman.

In early 1999 Declan Salter, formerly CEO of Watmough, joined to run Hinckley and the Group's Wine and Spirits division. The Wine and Spirits division was still profitable and with the increased business from Ripley had a turnover of over £25 million. Hinckley was loss-making.

The site at Hinckley, which was known to the industry as a "packaging super site", contained different cultures and it was obvious that the wine and spirits label side of Ripley did not fit. It was decided to move the Ripley business to Leeds and Glasgow. The bulk of their turnover was to the wine and spirits industry which would increase the overall size of the Jarvis Porter market share of this sector. However, the project management of this move was, according to Paul, 'badly thought out and had no project team other than existing management to accomplish it'.

At the same time, the then CEO dispensed with the services of senior management within the Wine and Spirtits division and installed interim managers under Declan Salter. "This move," explained Paul, "resulted in a lack of service to the key customers, substantial build up of stock and expensive outwork to try and satisfy customers' needs". Losses inevitably ensued towards the end of 1999.

Donprint was sold in 1999 for £65 million, £20 million of which went to support the loss-making Wace acquisition, with the rest being returned to the shareholders at 70p per share. 'In my opinion', explained Paul, 'it was arguable that the money should have been kept within the company to allow substantial rationalisation and capital expenditure to take place in order to keep pace with the changing markets'.

In late 1999 Hugh Donaldson arranged for an analysis of the Wine and Spirits by Price Waterhouse Coopers. In the space of two weeks a decision was reached by the Board to close the division. Shortly afterwards Paul resigned as Chairman as he felt that effectively this decision was made by people whom, he considered did not really understand the business or the implications of closing a division which was effectively the "heart and soul" of Jarvis Porter. As Paul puts it 'If you take the heart of a person then they die very quickly. So it is with companies'.

Businesses were then closed or sold off in rapid succession resulting in the Group becoming a cash shell by 2002. Paul helped in this process as he was uncomfortable with the self-adhesive business remaining in the hands of a Board who did not understand the industry.

He therefore helped to broker the deal to sell the business, which include plants in Leeds, Paris, Lewes and Utrecht, to CCL Inc. This secured the future of the employees – and indeed all these businesses are now prospering under the CCL umbrella.

'The lesson to be learned from this' says Paul Jarvis, 'is that within the label industry in particular, one has to be hands on. It is not a business to be run from an ivory tower and frankly very few such businesses should ever go public. Otherwise, the consequences of 'academic management' and suspect decisions like those described above, can result in spectacular falls from grace, as sadly happened in the case of Jarvis Porter – from successful world leader to cash shell in under two years.' ■

"The lesson to be learned from this is that within the label industry one has to be hands on. It is not a business to be run from an ivory tower and frankly very few such businesses should ever go public"

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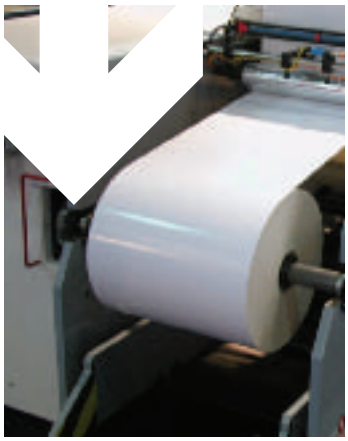


Summit triumphs in Mexico

The first Latin America Label Summit organized by the Labelexpo division of the Tarsus Group and sponsored by L&L proved a success far beyond the most optimistic expectations. Altogether 650 label converters registered. **Andy Thomas** reports from Mexico City

Delegates to the Label Summit came from across Latin America, with the great majority from Mexico. Their high level of concentration and interest throughout the sessions – chaired by this writer and L&L's Mike Fairley – is a sign of the tremendous opportunities open to narrow web converters in one of the world's most dynamic label markets.

Setting the scene was a keynote presentation written by JoukoLähepelto, Raflatac's senior vice president, Americas.

Lähepelto stressed the new climate of economic stability emerging across South America, with record exports reported from across the region. Mexico in particular is relatively buoyant, displaying a resilience through the darkest days of the US economic recession matched only by China . Raflatac estimates label growth in Mexico at anything up to 20 per cent despite a GDP growth last year of just 1.5 per cent, with double digit labels growth across the rest of Latin America.

These high growth rates demonstrate the enormous potential in a region which still has a relatively low per capita consumption of pressure-sensitive (PS) labels. Mexico, with a population of 104 million, consumed just 1.6 sq metres per person last year, for a total of 200M sq metres. Compare this to a per capita consumption of 10+ sq metres in the US, or 3.7 billion tonnes a year.

The biggest consumer of PS labels in Latin America by volume is Brazil, but even this totals just 400M sq metres for a population of 182 million, or 1.5 sq metres per capita, which is below that of Mexico.

Lähepelto next turned his attention to materials trends in Latin America, which closely track what we have seen in Europe and North America. We see increased demand for clear acrylic adhesives and transparent polyester liners for clear-on-clear label constructions in the wine and health/beauty/cosmetics

markets. Increased use of hot melts mirrors the explosive growth of plastics container labeling. Mexico is far ahead of the rest of Latin America here, with 46 per cent of its adhesives consumption hot melt against one third for Latin America as a whole.

Film is starting to make big inroads against paper across Latin America, and now accounts for 25-28 per cent of total PS useage, according to Raflatac's figures. The trend to film will be driven by the personal healthcare, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals sectors, just as it has been in North America and Europe.

Lähepelto sees Variable information (VIP) labeling for barcodes and sequential information as a key growth sector for pressure-sensitives in Latin America. Growth rates as high as 50 per cent are predicted as logistics chains become more sophisticated and global Fortune 500 companies continue to move their assembly operations to the region. Mexico and Brazil are key assembly centres for the North American auto and electronics sectors, for example.

Post NAFTA, Mexico is very heavily dependent upon its northern neighbour, exporting more PS labels to the US than it consumes. At the same time, Mexican end users import the majority of their higher value-added product decoration labels from the US, which represents a major opportunity for import substitution as local currencies move down against the dollar.

Looking to the next four years, Lähepelto sees Brazil as the fastest growing labels market in Latin America – 22-26 per cent – followed by Mexico at 18-20 per cent growth. Chile, the smallest PS market at 28M sq metres consumption, is expected to grow by 14-16 per cent, Columbia at 12-14 per cent from 74M sq metres and Argentina by 8-12 per cent from 68M sq metres. Venezuala is predicted to grow 4-6 per cent growth from a current total of 45M sq metres.

End user trends

Following this excellent introduction, Tarsus' strategic consultant and L&L contributing editor Mike Fairley put Latin America's growth in the context of the world label market, which is expected to grow in value from US$50.8bn in 2003 to $59.6bn in 2005. South America currently accounts for 5.4 per cent of the 29bn sq metres of labels of all kinds now produced globally. Excluding Mexico, Fairley predicts growth rates of 13-17 per cent for South America up to 2005, making it the world's third fastest growing labels region behind China (26 per cent) and Eastern Europe (20-25 per cent).

> "These high growth rates demonstrate the enormous potential in a region which still has a relatively low per capita consumption of pressure-sensitive (PS) labels"

Turning to Mexico, Fairley pointed out that since joining NAFTA ten years ago, Mexican trade with the US and Canada has tripled – and brought Mexican label converters into direct competition with label converters in North America.

This means Mexican converters will be subjected to the same end user demands as their North American counterparts, and Fairley used the TLMI's recent End User Survey to tell delegates what this means in practice: open bid reverse auctions, vendor consolidation and the '10 per cent rule', by which end users demand a 10 per cent year on year reduction in the price they pay per label. At the same time there is, in Mexico as elsewhere, over-capacity on older (non-added value) presses.

'Label converters are now expected to become partners in cutting costs and increasing efficiencies in the supply chain,' said Fairley. 'Almost one quarter of brand managers surveyed

said their label suppliers need to become more proactive and a further 14 per cent said their label suppliers are not yet active supply chain partners.'

Converters will be expected to deliver labels to accelerated time lines and implement trouble-shooting to solve end user problems. This may mean solving adhesives challenges and improving tolerances to ensure label application systems can run at higher speeds.

Converters today need to better understand the product decoration technologies which are challenging PS, said Fairley, and need to be more proactive in bringing new substrates, printing processes and technologies to end users. Particularly significant is the growth of sleeving, in-mold and wraparound film, said Fairley, who predicted that sleeve and reel-fed wraparound labeling will hit 16-18 per cent growth this year throughout NAFTA – albeit from a small base – compared to 4-6 per cent growth for pressure-sensitive labels. At the same time the rise in hot filling of food and beverages will continue to create problems for pressure sensitive labels.

Fairley pointed out that end users are now investing in label applicators which combine wrap-around film, wet glue, sleeving and PS modules on the same machine, and will expect label converters to supply all these label types.

Label converters will also have to offer end users vendor-managed inventory, more extensive design capabilities and the ability to act as core vendors supplying worldwide manufacturing locations. This may sound like a formidable list, but as Mike Fairley pointed out, it also gives Mexican converters a unique opportunity to leap ahead and position themselves as world-leading suppliers to the major global brands.

A sign that suppliers are starting to see Mexico in this light was a world first announcement at the summit from J Michael Rivera at Amagic Holographics of a new security hologram system applied using cold foil technology. L&L will review the system more fully in the next issue.

Mexican converter survey

Conversion magazine president David Ashe then presented the results of a unique on-line survey carried out jointly with Tarsus and taking in over 300 converters in 19 countries across South America. This provides a fascinating snapshot of the label converting industry across the region and its increasing sophistication. Almost 70 per cent of responding label converters produce PS labels, one third wet glue and more than 20 per cent also produce wraparound sleeves and five per cent in-mold labels.

For a high proportion of the converters surveyed, labels represent only one part of their business. Almost half also convert flexible packaging and well over 40 per cent produce commercial offset work. Cartons are produced by 15 per cent of these label converters.

Flexography is by far the most widely used printing process, with one quarter of the sample using UV flexo and 15 per cent using presses combining multiple print processes. A surprise is the high penetration of digital printing (20 per cent), while rotogravure also makes a significant impact at 12 per cent.

Half of all respondents implement inspection rewinding, almost half have plate making in-house and one fifth have already moved to computer-to-plate systems.

In terms of materials usage, almost 70 per cent of respondents are converting filmic substrates, with one third converting Variable Impression Printing (VIP) substrates for applications such as inkjet, laser and thermal transfer.

In terms of end user markets, we see a typical distribution between consumer products, industrial products, electrical and logistics applications. But this is already a highly internationalised industry, with well over 40 per cent of label converters surveyed exporting labels to other Latin American

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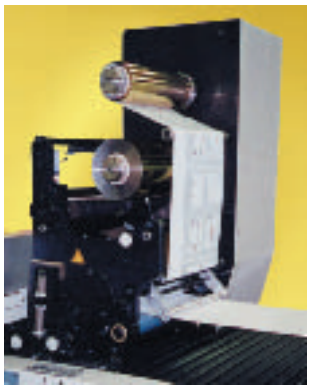

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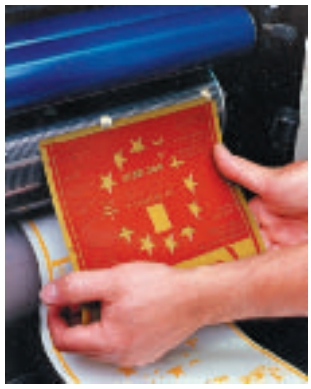

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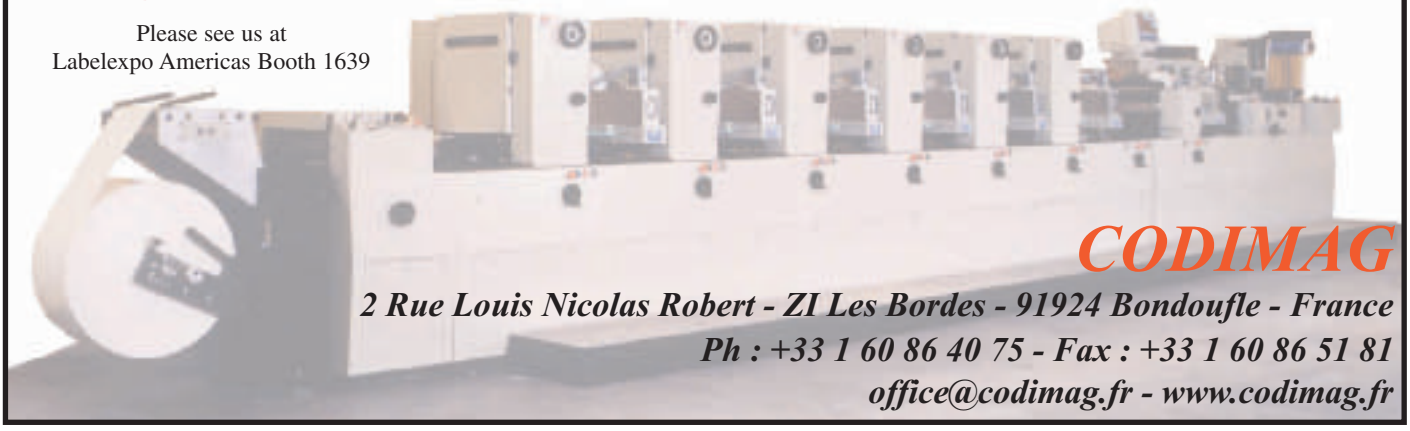

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"Over half of respondents are planning to invest in new capital equipment over the next 12 months – and a staggering 74 per cent over the next two years"

countries. One in five export labels to the US and Canada.

When asked what they see as the main problems confronting the Latin American labels industry, very few respondents cited competition from North American label converters. The biggest area of concern is finance and rising costs in general, particularly for new technology.

There is a great interest in exploring new applications, with 60 per cent of companies seeing security printing as a key future development area. Over 40 per cent already use holograms and Optically Variable Devices (OVDs) as security devices and one third are looking at new anti-piracy/counterfeiting solutions. Given the pressures now being exerted by the big retail groups like Walmart, it is perhaps no surprise to see almost one fifth of respondents expressing an interest in RFID developments.

One can understand why label industry suppliers are so interested in this region when you discover that over half of respondents are planning to invest in new capital equipment over the next 12 months - and a staggering 74 per cent over the next two years. This is reflected in label converters' optimistic outlook for future sales growth, with one third of respondents reporting 5-10 per cent higher growth in 2003 compared to 2002 and only 7 per cent reporting negative growth. Sales growth of more than 20 per cent was reported by 15 per cent of respondents. There is also a widespread hunger for advanced technical education – a finding which was clearly confirmed by this event.

Jorge Luis Lara Marroquin, president of the Mexican Flexographic Technical Association (ATM Flexo) then reported the results of the group's own survey into the flexographic label converting industry in Mexico.

Marroquin said there are 129 narrow web flexo press installations in Mexico against 37 offset and a handful of letterpress, rotogravure and screen systems. In geographical terms, almost 80 per cent of the industry is concentrated around the Mexico City region .

The ATM Flexo survey results confirm that this is a forward looking industry, listing principle future opportunities as RFID; security solutions – particularly for the pharmaceutical industry; integration of microchip technology; high value added labeling in areas such as wine, beverages and cosmetics; and looking at high quality markets currently dominated by offset and gravure.

Growth opportunities

A succession of speakers looked in more detail at the opportunities open to Mexican label converters. Alejandro Herrera of Avery Dennison Mexico pointed out that although in the healthcare and cosmetics markets there is high penetration of PS labels, more than 40 per cent of these labels are currently imported from north of the border. A major investment is required in new equipment to target these high value added markets.

There are also major opportunities for Mexican converters in the highly competitive VIP sector, where Herrera forsees a growing use of RFID labels, and in pharmaceutical labels where PS also has a high penetration and security will become more important.

Drinks labelling however, will be the major growth opportunity in the next three years, says Herrera, particularly for wine, liquor, beer, bottled water and energy drinks. In the food sector there are opportunities for freshness indicators and other intelligent labels, while the electronics and durable goods industries show accelerating growth and opportunities for PS. Most of these labels are currently imported.

Carlos H. Alcaraz, sales manger at Green Bay Mexico, was bullish about the country's PS prospects, particularly to combat growing theft and counterfeiting, now estimated to account for 1.7 per cent of total sales and growing rapidly. Alcaraz told delegates that the rapid growth of supermarkets and hypermarkets will push label quality demands higher and will result in an explosion in demand for VIP labels for their sophisticated logistics chains.

Alcaraz' enthusiasm was shared by Carsten Fels of the Cham Paper Group, who talked about the challenges and trends in

Mike Fairley welcomes delegates to Mexico City

"Drinks labelling however, will be the major growth opportunity in the next three years, says Herrera, particularly for wine, liquor, beer, bottled water and energy drinks"

paper facestocks and liners, stressing the continued importance of paper for higher value added applications in digital printing and security and the likely potential of clay coated kraft liners in Latin America.

Technology presentations:

There were presentations from the 'big three' press manufacturers supplying the South/Latin American market. Nils Evers, Nilpeter's general manager in Latin America considered the need for modular combination printing systems – now including gravure as well as foil and screen - to meet end users' demands for value added solutions. Narrow web converters have the unique opportunity to apply these techniques to a wide range of value added packaging items including PS labels, sleeves, sachets and cartons. Evers said that although flexo and UV flexo now dominate the worldwide narrow web industry, rotary offset is increasingly important for some key brand buyers.

Gallus-Heidelberg's Heinrich Sutter aimed at the very top of the Latin America label converter market with a presentation on the direct servo-driven RCS330 press, while Mark Andy's Adrian Ayala Alcocer gave a product presentation of the MSP ProGlide press.

Die tooling issues were addressed by Rotometrics' Scott Phillips, who looked at factors influencing the choice between solid and flexible dies, including substrate type and run length. The importance of correct pressure adjustment was also stressed.

BST's John Thome looked at the benefits to be gained from automated inspection systems on narrow web presses and Praxair technical sales representative Patricia Muñoz gave a well received and highly informative presentation on the influence of the anilox on high quality flexographic printing. Kevin McLaughlin and Jose Velasco from Flexo Concepts looked at best doctor blade practice.

Two vendors gave presentations on current state of the art in ink systems, with Jose Ignacio de Velasco Alonso from Sicpa taking a look at the company's new generation of metalized inks, and considering applications for special effect inks such as luminescents, thermochromics and fluorescents. Carmen Eide of ANI Printing Inks presented a useful guide to setting up a comprehensive color management and ink mixing systems, and looked at extended 6- and 7- color flexo ink systems.

One area where Mexican converters will certainly need to invest is automated finishing, and Rotoflex's Alexander Mercon looked at the efficiencies and cost savings to be gained from automated inspection/rewind systems, 'The drive towards automation enhances converters' performance and profitability,' said Mercon.

Pre-press was covered by DuPont's Jose Luis Espinoza, who looked at the advantages of digital flexo platemaking against analogue film workflows , while Cyrel's Juan Pablo Bernal reviewed the company's FAST thermal plate processing system, which cuts platemaking times and eliminates the use of washout solvents.

A sure sign of a label market's growing maturity is its acceptance of digital printing, and there was great interest in the presentation from HP Indigo's Ray Dickinson on where the company's ws4000 digital offset press fits into a conventional converter's workflow. ■

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Kammann launches hybrid screen-offset press

Werner Kammann has combined its screen and waterless offset technologies with press-side computer imaging units to produce a short run press system which has already impressed industry observers. **Andy Thomas** reports on the first installation at eprint, Germany

Industry observers – including this writer – were taken by surprise by the launch at drupa of Werner Kammann's hybrid flatbed screen/offset press, the K61-OS. Kammann is best known to the labels industry for its rotary screen presses, which use a motorized counter-pressure cylinder against which the squeegee assembley will always be in a vertical position. These presses are installed at the higher end of the labels business at converters like Spear and Skanem, typically producing clear-on-clear labels for the cosmetics and drinks industries.

So where did the hybrid offset-screen press concept come from? And what about the computer-to-plate and computer-to-screen units which are sold as a package with the K61-OS press?

In fact, Kammann has been manufacturing waterless UV offset presses for the CD industry since 1997, and has sold 400 units to this sector along with a CTP system developed in partnership with a leading supplier.

So the K61-OS press represents a bringing together of these two existing technologies.

The press is driven by direct gearless drives with no line shaft, meaning offset and screen modules can be configured in any order. The press could even be configured as a fully screen or waterless UV offset press. Optional modular components include foil hot-stamping, laminating, lacquering, and rotogravure stations for printing metallic inks, most of which are already available for Kammann's rotary screen presses.

Servo control also allows centralized input and recall of data for factors such as print image correction, screen stroke, squeegee movement, kiss cutting length, material tension, material and blanket thickness etc.

> "In fact, Kammann has been manufacturing waterless UV offset presses for the CD industry since 1997, along with a dedicated CTP system"

The print units are hybrid servo-mechanically driven, with gearless motors driving the plate cylinder which is mechanically linked to the blanket cylinder. The inking train is similarly servo driven then mechanically linked.

The waterless UV offset print stations incorporate a single, servo-driven plate cylinder for all print lengths. Similarly the servo-driven rotary die-cut unit features a fixed-diameter magnetic cylinder for the entire repeat length range. The blanket is shortened or lengthened depending on print length.

Maximum print width is 340mm for offset and 350mm for screen printing, with print length infinitely adjustable between 7-14ins (177.8mm – 355.6mm).

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Servo controlled die cut module handles multiple repeats

may seem slow, but in reality combination rotary flexo/screen presses in the field rarely run much faster than 40-60 metres/minute whatever their theoretical speed.

Movement of the web through the offset units is intermittent – compensated by dancer rollers which maintain correct web tension and positively pull the web through the press– but fully rotary through the screen and die cutting sections.

Theoretically the K61-OS press can handle heat sensitive materials including shrink films down to 25 microns (with the correct elasticity modulus). It has an extensive heat management system which includes chill rollers on the UV units, chilled impression rollers and chilled air blowers which maintain the plate surface temperate at 17-18 degC.

All print stations auto register to a mark printed at the first station without affecting the registration of any other print unit – another advantage of a non line-driven press. The screen units are positioned with a pin-registration system and driven backwards and forwards by linear stepper motors to maintain register with cross-register adjustment available as an option. The whole print station can be aligned off-contact.

Kammann has implemented its own CIP3-type pre-press to press interface - Computer To Ink (CTI) – which takes color information from the pre-press file to set up the computer-assisted inking controls on the press via motorized fountain keys. This is a far more accurate system than plate scanning for setting ink densities and distribution across the web in each key

zone. Duct settings can also be altered from the touch screen control panel, then the final settings saved. Naturally these ink values can be stored and recalled for repeat jobs.

This is augmented by an automatic ink dispensing system which takes ink coverage information from the CTI system and monitors it against the amount it is using, dispensing more ink from a cartridge as necessary.

Pre-press

Kammann developed a new generation of technology for the K26-O HS offset CTP system and the K26-S CTS computer-to-screen system.

In operation, the offset plates are first mounted on the print cylinder, which is inserted onto a hydraulic expansion shaft on the CTP imaging unit. After imaging, the print cylinder is inserted directly into the printing unit and positively located using the same mount/lock single pin register system as on the imaging device.

Because the image is registered to the cylinder and not the plate, plate positioning is not critical to achieving register. When plates are mounted in the four offset print stations they are already in near perfect color-to-color register and require minimal adjustment.

'This means that when new plates are imaged for repeat jobs, the image will be in identical register without the need to optically adjust the plates,' remarks Oliver Kammann.

The mounted plate cylinder is inserted through the press frame

One of the two imaging cylinders on the K26-O HS offset computer-to-plate unit

'Most of our jobs are between 50-100,000 labels, but we are now seeing growing demand for 4-color printed labels down to 20,000,' says Horst Steinkamp

'Similarly if a plate fails during a run a new plate can be quickly mounted, imaged and the cylinder placed in register back into the press. This system also makes it easy to change black plates for short run jobs involving text changes. Most printers using our offset imaging system for CD printing keep 5-6 sets of cylinders, so they are preparing, cleaning, imaging and printing all the time.' The K26-O HS takes from around 40 seconds to image a dry offset plate depending on the amount of detail.

The plate mounting cylinder has the locating system to mount standard Toray plates if required - for example if converters want to go to higher resolutions than the 2540dpi (80 lpc or156 lpi raster) offered by the K26-O HS laser, or if a stochastic (FM) screen is required.

There are two hydraulic shafts on the K26-O HS, so a cylinder can be mounted while the second is imaged. The laser auto-calibrates to a central datum point between the shafts to ensure consistent power output.

The solid state laser is claimed maintenance free and there are no utilities to connect other than power. It does not require a clean room for installation 'although it should not be installed in the yard,' remarks Oliver Kammann.

The imaging engine for the 700 kilo K26-O is exactly the same as for Kammann's CD/DVD press CTP unit, except for longer imaging cylinders. Indeed, the CD imaging units can be field-adjusted to handle label-sized plates.

The CTP unit is driven by the Harlequin-based K-RIP licensed from Global Graphics. Wilfried Kammann, managing director and CEO, says his company had excellent experience with Harlequin technology for some six years prior to deciding to become an OEM. 'The Harlequin RIP is very fast and its plug-in architecture means we can configure it easily to individual user requirements. It is also very reliable in that it never breaks, never crashes - this kind of stability combined with its superior performance makes Global Graphics' Harlequin the ideal RIP solution to provide a top class front end system to complement the development of CTP.'

The Harlequin RIP's plug-in structure and Rip Once Output Many (ROOM) capabilities could be utilized for constructing a digital proofing workflow – a development Kammann is actively considering.

Using the RIP's queuing function, imaging data can be prepared by skilled operators on the day shift to be imaged and mounted by the night shift.

eprint

The first K61-OS press has been installed at eprint in Kirchlengern, Germany, a company which already runs two Kammann 6-unit flatbed screen presses and services the top end of the cosmetics, toiletries and food markets.

The press is configured with one screen unit, followed by four UV waterless offset stations, then two more screen stations, along with hot foil stamping and a flexo laquer station which 'irons on' a reusable web to give a gloss-laminated look. Ancillary equipment includes E&L web guide, Teknek double-sided web cleaner, BST EuroScope video camera and IST UV system.

eprint owner Horst Steinkamp says his objective in installing the press was to attack the flexo and letterpress label sector with high quality web offset – 'because we can get more brilliant color and more opacity'. At the same time the press had to handle short runs with minimum downtime and materials wastage.

'Most of our jobs are between 50-100,000 labels, but we are now seeing growing demand for 4-color printed labels down to 20,000,' says Steinkamp. 'We wanted to be able to change 4-colors plus screen plus materials in 20 minutes without changing gears or tools.

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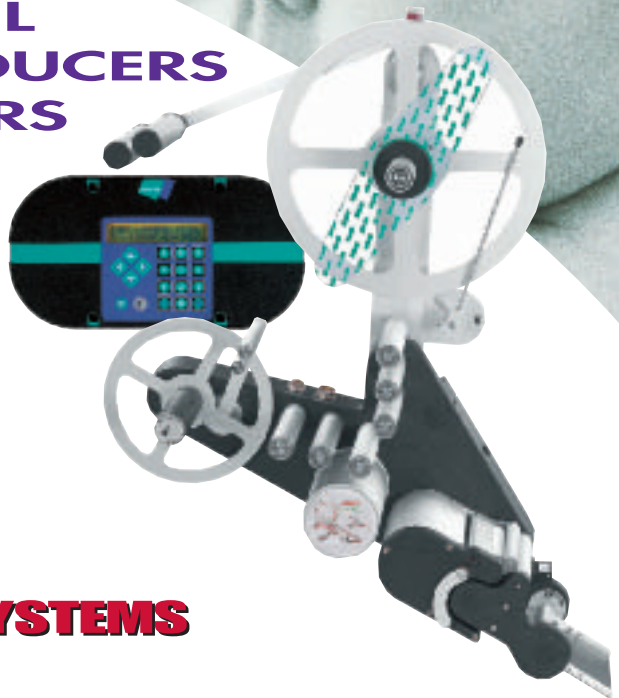

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"CTP is so cost effective that we simply re-make a plate rather than carry out changes on-press, so there's less machine downtime and it remains calibrated"

Conventional rotary offset presses can take hours to make ready when changing repeat lengths.'

The company considered digital printing: 'But Digital is too expensive and not yet for industrial production. We would also need more manpower to go digital.'

On the K61-OS press, makeready can be achieved in 50-100 machine cycles, or from 20 metres to around one machine length on repeat jobs.

Horst Steinkamp says the K61-OS press and the CTP offset imaging unit have changed the way the company works. 'Now we want to set the ink train to a standard position and make changes on the pre-press side. The data guys make changes to the colors and the ink stations remain constant so we can run to a standard. This is possible because of computer-to-plate, because we can make a plate in so little time. It's so cost effective that we simply re-make a plate rather than carry out changes on-press, so there's less machine downtime and it remains calibrated. A flexo sleeve costs €40 but a dry offset plate costs €3.50.Once we finish with the plate we throw it away. We store PDF's, not plates. If we need to make changes we RIP on-demand.'

The machine's K-RIP fits seamlessly into eprint's Artpro pre-press system.

On the Screen side, Horst Steinkamp sees great benefits of a flatbed versus a rotary system. 'A flatbed screen costs €60-70 against €350-400 for a rotary screen. The flatbed does not take two people to mount it, there is no need to recondition it and there is no money tied up in stored screens. Flatbed also has a better quality to 60lpc (156lpi) which allows us to target niche markets.' The aluminium screen frame can be re-used multiple times.

The flatbed screen unit also allows eprint to utilize a wider range of meshes to vary ink film thickness, as well as adjust the squeegee angle. 'On rotary, by contrast, there is a limited variety of screen fabrics. We can also play with the screen tension to create layer thicknesses,' says Steinkamp.

eprint has not taken delivery of Kammann's computer-to-screen unit because it cannot attain the same resolution as its analogue screen making system.

Oliver Kammann comments: 'The CTS laser images at 1200dpi, or 44 lpc raster, which is perfectly adequate for the CD/DVD market, but the next stage for us is to develop lasers with a higher resolution and to work with our partners to develop emulsions targeted to these new wavelengths. How many label converters will need this higher screen resolution we are not yet sure.'

eprint's workflow ends with automated inspection/rewind on two Leomat machines fitted with Ultramat 100 per cent inspection systems. ■

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The K61-OS press - eprint's is configured with three screen stations and four offset

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Plate changes

New developments with computer-to-plate technologies coincide with some optimistic forecasts from system vendors. **Barry Hunt** reports

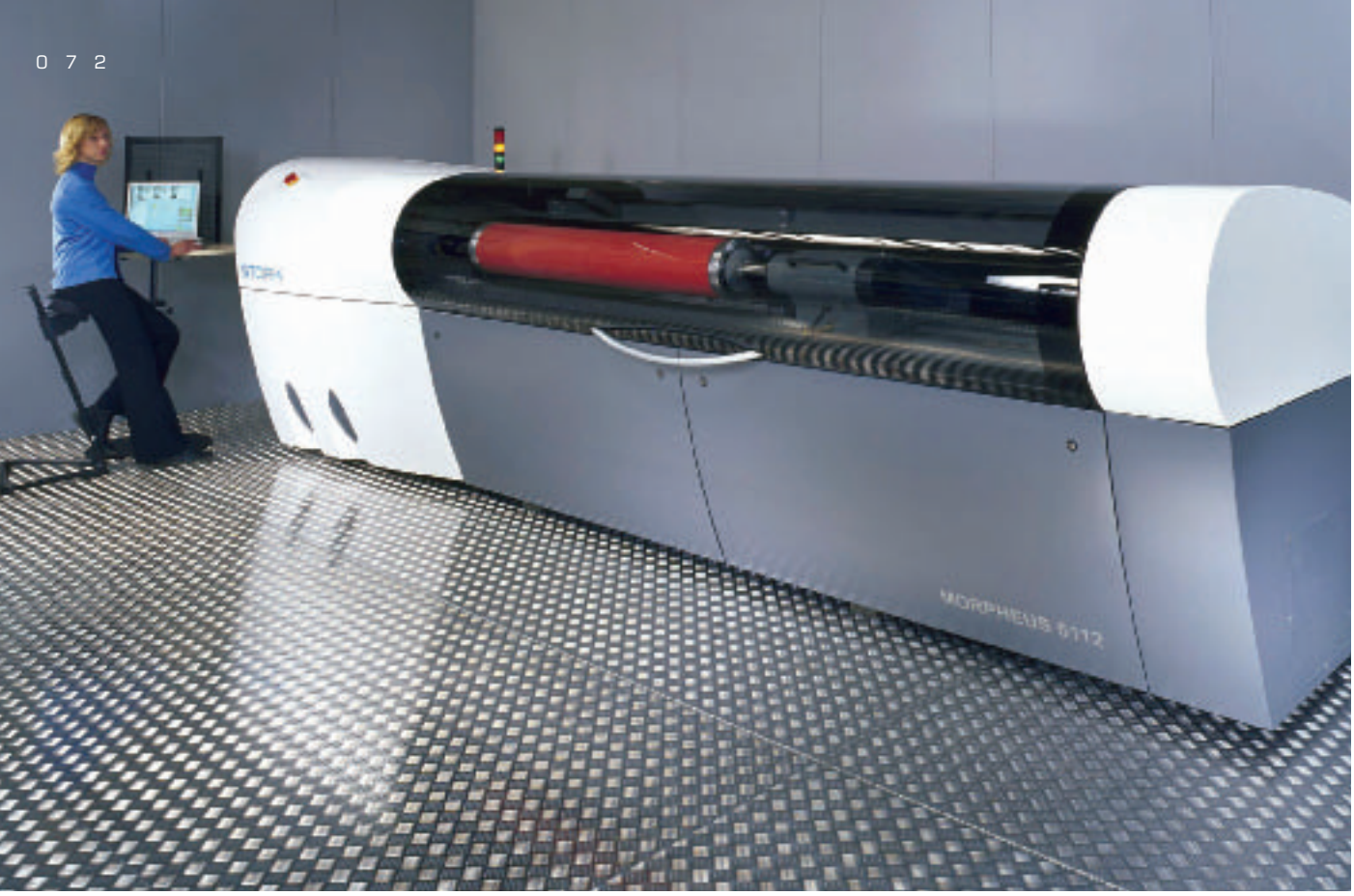
After nine years of development, computer-to-flexo plate (CTFP) technology appears to have forced its way on more companies' wish-lists. This is partly due to a wider understanding of how digital platemaking fits in the pre-press workflow, supported by a new generation of useful 'plug and play' software tools based on PDF or even JDF open system standards (see Issue 2, pp74-78). Ironically, this is happening at a time when new types of digital laser engraving systems and media are appearing to challenge CTFP's growth. In both cases, vendors make much of the respective technology's ability to combine high productivity with superb standards of reproduction quality. This article examines some of the recent digital platemaking developments, including offset computer-to plate technology, and some related techniques.

Evidence of growing interest in CTFP comes from DuPont Imaging Technologies, which introduced the Cyrel Digital Imager (CDI) pioneered by Barco (now Esko-Graphics). It says there were over 650 global installations of all flexo platesetters up to the first quarter of 2004. About 130 of these were installed in 2003 alone. Variants of the CDI range, including those optimized for the new Cyrel Round sleeves, operate in 400 plants worldwide. For its part, Creo has installed over 150 ThermoFlex platesetters around the world. In Europe it has a 25 per cent share of the market, says David McBeth, Creo's business development director for Europe, Middle East and Africa. In 2003 Creo sold 22 ThermoFlex units to European converters and trade houses. It expects to sell 35-40 units by the end of this year. As in other sectors, investment growth in parts of in Eastern Europe, China and South East Asia is also helping to establish the new platemaking technologies.

CTFP in its present form is unlikely to displace conventional film-based platemaking. It is not suitable for a large majority of converters, who will have difficulty in justifying the move to a high-tech method, with all the extra expense, training and production upheavals this implies. In any case, many use trade shops for all or part of their plate needs. Despite the materials and labour costs when processing film, it still represents a reasonably cheap and effective way of storing job data that is easily accessible for remakes or repeats. Those who have adopted CTFP tend to be converters or trade shops who cannot compromise on quality at any stage in the production line. This sounds glib, but CTFP's strengths derive from a technical ability to reproduce electronically-generated halftone dots that remain the same size, or slightly smaller, on the actual plate. The integral mask construction of the photopolymer plate prevents light scatter and image spread, which adds up to minimal dot gain, good vignettes and wide tonal ranges with good contrast and definition. Eliminating the film stage reduces variables to maintain a measurable consistency that translates into good on-press performance. It's a contributing reason why flexo can compete with offset and gravure for work that was beyond its competence a few years back.

However, this pin-sharp reproduction is not achieved in isolation. 'You have to pay attention to all the other variables in the production line, right from the anilox roll onwards', says

"CTFP in its present form is unlikely to displace conventional film-based platemaking. It is not suitable for a large majority of converters, who will have difficulty in justifying the move to a high-tech method"



Stork's Morpheus 6112 engraves flexo plates and Rotamesh screens on the same machine

"Modern UV flexo technology has become the ideal partner for digital platemaking. The printed results are so good it's often hard to tell whether a small carton or premium label has been printed UV flexo or offset"

David McBeth. He agrees that modern UV flexo technology has helped in this respect to become the ideal partner for digital platemaking. 'The printed results are so good it's often hard to tell whether a small carton or premium label has been printed UV flexo or offset. Besides quality considerations, maintaining the accuracy of plate images is also important. For example, fill-ins of small-size, reversed-out text would be disastrous when printing pharmaceutical labels or leaflets.'

The 'plug and play' software tools mentioned earlier are also making it easier to maximize the potential of CTFP technology. For example, using FM screening for the highlights and AM screening for the rest of the halftone scale to eliminate or minimize any transition from inked to non inked areas. A comprehensive example of this is at Reproflex 3, a trade house near Newcastle-upon-Tyne. It drives a new ThermoFlex Narrow platesetter with Creo's Prinergy Powerpack workflow management system running an on-line Synapse InSite Internet portal. The screen software package contains Creo's MaxTone, DigiCap, Raster Scaling and HyperFlex software. Also linked is the firm's management information system,which automates the exchange of data information between the production and business workflows.

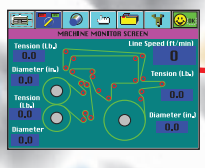
Recent developments

The recent Drupa show was a catalyst for many new CTFP and CTP developments. Esko-Graphics introduced Optics 80, an optical technology for the new CDI Advance platesetter. The plate loading, imaging and unloading cycle are completely automatic and the plate magazine contains 16 cassettes for similar or different-sized plates. It can image 8 sq/metres of plate per hour unattended and offer seamless and variable resolution imaging. Creo introduced a digital plate-on-sleeve workflow and ThermoFlex Wide for flexible packaging printers, offering a digital plate on-sleeve application and seamless sleeve imaging option. A magnetic drum option is available for the ThermoFlex Narrow to take metal-backed dry offset plates.

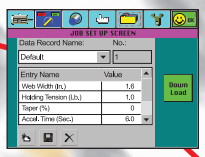
Global Graphics bases its approach to CTFP on an ICG Cirrus 8 flatbed machine. A high power UV plasma head images conventional photopolymer flexo plates without an intermediate negative mask. The patented UV system was developed with Cortron Corporation of Minneapolis. It will initially be offered in a manual version, expandable into a semi-automatic system. Global Graphics claims this approach offers enormous potential, pointing out that many plate users have not switched to CTP technology because of the high cost of thermal or silver halide plates.

Kodak Polychrome Graphics introduced Flexcel NX, its first digitalplate. It is said to deliver excellent color reproduction on

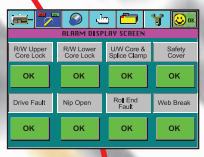
Machine Monitor Screen



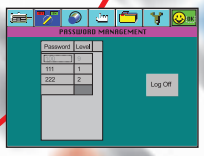
Job Screen



Alarm Display Screen



Limits Screen



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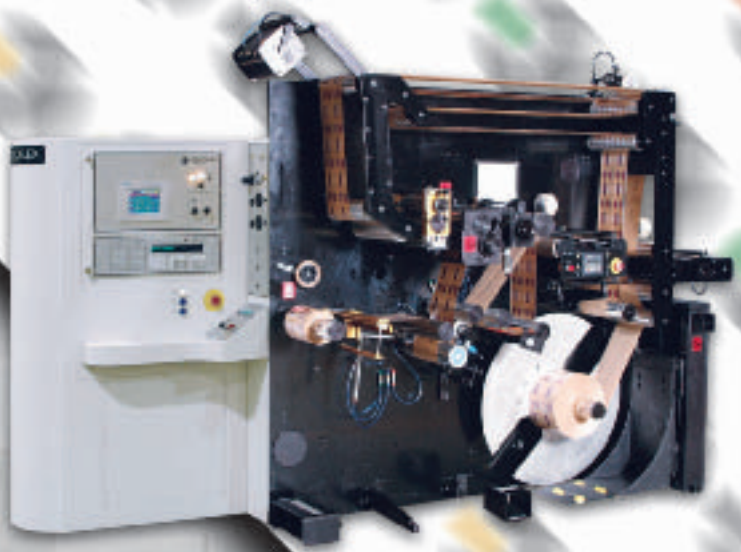

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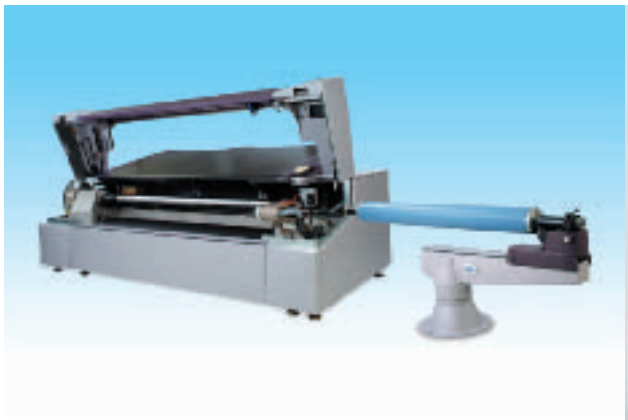

(Above) Creo's Thermoflex Wide handles plate on-sleeve and seamless sleaves

(Above) BASF introduced its flexo engraver at Drupa

substrates ranging from polypropylene to corrugated board, printed with conventional and UV flexo inks. It joins KPG's existing range of Flexcel plates for packaging, labels and tags, and folding cartons.

Anderson & Vreeland claims to have introduced the first complete CTFP system for water-wash flexo plates using the Flexo Lasersetter, a German-made fibre laser imagesetter from Flexo Laser driven by its open standard PixFlow software and RIP-Server. A&V's in-line Freedom processor complements the Lasersetter to wash, rinse, dry, post expose, de-tack and discharge plates automatically.

While flexo takes the limelight, BASF has not ignored its many letterpress customers by introducing digitally-imaged letterpress plates. As with digital flexo plates, they incorporate a black mask layer for laser ablation and eliminate an intermediate film negative. Nyloprint D plates – available on polyester and steel bases – can be imaged using existing flexo imaging lasers and offer similar quality and production benefits. The plates are available in versions for label printing and printing directly onto certain containers.

DuPont's CyrelFAST dry thermal technology now has around 300 individual users worldwide. It is a hybrid CTFP solution that eliminates any washout or drying stages, although after development the plates require post exposure and finishing. In terms of undercuts or distortions, proprietary FAST plates can be freely exchanged with traditional plates, while allowing users the option to work within digital pre-press workflows. FAST Round sleeves are the latest development. Esko-Graphics says FAST processors can be integrated with its CDI Advance platesetter to reduce throughput times. The TD4260 thermal processor is the latest Cyrel FAST product, where the firstplate takes 17 minutes to process. giving processing speeds of up to 75 per cent faster than conventional solvent washout systems without the use, storage and recycling of wet chemistry. The unit – aimed at tradeshops and larger flexo converters – can process plates up to 106cm x 152cm (42 x 60 inches) and a thickness up to 2.84mm.

Laser engraving

Industry watchers are intrigued by the arrival of new types of direct laser engraving systems to produce flexo plates and seamless sleeves for narrow and mid-web presses. Instead of a black ablative mask, a high power CO2 laser head burns away unwanted material to form sharp relief images, ideally with steep, smooth edges. A short water wash and dry cycle follows. An interesting development is the formation of Lüscher Flexo, following the takeover of ZED Instruments. Based in Thame, Oxfordshire in the UK, the new company will develop and manufacture direct laser ablation technologies for flexo and letterpress, as well as anilox roll engraving. The first fruits of this Anglo-Swiss link-up is the next generation FlexPose!Direct, based on the existing ZEDMini internal drum technology. It uses a sealed pulsed CO2 laser-ablation system adaptable for flexo sleeves and plates. Depending on format, there are one or two 300W lasers to ablate lengths of 120cm or 222cm with 50-cm diameters. Print quality delivers for Class A bar codes and text down to 2pt. Lüscher is working with Toray to develop Toreflex CTP, a direct engraved wash and dry plate soon to be available in Europe through Dantex Graphics.

Another joint venture involves BASF Printing Systems and Stork Prints. At Drupa, Stork introduced the Agrios 413X direct engraver, which uses a patented triple-beam laser technology to burn rubber or polymer at up to 18 metres/second. BASF will offer its badged version – the Infinity 4131 engraver – using the new Nyloflex Infinity technology to convert flat polymer plates into seamless flexo printing formes. For combination flexo screen operations, Stork launched the Morpheus 611X, the industry's first multi-functional laser engraver. It images rubber or polymer flexo plates as well as Stork RotaMesh rotary screen cylinders using a single beam YAG laser, so replacing conventional flexo and rotary screen making equipment and chemistry. As with the Agrios 413X, Stork's flexoPOWER image-processing software achieves resolutions of 80 dots/mm (2,032 dpi) at engraving speeds up to 14 metres/minute.

'Laser engraving is one further step in the technological development', said Jürgen Steinmetz, managing director of

"Industry watchers are intrigued by the arrival of new types of direct laser engraving systems to produce flexo plates and seamless sleeves for narrow and mid-web presses"

BASF Printing Systems. 'In Europe, the share of laser-imagable flexo printing plates has already reached the 20 per cent level. But only direct engraving, which does not need additional processing steps, will enable users to attain a more consistent quality and shorter processing times.'

Offset CTP

Compared with CTFP, offset CTP really is an old timer. In our industry it provides the main platemaking method for hundreds of sheet-fed printers of wet-glue applied or in-mould labels, as well as scores of converters with offset-based combination presses. Metal or polymer offset plates are usually thermally imaged, where an infra-red laser heats an emulsion coating. The process delivers high standards of reproduction and good on-press characteristics. It was introduced around eight years ago and accounts for most high-volume commercial applications. Currently the European market is served by at least six manufacturers of thermal plates and ten types of plates. Most are working on CTP plates that eliminate or greatly reduce the post-imaging stages and their associated chemistry.

Visible light is the alternative imaging method (commonly silver-halide or film-speed photopolymer) where a laser exposes an emulsion to light at a certain frequency. Some pundits believe CTP technology based on violet diode lasers, which are found in CD and DVD players, will offer a serious challenge to thermal imaging during the next few years. They talk of more powerful laser diodes leading to the processless violet plate, the practicality of which is dismissed by the thermal camp. As usual, the issue turns on what particular method suits a particular application and the value that users place upon this.

A new plate offering is Kodak Polychrome Graphics' Thermal Direct Non Process Plate for small-to-medium-sized offset printers. Thermal Direct presensitzed aluminium plates are compatible with a wide range of inks and fountain solutions, including alcohol and most popular alcohol substitutes. It can handle run lengths of up to 75,000 impressions under optimal press conditions and will hold 1 to 98 per cent dots at 200 lines/inch.

Plate pricing is one reason for interest in CTP technology applied to conventional offset plates (CTCP). Esko-Graphics' new Expresso B2 is said to expose 20 conventional UV-sensitive offset plates per hour. A quite different adaptation comes from Creo, which has modified its thermal imaging technology for producing sleeves for gravure packaging presses. The Exactus thermal gravure system combines Creo's SQUAREspot thermal laser imaging heads with an electrolytic copper removal process developed by Acigraf. This combination is said to offer significant cost savings over conventional gravure processes and a superior 3,200 dpi imaging quality.

For the record, another interesting CTP development, covered elsewhere, is a hybrid screen/waterless offset press complete with press-side direct imaging units for offset plates and flat-bed screens. The servo-driven K61-OS from Werner Kammann was shown

"Despite some important environmental and cost-saving benefits, the perception persists that water wash-out plates do not deliver good quality results"

at Drupa configured with a screen print station followed by four waterless UV offset printing stations. Kammann developed the K26-O offset CTP system and the K26 S CTS computer-to-screen system specifically for this press, along with RIP software for converting either PostScript or PDF files.

Water washout developments

While commonplace for letterpress plates, washing flexo plates with water rather than the usual solvent-based solutions remains as ambivalent as ever. Despite some important environmental and cost-saving benefits, the perception persists that water wash-out plates do not deliver good quality results. This may arise when plates are washed in batches and the bath becomes saturated leading to a decline in image quality. Some systems overcome this with continuous replenishment and patented filtration to ensure consistent results.

The two main Japanese pioneers – Toray Industries (Toreflex) and Toyobo (Cosmolight) – say these concerns are addressed with the latest versions of their respective products. Dantex Graphics based in Bradford and Toray's European distributor, has relaunched the technology based on Dantex's Aqua-Flex range of platemakers and the latest Toreflex plates. They are said to produce a screen image from 2 to 95 per cent with a minimum isolated dot of 150 micron and minimum fine line of 40 micron. Improved quality is complimented by a claimed processing time of about 35 minutes for each water-washable plate. Toyobo's new generation of Cosmolight plates – NEO for labels and NSF for flexible packaging – are also said to meet today's higher quality expectations. plate.

Interestingly, Agfa Corporation's first step into the flexo plate market is a water-washout platemaking system. Intended initially for the North American market, Aqua FLASH was developed with Olec, Flexo BRAVO and Toray. Agfa says the system's parallel platemaking capabilities allow operators to produce a set of four fully processed plates in less than 70 minutes. Agfa claims resolutions up to 175 lines/inch on a variety of substrates for labels, flexible packaging and folding cartons.

In the USA, MacDermid Printing Solutions offers Flexceed water-washout flexo plates in a wide range of sizes for a variety of substrates and ink systems. Several different types of Flexceed plates are available to suit various substrates and all ink systems. The company says Flexceed plates are not limited to line, solid, and coarse screen printing, as are many other water wash plates, but can handle printing up to 150 line screen. Also, there is no need to stop production after each batch since the system automatically controls both washout solution replenishment and treatment. ■

e No.310

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Industrializing labels

The car industry, the airline industry and the machine tool industry provide important models for how the narrow web industry could transition from a craft to an industrial-based process. **Andy Thomas** presents the first of two reports

Narrow web printing remains at heart a craft-based industry, relying on traditional skills and procedures which have not changed much in 25 years. But this position is no longer sustainable as narrow web converters come under pressure from consolidation at both ends of the supply chain and savage price pressures from end users and retailers.

Because narrow web converters cannot influence the price of raw materials or the prices demanded by end users, we must, as an industry, focus on removing costs and increasing efficiency in our own plants using the well tested tools of industrialization.

Other industries have gone through this process, and it was to identify the lessons for the narrow web industry that Gallus recently organized a two-day seminar in Switzerland and Germany for leading global label converters entitled 'From Craftsmanship to Automated Production'.

Klaus Bachstein, CEO at the Gallus Group, opened the proceedings by noting that label converters need to focus on the key cost drivers in the narrow web business: cost optimization and product differentiation.

Bachstein said a new business model is needed to revolutionize the narrow web industry in the same way that the low cost airlines have turned that industry on its head. This is not just a question of technology. RyanAir and EasyJet use the same production technology (aircraft) as the major national carriers. 'For them, use of Time is the essence. It has allowed them to re-write the rules of that industry,' said Bachstein. 'Similarly, up to now we have only looked at getting the maximum output from the printing press, not at optimizing the whole printing operation.'

The key cost driver for the low cost airlines is not the price of the inputs – the tickets - but reducing the total cost of ownership by spending more time in the air (uptime) and less time on the ground making unproductive passenger changeovers (downtime).

In the same way, Bachstein sees the time between process changes as the key cost driver for narrow web converters. According to Gallus' figures at least 70 per cent of all first order jobs today are 80,000 labels or less, with almost 90 per cent of the cost of these labels represented by materials and unproductive set-up time. So we need to concentrate on reducing the time between job/process changes and minimizing the waste such changes inevitably generate.

In Bachstein's view this will be achieved by industrializing the label printing process, - and control of digital data is the key: 'Whatever can be digitized will be digitized and this is the pre-condition for industrialization. By this I do not mean digital printing, but the digitization of production data and digital control of the press through servo drives.'

The key advantage of servo drives compared to conventional drives is the ability to program, save and recall different behaviors and to introduce true modularity to print and converting systems: turning the press from a craftsman's tool into an industrial machine tool .

Professor Gunther Schuh from the RWTH research institute in Aachen, Germany, looked more closely at this comparison between the servo-driven narrow web press and machine tool, taking as his example the Gallus RCS330 press (although his

"We need to revolutionize the narrow web industry in the same way low cost airlines have turned that industry on its head"

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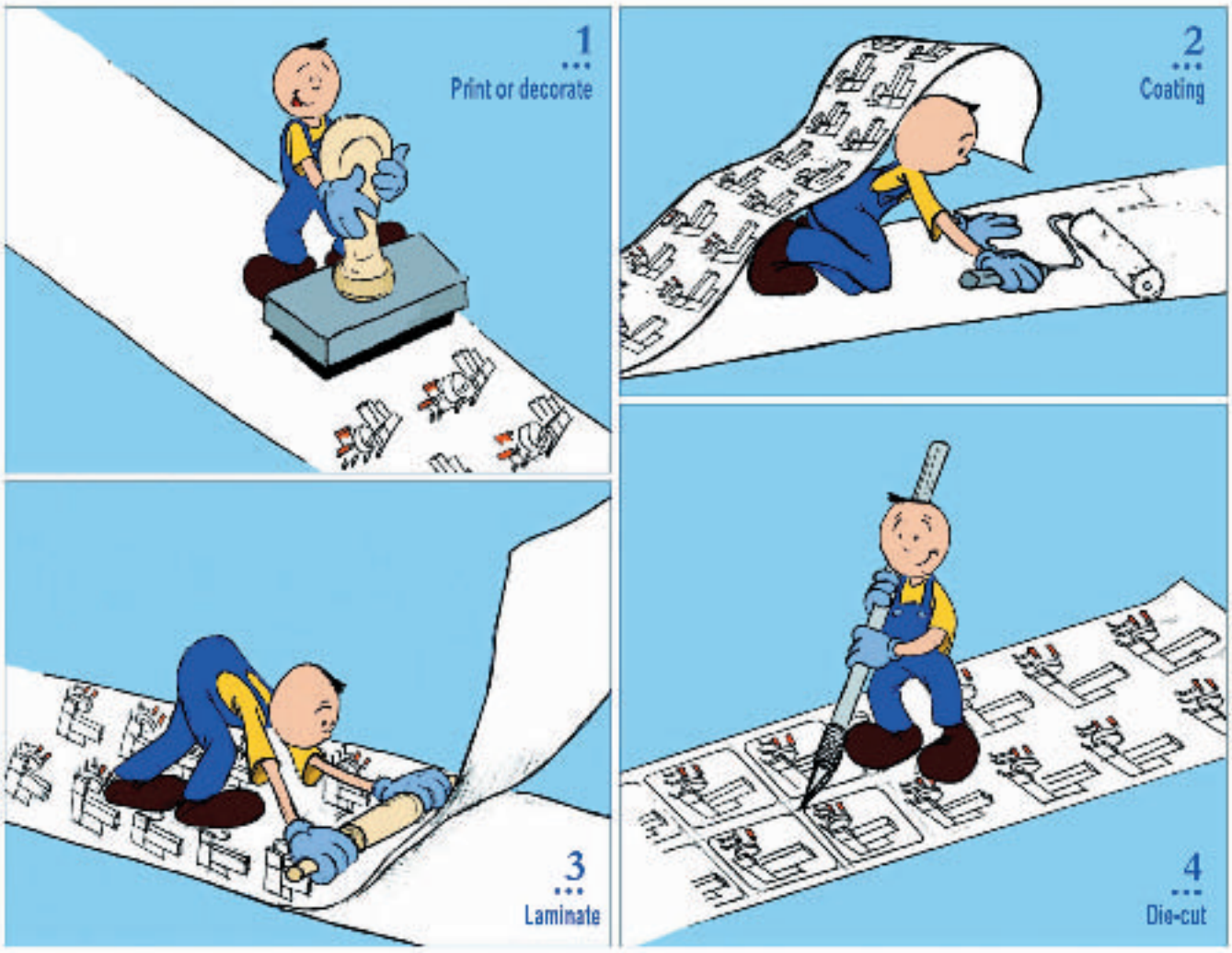

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e No.196

Many top label converters from Europe and beyond attended Gallus' industrialization seminar in St Gallen

comments apply, in principle, to any fully direct-driven machine).

Today's fully automated industrial machine tools can select and change between tools from a central magazine in 0.9 seconds via extensive use of servo drives and digital job data. They have the ability to operate multiple tools (spindles) and different combinations of tools on the same job.

A direct-driven press with a sleeve mounting system is equivalent to the industrial machine tool's change cassette - allowing rapid selection of the next imaging tool. On a press like the RCS330 we could get closer to the machine tool concept by setting up a new job during the print run. Gallus demonstrated flying imprinting with two black plates at Labelexpo , but there is no reason why a complete 4-color job should not be made ready while a 4-color job is running. Running the new job up to press speed then switching it in could be done without stopping the press and with minimal waste if the same material is being used, or if splicing from a second unwind.

In the future we could see robotic sleeve loading to complete the machine tool paradigm. In flexography this could be enabled by the new generation of 'one-step' sleeve engraving systems (see pages 71-76), imaging and loading sleeves in one automated operation.

Professor Schuh identified other similarities between machine tools and the direct-driven press:

- Recalling preset data allows automatic setting of the machine tool and thus rapid job change. Similarly the direct driven press can automatically recall factors such as web tension and thickness, length and cross register, repeat length correction etc, as well as order-specific information like job size and process order. Leveraging standards like CIP4 and JDF, we can expect to see digital set-up data flowing into the press and operational data flowing back to the plant management information system (MIS).
- Like machine tools with their multi-spindle, multi-tool capabilities, today's narrow web presses can perform multiple machining tasks simultaneously, with in-line integration of modular converting processes.
- Central to the machine tool concept is the ability of the system to monitor itself. Primitive closed loop control systems were developed for industrial machine tools in the 1990s - for example reducing drilling power if vibration reaches a set level. Today, institutes like Professor Schuh's RWTH are researching real-time machine cognition, including 'reflexes' and the ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions. Real world examples of what Professor Schuh called 'automatic real-time self-optimizing systems' include Cruise missile terrain navigation systems and car brakes which change force depending on road conditions.

"Today, we are researching real-time machine cognition, including 'reflexes' and the ability to adapt to changing environmental conditions"

Professor Schuh pointed out that the RCS330 already has 'first generation' self-optimizing systems including dynamic printing pressure adjustment powered by differential direct movement of the anilox, print and impression cylinders. The press can be 'taught' to recognize when it is printing solids, when combination printing and when printing fine lines and text, and


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Klaus Bachstein, CEO, Gallus Group

adjust the curve accordingly. In the future, closed loop color assessment systems could feed back to adjust printing pressure automatically and in real time.

Professor Schuh concluded that in fully direct-driven presses such as the RCS330 we have the tools to reproduce the machine tool paradigm - digitally controllable, multi-process capable and with self-monitoring and adjustment systems on the horizon.

Professor Schuh characterized the narrow web servo press and industrial machine tool as 'open' systems – meaning they are open to future development and modular expansion. By contrast, sheetfed offset is a 'closed' system, with only a limited ability to change behavior via programming and adding in-line processes. In-line varnishing has been achieved, and in-line die cutting is under discussion, but that appears to be the limit for integrating new processes. Professor Schuh compared sheetfed offset to Volkswagen's famous Hall 54 production line, which was built as a showcase for efficient linear production but failed because it could not evolve the Volkswagen product line.

Chase the Waste, chase the Muda

Implementing a Lean Manufacturing operation was the subject for Peter Del Conte of PDC-Waste Spirit in Switzerland, who has been advising Gallus on implementing its 'pitstop' manufacturing system (see box 1 below). Del Conte draws on extensive experience working with the acknowledged masters of the industrial process - Japanese car companies.

Del Conte said the narrow web industry is facing the same challenges as the auto industry faced, moving from:

- Production based on forecast to production based on orders (pull production)
- Layout based on function/department to layout based on product flow
- Large to small batch sizes
- Batch and queue processing to Continuous Flow
- Lot sampling to Zero Defect (Jidoka)

> "The problem of waste is concealed by inventory, which can cover up large batch size, bad design, inefficient layout, lengthy set-ups, bad quality and unreliable suppliers"

These are the essential building blocks of Lean Manufacturing. But the foundation stone of Lean Manufacturing is the identification and elimination of waste, what the Japanese call 'Muda'.

Hidden Muda can take many forms including overproduction, transportation, inventory, waiting, watching, motion, moving, counting, breakdowns and rework.

'The problem of Muda is often concealed by inventory, which covers up problems like large batch size, bad design, inefficient layout, lengthy set-ups, bad quality, machine breakdown and unreliable suppliers,' said Del Conte.

The most effective way to discover and tackle hidden Muda is 'Extreme Housekeeping'. This is not another dangerous sport, but rather a ruthless sorting out of what is needed and what not needed. Essential tools are arranged in order of use for easy access and their location visualized so staff can clearly see if something is missing. 'Every time a worker has to look for a tool, or move to another location to pick up a tool, waste is created,' said Del Conte. 'Extreme Housekeeping allows your operator to focus on reducing tools and components when changing processes.' Extreme Housekeeping needs to be internalized as a routine practice.

Del Conte said the layout of production cells should be changed every year, forcing a constant re-assessment of best working practice. Managers at Mitsubishi are reportedly paid bonuses each time a cell is re-arranged!

The organization of workflow within the cell groups dissimilar machines to produce families of parts, with single work assemblies flowing in one direction through the cell. This is different to the traditional 'serial' production concept where workers perform the same operation as a part move in front of

Professor Gunther Schuh, RWTH research institute in Aachen

Peter Del Conte, PDC-Waste Spirit in Switzerland

them. The cell concept encourages quality control by the individual within the cell.

In the pursuit of Zero Defect manufacturing each production cell embodies Jidoka - the authority to stop the production line. This is critical to achievement of Kaizen, or continuous improvement (from the Japanese words Kai, to modify/change, and Zen, to think/make good/make better). Workers within the cell are intimately involved in this process, spotting defects, analyzing problems and generating ideas for improvement. Undercapacity scheduling is important to allow time for planning, problem solving and preventative maintenance.

A challenging concept for the label printing industry, with its rigid 'craft' demarcation lines, is that workers in each Lean Manufacturing cell should have the ability to perform multiple tasks. Imagine the press and its surrounding services as a cell. Instead of operators dedicated to machine minding, to mixing ink, mounting plates and tools, these operations are performed interchangeably by any operator, greatly increasing efficiency. We will see later how this has been implemented – in co-operation with the Trade Unions – at BMW.

Del Conte challenged label printers to stop thinking of some statistical level of defects as inevitable. 'Allowable defects are simply another form of avoidable Muda. This is the Japanese mentality of Poka-yoke, or zero defects.'

Muda can also be identified outside the workplace, in relations with suppliers and customers. This can be tackled in a number of ways, including:

- Locate near to the customer. Perhaps establish small warehouses near to the customer or consolidate warehouses with other suppliers
- Use small, side loaded trucks to ship mixed loads
- Refocus on 'total cost of ownership', not on 'cheap purchasing'

"A challenging concept for the label industry, with its rigid 'craft' demarcation lines, is that workers in each Lean Manufacturing cell should have the ability to perform multiple tasks"

There is much to be gained by implementing Lean Production with its related building blocks: reduced inventory, improved quality, lower costs, reduced space requirements, shorter lead times, increased productivity, greater flexibility, better relations with suppliers, increased capacity and better use of human resources. But Del Conte cautioned that it is a continuous process – not a project with a start and end date. This requires a high and sustained level of management interest and a positive effort to involve staff at all levels. ■

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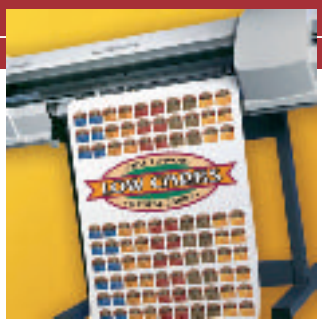

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Smart packaging

Jeremy Plimmer previews first Smart Packaging conference, September 8th – 9th in Chicago

The term 'Smart Packaging' denotes systems which add the ability for products to react to changes in the environment and indicate that change accordingly. Drawing attention to such variations provides consumers with confidence and supports the brand owner/customer bond accordingly.

This important trade conference aims to educate and inform packaging professionals together with labeling and security specialists in the latest smart packaging technologies, some of which will be revealed for the first time.

The lighter shade of smart packaging

The way a product is sealed is important to brand owners as it can indicate either a caring or careless attitude that is conveyed to the customer immediately the product is opened. This effect exists whether the product is a food, beverage, pharmaceutical or chemical for garden or household use.

By using various films, seals and tamper evident closures a brand owner can visually provide an indication of security, freshness and well being that assures the consumer that they have made the right choice and at the same time want to repeat the process again in the future.

Smart packaging can also be useful in assisting with indicating the current product status with regards to a time/temperature history that displays visual information on the extremes of temperature the product has been exposed to during distribution and sales display.

Other 'smart' features include microbial indicators and tilt and shock displays that show that food is safe to eat or that sensitive electronic goods have not been damaged in transit.

Reactive systems can be built into packaging too. Labels or sachets can remove or delay the take up of oxygen in fresh food and as such extend a product's shelf life safely. An important point here is that such systems - if used properly - can reduce or eliminate the need for additives and artificial preservatives some of which can cause unwanted side effects.

Other systems are designed to absorb moisture or heat or cool the product on opening.

Our increased fondness for fresh foods, especially salads, has led to the development of specialist 'breathable' polymer films that can regulate the levels of oxygen and carbon dioxide. These films enable us to enjoy fresh produce that replaces traditional 'out of season' products allowing wider availability and year round consumption.

RFID has recently begun to play an important part in Smart Packaging with 'radio barcodes' as they are called by this industry sector providing a range of functions such as anti-theft and logistical benefits through supply chain management.

So much so, that on both sides of the Atlantic, several retail groups have pledged their support for tagging pallets and cases with intelligent tags capable of remote data exchange over distances of a few metres.

The interception of retail supply chain data through remote acquisition has led to savings in labour costs and is fuelling an interest in combining other functions such as anti-theft and time and temperature monitoring from these 'smart' devices.

The greyer shade of smart packaging

Also as a by-product of radio barcode programs brand owners will be able to monitor the route which goods take to market and establish the pedigree of products simultaneously. It is a well known fact that brand owners sell products in different markets at differing prices. The price demanded for a branded product might differ greatly in Birmingham, Alabama, to that of Birmingham, U.K.

This price difference will reflect costs such as advertising and supporting retail promotions, local competition from similar lines and the recovery of research and development when this is absorbed in home markets rather than export sales.

Wholesalers often take advantage of this fact and buy in areas where prices are cheap and re-export back to those markets where prices are higher. Local sales taxes are also an illustration of how differences in prices can occur from State to State. Some also may wish to take advantage of this difference but brand owners and Government would like to know when it happens and who is taking benefit from such 'grey' activities.

Smart Packaging provides brand owners with an ability to identify whether goods in the supply chain are in the correct channel and if not the source of contamination so that it can be checked.

Several methods of achieving this objective are available. The

radio barcode provides a solution since all marked products can be identified and located within the supply chain. Sometimes conventional barcodes in encrypted, matrix form are used to secure this risk. More often than not though, secret printing and coding within the packaging (or label) design allows products to be tracked using digital information buried within the screens and inks that carry the familiar brand names and markings on our favourite products.

The darker shade of smart packaging

For many brand owners though there are risks that are more serious than grey market trading and the diversion of goods from one market to another.

In sectors of the market such as pharmaceuticals, imaging supplies and automotive parts where R&D costs are steep, criminals conspire to copy products and packaging and infiltrate these pirate products into the supply chain.

Though illegal, this activity is lucrative and high profits can be made for little or no investment. After all, most medication is in the form of white powder or clear liquid and counterfeiters have no problem in finding a replacement that looks similar. Chalk or water are common substitutes for a variety of high cost drugs and these ingredients can be packaged to look like the 'real thing' with little difficulty.

Those that are less well connected will refill used packaging with substituted look alike materials and re-seal the used packets with counterfeit seals.

In the imaging supply market where cartridges are recycled for environmental reasons, crooks intercept the empty containers and recycle them at a fine profit for themselves. The losers in this deal are the users who find their printing equipment is damaged and the brand owners who receive complaints about faulty equipment.

In the computer industry, the brand owner can be charged for original replacement parts supplied under guarantee by sub contractors who fit counterfeits. A case in point was brought before the courts in the USA recently on this very point.

Clothing, footwear, high-ticket foodstuffs, luxury goods, sporting equipment, cigarettes, liquor and toiletries can all be affected. Brand owners need methods to identify and remove such unwanted products from the supply chain.

Special materials, inks and holographic foils are now being used to enable non-specialised inspectors and the general public ways in which to identify authentic goods. Specialist forensic tracers are being introduced into products in bulk and liquid form in order to supply markers that can be used to establish a product's pedigree.

Of course, solutions that address a variety of needs can be combined with each other and placed into or onto the product in such a way that a structured defence is created that protects goods from the attacks identified above. This takes a high degree of knowledge and experience that can only be combined by specialist packaging and labelling suppliers who are experts in their field.

During Smart Packaging in Chicago on September 8th and 9th delegates will be able to hear first hand from experts and brand owners on how such smart devices will shape the future.

Smart Packaging will take place at the Rosemont Conference Center, Donald E. Stephens Convention Center, Chicago, U.S.A. and will be supported by the Institute of Packaging Professionals, Packaging World, Labels and Labeling, Product & Image Security Foundation and Product & Image Security Magazine.

For further information about Smart Packaging, please contact Cordelia Hime, chime@tarsus.co.uk, +44 (0) 20 8846 2700. ■

Taking the guesswork out of color matching

Printing special colors can be a hazardous business for label converters. But Dutch converter Checkpoint Meto-Kimball has reduced its downtime up to 40 per cent by setting-up a color matching system, as **Durk Schilstra** reports

It is a wide variety of substrates that is printed by Checkpoint Meto-Kimball in Terborg, a village east of Arnhem near the German border. The company produces tags and labels of paper, carton and films. It is a subsidiary of the worldwide operating Checkpoint Systems Inc., traded on the New York Stock Exchange with a turnover of $640 million. Checkpoint is a leading provider of radio frequency (RF) based loss prevention systems for the retail industry. The products and services not only include tags and labels, but also the complete labelling and detecting systems.

The Terborg plant was originally set-up by Kimball, a manufacturer of RF secured labels. Later it was taken over by the Meto Group of the Swedish concern Esselte, which sold Meto to Checkpoint Systems Inc. Checkpoint Terborg is now one of the production facilities.

It produces tags and self-adhesive labels ordered by the Checkpoint sales office in Nieuwegein near Utrecht, disposable tags and labels for Electronic Article Surveillance (EAS) and tickets for Checknet, a global service bureau of Checkpoint. The tickets are semi-manufactured tags and labels centrally produced by Checknet and then sent to printshops in the neighbourhood of the end-user where the specific information of the end-user is printed. The Terborg plant is one of the 30 print shops of Checknet spread all over the world. The operations include full color printing, barcoding, variable imprinted apparel tickets and labels with integrated EAS.

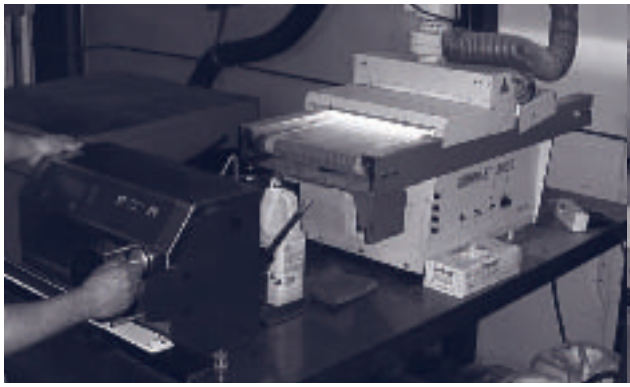
The printing shop is equipped with four narrow web presses: one 7-color Arsoma, one 7-color Comco, one 4-color Comco and one 5-color Mark Andy. The EAS department employs two modified Comco machines. The topside of an EAS label can be printed with up to seven colors, while the other side can be printed up to four colors.

Most of the tags and labels need special colors and in the past this was frequently the cause of press downtime: the printed color did not match the color specified by the client. So the ink had to be reformulated which took some time. In the meantime the press stood idle or was set-up for another job, costing both time and money.

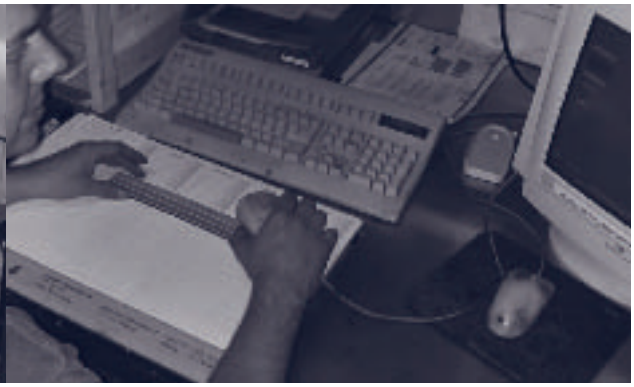
A few years ago Checkpoint decided to invest in a color matching system which would reduce downtime and give the correct color right at the start of printing.

Garry M. Van Delden, plant manager, comments: 'The color matching system has been very successful. One of the most significant results is the reduction of downtime in the printshop by 30-40 per cent. Moreover, the system allows us to re-use inks and this has lead to a reduction of partially used inks in the storeroom by 50 per cent.'

The systems consists of two main components: the X-Rite Color Master software and the IGT flexographic printability tester F1. With the Color Master software the ink formulation is



Rob van Dolderen makes a test print with the F1 printability tester. In the background the UV-curing installation



The test strip is measured with the spectrophotometer

Above left: Weighing an ink for mixing, Above middle: Ruud Tiebes: color project manager. Above right: A view of the printshop.

calculated based on color measurements with the spectrophotometer. The IGT printability tester is used to produce test strips for color measuring.

Reproducible test prints

The F1 tester is, in fact, a small flexographic press. It consists of an inking section with engraved anilox roller and doctor blade, and a printing section with printing form and impression cylinder. The substrate is attached to a flat carrier which moves between the printing and the impression cylinder. Substrates with a thickness of up to 4.0 mm can be printed on the tester. The printing force between the anilox roller and printing disc and between the printing disc and substrate can be selected independently of each other between 10 and 500 N (Newton). So, all printing pressures applied on flexo presses, including kiss-printing, can be applied. The printing speed is variable from 0.2 to 1.5 m/s. These are values which differ from the printing conditions on flexo presses. But with some experiments one can determine the printing parameters of the tester, which give a good correlation with the printing results of the flexo press.

One of the main characteristics of the tester is the high reproducibility of the print results, because the tester uses a fully computer controlled process which excludes any manual influence.

The color checking process

Most special colors at Checkpoint are specified as Pantone colors. But customers present their own color samples. The samples are measured with the spectrophotometer and with this data the Color Master calculates the ink mixing formulation. A small amount of ink is mixed with this formulation. Then a test strip is made on the F1 tester. The test strip is visually judged and measured with the spectrophotometer. Both are necessary, as color is subjective as well an objective affair. Sometimes the color is correct according to the spectrophotometer, but visually there is a difference with the specified color sample. When necessary, the ink formulation is adapted and a new test strip is produced. This procedure is repeated until the color of the ink is right. Then the required amount of the ink of that color is mixed.

'Nowadays, 90 to 95 per cent of the inks have the correct color when they are printed on the press', observes Ruud Tiebes, project manager. 'This is big improvement compared with the past and saves us a lot of time.'

The biggest problem when setting-up the color matching system was, as Ruud expresses, 'finding the key between the printability tester and the production press'. There are so many variables and for each one the correlation between testing and printing has to be determined.

There are the many substrates processed by Checkpoint, including paper, filmic substrates and cartons. In printing water-based and UV-curing inks are used. Next to the F1 tester is a UV-curing unit. The test strips are cured immediately after printing. This is necessary as the gloss of the ink is reduced when the curing is not done directly.

Flexo plates of different photopolymers are applied. For the printability tester printing forms are made of the same polymer used in printing. Moreover, the test image is also adapted to the type of work: solid, screens or text. And of course, each press has its own characteristics. By standardization of the printing process the presses have been brought to the same level as much as possible. When there are changes in the printing process, the parameters of the printability testing also have to be adapted. One has to be constantly aware of these changes, otherwise the color matching system fails.

Only a few people are allowed to perform the color matching procedure, because of the possible subjective interpretation of the results. Therefore, system operator Rob A. van Dolderen usually does the matching and mixing. In the color matching area and in the print room the same types of lamp are used to prevent any misinterpretation of color. Customers are advised to have the same standard illumination conditions in the room where they appraise their samples and the printing results. This prevents much discussion and miscommunication.

Despite all sophisticated color measuring techniques available nowadays, there will always be room for subjective interpretation. A color matching system that is 100 per cent reliable will therefore probably never become reality. But with the system set-up by Checkpoint most guesswork has been taken out. ■

No.513

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Eastern Europe feature

Opening up the east

With L&L sponsoring the first European Labels Summit in Prague in October, we present the first in a series of reports on the labels market in this dynamic region, starting with a tour of leading label converters in Turkey in the company of Mark Andy and Komori agent Aras Grup

Turkey, the bridge between Europe and Asia, is now seen by many printing and converting machinery manufacturers as a major opportunity for market growth. With a population of 68 million and a low per capita consumption of printed material, the country, which is currently enjoying a sustained period of political and economic stability, is slowly awakening to what consumer demand has to offer, with its associated growth in demand for print. Geographically well placed to serve both the mature markets of Western and the awakening markets of Eastern Europe, Turkey is unique.

It is against an industry base of some 5,500 offset printers, 70 label printers and 150 other assorted processes including wide web flexo, gravure and screen, that the family owned Aras Grup, based in Istanbul, has established a reputation for quality, both in capital equipment supplies and after sales support. Founded by brothers Tahsin and Turan Araz in 1972, the company now employs 80 staff in its 3,000-m^2 business park site, which houses over 200 other companies, many of them printers.

In the offset field, Komori presses now have a well established customer base in Turkey, thanks to Aras, which has sold 37 machines in the last 12 months. Other manufacturers represented include Ryobi, Sanwa, Bielloni, and since 1998 Mark Andy and more recently Comco in the field of narrow web flexo equipment for the production of labels, flexible packaging, and cartons. Serkan Araz, from the second generation of family management explained: 'Our aim is to offer customers a single source for all their requirements from raw materials to finishing and converting. We shall shortly be adding a further 12,000-m^2 to our facility to cater for paper storage and a new ink production unit from Flint Schmidt.'

Aras Grup General Manager, Chris Stallwood, has been with the company since 1995. An Englishman with almost 30 years of international experience in graphic arts equipment, he now specialises in the Mark Andy and Comco lines and has sold 16 label presses and 2 Comco lines, the latest of which is a 10-colour high specification press with a 460mm web width. Stallwood outlined the market he serves: 'Although domestic demand for packaging is low at present, it's growing fast, so printing companies are investing in the latest high-tech equipment to allow them to compete on quality terms with their western counterparts.'

To highlight his point, Labels & Labeling visited three companies in different regions of the country, and with different machine programmes. First call was M-Grup in Kayseri, central Anatolia, where general manager, Ömer Tahtasakal has installed the first Comco ProGlide MSP line in Turkey. The flexo press is a 7-colour model with a 410mm web width, and is fitted with GEW UV curing throughout. Specification includes a corona treater, delam/relam units, turner bars, lamination, and cold foil. Installed originally to produce folding cartons, the Comco spends most of its time producing flexible packaging with PP and PE materials.

Tahtasakal outlined his company's business: 'We are an offset house with Heidelberg presses and offline converting, but can see the major benefits by one-pass production on the Comco. Currently it accounts for about 25 per cent of our output on single shift operation, but that will double in 12 months, and I shall soon be looking for a second Comco with a wider web and specified purely for flexibles.' He predicts the growth will come from the food industry, along with detergents, and has plans to get involved with PE extrusion to be able to control costs more closely. Currently, typical run lengths are 10,000m for labels and 35,000m for film jobs on the Comco, compared with around 6,000 sheets on the Heidelbergs, an area where Mr Tahtasakal sees little potential for growth.

Moving on from Kayseri, the next port of call was Desen

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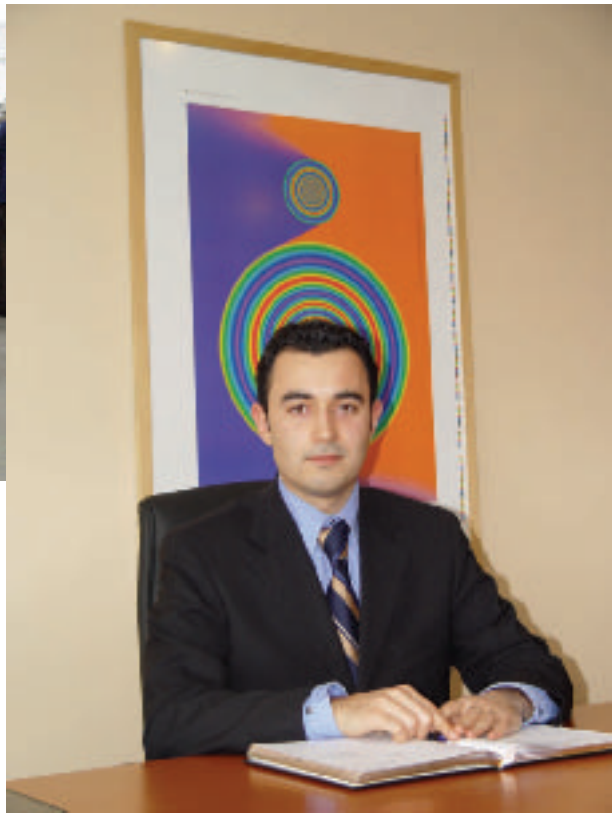

(Above left) Ali Gokhan Cimen, company director of Desen Matbaacilik, (above right) Serkan Araz, manager of Aras Grup

"It can take 3-4 days to get flexo plates. Rotary die-cutting, is about eight times as expensive as the locally supplied flatbed dies, and take four times as long to arrive from Europe"

Matbaacilik in Ankara, another offset house using Roland and Heidelberg presses that has turned to narrow web flexo for growth. Here, in a 1400m² facility spread over five floors, one of the new Mark Andy LP3000 flexo lines went into commercial production at the end of March 2004.

Company director, Ali Gokhan Cimen, son of the founder Sahmettin Cimen, explained his company's choice of press: 'With more than 60 size-3B presses serving the local market we knew we had to look at different technology to give us an edge. The label and flexible packaging markets attracted us, and after considering Arsoma, GiDue and Edale, decided to order a Mark Andy through the Aras Grup, partly because of their reputation for service and support.'

The LP3000, launched in Europe by Mark Andy at last year's Labelexpo, has a 330mm web width, 8 printing stations, a corona treater, delam/relam facility, turner bars, lamination, cold foil, and a web scanner. It is fitted with the Turkish built Feket UV system. With an operating speed of 230 m/min and a 610mm print repeat, the LP3000 uses what Mark Andy calls 'Next Generation' quick plate loading and ink cassette technology for reduced downtime between jobs.

The move from the traditional commercial offset markets of brochures, catalogues and posters into labels and flexible packaging will open a new customer portfolio for Desen. These include companies supplying bottled water, healthcare and beauty products, as well as food and beverages, much of which is not pre-packed at present in Turkey.

'There is so much potential in Ankara, without tapping into the Istanbul market 400 km away. We are looking at new business and spin off business from sheetfed labels, currently printed offset for wet glue application. I am anticipating that flexo will quickly account for 50 per cent of our output, despite its learning curve, and I shall allow customer demand to shape future investment, such as fitting a rotary screen unit to the Mark Andy. We have good prepress expertise here that will allow us to maximise the productivity of the LP3000,' explained Cimen.

Back in Istanbul, Türker Label has recently switched its investment from rotary letterpress to flexo with the installation of an 8-colour Mark Andy Scout. The Scout, which has a Feket UV system as well as full water-based facility, produces labels mainly for the foodstuffs, health and beauty and motor oil markets. According to company president Salih Hisarkaya, one of the problems in Turkey is the cost of flexo pre-press and rotary dies, which is why he believes that short run label work will stay letterpress for the time being.

At present it can take 3-4 days to get flexo plates, and when it comes to die-cutting, rotary is about eight times as expensive as the locally supplied flatbed dies, and it takes four times as long to arrive from Europe. As soon as volumes increase, prices and delivery times will fall, but in the short term Hisarkaya is concentrating on medium to long run multi colour (six or seven

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Türker Label moved from sheetfed offset to flexo

"I've worked in most of the mature printing markets and there is definitely an aversion to flexo, almost a fear of the process amongst offset printers"

plus varnish) work with his Scout, and offering added value features like reverse side printing, laminating, and cold foil.

'My next machine will almost certainly be a 460mm Comco ProGlide specified for flexible packaging. This is where the boom in demand for packaging will start, so we want to build up our flexo know-how and techniques to maximise the opportunity. We owe a lot to the support we receive from Aras in Istanbul, and Mark Andy AG in Switzerland – who offer a good training programme for operators.'

Türker Label, like the other companies we spoke to, has graduated to narrow web flexo from sheet fed offset out of choice, a phenomenon almost unknown in western markets, and is an area where Chris Stallwood believes many of his fellow agents worldwide are missing an opportunity.

'I've worked in most of the mature printing markets and there is definitely an aversion to flexo, almost a fear of the process amongst offset printers. In Turkey they have no such prejudices – if flexo is where the future growth is, then that is what the printing companies will buy – it is a straightforward commercial decision,' he said.

As Turkey moves slowly but surely into a consumer society, which will accelerate when the country joins the European Union, the extra demand for package print capacity will provide great opportunities for machinery manufacturers. Those who establish a firm foundation now will benefit the most. It is not merely a question of the technology available, it is more about the package on offer and of building relationships.

Flexo, and particularly UV-flexo, requires a new way of thinking that often deters offset houses who see it as a rival to their sheet fed capacity. Viewed as a complementary process that can open new and lucrative markets, the situation appears different. There is no doubt that Turkey is embracing this concept and it will be interesting to see how long it takes other countries to catch on. ■

Nilpeter updates offset series

Nilpeter has updated its MO-3300 rotary offset press with a range of features claimed to equip it for medium and even short runs by reducing makeready times and set-up waste. **Andy Thomas** reports

Rotary offset printing presses have been an established part of the Nilpeter product range since 1994, and have been more successful than the company originally predicted. At the high end of the toiletries and cosmetics sector brand managers continue to specify offset quality for features like vignettes fading to zero per cent, while many sheetfed offset label converters have moved into offset rollfed labels rather than go through a process change to flexo.

Ten years later, Nilpeter has incorporated a range of innovations in the press design concept which the company says creates a new generation of machines.

The main problem for rotary offset, has been its perception as a long-run process due to materials wastage while running up to ink-water balance. With the growing move to short runs, however, the pressure is on to optimise make-ready operations to reduce makeready times and start-up waste.

In response, Nilpeter has introduced servo drive technology to the M3300, optimized damping curve control, and introduced pre-setting system for all major components. According to Torben Rasmussen, development manager at Nilpeter, make-ready waste has been halved, on a conservative estimate. 'In favourable situations - for example setting up one repeat job with five colours (Euroscale plus one special colour) make-ready waste can be cut to as low as 20 per cent, says Rasmussen.

Inking and dampening

Advances in inking and dampening functions offer major benefits to users, since these are among the most important parts of setting up an offset printing press. The balance between these functions is crucial for the printing result. One of the problems is that the variation of the ink-water balance with changes in printing speed is non-linear, i.e. when rotation is accelerated up to production printing speed, the balance has to be re-adjusted. The waste involved can be a source of concern even for large production runs. And the smaller the print run, the higher the proportion of make-ready waste.

For label converters using rotary offset, make-ready at speeds of 30 metres/min or more is now common practice. Lower web speeds make it more difficult to set the ink-water balance. With presses set up with multiple color and converting stations, this often means writing off several hundred linear metres of waste.

On Nilpeter's 'second-generation' MO-3300 standard make-ready speed has been reduced to 18 metres/min, and according to Torben Rasmussen, many customers actually set up their Nilpeter offset rotations at even lower web speeds. This significantly reduces the level of waste.

The press control system also has multi-point damping curve control, so that a constant ink-water balance can be maintained even when the speed changes. These curves are individually adjustable, which means that factors such as changing ambient temperatures in production areas without climate control - for example in summer and winter - and evaporation can be taken into account. By means of the specially adjusted control curves, the ratio between damping and inking is balanced over the entire range of printing speeds - from make-ready to production printing.

Pre-setting

Substantial reductions in make-ready times are also achieved with the pre-setting function. Particularly for repeat jobs, the stored job data is used to automate important settings, including damping units, ink keys, position of press rollers, register and web tension. As well as being much faster, the pre-setting adjustments carried out automatically by the press are more accurate than can be achieved with manual operation.

Job details are recorded directly in the press control system and automatically transferred at the time of slide-in printing module changeovers. This eliminates manual pre-adjustment of the cylinder prior to the slide-in module changeover, making

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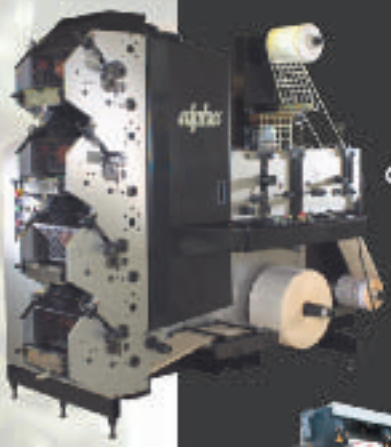

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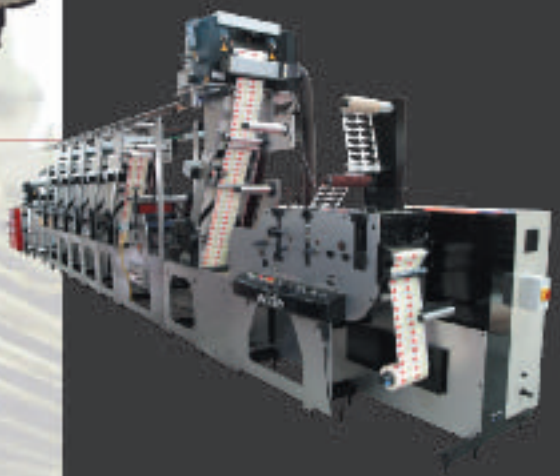

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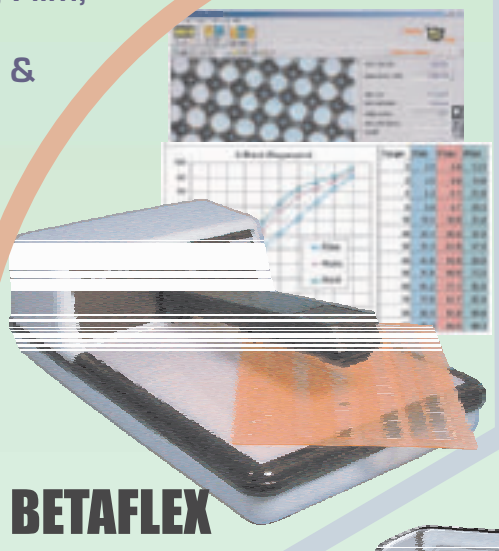

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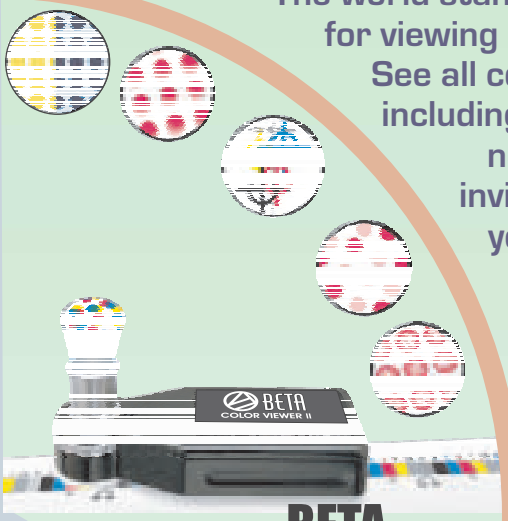

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"One of the major changes in comparison with the previous-generation presses is the use of servo drive systems for all printing units."

printing unit changeovers faster and easier than before.

One of the major changes in comparison with the previous-generation presses is the use of servo drive systems for all printing units. A mechanical shaft is now required only for the main drive system.

The software-based register control system used in the Nilpeter MO-3300 makes it possible to take account of the characteristic features of different materials. With this system, users are also able to store the data for the last 100 linear metres of a production operation, and then optimize the control parameters on the basis of the information that provides.

For web tension control, two options are available: Selecting a constant tension of the web material, or using a closed-loop control system to achieve constant web elongation.

Full compatibility for slide-in modules

In the development of these new printing technology features, Nilpeter has been careful to ensure full compatibility of all slide-in printing units for the MO-3300. According to Torben Rasmussen, previously supplied modules can still be used in the new presses, and the new cartridges can be fitted to first-generation printing lines.

The servo drive technology is available even in cases where older slide-in modules are being used with the new generation presses. For users who also want the benefits of the pre-setting function, Nilpeter provides a special retrofit kit for the required modification to the slide-in module.

Other new, standard features include modifications to the washing system, which now has an automatic metered feed arrangement for the washing agent, operated by the system itself. This means that the operator is no longer required to apply the washing agent manually.

The new press generation also features automatic setting of the ink units. This allows the printer to adjust the required ink quantity from the control panel, via the ink duct roller frequency. ■

e No.315

Klemm joins laser die cut race

German company Klemm has launched a laser cutting system capable of web speeds of 30 metres/min with a 25 watt CO2 laser system. This equates to cutting speeds of 300 metres/minute, rising to 600 metres/minute with a 200 watt system, although output is dependent on cutting depth, cutting length, and substrate. Laser outputs up to 400 watts are available. The Laser Cut system can be used with the full range of digital printing system including HP Indigo and Xeikon, while Klemm can supply a complete system with laminating and inkjet printing. Klemm sells Laser Cut in standard sizes of 100x100 mm, 200x200 mm, 350x350 mm, and 500x500 mm. Spot size (focal point) on the material is 0,2 - 0,5 mm.

As well as applications in short-run pressure-sensitive labels, Klemm says the Laser Cut system is well suited for folding carton production. Materials can be punched, and folds of different depths are produced parallel. Except for PVC and transparent substrates, all papers and foils can be processed.

Laser Cut operates maintenance-free, and the life span of the laser is claimed at over 20.000 hours, or 10 years in a one-shift-operation. Thereafter the laser can be refurbished, with replacement of laser tube and optics, for another decade.

Integration into existing printing lines - either digital, flexo, offset, screen print - is possible. If required, the laser cutting unit can be placed on rollers and operated on-line, or mounted stationary into a printing line. ■

e No.316

Conformable BOPP label film takes on PE

Surface Specialities/UCB is claiming a major breakthrough in creating BOPP films which combine the traditional qualities of high strength, stiffness and clarity with the additional and conflicting property of conformability and squeeze-ability

Over the last 12 years there has been exceptional growth in the use of biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP) films as facestock materials for self-adhesive labels. In particular, bubble-manufactured BOPP has brought a multitude of attributes to label facestock producers. The inherent properties of polypropylene allow its use in a wide range of demanding applications where labels are required to be resistant to water, oils, fats, bases, acids or salts or combinations of these aggressive agents.

In their oriented state, the molecular alignment of the long polypropylene molecules gives rise to high stiffness and strength. This results in high performance of BOPP labels in the areas of printing (good control of register), die-cutting (excellent label edge appearance and even die-wear), matrix-stripping (high tensile strength results in fewer web-breaks) and in dispensing, where the high bending stiffness of BOPP allows high speed dispensing without the risk of "missing-labels".

Currently, these stiff, non-conformable BOPP films find widespread usage in glass bottle labeling or on rigid plastic containers and bottles. Their high clarity and strength have been key success factors in producing labels of high aesthetic quality which can be dispensed at high speeds onto semi-rigid plastic containers or glass bottles. However, these film types have not found widespread application in the labeling of squeeze-able containers due to their reduced performance in squeeze testing, where edge-lifting, film creasing and adhesive pull-off often occurs. This restricts the use of BOPP in such markets as Health and Personal Care which demand a pristine label appearance throughout the lifetime of a labeled container.

Indeed, it is somewhat a conflict of requirements to consider the use of BOPP as a deformable or squeeze-able label facestock traditionally the domain of polyethylene (PE) films. The very reason for orienting a film is to impart considerably higher stiffness to a film. However the widely used PE films, whilst having the conformability required for squeeze-container labelling, generally suffer from poor clarity (haze) and need to be considerably thicker than BOPP in order to effect efficient dispensing performance. Both of these factors limit their ability to offer the no-label-look.

Recently-developed technology at Surface Specialties however looks set to completely change this picture. Realizing the need for an enhanced no-label-look on clear labeled flexible containers, Surface Specialties have developed bubble-BOPP technology which can deliver clear, high tensile strength label films, but with reduced moduli. These films, designated Rayoface CZPA, are designed to have the resilience and conformability/ squeeze-ability of polyethylene type label films, with the added advantages associated with BOPP: high

“Indeed, it is somewhat a conflict of requirements to consider the use of BOPP as a deformable or squeeze-able label facestock traditionally the domain of polyethylene (PE) films”

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Evolution of Rayoface CZPA

The biggest challenge was to develop a film with a low modulus, but manufactured by a process which is designed to impart high modulus and strength. By choosing polymers with inherently lower crystallinity and modulus than traditional extrusion grade polypropylenes, it has been possible to produce BOPP films with fundamentally the same level of the other important properties, whilst being more suitable for conformable label applications through their lower modulus.

To test the concept, various films were coated with transfer adhesive and cut to a size of 43mm-MD x 118mm-TD. The "Labels" were adhered to empty HDPE shampoo bottles and the labeled bottles were conditioned for 48 hours at 25oC. Bottles were squeezed 60 times wall to wall, using a squeeze test apparatus. After each set of 10 squeezes the labels were examined for any visual defects.

CZPA vs established conformable label films

So CZPA's low dynamic loss modulus translates into a high performance in squeeze testing. However, a film needs to perform in a number of other areas to be successful as a pressure-sensitive adhesive facestock for labeling of bottles/ containers. In particular, the high speed adhesive coating operations used to apply adhesives to a facestock demand that films must be held under tension without deforming. In addition, the film needs to be die-cut to specific label shapes and also it needs to be printable by traditional label printing processes such as UV Flexography, UV screen etc.

The physical properties of a film can often give a good indication of how it will perform as a label facestock. Surface Specialities conducted tests which compared the tensile strength and elongation at break of CZPA compared to the company's BOPP50, and two other samples (A and B).

Tensile Performance

The tensile strength of CZPA is considerably higher than all of the other conformable films tested, whilst being only slightly lower than the non-conformable BOPP50. Samples A and B showed the lowest tensile strength values in both the MD and TD.

The higher level of tensile strength of CZPA would suggest that the film will be able to withstand higher tensions during conversion than the other conformable films. In addition, the balance of strength in the MD and TD for CZPA is not apparent in the other films. Balanced tensile strength properties give rise to high film dimensional stability. It is expected therefore, that

> "This breakthrough in label film technology is a major step for BOPP in terms of its ability to be used in areas traditionally dominated by polyethylene label films"

CZPA will exhibit better register control during printing, when compared to the other conformable films.

When compared to the other conformable films the MD elongation of CZPA is lower but is more balanced, with both the other conformable films showing non-balanced elongation at break. When compared to samples A and B, the conversion stability of CZPA would be expected to be considerably better.

Print Performance

CZPA film incorporates a proprietary top coating claimed to give a high degree of print performance. The top-coat is suitable for printing by a wide variety of printing processes including offset, screen, letterpress and flexography and gives particularly good results with UV curing inks, according to Surface Specialities. An additional benefit of the top coat is its resistance to hot and cold water immersion, which is an important consideration when labeling bathroom or under-the-sink products.

In conclusion, Surface Specialities has now demonstrated that balanced biaxially-oriented BOPP films can be manufactured with all the recognised characteristics of standard BOPP label films, but with the additional conformability needed for the labelling of flexible/ squeeze-able containers.

The company claims that this breakthrough in label film technology is a major step for BOPP in terms of its ability to be used in areas traditionally dominated by polyethylene label films. So CZPA could represent a significant opportunity for the pressure-sensitive label industry to utilize the proven benefits of BOPP in application areas thus far not represented by BOPP films. ■

Technical data supplied by Dr Mike Taylor, Business Development Manager Labels and Graphics Business Unit, Alasdair Mc Ewen, Senior Project Leader, R&D, Dr John Rasburn, Project Leader, R&D Surface Specialties UCB, R&D Centre

No.317

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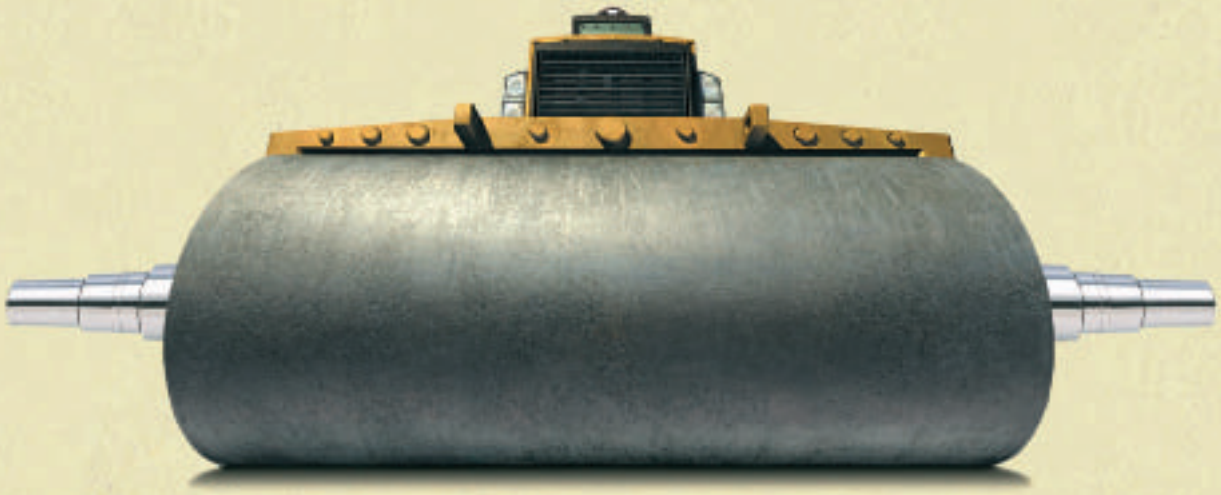

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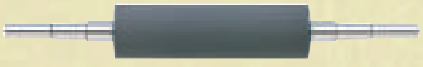

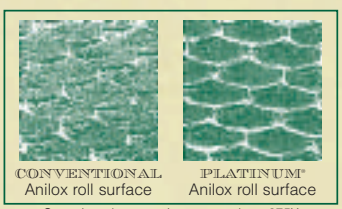

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(From left clockwise) The Ice Valley Gold Award labels offer a striking direct 'no-label look' appeal.

Coca-Cola Light labels flexo printed by Frantschach Flexible Packaging, Poland.

A special humidity-resistant coating on Neviot mineral water labels, Israel.

ROSO reel-fed wrap-around label for Gatorade, Italy.

Offset printed Limonaad carbonated soft drink label printed in Latvia.

Dasani mineral water label printed in Mauritius for Coca-Cola, Kenya.

"The gravure-printed cut-and-stack winning label provides a striking 'no-label look' design for a stronger product appeal at point-of-purchase"

Mineral water label wins Gold Award

High quality filmic bottle labels were again featured at the recent Oppack Awards. **Mike Fairley** reports

The continuing rapid evolution of high quality printed wrap-around, cut-and-stack and Roll-On-Shrink-On film labeling of mineral water and carbonated soft drinks bottles was again exemplified at the presentations of the Oppack Labeling Awards 2003.

In a dinner and Awards ceremony held during a Rhine cruise on the evening of the 10th May – during Drupa – labeling and packaging converters from across Europe saw the Gold Labeling Award presented to Printpack Europe and S.C.Labels for cut-and-stack film labels on Shepley Spring's Ice Valley Mineral Water.

The gravure-printed cut-and-stack winning label provides a striking 'no-label look' design for a stronger product appeal at point-of-purchase, greater color depth, and is applied using a conventional wet-glue paper label machine – but at vastly improved speeds and with cost savings for the end-user. It replaced a self-adhesive label.

Converters Printpack Europe and S. C. Labels Ltd are part of the American Printpack Group, one of the largest flexible packaging converters in the United States. End-user Shepley Spring is one of the U.K.'s leading bottlers and distributors of branded mineral waters.

The jury, comprised of five experts from the packaging industry across Europe remarked on the winning label that 'this water has a striking direct appeal which gives several positive characteristics and illusions. A tactile, embossed look matches the product – it looks like a glass bottle with an exclusive print – a real 'no-label look'.

Nominations for the Oppack Labeling Awards also include labels for Coca-Cola Light, Dasani mineral water, Gatorade energy

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The Ice Valley Gold Award labels offer a striking direct 'no-label look' appeal.

drink, Limonaad carbonated soft drink and Neviot mineral water.

The Coca-Cola Light labels were flexo-printed wrap-around labels printed on a superwhite opaque reel-fed film, metallised on one side, by Frantschach Flexible Packaging in Boniocha, Poland. Since changing the label, sales of the product have doubled and speeds on the Trine labeling machines have improved impressively.

Again for Coca-Cola, the Dasani mineral water labels were also 'no-label look'. Produced as a cut-and-stack wrap-around label by Standard Labels in Mauritius, the high-quality flexo printed design offered excellent dispensability on the label line and good machine efficiencies.

ROSO reel fed, wrap-around labels with up to 18 per cent shrinkability provide the snug-fitting label solution for newly designed contoured bottles for Gatorade energy drink. Printed by Bruno Viappiani, Italy, the paper replacement labels are more cost-effective than a shrink sleeve and more resistant than a paper label and can be easily applied with hotmelt at speeds of around 30,000 bottles per hour – then moulded to the bottle's contours in a hot-air tunnel. The end-user is PepsiCo Beverages in Treviso, Italy.

"ROSO reel fed, wrap-around labels with up to 18 per cent shrinkability provide the snug-fitting label solution for newly designed contoured bottles for Gatorade energy drink"

A white wet-glue, cut-and-stack label for Limonaad in the nominations was one of the first examples of conventional offset printing on plastic film in a former Soviet state. Printed by S & G Tipografija for PJSC Gutta – both in Latvia – the labels are dispensed on the original paper labeling machine, with a very similar machine performance.

The final nomination was for a reel-fed wrap-around film label for Neviot mineral water. Printed by Loboprint, Netanya, Israel, the labels incorporated a special coating designed for labels used with products that are sensitive to humidity or often stored in humid conditions. The end-user is Neviot (Coca-Cola Israel).

The jury for the Awards met in the regional headquarters of ExxonMobil Films Europe in Luxembourg in December 2003. Made up of:

Kim Norland from Design Succes design agency based in Denmark; Gilbert Bureau, Head of ESIEC Packaging School in France; Claudio Colombo, editor of Rassegna dell'Imballaggio based in Italy; Nico de Kruijf, Head of the Packaging Research Department for TNO, based in the Netherlands; Denis Eugene, Division R&D Manager of SICPA, based in France.

The expert jury decisions reflect the growing trend for innovative packaging and labeling that adds value to a product and provides enhanced consumer appeal – a trend that will undoubtedly continue. ■

No.319

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Tackling waste marks way forward for convertors

Mike Fairley looks at a new waste management system and assesses its potential in the label industry

One of the key challenges for the label converter today is how to get back to the levels of profitability achieved by the industry in, say, the 1980's. With margins now being continually squeezed by cost increases and by buyers driving down prices, many converters no longer make a sufficiently viable return to invest for the future. That's not sustainable in the longer term.

Options to improve profitability can only really come from finding higher added-value, more profitable, work or from increasing efficiency and reducing wastage. Yet, many converters still invest too little time and effort in either option.

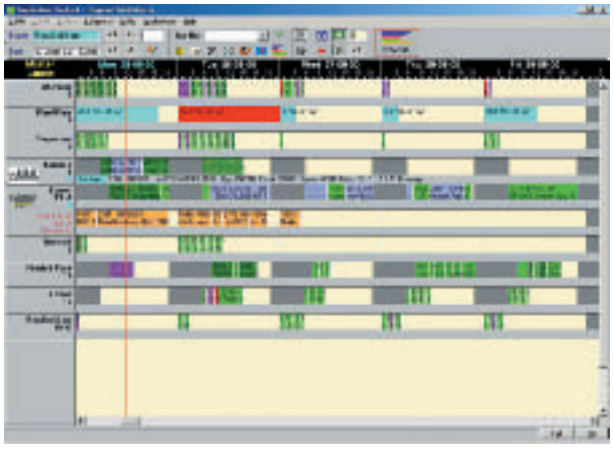
Certainly, finding and developing added-value label business is not a quick fix. It takes time to develop the right opportunities, to invest in the right technology and people needed and to find the necessary new markets and customers – but get it right and it can undoubtedly add value to the bottom line over a period of time.

In the more immediate term however, it is the challenge of tackling wastage and improving press or operator efficiency that offers the fastest route to improving margins. Even here, too few converters have so far made really serious efforts to manage their materials wastage, to benchmark press performance or to run their label operation much more efficiently.

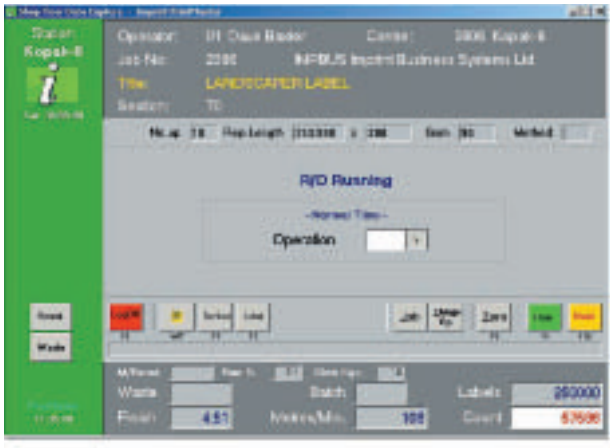
Indeed, how many converters can truthfully say what their exact percentage of wastage is, which presses are the most

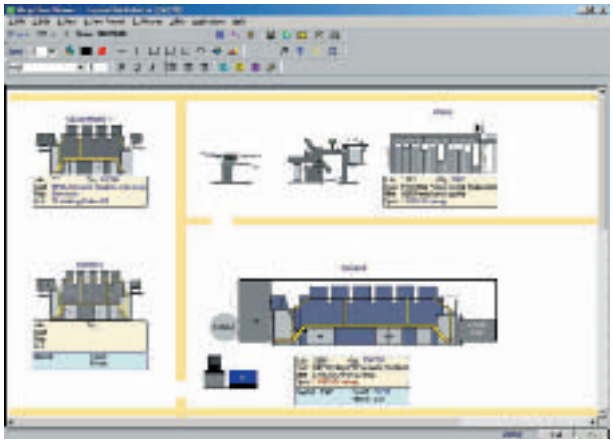
> "Options to improve profitability can only really come from finding higher added-value, more profitable work, or from increasing efficiency"

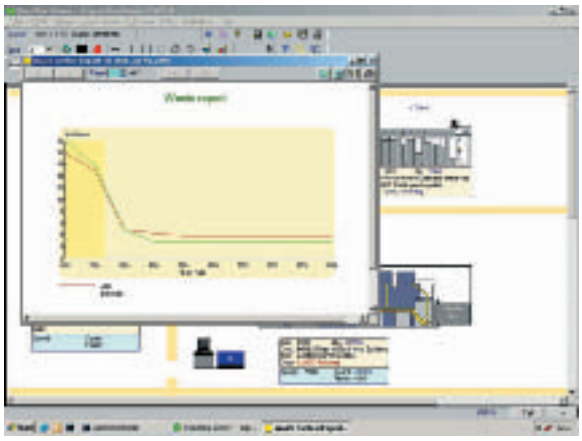
Viewing and monitoring production control operations on screen



Shop floor data capture information for a KoPack press







(Above, left and right) Calling up a waste report on screen

"A waste control management system that facilitates tracking and monitoring of waste through the production cycle is relatively inexpensive today"

efficient or profitable, what work they should be seeking for the best margins? But why not? A waste control management system that facilitates the tracking and monitoring of waste throughout the production cycle is a relatively inexpensive investment today – perhaps US$ 5,000 for the software modules and under US$ 2,000 per press for the machine monitoring devices.

Combine the software modules and monitoring devices together and link them into the converter's MIS system and the resulting waste management system incorporates stock control and goods inward information, shop floor data capture and machine monitoring.

Waste control reporting improves the accuracy of shop floor data capture and produces a blow-by-blow record of make-ready and press running time, machine stops, wash-up time, copies run, wastage, material returned to stock, comparisons of presses or operators in terms of waste performance and efficiency, comparisons of labelstock performance by materials type or manufacturer, amount of material used in make-ready and much more.

Armed with such data it becomes easy to take steps to reduce all areas of wastage and down time – materials, make-ready, wash-up, presses, operators, etc.

But does it all produce results? Well, according to converter feedback to Imprint Business Systems Limited, who recently introduced the Imprint Waste Management System, the return on investing in the system can be achieved in around 2-3 months through reduced wastage and improved efficiency. Few investments in the label industry can be said to offer such an immediate response.

Formed in 1979 by highly qualified staff from within the printing industry, Imprint has been developing and installing sophisticated Management Information Systems (MIS) into the printing, roll-label, carton and packaging sectors for many years.

Modules currently available include everything from estimating to job costing, purchasing, stock control and finished goods through to despatch control and labelling, shop floor data capture through to production, invoicing and report generation.

Now, with their latest waste management system, Imprint has taken the tracking and monitoring of label and production waste to new levels of performance. Three module groups are involved in the system:

- **Stock control and goods inward.**

In this module, reels (or pallets if sheet-fed presses are used) are weighed as they enter the plant via an on-line electronic weighbridge, which automatically allocates a batch number and a reel number and books the reel into stock. A label is

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"Shop floor and production control data can be significantly improved by fitting an intelligent interface between the machine and the shop floor data capture station"

produced for attaching to the reel, while the stock system records the reel weight and width and any other relevant details – such as laminate type. Reports may be produced to show any variance of actual against ordered material. Reels or pallets are therefore weighed, validated and identified in the goods inward area and not at the press.

The labels produced at goods inward are used for identification, reel tracking and electronic stock checks. The barcode on the label can be scanned on a shop floor data capture station on the press, so identifying weight, width, gsm, microns, supplier, order/batch number, etc, of each reel as it is presented to the press. Part returns to stock can also be identified.

● Shop floor data capture and production control.

Shop floor data capture stations normally include a barcode reader and are connected to the main file server. Being PC and on-line, they can relate directly to stock control, production control, works instructions, cost sheets, etc, for the particular job being run. Operation codes input by the press operator report back on what is actually happening.

Shop floor and production control data can be significantly improved by fitting an intelligent interface between the machine and the shop floor data capture station. This enables the press to be directly monitored. The link can either be connected to a modem in the press control system or through attaching two or three non-invasive electronic sensors to the press.

The intelligent interface improves the accuracy of the shop floor data capture, links directly to the production control office and records a blow-by-blow account of make-ready, machine starts and stops, press speed, wash-ups, copies run, wastage and all individual operations and events.

● Waste control.

Using the software modules and intelligent interface enables individual reel weights, lengths, widths, etc, to be known, what happens to them while they are running and the good/waste counts attributable to each reel or pallet.

A standard electronic weighbridge is attached to the shop floor data capture terminal and continuously monitored. This enables reel waste to be monitored and reported from a pallet or bin sitting on the weighbridge.

All data throughout the process is recorded and can be easily accessed to produce waste reports by shift, job, operator, press or to customers' specific requirements – and over any time scale.

Intelligent interfaces can also be attached to later processes – such as re-winding, slitting, etc, - to allow waste to be tracked throughout the whole production process, not just press wastage.

At the end of each job or each day, a complete record can be used by the company to compare labelstock performance between different suppliers, to compare wastage levels between presses and/or operators and to obtain a complete analysis of press performance and waste.

Linked into an MIS system the waste control and analysis data can be used in the preparation of all kinds of documents – internal reports, management documents and even performance or waste management reports for key customers. That is something that impresses them.

Production performance, market performance, future waste projections or press efficiency, etc, can all be incorporated into personalised documents or presentations. Month-end figures, statistical reports, etc, can also be generated.

Perhaps, more importantly, the system – named WasteMaster – provides all the facts and figures and reports to help a company comply with packaging/label waste legislation (e.g. the EEC Packaging Waste Directive). As such legislation becomes ever more invasive of converting performance and operation it will become key for label converters to prove they meet their legislative requirements.

Managing waste, monitoring press and operator performance, increasing plant efficiency, etc, are no longer things that are nice to be able to do – they are now part of the day-to-day management of efficient label plants looking to achieve sustainable profit levels and to have the funds available to invest in their ongoing, and successful, future.

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Embossing opportunity

Xynatech has developed a system for embossing with a single magnetic cylinder – a system equally applicable to pressure sensitive stock and thin paperboard. **Andy Thomas** reports

Xynatech is developing an in-line, single magnetic die embossing technique. Designed as an inexpensive alternative to solid tooling, the system is capable of handling a wide range of substrates with a single stainless steel die, opening up new applications for Braille or short run decorative embossing where solid tooling is prohibitively expensive. The first examples, seen by L&L, include embossing in register with a printed image. Several converter trials have been successfully concluded.

The system is deceptively simple. Instead of adjusting the embossing profile, the Xynatech system builds the height of the impression cylinder using a compressible plate material whose thickness can be varied. This technique allows the converter to control the impression. The stainless steel embossing die is mounted on a magnetic cylinder.

A solid embossing die can cost up to $3,200, while the plate material costs $0.45 per sq inch. So a 10 x 12in impression plate would cost just $48. The very thin cushioning material can be re-used multiple times.

Xynatech has conducted extensive R&D running the embossing plate against various impression materials to ascertain the optimum plate material and thickness. Folding carton embossing is done on male-female die sets, integral with the cutting and creasing, so the embossing system complements Xynatech's growing commitment to the in-line carton converting market, as well as to the prime label market.

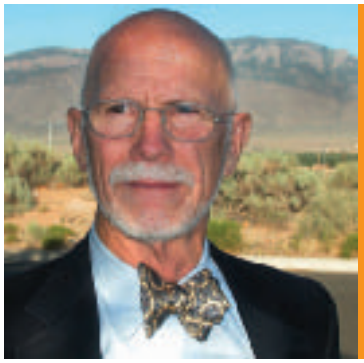
The company had its PC pressure cut m/f die system (see boxout below) on the Varyflex press seen at Omet's Open House in Italy (L&L issue 2, 2004) and at Drupa, and has gained significant experience on a number of other narrow web presses.

'Die cutting on cartons is not now the key issue - we can do it,' states Xynatech's Jim Redd. 'The issue is the delivery table and handling the scrap on a system like the Omet Varyflex, which runs at 500ft/minute on a 26in web.'

Waste is normally removed as a 'stream'. Stream stripping is very reliable and easy to set-up. If internal waste must be removed, stripping pins can be placed in the lower magnetic cylinder. The waste is then removed by a comb and vacuum system. Outboard stripping is another alternative. When stream stripping is used and a window or other internal waste must be removed, a separate air-eject cylinder is often employed. Sometimes the lower magnetic cylinder is prepared with an air-ejection capability.

"Xynatech has conducted extensive R&D running the embossing plate against various impression materials to ascertain the optimum plate material and thickness"

On narrow web presses the male-female combined cutting and creasing cylinders are mounted in the last station, and with



"Die cutting on cartons is not now the key issue - we can do it," states Xynatech's Jim Redd

adequate access to the magnetic cylinders, PC dies can be changed without removing the magnetic cylinders from the press. However, the demand for quick changeovers has led many press manufacturers to offer removable die cutting modules, allowing for off-line die make-ready and significantly reducing changeover times. Cutting loads are high with pressure cutting, however, and a PC-enabled press must be rigid to minimize deflection and bounce.

Extensive feedback on the style of cut/crease acceptable to end-users has come from the offset carton industry. 'Pretty much the first thing an offset printer will say is that the scores are not high enough, so we had to change the way we do things and add height to the score,' says Jim Redd. In fact PC scores are more controllable than steel rule scores since the etched dies can be produced with any blade width. This is not so with steel rule dies. Today the PC dies are available in virtually every conceivable type of score or crease. The crease can be raised, reversed, interrupted cut or partial cut, for example. The range of paperboard thickness handled runs from 0.011 to 0.032 inches.

In terms of run length, shorter run, high value added carton work must count as a major opportunity for narrow web converters, according to Jim Redd. But longer runs of cartons can also be profitable using magnetic dies. Xynatech has one long run narrow web application in China, for example, with a 16in Mark Andy press converting milk cartons. Flip top cigarette cartons are another growing end-use where long runs are common.

Interesting to note is the importance in China of adding anti-counterfeit features with the die tooling. This is a technique Xynatech developed for stamp printing - perforations with irregular shaped die designs were used for a Hong Kong stamp which features a tiny school of fish. But the technique has clear possibilities in the labels and in-line carton area. ■

e No.320

"The system is deceptively simple. Instead of adjusting the embossing profile, the Xynatech system builds the height of the impression cylinder using a compressible plate material"

PC carton dies

Xynatech's PC carton dies combine cutting and creasing in one die set which eliminates cut-to-score registration problems and reduces tooling expenditures. The dies are imaged directly to the steel instead of using film, allowing a high level of control over the cutting profile.

The conventional process for manufacturing flexible dies employs a photographic film mast to transfer the die image to steel plates. After this the plates are etched and become dies. The weakness of this conventional process is the instability of the photographic film. Moisture changes and temperature changes will cause dimensional changes in the film. In the most benign cases, the resulting die is not the specified length or width. With most single dies – for labels - this is not critical. However in situations where the print to cut registration is tight or in situations where two dies must register - such as folding carton dies - film movement can be devastating.

This level of accuracy and repeatability is important for the pressure cutting system to work. The underlying principle is that the flat cutting lands compress the paperboard to the point of rupture. The resulting cut is claimed clean and dust free. There is no contact between matching lands - a separation of approximately 20 per cent of the original board caliper is maintained. This absence of steel-to-steel contact greatly increases die life versus conventional crush cutting, says Xynatech's Jim Redd. The PC score is formed when the paperboard is pinched between the male blade and the female channel.

According to Jim Redd, PC dies work well on SBS and recycled paperboard, although die life will usually be better with SBS. The coating on the board has a significant impact on die life. Abrasive coatings reduce die life while coatings with lubricity - such as polyethylene - enhance die life. Running recycled board, a minimum die life of 2,500,000 can be expected on a fixed gap installation. When running recycled board with an adjustable gap, a die life of 5,000,000 is a realistic objective. The dies can be used many times but care should be taken to avoid damaging the mounting holes. Paperboard thickness can range from 0.010 to 0.032 inches.

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Modern Labelling implements MIS

Label converters are starting to take management information systems seriously, following a trend pioneered in the commercial print sector. Modern Labelling Systems in Ireland has now made the jump and is reaping significant benefits

As increasing numbers of label printers look to invest in Management Information Systems, MIS suppliers are starting to take the market seriously. Optichrome Computer Systems Ltd (OCSL), a major player in the commercial MIS sector, has just installed a system at one of Ireland's largest label printers, Modern Labelling Systems in Mullingar.

'We are seeing an increasing amount of interest from label printers in our Optimus 2020 system and expect this to be one of our biggest growth markets in the next 18 months,' says Henny van Esch, international director at OCSL and chairman of the CIP4 MIS Working Group. 'Commercial printers have long recognised the advantages of MIS and recent developments have made this technology more popular with label printers.'

Modern Labelling Systems has reaped the benefits of having progressed from manual methods of inputting data to the high levels of automation offered by its OCSL Optimus 2020. The company is currently implementing an e-commerce facility within its MIS system and expects this to be functioning during April.

'Label printers are catching up with their commercial peers in terms of MIS technology and in having to deal with similar trends such as shortened run lengths, faster turnaround requirements and demands for tighter costs,' says Martin Doyle, managing director of Modern Labelling Systems. 'Having experienced the advantages offered by the Optimus 2020 system, we would never consider going back to a manual system.

'The initial installation of Optimus 2020 consisted of estimating, costing and stock control modules and this has been expanded to include shop floor data collection terminals, which are situated throughout the pressroom and finishing

"The e-commerce facility within the Optimus 2020 system allows customers to have direct access to job information, PDF proofs and account information"

departments.

'Although inputting instructions on an MIS system is only slightly faster than doing the same manually, there are huge benefits from that point onwards. For example, eliminating the re-keying of information has resulted in huge time savings, with jobs being completed in a couple of minutes that used to take half an hour. What's more, there is greater precision of information, which has led to a significant reduction in wastage due to job data errors.

'It is extremely quick and easy for operators to enter information and anyone in the factory can check the progress of the job at any stage. This is a big aid to the production team, and this ability to have shared knowledge between departments was something we were very keen to implement.

'If used correctly an MIS system will help to identify more clearly which are the most profitable jobs and in what areas it may be possible to save money. The Optimus 2020 system has helped us win more work and is vital in allowing us to provide the speedy turnaround that is demanded in the industry.'

With the potential to win new business via the Internet, e-commerce is emerging as a major selling tool. The e-commerce facility within the Optimus 2020 system allows customers to have direct access to job information, PDF proofs and account information. They can check stock levels, request quotes, place orders, give delivery and call-off instructions and re-order all on-line.

'Once we move on-line the whole process will become much quicker and simpler and customers will be able to view images and samples of jobs via the Internet,' says Martin Doyle.

Modern Labelling Systems has recently installed the report writing tool Cognos from OCSL. This programme offers a wide range of business tools, providing a complete description of the database and delivering current and detailed transactional data. It also allows IT departments and managerial staff to access and analyse data.

'You need to take care when you are trying to find the right MIS system for your business as there is a range of suppliers, which all appear to offer similar modules. Make sure that the MIS modules are suitable for the type of work you handle and that they are JDF enabled. It is important to have a strong technical support team that offers sound training and after-sales advise. This is one of the areas that OCSL has been excellent at providing,' comments Martin Doyle.

'I would advise anyone out there who is looking to invest in an MIS system to make sure that they have a clear vision of what they wish to achieve with their new software before they install it.'

Modern Labelling Systems was founded by Martin Doyle in 1987 and now employs 20 people, supplying self-adhesive labels to high street pharmacies and supermarkets throughout Ireland. In addition to its comprehensive pre-press and finishing departments the company operates three Mark Andy flexo presses.

Henny van Esch has worked at OCSL for 10 years and in his role as international director he comes into contact with printers throughout Europe. 'I think one of the biggest dangers when installing an MIS system is to simply use it to do electronically what used to be done manually, because this will not let you get the most out of the technology. says van Esch. 'The implementation of an MIS system provides the perfect opportunity to examine all of the procedures carried out within the factory and a good MIS supplier should be able to give advice on how best to optimise these.

'Potential buyers should look carefully at what the MIS supplier is offering. For instance, will the modules require extensive customisation to make them do what you need, are there regular updates and will the software enable you to take advantage of the latest industry development such as JDF.'

Van Esch warns potential buyers to beware of claims of equipment being JDF compliant, because this can be misleading. 'A lot of suppliers are implementing parts of the official JDF specification, but this is more than 900 pages, and some companies are developing their software to be compliant with only a tiny part of the specification – generally the part that is easiest for them to implement. It means that they can put a "JDF compliant" sticker on their equipment, but it is likely that it may not work with other systems because they have developed different parts of the specification.' ■

"Some companies are developing their software to be compliant with only a tiny part of the JDF specification – generally the part that is easiest for them to implement"

13 - 16 September, Chicago
LABELEXPO Americas 2004
www.labelexpo-americas.com
Booth 810

Our new carousel design makes automatic roll changing so easy, even a child can do it.

Now Martin offers an automatic roll-change solution specifically designed for quick payback in narrow web printing and converting.

The new STS and STR eliminate costly press downtime and substrate waste related to manual roll changes. Available for up to 13" web widths, the new STS and STR are compact carousel turrets with small footprints making them ideal for both new and upgrade installations. Both feature fewer operator controls for simplified operations and maintenance. The STR is designed to wind rolls without foldback at the core, eliminating a source of wrinkling and materials waste. A lay-on roller and integrated web guide provide greater winding control for higher quality rolls. Non-stop productivity and simplified operations are built into every Martin solution. For an on-line video demonstration, visit www.martinautomatic.com

Martin Engineers Solutions

Martin Automatic Inc

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Martin Automatic Europe GmbH Sonnenbergstrasse 73 D-74626 Bretzfeld-Dimbach Germany tel +49.7946.942.881 fax +49.7946.942.396

Labelexpo Americas 2004
Show Preview

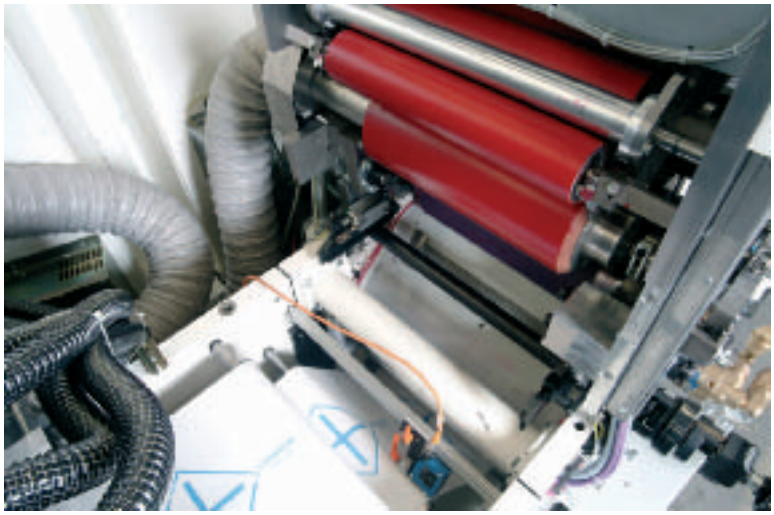
The Labelexpo Americas Review
continued from P.45

Island Clean Air Inc
Island Clean Air has three new machines which are engineered to capture fumes, ink smells, toxic VOC's, pollen, dander, bacteria, paper dust and spray powder below one micron. All have air flow meters, vacuum cleanable filters, plug into 120V and five year warranties. The Duster 1,000 will clean shop air up to 1,000 square feet. The Duster 2,000 will clean shop air up to 2,500 square feet and the Duster 3,000 will clean shop air up to 5,000 square feet.

ITW Thermal Films
ITW is announcing the release of the B324 Broad Spectrum Resin, developed to provide versatility whilst delivering good chemical and abrasion resistance.

Kammann Machines
Kammann, a manufacturer of roll-to-roll screen printing equipment is introducing a new narrow web offset machine. The K61.0S combines Kammann's screen technology along with waterless UV offset to provide high quality labels. The new features of the K61.0S include gearless material transport system for no-tool changeovers and digital pre-press.

Kocher Beck USA
The product line includes laser hardened flexible dies (3L), magnetic cylinders, printing cylinders, hot stamping cylinders, anvil cylinders, pressure monitors and worldwide patented Gap Master adjustable anvil systems. The new Gap Master Plus version allows the press operator to change the gap by increments of 0.8 microns. The adjustment can be made on both the operator and gear side at the same time, or just on the gear side to give maximum flexibility.



Kammann offset print station on K61-0S press

Ko-Pack International
Ko-Pack International's 400-F Flexible Packaging press is a versatile CID press that can be used with UV or water based inks. It is ideal for printing unsupported film substrates for beverage labels, shrinkable sleeves and stretch labels. Can also be configured to print general packaging like paper and synthetic pouches, paper and plastic folding cartons. Options include reverse side printing, inline over laminating, inline die cutting, and the world's first EB curing system for flexography. It is available in widths of 10",15",25" and upwards.

Labelmate
Labelmate will show its new TWIN-CAT-2 stand-alone label unwind, rewind, inspection and counting station at the show. Visitors can also see the popular MINI-CAT label rewinders and full-size CAT-2 rewinders along with new powered and unpowered label unwinders. Label dispensers for transparent and opaque labels will be shown, as well as Quick-Chuck core chucks for volume label production and complete slitting stations at special show prices.

Mach III Clutch
Mach III Clutch will exhibit the SensiFlex pneumatic tension control clutches and brakes. New to the SensiFlex product line this year are four sizes of foot mounted clutches. These clutches are ideal for new equipment and retrofit applications.

Application engineering personnel will be on hand to discuss solutions to attendees' tension control clutch and brake challenges.

MACtac

MACtac is showcasing a full range of labelstocks for consumer and industrial labeling, and variable information printing. The booth will feature major end-use applications of MACtac prime label films and papers, laser, ink jet, transfer and direct thermal stocks. New products on display include postage stamp stocks; thermal films; layflat products; the MACjet Gloss, matte & breakaway tag; and White Radiance. MACtac is also introducing flexible packaging film laminates including Curlam paper/foil, Liquiflex Polyester/Foil, and Java-flex Metalized Polyester.

Mario Cotta

Mario Cotta will be introducing their new Gold Series Knife Holder. The company claims that the knife will revolutionize slitting and cut down on downtime.

Mark Andy

Mark Andy will launch its new press model, the XP5000. It is the next generation of its 'Productivity' Platform, following in the footsteps of the LP3000. The XP5000 has fully electronic job handling with Mark Andy exclusive program algorithms. Mark Andy claims that savings of set-up waste can be achieved by the XP5000's pre-registration function in both print and die stations. Fully electronic registration control, operator interfaces at each station, along with immediate operator production feedback and remote diagnostics help to maximize productivity and up-time/

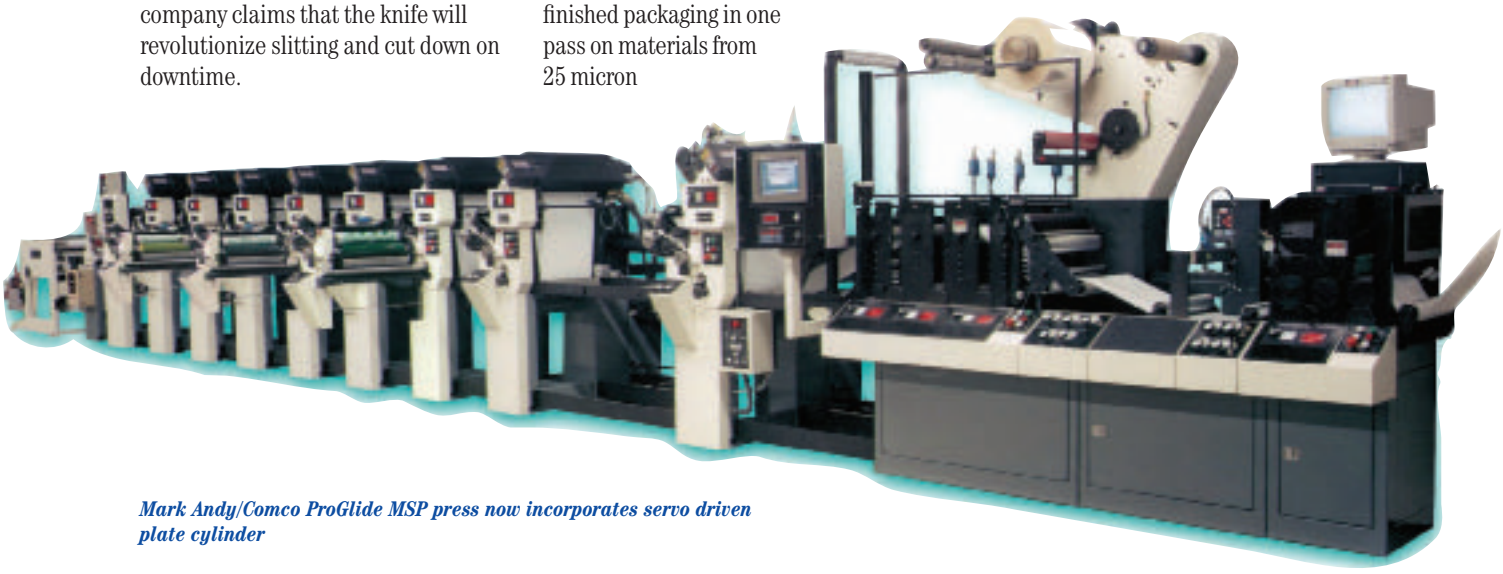
The XP5000 has interchangeable 'QC' or Quick Change cassette systems. Rotary screen, hot foil, and inter-station die cassettes along with newly designed cold foil modules can be added to any XP5000 or LP3000 to maximize either press' capabilities.

For converters looking to produce finished packaging in one pass on materials from 25 micron unsupported film to 600-micron carton board, the Comco ProGlide MSP, now available with servo drive, will also be on display.

The Mark Andy DT2200 digital printing and converting system is available for sale worldwide. The DT Series inkjet-printing module, developed exclusively with dotrix (now a division of AGFA) integrates directly into a 13" Mark Andy 2200-flexo press, which incorporates standard in-line, single pass flexo printing and converting operations. The four-color system is capable of printing high-end graphics with 100 per cent variable information and coverage at 25m/min.

The DT2200 combines full width 300-dpi resolution with eight levels of grayscale and UV curable ink and the DT laser finishing module, developed with LasX Industries, makes it possible to produce short run labels most efficiently and quickly.

Longford International, a designer and



Mark Andy/Comco ProGlide MSP press now incorporates servo driven plate cylinder

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developer of machinery for high-speed ON-Press manufacturing of extended text labels (ETL) and RFID Tags, will be displaying two systems on an LP3000 13" press in the Mark Andy booth: The OS700 Surge Feeder for extended textlLabels (ETL) and the new Longford RFID100 TAG affixing feeder.

Mark Andy will also be showing the newest ink resin technology, Flexcure by Ashland Chemical, which claims to have resolved the problem of UV flexo odor.

Finally, a Mark Andy 830, central impression press, will be featured in the American Water Graphics booth. The press will be operating live with AWG inks.

Martin Automatic

Martin Automatic will showcase two complete roll-changing systems for non-stop production on narrow web, roll-to-roll processes. Visitors will see live demonstrations of the MBS automatic butt splicer in line with the LRD automatic transfer rewind. This show is also the North American introduction of two new products, the STS automatic turret butt splicer and the STR automatic turret rewind, both designed specifically for narrow web presses and processes.

With a Martin butt splicer and rewind, the press or process does not slow down or stop for roll changes. As a result, materials waste and press down time can be reduced. Martin representatives will help visitors calculate their own efficiency improvements and waste reductions gained by replacing manual roll change equipment with Martin Automatic non-stop roll change systems.

Matan

Introduces to North America the Spring thermal transfer system, which enables on-demand digital production of a wide range of applications. It builds on the success of the acclaimed Spark1612, offering enhanced resolution and speed, a more extensive color gamut, and other advances for label and tag printing. With a choice of four, five, or six-color one-pass printing at up to 1600x400 dpi at up to 270m/hr on a 12-inch web, the Spring provides a flexible solution for producing high-quality output required in the Tag and label market. It also empowers printers to offer value-added capabilities for labels, tags and decals, such as spot colors, variable data, automatic numbering and bar coding. The Spring system utilizes resin and wax/resin-based ribbons in CMYK process color as well as a wide variety of spot colors, including opaque white, metallic gold and silver, and "double-bump" black, on a broad range of pressure-sensitive films, synthetic papers and specialty products.

MD-Both Industries

MD-Both says that its new water-based Mirasheen inks offer good mirror-like brilliance, printability, and cost-effectiveness in high-quality folding carton and label applications. Inkantation, MD-Both's new interactive tool, helps you evaluate the cost benefits of using Mirasheen. MD-Both also has a complete line of MFX Base Silver Inks, allowing the simultaneous printing of thousands of metallic colors on a five color press.

Mekrom Inc

Mekrom Inc, the North American subsidiary of Degraf S.p.A. Milan, Italy offers a complete line of photopolymer processing equipment. Systems range from simple 14" by 20" to state of the art 52" by 80" sizes. The newest design, the HTD Dryer, dries a solvent photopolymer plate in 20 minutes.

Melzer

Melzer demonstrates production lines for all four segments of contactless technology – contactless plastic cards, contactless labels, contactless tickets and inlays. Melzer will be demonstrating its latest developments in Modular Digital Manufacturing for Inlays. M4 is the multifunctional modular machine with space for six different or identical working heads. The 100 per cent digitized process gives flexibility for a quick change between the different processes like wire embedding, pick & place, dispensing, bonding, testing, blade cutting, laser cutting, ultrasonic welding, printing. It is available for working from sheets (max format 1010x1290 mm) or reel-to-reel (max web width 260mm).

MPS

One of the latest developments from MPS is the Effective Converting (EC) press, for self adhesive label printing. Incorporates MPS' proven Multi-Drive servo drive and Crisp Dot technologies. MPS has also developed an in-line system for converting multi-layer labels.

NDC Infrared Engineering

NDC Infrared Engineering offers a range of on-line coat weight measurement and control solutions such as gauging of adhesives and silicone release coatings, as well as on-line moisture measurement. NDC will be showing its new MiniTrak scanner family.

Nilpeter

Nilpeter will highlight some of its most advanced narrow-web techniques under the 'Perfect Solution' banner.

Press demonstrations will center on the redesigned 13" flexo press built in the USA by Nilpeter Inc. The press features new types of modular print units that are ergonomically designed to make operation easier. To achieve fast color set-up, Nilpeter has installed a new type of instant registration device that avoids the manual preparation of cylinders and greatly reduces material waste.

The flexo line of presses print on substrates ranging from 0.001 inch film to 0.016 inch paperboard carton stock, at speeds up to 750 ft/minute. Other features include high-capacity hot air dryers, quick-change slide-out print units with removable ink pans and 'tool-free' quick changeovers. The press can also run with inter-deck UV-curing lamp units allowing combinations of UV-flexo, rotary screen and hot foil stamping units, as well as chill rolls for converting films.

The Nilpeter flexo presses can be specified to use servo-drives with a master motion controller aided by a fiber-optic network. This ensures that all printing operations are synchronized and operators can restart from any point in the web after each press stop when changing cylinders or cleaning plates.

The company will also demonstrate its second-generation 13" wide MO-3300 offset press printing premium film or paper self-adhesive labels. It will have eight units with quick-change cassette cylinders, configured with one rotary screen, five offset units, one hot foil unit and a UV-flexo print/varnishing unit.

Nilpeter will also show the new servo-drive option for the MO-3300 press as a static unit, linked to a computerized press control unit. Nilpeter claims that the gearless mode allows even faster set-up – including those for repeat lengths – and that the press can handle even shorter run lengths with reduced waste than.

Nilpeter will also run a series of designated workshops on the booth addressing areas such as:

- Financial options and advice
- Technical criteria for specific applications
- Customer support programs
- Choosing service contracts
- Printing and processing options
- Principle markets and production trends

OEC Graphics

OEC Graphics, a first-time exhibitor at Labelexpo Americas 2004, will be presenting OEC-DFM (digital facilities management) and Seamex to the label and narrow-web market.

OEC-DFM is a program where digital platemaking, processing and/or proofing equipment is placed within the customer's facility. Owned and maintained by OEC, the equipment is operated by the customer, allowing them a greater degree of control and economic flexibility, but the latest technology.

Seamex is seamless photopolymer bonded and vulcanized to a variety of base sleeves such as nickel or composite. Manufactured in-the-round, OEC claims that Seamex can eliminate plate break, as well as significant production efficiencies associated with its use. Accurate registration is also achieved on-press as all colors are laser-imaged in place on sleeves.

Brad Vette, OEC's Corporate Business Development Manager will be speaking at the Labelexpo Americas 2004 conference on the economic case for CTP use in relationship to OEC-DFM.

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MATAN Spring 12

Short Run Label Converting System That Can Pay for Itself in A Few Months!

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- Up to 400x1600 dpi
- Files imposition and step & repeat
- Color management
- Environment-friendly consumables
- Quick change between colors
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- Optional- automatic registration system- For pre-print reels
- Optional- digital finishing system- DFS, Laminate, die-cut, Strip, Slits & Rewind

- No Film!
- No Plates!
- No Dies!
- No Make Ready!
- No Clean Up!

Come see our new member of the Matan Spring product line, the all-inclusive SpringPro™

The DFS (Digital finishing system) complements both the Matan Spring and Spark printers, providing a total finishing solution to the Label converter: Laminating, Digital Die-cutting, Stripping, Slitting and rewinding finished labels in minutes! The best digital finishing solution for converting labels - from one to thousands.

The Matan Spark 1612 is the cost-effective solution for the small and medium label converters, offering short-run labels, decals and/or Industrial markings products. Produce finished labels in quantities from one to thousands. True 4-color one-pass (spot and/or process!), up to 5 year outdoor durability without top coating or laminating.

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e No.162

Omet Twin Cut die cutting system handles multiple repeats without cylinder change

Omet

Omet will show its patented die-cutting unit Twin-Cut in line with the narrow-web gearless Varyflex press to produce die-cut self-adhesive labels and folding cartons.

This innovative die-cutting system with magnetic cylinders handles all formats using only two pairs of magnetic cylinders. The die-cutting cylinders rotate at a constant speed during the cutting phase and accelerate in the rest phase on both cylinders alternatively. The unit is provided with automatic register control, controlled-tension waste-removal and central adjustment from

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the control panel. This unit can work with only one interchangeable magnetic cylinder like the traditional system, or with double alternate cylinders using the Twin-Cut system. The Varyflex will also be shown printing on BOPP.

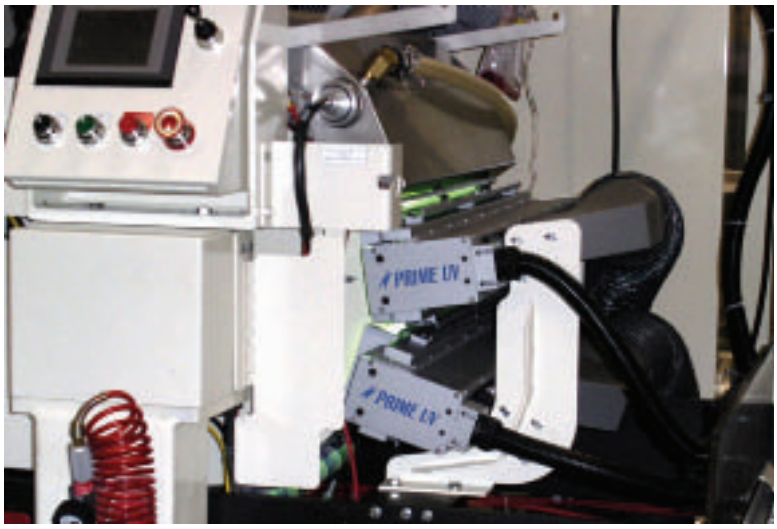
PCMC

PCMC will be running its new Evolution Converting System, an in-line flexo converting press, at the show. The press incorporates AC Digital servos which control the print cylinders with precision through a user-friendly operator interface. The press is available in 18" (460 mm), 26" (660mm) and 30" (762 mm) print widths and can be used for flexible packaging, folding carton, tag, and label applications

PCMC designed the print head, Deck x 2, which has a single impression cylinder operating between two color decks, allowing for a short web path and versatility to add additional print modules and converting options. PCMC claims that with its design and automatic rack out/rack in features, changeover can be accomplished in under 30 minutes for 8-colors, with good registration.

Plastic Suppliers

Plastic Suppliers will be introducing compostable label film and liner material, EarthFirst. It is produced from NatureWorks PLA, supplied by Cargill Dow LLC. EarthFirst is designed to be used either as a supported or unsupported substrate and is completely compostable. In addition to offering good grease and oil resistance, EarthFirst is FDA compliant for direct food contact. Produced from a 100 per cent renewable resource – corn – EarthFirst offers users an alternative to petroleum based products. For additional



Prime UV's eight lamp FLEXfilm curing system

Polymag Tek Inc

Polymag will introduce its Oscillating 6-roll web cleaner with clamshell and tape drawer slide and also the 2-sided 4-roll web cleaner for vertically-oriented webs, such as on a Gallus press. Also on display is the 3-roll sheet cleaner, 2-roll narrow web cleaner, hand rollers, tacky pads and adhesive tape rolls.

Primac Systems Inc

Primac is a management information system specifically tailored for the flexographic label industry. Primac's capabilties include job costing, estimating, order entry/finished goods, inventory, scheduling, job jacket and handling multi-plant operations. It runs in a client/server environment on UNIX, Linux, or Win2000 servers. New products include Internet access and e-commerce, browser enabled Primac, enhancement release 12, job scheduling/job tracking, and a shop floor system with touch screens.

Prime UV systems

Prime UV will be showing a live demonstration of the new 8 lamp prime UV FLEXfilm curing system at Label Expo. The system is installed after each color unit to cure UV flexo inks and also after the coating stations to cure UV varnish coatings on the PCMC Evolution in-line CI flexo press in booth 845.

The UV FLEXfilm UV processor features an open base UV lamp facing a water-cooled chill roll and is installed in-between color units on all CI flexo presses, or can be installed as a retrofit on all CI web presses running flexible films. It requires less than 6" of space in the web direction and can be installed as a retrofit on all CI web presses. It is controlled by the Smart 2100 Control Platform, which provides the film converter with complete computer control of the Prime UV lamps. Smart 2100 users also benefit from on-screen system diagnostics as well as remote diagnostic capabilities.

Profama North America

Profama North America launched at Drupa 2004, bringing Profama printing and converting products to the USA, Canada and Mexico. The company manufactures rotogravure and flexo printing presses, a complete line of slitter-rewinders, inspection machines and paper bag making machines for the package printing and converting markets.

With two manufacturing plants in Brazil, it is the largest supplier of rotogravure presses and slitter-rewinders in South America.

Raflatac

Among other products Raflatac will demonstrate its new range of pressure sensitive piggyback constructions recently introduced to the North American marketplace. Piggyback label constructions are comprised of a single facestock and two liners. A piggyback label construction enables the top-layer label to be peeled away and affixed to another surface. Raflatac's piggyback labelstocks are developed for ink-jet, laser and copier applications. The company's range of face materials includes 50# Laser Plus, 50# Data, Transfer Premium Plus, 54# Raflacoat, and Kromekote Extragloss. All piggyback labelstocks use Raflatac's proprietary permanent adhesives.

RBCOR, LLC

RBCOR will be displaying ELASLON photopolymer flexo plates and the new CTFP plate for computer laser applications. In addition, it will be introducing a new formulated MIRACLON dry offset plate for labels, which is crack resistant and aims to ensure a higher quality of reproduction and longer press runs.

RDP Marathon

RDP Marathon is a manufacturer of variable repeat, litho/combination

Labelexpo Americas 2004
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web presses, including the new LS series which features SOLID infinitely variable sleeve print inserts that are also interchangeable with conventional three-cylinder litho and flexo inserts.

Retroflex
Retroflex will be featuring their T-Series press at LabelExpo Americas 2004. This press is a budget priced printer/coater that can be added to an existing line or be purchased as a stand-alone. It can be designed as either a flexographic or gravure printer/coater. The width of the press can vary from 10" through to 60" wide and run at speeds up to 500fpm. There are options of it being web driven, tied to an existing drive or servo driven. The unit can also be added to an inline printer to gain coating capabilities. Retroflex is promoting the quick delivery times that it can offer.

Rhodia Ink
Rhodia is announcing the addition of three solutions to its release coating product line:

- A low platinum thermal solventless release coating system that allows catalyst reductions of up to 50 per cent or more.
- Silcolease PC-615: UV-curable polymer designed to provide good anchorage and low extractables on less costly, untreated filmic substrates.
- Silcolease PC-263: Thermal solventless polymer that provides good cure, stable release, and a coefficient of friction as low as that of a tin solvent release coating.

RIPit Computer Corporation
RIPit has introduced SmartDie, a new feature available with OpenRIP Flexo-Label Edition product. OpenRIP FLE is designed for workflow automation, storing step and repeat information for all the dies in a flexo printer's inventory. Stepping and repeating a job in OpenRIP is just a matter of selecting the

Smart Workflow

GREAT Investment!

Before we purchased our RIPit System, we were looking for a RIP / Workflow solution that would improve our turn-around time and quality. After running numerous tests on several RIPs, we chose RIPit's OpenRIP Flexo because it gave us the best results. OpenRIP is versatile, easy to use and offers smart features which automate production and increase accuracy. RIPit's KOOLKolor™ proofing solution also saves time and helps us spot file problems before wasting expensive media. It's hard to imagine how we ever got along without it. This was money well spent.

RIPit Flexo Division
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888.947.4748 ext. 109

e No.173

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appropriate die – the step and repeat process, application of bearer bars, and appropriate anamorphic distortion are done automatically and consistently by OpenRIP. SmartDie automates the process further by allowing you to specify the die by name or number when you create the job. This means its no longer necessary to manually select the die each time you process the job in OpenRIP.

New OpenRIP FLE users will receive SmartDie as an integrated part of the standard flexo package, and existing OpenRIP FLEcustomers who are on the company's software support contract receive the new feature free of charge.

OpenRIP FLE also includes a number of other features:

- Latest Adobe PostScript interpreter offers a substantial performance improvement over previous versions, native support for transparency, and compatibility with PDF 1.5 format. New View Raster feature allows you to examine the RIPped file at full output resolution, check traps and overprints, and generate an ink usage profile.
- Standard Agfa Balanced Screening for Flexo provides premium quality flexo-optimized screening in a wide variety of resolutions and linescreen frequencies.
- Optional PerfectBlend Flexo screening is a second generation hybrid screening technology which virtually eliminates the highlight break and improves shadow detail.
- Standard Koolkolor proofing lets you create inkjet proofs using the same interpreter you use to output the final job, eliminating variations between the proof and the printed piece.
- Optional Kooltoning lets you create inkjet proofs which show the actual halftone pattern which will be present in the final printed piece.
- Optional Adobe In-RIP Trapping.

Ritrama Inc

Ritrama's newest products include full squeeze labels, print enhancing topcoats, PL, and high performance solvent adhesives. Also available are pressure-sensitive specialty papers for security, wine, and boutique food markets. Ritrama also offers a full line of films for health and beauty, food and beverage, household chemical and agricultural products.

Rogers Corporation

Rogers Corporation will feature its new and improved R/bak cushion mounting tapes. The tapes are offered with different compressibility levels to accommodate the full range of printing applications. They also include newly developed acrylic adhesives in a special construction designed to provide easy handling and long-lasting performance in any printing environment.

RotoMetrics

Rotometrics plans to debut many new products including: meter rolls, multi-port air-eject dies, hot foil security imaging, flat magnetic bases, hot foil magnetic cylinders, UniFlex&reg, hot stamp rotary flexible dies for folding cartons and UniFlex with special plating for wear resistance. It will also display its line of rotary dies and accessories.

Saint-Gobain Performance Plastics

Saint-Gobain will be introducing new additions to its Fluorosilicone release technology platform and a new film technology for chemical and UV protection for graphic face stock applications.

Spectratek Technologies Inc

Spectratek Technologies Inc. makes holographic film products for labels, packaging and a wide variety of other applications. New lines from Spectratek include Lens Array Frensel Lens products, SpectraSteel steel-like decorative films and the Engraved series of non-holographic films, which exhibit tremendous depth and movement.

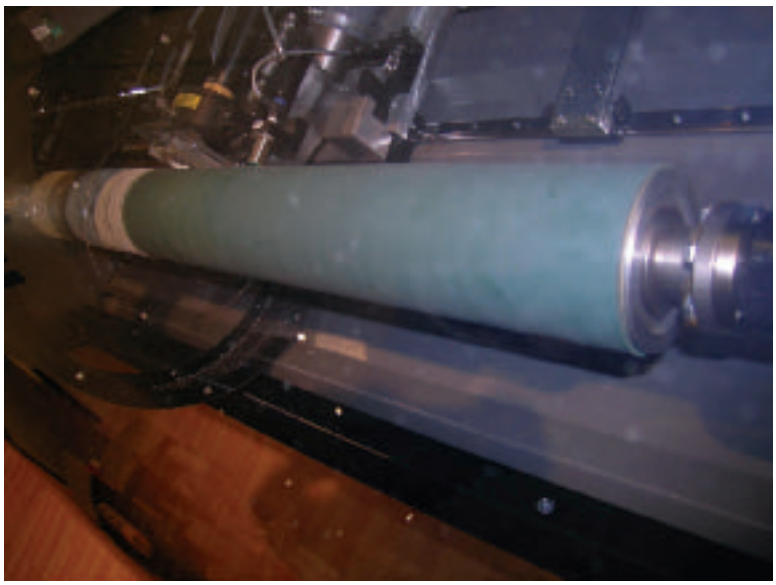
Stork Prints

New rotary screen products include the high resolution Toramesh 405 screen mesh, complete hot air rotary screen print stations and North America's premier rotary screen technology center. Also featured will be Stork's nickel sleeves that include the new gravure sleeve as well as several flexo sleeve systems.

Of great interest to label printers using flexo-screen combination presses, Stork will introduce an engraver which images both flexo plates and rotary screens. The Morpheus 611X Direct Engraver incorporates a single laser-beam that burns away unwanted material to form

the image without the need for exposing, washing and drying. The machine can engrave rubber and polymer flexo plates and sleeves, as well as Stork's RotaMesh screens.

Stork will also announce a dedicated direct engraving system for flexographic plates. Developed in collaboration with BASF, the Agrios 413X uses triple-beam laser technology to burn rubber and polymer at up to 18 metres per second. Three lasers pass along the plate in quick succession to create the printing dot in stages, driven by the same image-processing software as found on the Morpheus.



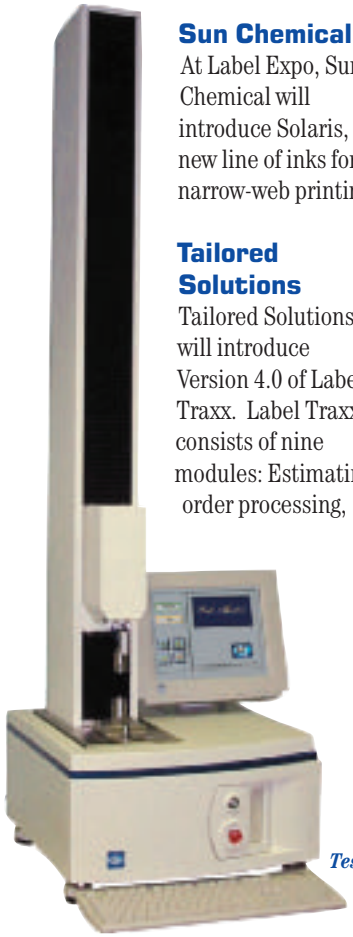
Stork's Morpheus 611X Direct Engraver

Sun Chemical

At Label Expo, Sun Chemical will introduce Solaris, a new line of inks for narrow-web printing.

Tailored Solutions

Tailored Solutions will introduce Version 4.0 of Label Traxx. Label Traxx consists of nine modules: Estimating, order processing, invoicing/accounts receivable, accounts payable, general ledger, job costing, stock products, quality control, and E-Traxx.



Testing Machines' Lab Master Tensile Tester

Testing Machines Inc

The new Lab Master Release & Adhesion Tester will be unveiled at Labelexpo. This instrument features an integral Windows-based microprocessor and a touch-screen flat panel display in a compact, network-ready unit. The new model features Test Method Wizard software for simplified set-up and operation.

The Lab Master Tensile Tester will be also be exhibited at the show. This tester provides precise, repeatable measurement of compression, elongation, peel, stress-relaxation and tensile measurements up to 250 lbf. A wide range of standard or custom sample holders are available.

Other equipment on display includes the RK Flexiproof 100, which provides high-speed production of proofs using water, solvent or UV flexographic inks. The RK Flexiproof 100 can print on any flexible substrate including paper, film, foil and PVC.

The Lab Master Probe Tack Tester will measure and analyze properties of adhesives and display curves generated by thousands of data points. The Windows-based system includes a test fixture and a flat-panel touch screen display. The Lab Master Probe Tack Tester can measure force with 0.1gram resolution.

Additional testing instruments include Digital Ink Rub Tester, Control Coater and Proofer, sample preparation equipment and more.

The Double E Company shows new web inspection system

Tharo Systems, Inc

Tharo Systems will provide live demonstrations of the RFID enabled PA1000tZ label printer/applicator and their RFID enabled EASYLABEL software, for custom designing and printing bar code labels and tags on a wide variety of printers. Demonstrations of the Tharo H and V Series of thermal/thermal transfer bar code label printers will also be available.

The Double E Company

The Double E Company, Re's exclusive North American partner, will introduce Re's new video inspection system. This system focuses on color fidelity and image quality, and the camera, equipped with a CMOS sensor instead of the traditional CCD type, offers 1.3 million pixel resolution and 24 bit color depth. It also has a split-screen feature (horizontal and vertical) for rapid comparison with the saved image, a remote membrane keyboard for calibrating and operating the system and 90° image rotation through four positions. It has a 6X or 10X motorized zoom, depending on the version selected and uses Xenon bulbs which minimize intensity variation. It uses an industrial PC with 24V or 110/220V power supply, has a 15" LCD or 17" SVGA monitor and the motorized version uses a stepper motor for horizontal movements.

The web inspection system will be seen running on the Double E demonstration machine. This machine showcases many Double E and Re web control products including core shafts, low-inertia carbon fiber rollers, three different web guide types, several tension control systems, brakes, and safety chucks.

UVTechnology

UVTechnology, a division of Mark Andy, will feature the Maxim Curing Systems on the Mark Andy and Comco equipment stand. UVT Maxim allows converters to incorporate the latest UV cassette technology with both standard and cool cure UV configurations. Maxim is designed to fit several different in-line flexo presses.

UVTechnology is promoting its full line of after-market technical support, replacement bulbs and accessories.

Wacker Chemical Corporation Silicones Division

Wacker Silicones is showcasing its complete line of Dehesive release coatings. New this year is Wacker's low content platinum release coating system. In the face of escalating precious metal costs, this new system offers

Changing demands-New Technology
Label printing , Coating and Converting.

From plain paper to finished self-adhesive labels, in just-one-pass of the press.

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Printing – Coating – Converting

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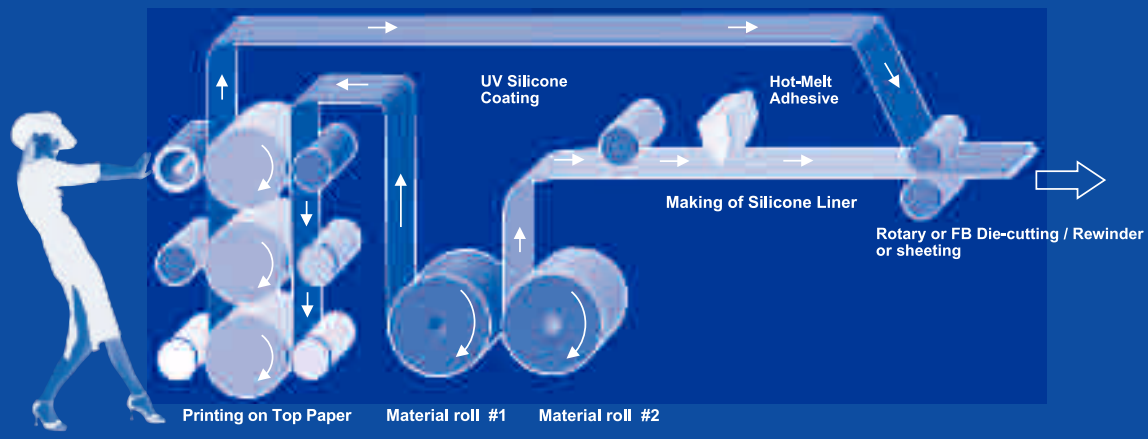

Flexibility is key to this innovative press design.

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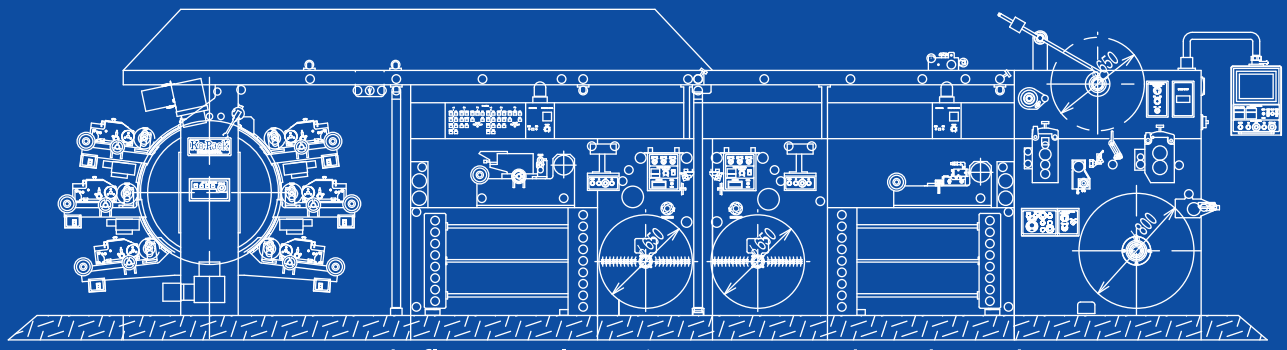
- Suitable for special security labels
- Ideal for short-run orders and JIT deliveries
- Choice of hotmelt adhesive, permanent, standard and peelable



△ Drum type with flying splicer/turret rewind and RY die-cutting

Configuration to meet customer's individual requirements.

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- Pollution-free UV inks
- Combination printing, including variable data
- In-line UV silicone coating
- In-line hotmelt adhesive coating
- Interstation cold UV curing
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- Punching, slitting and embossing
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Show Preview

comparable performance to higher platinum content systems while helping to reduce overall cost. Customized solutions also being featured are Dehesive release coatings for the emerging higher growth polyester film liner markets.

Water Ink Technologies

Featuring the latest technology in water-based and UV products. New PureFlex UV ink formulations offer low viscosity and high-strength. Water-based technology includes Versifilm film inks for a wide variety of film substrates and for laminating applications; Proset high-strength inks for process work and fine line anilox rolls; UltraFlo fluorescent inks have high-strength, excellent press stability and extended shelf life; Water Bright Metallic inks offer a superior metallic sheen; Coatings are available for high-gloss, thermal and laser imprintabilty, and product resistance

Water Ink Technologies also introduces PharmaFlex, a new line of UV inks. PharmaFlex UV inks are BP-free, low odor and offer consistent color, low viscosity and high strength. Water Ink claims that they have demonstrated outstanding mid-tone and shadow reproduction with no plate softening. For converters looking for new markets, these inks are ideal for pharmaceutical, cosmetic, food, beverage, and medical packaging, as well as health and beauty applications. PharmaFlex inks are balanced for use with Water Ink's Ink Miser computerized ink blending system.

Zeller+Gmelin Corp

Zeller+Gmelin's new Nuvaflex ink is designed to provide high print densities at reduced ink volumes. Use of lower line count aniloxes can eliminate the necessity to double-bump colors for adhesion at higher density. New high opacity rotary screen whites and colors are available and flexographic opaque whites have been designed to print at rotary screen opacities. A new reflective silver has also been designed to replace small hotfoil stamping coverage applications.

Late breaking news

Matan

Matan brings a new generation of optional components and new features complementing the successful Matan Spring12 digital printing solution for Tag, Ticket & Label converting. Headed by the Matan VariPrint variable data printing application, and the Matan FlexPrint for printing on top of pre printed media from the traditional flexographic press, these new features are designed to provide solutions for printing variable data on pre-printed rolls, and to broaden the scope of possibilities for a wider variety of label printing applications, as well as the flexibility to develop new applications. In addition Matan has optimized the ribbon consumption to drastically reduce wastage.

Matan VariPrint is a user-friendly software package claimed to offer the flexibility to use graphic images, combined with multiple fields of personalized text, serial numbers barcodes and more, to produce high

Sony Chemicals Corporation of America

Sony Chemicals Corporation of America will be bringing the Sony Tech Pit to its booth at the show. The Sony TechPit is a 60-by-80-foot mobile road show that is part of Sony's NASCAR team. The TechPit features computer-simulated races, and a Sony showcar. Visitors will also have a chance to register to win a variety of products from Sony.

At the Sony chemicals booth attendees will be able to learn about the latest product and application updates in the thermal transfer ribbon industry. This year, Sony is introducing shrink sleeve packaging for thermal transfer ribbons.

The first phase of Sony's introduction of shrink sleeve packaging on thermal transfer ribbons was on the Sony Signature Series line of ribbons. The sleeve wraps around the TTR roll extending over the exposed film up to the inner core. The sleeve has a double perforation running the entire length of the TTR roll making it easier to remove.

The second phase is Sony's introduction of a customized shrink sleeve-packaging program offered to its customers. They would be able to design TTR packaging with their own logos and contact information to increase brand awareness.

quality, on demand, fully customized prints. Matan's VariPrint is supported by an easy to use GUI (Graphical User Interface) for laying out multiple variable data fields.

The Matan FlexPrint option is a fully synchronized hardware and software system, which supports and compliments pre-printed reels that were printed on traditional and/or digital presses.

This feature completes the package of the Matan VariPrint, for adding variable data elements or for printing additional special colors such as metallic gold, silver, opaque white or any other special spot. Matan's RIP board version 2 is designed to expand the screening and color management algorithms in order to provide solutions to a wider range of applications and jobs.

AVT Focuses on Automatic Inspection

New products from AVT include PrintFlow, an optional tool used in conjunction with any one of AVT's PrintVision automatic web inspection solutions. The enhanced PrintFlow option features a versatile, standard SQL database platform.

PrintFlow has been reconfigured to provide comprehensive job information including the ability to study defects by type, frequency, duration, and even view images of the master and defect images. Operators can edit the report, accepting or rejecting detected defects, can print the report and keep it as a file for further use.

The new PrintFlow Manager extends the benefits of PrintFlow to print house managers (supervisor, quality assurance managers, production managers, etc.) enabling them to view and process information from the databases on each PrintFlow-equipped PrintVision solution on the site's network.

Using PrintFlow Manager, production can be monitored and comparisons made between jobs, job histories, presses, inks, substrates and other criteria. Reports can be created using all the information from the database(s) to provide both printer and customer with the most useful information.

WorkFlow Link is an add-on feature for that makes an important link between the press and the rewinder in a PrintVision production environment. WorkFlow link integrates with PrintFlow and PrintFlow Manager and enables increased control over waste removal from a printed roll while reducing the time of preparing a finished roll.

Used with a PritnVision system on press, WorkFlow Link will place a mark on the web at pre-determined intervals. These marks can be numbers or bar codes printed in the trim area, or on the reverse of the web, or self-adhesive labels that are applied to the web.

When the printed roll is delivered to the rewinder, the WorkFlow Link information is sent to the rewinder. A reader on the rewinder ensures that the physical web is synchronised with the defect information contained in the roll report – even if sections of the roll have been removed as a part of the Quality Assurance process.

Using the markings on the web, WorkFlow Link controls the rewinder, slowing it down and stopping the web at the beginning of the defective area on the splicing table, ready for removal.

Also introduced is a closed loop option for the PrintVision/Helios inspection system, used during make-ready to verify that the job in preparation is the correct one, and to shorten the make-ready time.

This is done by comparing on-line the printed image to a previously captured or produced reference, such as an image from a previous run of the same job or information (file) from the pre-press.

By automatically tracing and highlighting the differences, the closed loop capability of the PrintVision/Helios assists the press operator to verify the correct job and to quickly get the press into the right settings of register, color, etc.

Azcoat Inc.

Azcoat Inc. has developed print-films, topcoats and adhesive-coated films and paper for flexo, offset, laser, inkjet, and thermal printing systems. Durable and water-resistant, SuperTag now includes lower-cost ticket materials for direct thermal printing.

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Labelexpo Americas 2004
Conference Preview

Day 1 – Tuesday, Sept. 14 2004

7:00 – 8:00 **Registration/Continental Breakfast**
Open to all Labelexpo Americas '04 vendors and registered attendees

8:00 – 8:10 **Welcome/Opening** - Remarks John Bankson, Label Technology Inc.; TLMI
Mike Fairley, Labels Group, Tarsus Exhibitions and Publishing

8:10 – 9:00 **Keynote Address** - The State of the Label Industry, Dan O'Connell, Raflatac

Session 1	Session 2	Session 3	Session 4
9:30 – 10:30 Emerging Applications for Narrow Web Technology Part 1 ● Beyond pressure sensitive labels – what has changed since 2002? ● Shrink wrap around roll fed labeling: ● Developments in roll-on, shrink-on films James Mullen, Klockner Pentaplast of America Roger Brown, Plastic Suppliers Paul Marquard, AET Films George Michaels, Trine Labeling System Moderator: Gary Gates, The Garron Group	**9:30 – 10:30** Total Quality Management Part 1 Total Quality and Process Control ● Part A Print and process control ● Inspection protocol for pre-press, press and post-press ● Part B Different inspection techniques ● Handling web stretch ● Capturing the reference image - is it possible from the original artwork? Ignatius Manning, Print Vision Systems (Part A) Dr Stephan Krebs Nyquist Systems (Part B) Moderator: To be confirmed	**9:30 – 10:30** Impress with Prepress ● The innovative software revolution ● Growing array of software options ● Key solutions and industry developments Dan Lacey, Artwork Systems Ian Hole Esko – Graphics, Inc. Pat O'Brien, Premier Sales, RI Andy Thomas Labels & Labeling Moderator: Robert J. Smithson, Trinity Graphics USA	**9:30 – 10:30** The Current State of Digital Printing ● Emergence of digital solutions ● Printing requirements and applications ● New digital innovations for label converters Liz Ziepniewski, I.T. Strategies, Inc. Ken Daming, Mark Andy, Inc. Ray Dickinson Hewlett-Packard Company Kristof Vereenooghe, Xeikon International Moderator: Liz Ziepniewski, I.T. Strategies, Inc.

Session 5	Session 6	Session 7	Session 8
11:00 – 12:00 Emerging Applications for Narrow Web Technology Part 2 ● Flexible packaging; a narrow web perspective ● Inks for narrow web flexible packaging Dennis Calamusa, ALLIEDFLEX Technologies, Inc. Chris Mitchell, Avery Dennison Glenn Webster, Sun Chemical Moderator: Gary Gates, The Garron Group	**11:00 – 12:00** Unlocking the Value Potential of Your Sales Force ● The sales contribution to profitable revenue ● Key routes to sales and personnel value ● Developing customer relationship management solutions Nancy McKeon, Stapleton Resources, LLC Moderator: Suzanne Zaccone, Graphics Solutions International, LLC	**11:00 – 12:00** Making The (Economic) Case for CTP ● Computer to plate solutions ● Quality and processing advantages ● The bottom line impact of CTP Raymond W. Bodwell, DuPont Mark Vanover Esko-Graphics Inc Brad Vette, OEC Graphics, Inc. Moderator: Tom Cobery, Aladdin Label	**11:00 – 12:00** Total Quality Management Part 2 ● Increasing profits through plant efficiencies ● Managing for quality and performance ● Enhancing operational and financial advantages Brenda Kujawski, WMEP/WCTC Ronald Irwin, REI,LLC Moderator: Mike Buysted ANI Printing Inks

12:00 Conference close for the day

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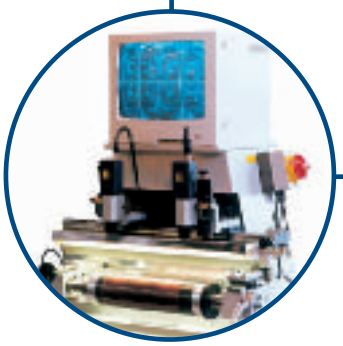

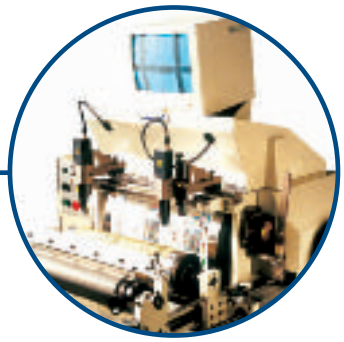

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Labelexpo Americas 2004
Conference Preview

Day 2 – Wednesday, Sept. 15 2004

7:00 – 8:00 Registration/Continental Breakfast

Session 9

8:00-12:00
Emerging Applications for Narrow Web Technology Part 3

- Shrink sleeve labels – narrow web perspective
- Sleeve materials for successful converting
- From pre-press to press

Gary Gates, Garron Group
Huston Keith, Keymark Associates
Roger Brown, Plastic Suppliers
James Mullen Klockner Pentaplast of America
Paul L.Wingate, Jr Bonset America Corporation
Robert Finke, Mitsubishi Polyester Film
Brendan J. Maunsell Coates Inks
Ron Ryback, Karlville Development / R&R Consulting
David Gursky, Artpro
Dave Niemuth, Krones

Session 10

8:30 – 10:00
Smart Labels Part 1

- RFID, What does it mean for you, the converter?
- What is the current state and evolution of RFID?
- Learn about the impending technology and the potential impact it will have on your business
- How much is it going to cost you, the converter?

Michael Keim, Trade Secrets
Vincent Rees Appleton Inc.
Moderator: To be confirmed

Session 11

8:30 – 10:00
Expanding the Color Gamut: What are your options and why?

- 6 and 7 color process printing
- Opportunities and benefits
- Development in Hexachrome, Opaltone and creating your own expanded gamut formular.

Matthew Bernasconi Opaltone Graphic Solutions
Alexandra Gebhardt Pantone
Glynn Hartley Special Color
To be confirmed, FTA
Moderator:
Mike Buystedt
ANI Printing Inks

Session 12

9:30 – 10:00
Proofing: How close can you get?

- Analogue and digital proofing
- Proofing to customer requirements
- The changing world of digital proofing

Stanley Field, Integrity Engineering, Inc.
Patrick Floody, Creo
Mark Mazur, DuPont
Richard Deroo, Latran Technologies
Moderator
To be confirmed

Session 13

10:30 – 12:30
Smart Labels Part 2
Brands Under Attack

- Developing a security and anti-counterfeiting strategy
- The FDA and other world regulatory initiatives
- RFID chip, patient labeling requirements and anti-counterfeiting features

Carolyn Burns, DuPont Security
Albert Groen Fasson Roll North US
Craig Curran, Trustcopy USA, Inc.
Ralph Dillon,Pfizer
Moderator:
Bud Gray, Cypress Multigraphics, Inc.

Session 14

10:30 – 12:00
The Financing Game: How to Purchase Equipment

- Staying competitive in the label industry
- Managing the impact of capital-intensive activities
- Impact of investment on cash flow and bottom line

Bob Seeds, International Financia Services
Leslie Anderson, Fifth Third Bank
Jennifer Gainer Fifth Third Bank
Moderator: To be confirmed

Session 15

10:30 – 12:00
Growth in a Changing World

- Planning for growth
- Developing the strategy
- Managing the change

David Kucsma
Match Point Marketing Group
Moderator: To be confirmed

Session 16

10:30 – 12:00
Manufacturing Workflows: Improving your Bottom Line by Streamlining your Sales, Operations and Manufacturing Processes.

- Workflow and bottom line
- Streamlining sales, operations and manufacturing
- Workflow management and control

Chris Wood
DiMS! Organizing Print
Moderator: To be confirmed

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Labelexpo Americas 2004
Conference Preview

Day 3 – Thursday, Sept. 16 2004

7:00 – 8:00 **Registration/Continental Breakfast**

Session 17

8:00-12:00
The Future of Label Converting
- The evolution of a service and value solutions-based industry
- The growing importance of managing information
- The development of smart/intelligent solutions
- Evolution of label converting industry by 2010

Mike Fairley, Labels Group, Tarsus Exhibitions and Publishing

Session 18	Session 19	Session 20	Session 21
10:30 -11:30 Beyond Marketing: Developing your Website for Customer Service ● Economic and effective web based solutions ● Customer access to web services ● Customer relationship management online Jim Drisler, CRC Information Systems Ken Meinhardt, Tailored Solutions, Inc. Moderator: Kevin Wise, Wise Tag and Label	**10:30 -11:30** Customization/ Retrofitting Used and Existing Equipment: Making the Economic and Operational Case ● New capabilities and performance ● Options, benefits and costs of retrofitting ● Equipment and ancillaries for upgrading Joseph Drilling, Drilling Technical Services, Inc Roman Mudry FlexAir Dan Plash, Telstar Engineering Scott Beaudoin FlexoExport Moderator: To be confirmed	**10:30 -11:30** Emerging Applications for Narrow Web Technology Part 4 ● Laminating on press ● Cut-N-Stack Labels ● Topp Cure Labels ● Narrow Web Folding Cartons and Blister Cards Mike Pfaff, Comco Division Mark Andy To be confirmed, Exxon Mobil Rob Carter, AET Films To be confirmed Mark Andy Moderator: Gary Gates The Garron Group	**10:30 -11:30** High Definition Label Printing: Quality and Performance Breakthroughs in Flexography ● Making the case for HD flexo ● Improved press workflow and platemaking performance ● Dramatic cost savings to label purchasers To be confirmed DuPont James R. Kadlac, Advanced Prepress Graphics Marc Fioravanti, Cortron Corporation Stephen Miller, Creo Moderator: To be confirmed

Session 17

11.15-12:30
Innovative technology for profitable label production
- Label printing and converting in one line
- Applications for silicone and adhesive constructions
- Added-value solutions- gluing, folding, application and forming

Jimmy Anzai, Ko-Pack International

12:30 **Conference close for the day**

Hungary for success

In October, L&L sponsors the European Label Summit in Prague, reflecting the high growth rates being seen across Central and Eastern Europe. In the first of a new series, **Andy Thomas** visits key label convertors across the region

With the entry of ten Central and Eastern European countries into the European Union, there is much speculation as to the impact this will have on the labeling industry. These questions will be addressed at the European Label Summit organized by the Labelexpo group and sponsored by Labels & Labeling.

In this issue of Labels & Labeling we begin a series of articles profiling major label printer/converters throughout this dynamic region, which is displaying growth rates second only to China across all label types.

We begin in Hungary with M-real Petofi Label, a division of M-real Corporation based some 80 kilometres outside Budapest.

The company has a turnover around ¤€7M/year, with 69 people employees. The Petofi company was founded in the last century and has been producing labels since 1964, but M-real Petofi Label Ltd was established in August 2000 when the owner decided to split the company into five different entities based on product line - folding box, self-adhesive label, conventional label, flexible packaging and newspapers.

Managing director Bela Csuthi has been working at the company since 1988. Starting out as a student, he became a skilled sheet-fed offset machine operator for five years while studying at Printing College. Csuthi also worked in the company's R&D department for three years, then took responsibilty for the labels business as sales manager.

Bela Csuthi, managing director of M-real Petofi Label

In terms of equipment, M-real Petofi Label runs two Nilpeter M-3300 presses combining offset, flexo, screen, hot-foil and lamination, with a maximum 7-colors + varnish, all UV, and with the possibility to print on the back-side or adhesive. The company also runs two Gallus R-160B UV-letterpress machines, maximum five colours + varnish, with back side printing.

M-real Petofi Label uses two subcontractors for its artwork preparation, one of whom supplies offset plates. Letterpress plates, flexo plates and screens are made in-house.The workflow is completed by two Rotoflex VS-330 machines and one Omega-330, with two Willett units for numbering and a Gallus roll-to-sheet cutter.

M-real Petofi Label's main end-use customers are in the household-chemical industry (liquid detergents), then pharmaceuticals, meat, electronics and wine. Currently around 10 per cent of production is exported to Poland, Croatia, Romania, Austria and Slovakia. Customers include a lot of middle size Hungarian companies and all the biggest global brand-owners located in Hungary, including Unilever, Henkel, Reckitt Benckiser, Flextronics, Philips, GE and Procter & Gamble. As well as pressure-sensitive labels, M-real Petofi Label converts multi-layer, paper-based flexible packaging. ■

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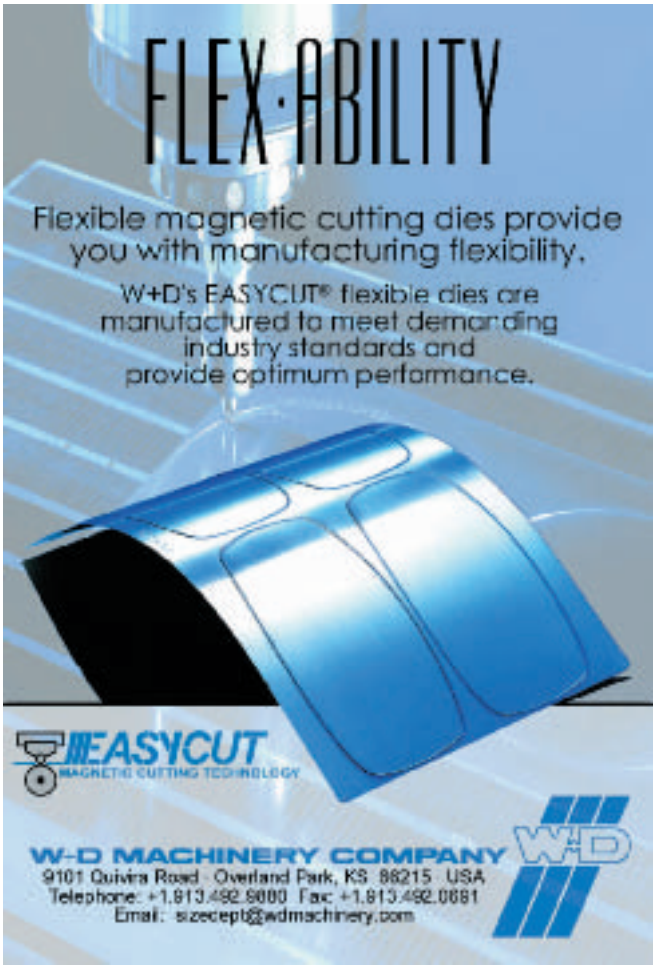

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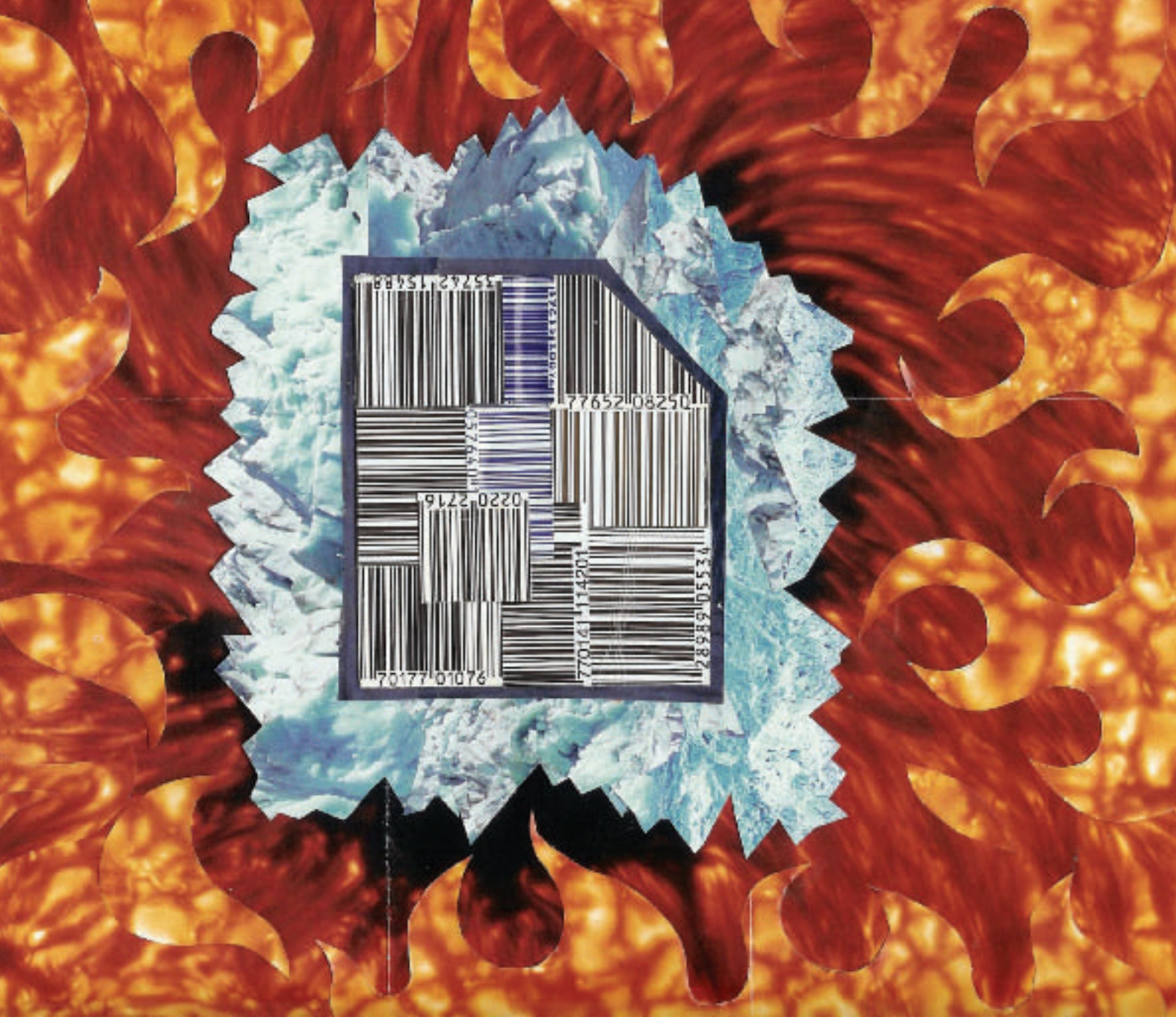


Hitting the circuit

A handful of players dominate the lucrative electronics label market. **Katy Wight** finds out how the industry is challenged by offshore production, vendor consolidation, environmental pressures and a shortage of raw materials

Did you hear the joke about the jet propulsion program manager who didn't realize that sending the modem to mars would void the warranty? This might be a joke and space is an extreme example, but it's just one of the environments that hardware is built to withstand. What you may not realize, is that for every electronic printed circuit board – whether in your car stereo or in aerospace – there's also a corresponding barcode label that was applied at it's very beginning on the production line and that label has to survive even harsher demands. What would you say if a customer asked you to supply a bar code label material resistant to flux chemicals and temperatures up to 260°C?

Electronics permeates every aspect of our lives. Either PC components and peripherals, mobile phone handsets, digital

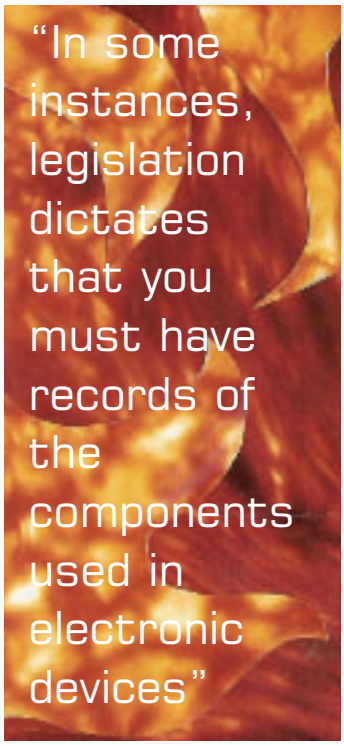
cameras or airplane components, they all require durable barcode labels for asset management, inventory and security. Auto-identification and data collection systems use scanners to track the components and collect data as they move through production. In many instances the barcode will also be used post-production for servicing and warranty reasons.

'In some instances, legislation dictates that you must have records of the components used in electronic devices,' explains Alexander Brunacci, durable goods industry marketing manager at Brady Corporation in Milwaukee, which formulates adhesive and printable coatings, coats and die cuts label materials for the electronics segment. Brady achieved sales of $620 million throughout 2003 and has 3,200 employees in its operations throughout North and South America, Asia, Australia, Europe and Russia.

'Comprehensive production records are critical in an industry like the airline industry which must keep a database of each component that is used, as well as a complete history of the manufacturing process of products it manufactures. Boeing, for example, requires all component suppliers to provide this data so that it can quickly locate and replace parts that have faulty components. There can be no room for mistakes, so a barcode is applied on a bare PC board prior to assembly of any components.'

At each stage of production, the bar code is scanned to identify the board and track all components that are being placed on the board. The PCB may have to withstand chemical fluxing and defluxing, high soldering temperatures and other environmental pressures. The barcode label not only has to be resistant and remain adhered to the board, but it must also give accurate barcode readings throughout production and beyond. As Mike Fairley explains in his Encyclopedia of Labels and Label Technology, the code may also include information about flux density and solder temperature, quantity and lot number, as well as a variety of test data. Reading the code may also help to reduce work in process inventory and reduce set-up times, and tamper-evident properties may also be incorporated to ensure that a serial number cannot be transferred to another board.

Label materials are carefully chosen to match the requirements of a particular circuit board and its application. Polyimide and polyester facestocks are typical materials and are matched to thermal transfer ribbons and any overlaminates used.



Barcode product families in this sector include:

- Identification labels for wire and cable marking
- Static dissipative labels
- Flame retardant labels
- Printed circuit board (PCB) labels

Outsourcing and offshore production

Brunacci explains that in the 1980s companies were continually approaching Brady for custom labels for the electronics industry. The US was where it was all happening.

'We kept on getting special orders – for particularly small labels or for specialized materials – so we started analyzing the needs of the electronics industry and put together these different stock label sizes that we could sell through our distribution chain. They were always in stock and could be shipped immediately,' he says. Brunacci believes that because of this strategy – catering to the demands of this flourishing industry – Brady experienced explosive growth in this sector until the Internet boom turned to bust in 2000. Following the Internet and IT crash, the landscape of the industry changed dramatically.

Outsourcing grew and production moved from high cost labor areas to low cost regions, which meant a huge shift from the US to Asia. Polyonics is a specialized manufacturer of label materials for harsh environment bar code labels and is one of the few players with a significant presence in the electronics market. Jim Williams founded the company in 1995, which primarily targeted the electronics industry, and this year it is looking at projected sales of over $10million. With 90 per cent of its business derived from electronics, the shift from domestic production has affected Polyonics business, but the company has learned to adapt and roll with the punches.

'Ten years ago all the business was focused in the major domestic manufacturing regions in New England, Florida, Texas and Silicone Valley,' says Williams. 'In the year 2000 we had zero sales in Asia and now it accounts for 30 per cent of our business. In 2001 the bottom fell out of the IT industry for everyone, but Asia rebounded very quickly. All of the domestic industry shut down and plants moved offshore.

'We budgeted for 20 per cent overall growth this year, which is slightly more than the estimated growth of the PCB industry. We are currently at 45 per cent growth and Asia is at 250 per cent of its budget. Maybe we're just bad at budgeting, but I think it's more likely that the market is just booming out there.'

Polyonics started with an office in New Hampshire and now has offices in Singapore, Shanghai and Hong Kong. Similarly, Brady has a presence in the Philippines, Thailand, Singapore, Malaysia, China, India, Korea, Japan, Taiwan and Australia.

'Our business is fastest growing in China, but we're expecting India to really take off,'

says Brunacci. 'I think that cell phone production in India, for example, is going to follow the pattern of China. India is currently about ten years behind, but it will take India half the time to catch because India will be able to look at what China did and improve upon it. India is a quarter of the size of China, but the population centers are much denser and the education levels are as high. An impediment to India's growth has been it's governments protectionist policies which it appears to be abandoning as tariffs have been falling in key areas which is encouraging investment.'

'Asia is responsible for 63 per cent of all electronics assembly (up from 47 per cent in 2000),' says Brunacci, 'the electronics production that has moved offshore is never going to return to the US. If you're going to be a player, you have to ask yourself – are you prepared to be a global company?'

Vendor consolidation and supply

'It's amazing how much the industry has changed,' Brunaccci adds. 'Ten years ago Brady's targeted customers were the OEMs. About 5 years ago, CEMs, contract electronic manufacturers, like Solectron and Flextronics, became larger customers of Brady ID solutions. CEMs like Solectron needed to address their supply chain strategies as their business model became more successful. For example, as Solectron secured business from more OEMs, its supplier base grew dramatically as OEMs typically specified different components (including labels) from different vendors. An OEM such as IBM might have been sourcing labels from 12 different converters. In order to drive costs down, there needed to be a reduction in the supply chain and this was the catalyst for vendor consolidation.'

The larger CEMs began buying smaller CEMs to fuel their growth and to give them critical mass to drive their costs down further resulting in a smaller customer base. These 'mega' CEMs were able to drive down prices of components because

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they had so much purchasing power. After the Internet bubble burst there was a big shift to ODMs – original design manufacturers – where the ODM, typically located in Asia, owns the design and sells the complete product to the brand owner (former OEMs like IBM).

Brunacci estimates that 70 per cent of the world's laptops are produced by ODMs in Taiwan and China. The brands that sell these laptops don't actually manufacture any of the components and have no control over anything apart from their brand logo's that appear on the devices. They have become virtual companies, sourcing and moving parts around the world.

A different breed of competitor to the label industry emerged as a result of vendor consolidation, both in the US and Asia. These companies focused on servicing the industry directly.

'Between 2000 and 2003, a company called Tyco from Massachusetts looked at the electronics supply chain and decided to buy up companies that could help it become a turn key supplier to its electronics customers,' says Brunacci, 'and they bought three label companies.' Tyco was already supplying the CEMs with electronic components and was in a good position to increase its offering to them.

'They could then approach companies like Flextronics and offer to supply labels as well. This was a worrying trend because our sales to a customer like Flextronics was insignificant compared to the sales of Tyco to Flex.

'Tyco appeared to be unstoppable. These new kinds of competitors meant that we had to offer a broader range of products to cater to the needs of the industry or start moving into higher end, value-added products.' Indeed, Tyco Electronics is now one of the world's largest suppliers of passive electronic components and a major producer of active components. In 2003 it achieved a revenue of $10.4billion.

The surge of electronics manufacturing in Asia did not go unnoticed by local Asian entrepreneurs keen to get a piece of the action. Realizing that all of the electronic components were being manufactured there, they looked for opportunities in the supply chain and soon became a threat to electronics label material suppliers in the US and Europe. New companies started emerging like Taiyi in Taiwan. They shaped a business around the needs of the industry in the region.

'There's a trend towards increased offering by vendors in the electronics industry,' says Brunacci. 'Taiyi positioned itself as being in the printing industry, so in addition to providing label materials, it is also printing all of the manuals for the products. In the current climate you have got to become more important to the customer so that your business is indisposable.

'Taiyi has expanded its presence very quickly in the US, strategically placing people where the largest OEMs are located – Dallas for Dell, Chicago for Motorola and so on.' To domestic suppliers, they pose a big threat.

Raw materials

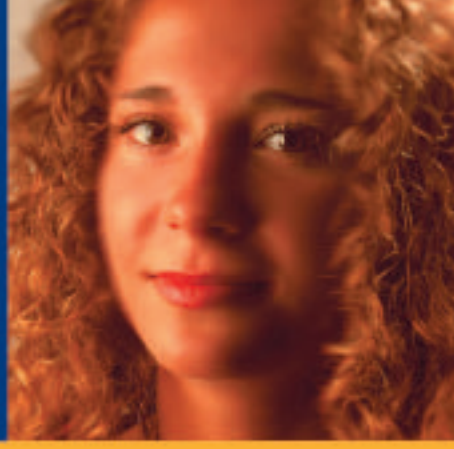
And if the electronics label material vendors haven't got enough to contend with, polyimide supplies – the single most important ingredient for PCB labels – seem to be trickling to a halt.

Polyimides are very strong and astoundingly heat and chemical resistant polymers. Aromatic heterocyclic polyimides, such as DuPont's Kapton or Ultem from GE have incredible thermal and mechanical properties and are used in place of metals and glass in many high performance applications in the electronics, automotive and aerospace industries. These properties come from strong intermolecular forces between the polymer chains.

'There is just such a demand for polyimide,' explains Jim Williams of Polyonics, 'as it's used in the production of the actual flexible circuit boards as well. Our theory is that the polyimide is out there, but polyimide for labels is difficult to get your hands on. It's just that it's being used in more lucrative markets. The suppliers have made a decision to put their capacity in other areas. We have had a 50 per cent shortfall of the polyimide that we need. As a captive user, it could have crimped our growth.'

Williams explains that he anticipated the shortages six months before it really hit. Polyonics was prepared, but has still suffered from increased lead times.

'Our clients have been spoiled in the past with quick deliveries. Our lead times have stretched from two or three days up to two or three weeks,' he says. 'But we've found other



Other issues:

The cost of applying labels is a problem. People are usually employed to apply them – sometimes with tweezers because they are so small. The smaller they are, the more difficult and expensive it becomes to automate.

At one stage it was thought that laser engraving would replace bar code labeling, but printed circuit boards are not smooth, they actually have a wave, which can affect readability. Implementing laser engraved codes would also mean that all the scanners in the industry would have to be changed and this would be a massive investment.

Brunacci suggests that about $5billion is lost in the industry through counterfeiting. Due to the sheer volume of components involved and the outsourcing, fake products are getting into the assembly line and labeling is potentially part of the solution – perhaps RFID will be involved

In some electronic applications labeling is going to have challenges to overcome. There is no reason why in the future RFID could not just be integrated into the PCB itself.

Labels could be developed to have combined functionality. For example, a bar code label could also double up as a label that detects water or shock for warranty purposes on consumer goods.

suppliers and I am a clever chemist, so we have developed alternatives. We have learned our lesson and in the future we will not be single-sourced and we'll make sure that we continue growing.'

Brady Corporation has also developed an alternative to the polyimide film, Polyplus, which it launched a month ago for labeling applications. The alternative labelstock has built in security features, high heat resistance and achieves good whiteness, whilst costing about 40 per cent less than polyimide.

Environmental pressures

Legislation to protect the environment is also having a dramatic influence over the materials and processes used in the electronics sector. The EU has issued deadlines for manufacturers to adhere to WEEE (waste from electrical and electronic equipment) and RoHS (reduction of hazardous substances) directives by July 2006. WEEE deals with recycling issues and take-back programs, whilst ROHS aims to eliminate harmful substances from manufacture. The directive will ban any item containing more than agreed levels of lead, cadmium, mercury, hexavalent chromium, polybrominated biphenyl (PBB) and polybrominated diphenyl ether (PBDE) flame retardants.

'Europe has instituted a zero tolerance policy – but what exactly is zero?' asks Brunacci of Brady, reflecting the confusion within the industry. 'It goes into effect in July 2006, but the products for 2006 are being designed and qualified now. No one knows what to shoot for.'

'Some companies are saying that they are going to ignore the initiative and some have decided to go even further down the road and ban more substances themselves. Sony is one of these companies. It has said that it wants to track 1200 different chemicals, which is a huge task. The testing itself for 1200 different chemicals is a huge cost for a vendor to bear.'

'Sony's policy is more rigid as a result of a lesson it learned the hard way. Sony used Holland as its distribution center for the European market. The Netherlands is very stringent when it comes to the environment and Sony's entire Playstation shipment for the European market was obstructed due to the presence of cadmium in the power cables right before Christmas and it cost the company millions. Sony doesn't want the embarrassment of that ever happening again, so now they are a leading light in this department.'

As a coater, converter and manufacturer of printing systems, Brady, and other suppliers would have to provide a breakdown of the chemical components that are used in its products'.

The nature of the global electronics market means that the whole world will be affected by the EU directives. It's not economically viable for a manufacturer to make four different variations of the same product for four different countries. To complicate the issue further, the EU proposals are directives, which means that member states can interpret them differently and implement them at varying levels.

In addition to providing chemical audits for OEMs, label material suppliers will have to reassess the materials that they are providing themselves. The introduction of lead-free soldering is an example, as Jim Williams of Polyonics explains: 'By taking the lead out of printed circuit boards the process temperatures are much higher and replacement materials need to be found. If processing usually takes place at 220-230°C, then lead-free needs temperatures between 250-260°C, which doesn't sound like a lot, but these are very high temperatures that we are talking about.'

'Last year in the US lead-free just was not an issue, but in Europe and Asia companies have been getting pounded for lead-free solutions for a while. Suddenly people are calling up asking if we can handle lead-free – which is no problem as we've always supplied these materials to Europe.'

The legislation is already providing a further challenge for electronics label suppliers: to find new substrates that can withstand different and sometimes even harsher conditions throughout the assembly process. ■

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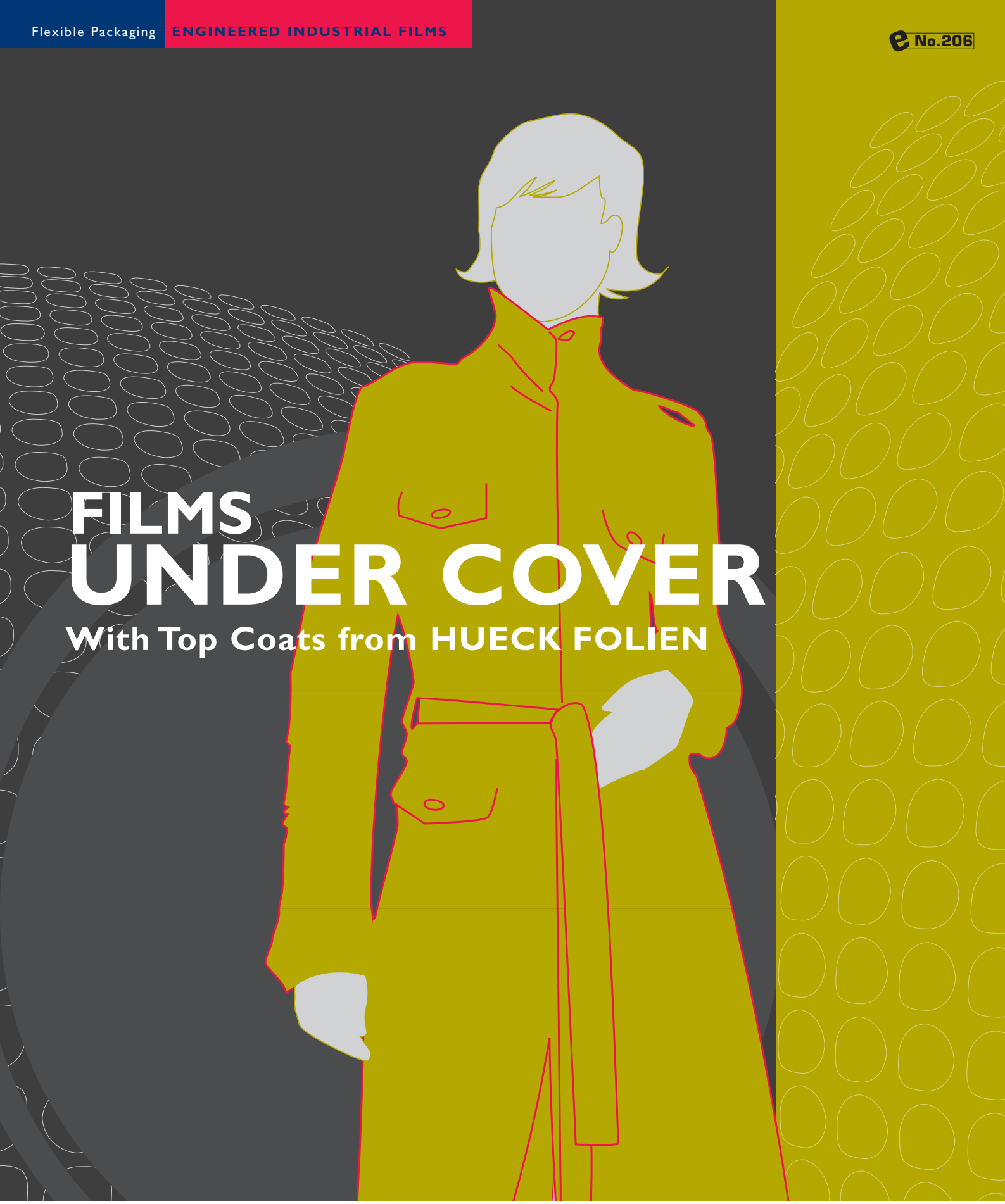

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Global challenge

'Co-opetition' was the title of the opening seminar at this year's PLGA annual meeting, posing the question: what are the benefits and drawbacks of co-operating with your competitors? **Andy Thomas** reports on a fascinating debate

How to deal with globalization and increasingly fierce competition are key concerns for label converters in North America, a trend well illustrated by the opening seminar of the Packaging & Label Gravure Association's recent meeting in Jacksonville, Florida, entitled 'Co-opetition'.

US flexible packaging converters are already finding competitors from Taiwan, South Korea and now China looking to take on the industry in its home market, while label converters see more and more business leaving their shores as companies like Walmart outsource production to cheaper labor zones.

One response to the challenge of globalization and the intense competition brought on by reverse auctions and consolidation at both ends of the supply chain is to develop strategic alliances. This was the subject of the first session, entitled Strategic Alliances and Partnerships, moderated by Mark Glendenning, president and CEO of Inland Printing.

Strategic alliances and partnerships fall into four broad categories:

- purchasing consortiums
- geographically-driven alliances which allow companies to sell each others' (non-competing) products into new markets
- extending a product line to capture end users with broad buying requirements – for example a pressure-sensitive label converter allying with a supplier of cut&stack labels to be sole supplier to a large customer
- a sub-contractor arrangement which delivers production flexibility and disaster recovery. Flexible packaging converters with wide-web machines – such as Glenroy Inc – are increasingly using narrow web converters to handle short run print work, freeing up their presses for long run work.

This writer suggested how converters in North America and Europe can take advantage of high growth in different geographical labels markets.

A pioneer of this 'informal' network are European converters Kolibri and Knaup, and Peruvian converter Kuresa, who have shared technical skills and market information to great effect (see articles in L&L Issues 1&2, 2004). This loose network retains the dynamism, management autonomy and rapid decision making capabilities of small companies, while speeding the introduction of new products such as extensible films pioneered by one company in the group.

Another real-world example of a successful strategic partnership is between Mark Glendenning's Inland Printing and Northstar Print Group. Glendenning layed out some basic ground rules for strategic alliances and partnerships, the most important of which was 'build it top down, practice it from bottom up.' This requires open and sometimes brutally honest communication between those getting the work done, matched by complete management commitment and a clear definition of the boundaries within which the partnership will operate. Success is measured ultimately by delivering increased customer satisfaction.

A legal perspective on the potential anti-competitive aspects of strategic alliances was delivered by Martin M Toto, New York-based Counsel for White & Case LLP (whose recent clients included UPM-Kymmene in its MACtac merger battle with the DoJ). Toto cautioned that strategic alliances or Joint Ventures (JVs) must be examined to ensure they are not really cartels. The danger signs are if the JV:

- leads to the exercise of monopoly power
- facilitates collusion
- stifles innovation

In reality, alliances between small players in an unconcentrated market – such as between the vast majority of label printer/converters – is unlikely to raise issues. The US government will not usually challenge where combined market shares are under 20 per cent, said Toto, while the ability of the JV to offer new services, produce scale economies or combine technologies is likely to benefit competition in the market, and so be seen more favourably. ■

No.322

The Packaging and Label Gravure Association (PLGA) has announced its request for entries to the 2005 awards programs. There are two categories: PLGA 2005 Print Quality Awards and the PLGA 2005 Technical Achievement Awards. Full program details and entry forms can be obtained form the PLGA website www.plga.com. Award entry deadline is December 17, 2004.

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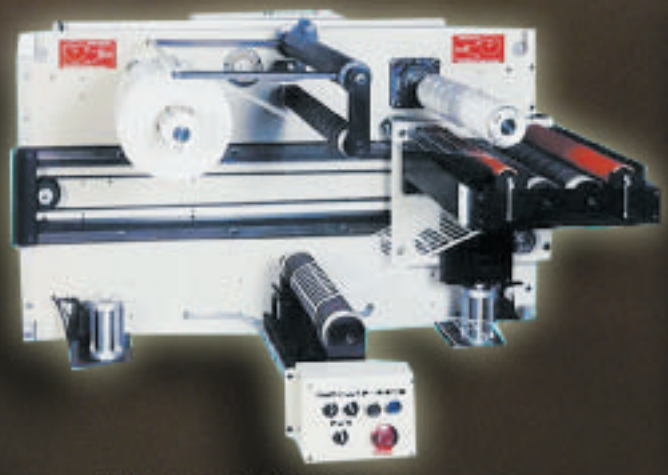

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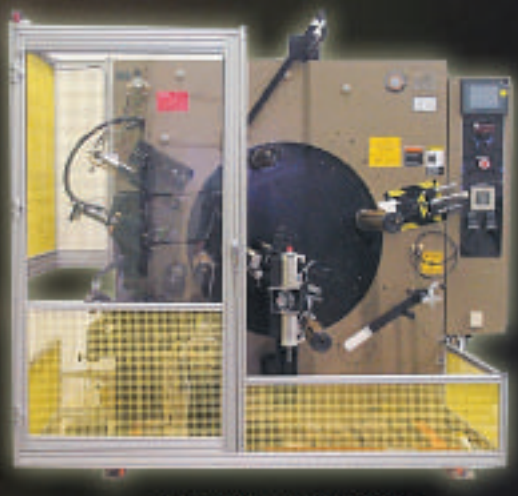

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Dale Bunnell wins Lifetime Award

The first R. Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award has been awarded to Dale Bunnell, who spent 20 years as VP sales & marketing at Mark Andy and a further five years as VP, business development, within the company.

Bunnell was chosen from a long list of nominees from the converting and supplier industry by a panel of top industry judges chaired by Mike Fairley from the Tarsus Group and including Andy Thomas - Editor, Labels & Labeling, Jack Kenny - Editor, Label & Narrow Web, Wolfgang Klos-Geiger - Editor, NarroWebTech, John Bankson - President, TLMI, and Fritz Beglinger - President FINAT.

Nominations for the global label industry awards were open to the whole labels industry and were posted on-line. Voting closed at the end of June and the Judging Panel met in Chicago on July 15 to review an extensive list of nominations for each of three award categories.

In addition to the Lifetime Achievement Award, three companies were nominated for the Label Industry Award for Continuous Innovation – Avery Dennison, Esko Graphics and Nilpeter.

Three more companies were nominated for the New Innovation category - AVT, Gidue and HP Indigo.

The winners of the Label Industry Global Awards will be announced at the Gala Awards Dinner and Ceremony, taking place at the Donald E Stevens Convention Center, Rosemont, Chicago on September 13, the first evening of Labelexpo Americas 2004.

Mike Fairley, Label Industry Global Awards Judging Panel chairman, commented:

'Use of the Internet to nominate for the Awards produced a varied and comprehensive list of potentially worthy suppliers and converters on a global basis, giving the judges a difficult task to reduce the list to a final shortlist of nominations and winners.

'For The R. Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award, the enthusiastic consensus of the panel was that Dale Bunnell was central to the most significant events in the narrow web label industry for the last 25 years and has been a leader, an innovator, and an ambassador for the industry globally, supported by his wife Shirlene.'

e No.500

Smart Packaging

The first Smart Packaging conference will be held on September 8th and 9th at the Donald E. Stevens Convention Center, Chicago. The conference has been developed with the Institute of Packaging Professionals (IOPP) and covers the latest 'intelligent' packaging, labeling and printing innovations

e No.503

CCL merges with Steinbeis and reorganises home base

CCL Industries is to merge its European and Asian label operations with Steinbeis Packaging, the label operations of Steinbeis Holding. Steinbeis Packaging, based in Holzkirchen, Germany supplies battery labels on a global basis and provides premium product decoration solutions for the European consumer products market.

CCL will hold a significant controlling interest in the new company and contribute its label operations in the U.K., France, Denmark, Thailand and The Netherlands as well as its new greenfield site currently being established in Poland. CCL-Pachem, CCL's 51 per cent controlled joint venture with plants in Austria, France and the U.K., will become a wholly-owned subsidiary of the venture with its founders Guenther Birkner and Thomas Summer taking leading roles in the new company.

Steinbeis will contribute the value of its operations in Germany, France, the U.S.A. and China to the new venture. However, the Steinbeis battery label plant in the U.S.A., with revenues of approximately Cdn $25 million, will subsequently become a wholly owned subsidiary of CCL Label Inc. in the United States.

The new company will focus on continuing to build a network of European and Asian label manufacturing facilities dedicated to serving large global customers in the consumer products, healthcare and premium food and beverage markets. This will include capital investments of Cdn $15 million to build new factories in the fast growing markets of Eastern Europe and China.

Geoff Martin, President of CCL Label will assume the role of CEO in addition to his North American responsibilities. Sales of the new venture in Europe and Asia are approximately Cdn $325 million with 2004 EBITDA estimated at approximately Cdn $40 million, making it the largest label converting group in the European and Asian markets.

At the same time CCL is realigning its Canadian label business with the sale of its label manufacturing plant in Winnipeg, Manitoba to Color Ad Label, a privately held company with interests in flexible packaging and labels. CCL Label Winnipeg focused on local customers in Western Canada with sales of approximately $10 million, and forecasted EBITDA of $1.5 million in the current year. The purchase price was $7 million.

The Company also announced the purchase of Graphiques Apex Inc., a privately held Montreal based manufacturer of instructional leaflets for leading companies in the pharmaceutical industry. Graphiques Apex Inc. has annualized sales of approximately $4 million and EBITDA of approximately $0.9 million.

Geoff Martin stated, 'It is strategically important to build our pharmaceutical business in Canada and provide our important global customers with the same products that we offer to the pharmaceutical industry in the United States and Europe. With the sale of the Winnipeg plant, we will also increase the focus of our Canadian operations on our key markets including personal care, healthcare and specialty products.'

e No.501

Arpeco acquired by Precision Automation

Arpeco is now a division of Precision Automation Co., Inc., a leading manufacturer and integrator of automation systems.

'We believe that the acquisition builds on the momentum that Arpeco is experiencing, following its recent restructure, and will enhance its capability to supply a full range of integrated finishing system solutions in the future,' said G. Frederick Rexon, Jr., president of Precision Automation.

Brian Ivens, sales and marketing manager at Arpeco, commented:

'This welcomed change is already producing positive results; strengthening our long standing commitment to provide quality machinery and customer service to the international package printing and converting industry.'

Arpeco has several machine orders in production and a fully stocked spare part warehouse within its new manufacturing facility located in Cherry Hill, New Jersey. Parts orders, technical support, as well as sales and marketing activities will be managed from its Mississauga, Canada location.

Since 1968 Arpeco has pioneered the design and manufacture of inspection slitting rewinding and diecutting machines, with more than 4,000 installations worldwide.

Precision Automation, founded in 1946, provides factory automation systems, fabrication, machinery and controls for a wide range of applications and customer requirements.

Precision Automation is headquartered in Cherry Hill, New Jersey with a second manufacturing facility in Clarksville, Indiana.

e No.502

European Label Summit

Following the entry of 10 new countries into the European Union in 2004, this first ever European Label Summit explores the implications of the enlarged Union on government, industry and commerce - and the impact that this will have on the label industry.

Already the fastest growing label markets in Europe, the Eastern European countries are seeing unprecedented investment by brand owners, retail groups and product manufacturers. But what do these changes mean for label industry suppliers and converters? What are the opportunities for partnerships, acquisitions, co-operative ventures, sales and marketing? How will this impact on both Western and Eastern European label suppliers and converters?

e No.504

Labeling News

Sun Chemical unveils integrated Solaris product line for narrow web industry

Sun Chemical has announced plans to introduce Solaris, a global product line of inks and coatings formulated to meet the needs of narrow-web printers. Solaris will be launched at Label Expo Americas 2004, to be held Sept. 13-16 in Rosemont, IL.

'Sun Chemical recognizes the special requirements of narrow-web printers and the growth opportunities for this market,' said Wes Lucas, chairman, president and CEO of Sun Chemical.

'That is why we are organizing a specific product line and teams of dedicated experts who will utilize our global resources to meet the local needs of narrow-web printers. Sun Chemical has long been active in this market, but we plan to expand our presence by offering the most complete line of inks to all types of printers, no matter their size or location, and backing it with a high level of service and availability.'

Chuck Shuty, director of narrow web products for Sun Chemical North American Inks, says: 'Solaris will offer the best inks and coatings technology from Sun Chemical's divisions around the world.

Sun Chemical is now forming regional teams who will sell proven narrow-web products and will offer narrow web printers extensive experience as they consider broader markets in such areas as flexible packaging, folding carton and shrink sleeves.

Shuty pointed out that Sun Chemical also can offer printers total solution packages through its printing consumables divisions, including Rycoline, which sells its products worldwide, as well as Boss Graphics and WebXtras, which sell in the United Kingdom and Europe.

'The creation of Solaris signals this company's commitment to the narrow web market,' said Tom Kelly, U.K. narrow web marketing manager.

'Through Solaris, Sun Chemical is creating a focused group that links all the diverse products required in this sector and will provide all product information under one umbrella to customers in Europe, the Americas and other locations.'

Kelly said that Sun Chemical, which has used Onyx as the name for its narrow-web products in the United Kingdom, will begin transitioning to the new brand name this fall.

Candover backs acquisition of UCB's Films business

Candover, a leading provider of equity for European buyouts, has acquired UCB's Films business, a manufacturer of speciality films, for a total consideration of €320 million. The business has been bought from UCB Group.

Headquartered in Brussels, Belgium, UCB's Films business is a manufacturer of specialist orientated polypropylene and cellulose films. The OPP division has a portfolio of speciality packaging products targeted on high growth niche markets.

The Cello division enjoys a market leading position and is launching new biodegradable packaging products for food and transparent labels for beverage bottles. Both divisions have a strong and well-established customer base.

UCB recently acquired Solutia's Resins, Additives & Adhesives activity for 500 million USD and integrated its Film and Chemical sector operations, combining all the Group's non-pharmaceutical activities in one entity called Surface Specialties.

e No.506

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Technology News

MPS
In-line multi-layer label system

Press manufacturer MPS has developed a system for producing multi-layer labels in-line. The system consists of a multi-web sealing and converting unit capable of sealing one or more (partly) self-adhesive transparent or non-transparent substrates on top of a printed base substrate. Additionally thin booklets and/or flat promotional items can be inserted between the layers of a label. The final label product can comprise two or more layers with the thin individual product in between. Such labels can be applied on almost any type of product packaging. Consumers peal-off the indicated layers to find more information or a special promotion.

In operation the firsts step is to print the separate sealed substrates individually on a full press width with 5-7 printing units. In the final in-line production step the printed base substrate and the additional layers are brought together on the connected in-line multi-layer seal-unit, where the adhesive parts are brought together, optionally with thin promotional items or booklets in-between. After leaving the unit the multi-layer web can be hotfoil-stamped, die-cut and stripped. Additional printing is possible as well.

MPS director Eric Hoendervangers explains: 'we determined the multi-layer market as an important growing segment for our UV-flexo presses. We have found a very clever solution for multi-layer label production, not by doing it on a long UV flexo printing line with a dozen or more units, but by printing on an approximately a 50 per cent reduced pressline.' The multi-layer seal-unit can be connected to any MPS UV-printing machine.

Hoendervangers points out that because the system does not involve a long and complex press set-up, high production speeds are possible and jamming is minimized. The system is also well suited to short run or just-in-time multi-layer label production.

Ko-Pack
One pass converting and printing system

Ko-Pack International has introduced a system which combines UV flexo, letterpress and UV rotary screen printing plus hot stamping with in-line self-adhesive material converting via in-line silicone coater and in-line adhesive coater.

The press is capable of converting plain material into self-adhesive material, as well as printing, die-cutting, and waste matrix rewinding simultaneously. Though capable of producing self-adhesive material in-line, it is not meant to replace commercially available self-adhesive material completely, but to complement its usage further.

AB Graphics
RFID/EAS converter

AB Graphic International has announced the development of the Omega 1600 RFID/EAS Converter to meet the demands of label and packaging converters seeking to enter this emerging market area.

The system comprises 28" diameter unwind and de-lamination and re-lamination unit with a liner compensation system capable of accepting RFID, EAS and similar inlays. The lamination unit with carrier rewind configured for unwinding of RFID tags and rewinding of the static liner can also be used as a standard lamination module. A second lamination unit with carrier rewind provides for over lamination of the web. Die cutting is provided through a single rotary die base that includes matrix stripping and two die positions. The second die position can be supplied to provide for sheet delivery.

The line is completed by an Omega rewind module with nip roller drive, scissor slitting, cross web adjustment and independently driven, pneumatic rewind mandrel that includes labels in, labels out selection and web advance arm for accurate placement of rewind cores.

Comments John Gallagher, AB Graphic International, Inc. 'The use of RFID and EAS technology is growing. The Omega 1600 RFID/EAS Converter takes rolls of pre-printed self-adhesive labels and integrates almost any type of electronic inlay in a sandwich between the label substrate and its backing paper. It is then die cut and rewound to finished rolls or individual pieces.'

Toray Plastics (America)
Resistant Polyester label film

Converters who produce signs, banners, P-O-P displays, labels and nameplates, and other printed products that require protection against UV light, rain, ozone and pollution, can now use new Lumirror U6V and U6V1 co-extruded, UV stabilized polyester films. Toray Plastics (America) Inc.'s new Lumirror U6V and U6V1 PET UV blocking films are color-neutral, don't degrade or yellow, and retain high optical clarity.

The new Lumirror films are ideal for indoor and outdoor lamination applications. Lumirror U6V and U6V1 preserve ink-jet, flexo, litho and gravure inks, allowing them to stay true to their color. In addition, U6VI film is coated for greater ink adhesion.

Lumirror U6V and U6V1 are claimed to offer excellent thermal stability and mechanical properties, including high strength and dimensional stability. They are available in 1 - 2 mil thickness and widths ranging from 25 inches to 78 inches.

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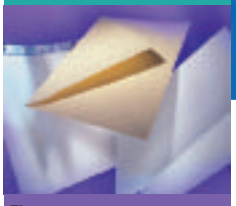

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Technology News

Avery Dennison
Electronic ordering expanded with new partner

The Fasson Roll North America division of Avery Dennison Corporation has collaborated with Tailored Solutions to simplify order entry and reduce material receiving time when purchasing Fasson-branded products. Narrow-web converters can take advantage of this collaboration by placing orders electronically via Fasson Connect utilizing the newest version of Label Traxx 4.0.

Label Traxx is a powerful business management software created for the flexographic narrow-web industry by Tailored Solutions. The Label Traxx software is designed for both Macintosh and Window platforms and Tailored Solutions has recently introduced an enhanced 4.0 version. 'This new version offers many user-friendly features including improved query and reporting functions,' endorses Ken Meinhardt, president of Tailored Solutions. 'Label Traxx can now be accessed remotely and on wide-area networks. Label Traxx 4.0 also offers the capability to purchase Fasson products via Fasson Connect and receive order shipment details directly back into an inventory system resulting in significant time savings, with improved order and inventory accuracy.'

The collaboration gives the narrow-web community an automated job-management solution for smooth and efficient business transactions. 'Printers using Label Traxx can dramatically reduce both their order placing and material receiving time utilizing Fasson Connect, states Agnès McGeever, manager of electronic communications, Fasson Roll North America. 'The system completely eliminates the need for double entries and manual tagging of received rolls, reducing errors and improving overall business efficiencies. This saves time while creating faster information processing.'

An added Label Traxx TM feature enables converters to automatically upload their excess inventory directly to RollXchange.com, increasing revenues from the sale of surplus materials.

FLEXcon
Advantage film for multi-pass UV/TTR applications

FLEXcon's new THERMLfilm Advantage Extreme is the third series in the company's Advantage line. It offers a new top-coat for multi-pass UV printing which can then be TTR printed with a variety of combo and/or resin ribbons. The new high performance acrylic adhesive is designed for performance on low surface energy or rough substrates.

Top coat TC-720, available on Satin White only, accepts a wide range of conventional, including UV, ink systems and can be TTR printed with resin based ribbons with maximum resolution of 600 dpi. Top coat TC-716, available on white, satin silver and satin clear, is claimed to offer an excellent anchorage with a variety of conventional inks and is highly chemical resistant. It Can be TTR printed with combo & resin ribbons at low burn settings and is also printable with U.V. inkjet.

Rotacom Equipment
Modular re-register diecutting converting systems

Montreal-based Rotacom Equipment Ltd has introduced the RC Series, a complete line of modular inline/offline converting and diecutting systems engineered and manufactured to meet the complex demands of the narrow and mid-web label industries.

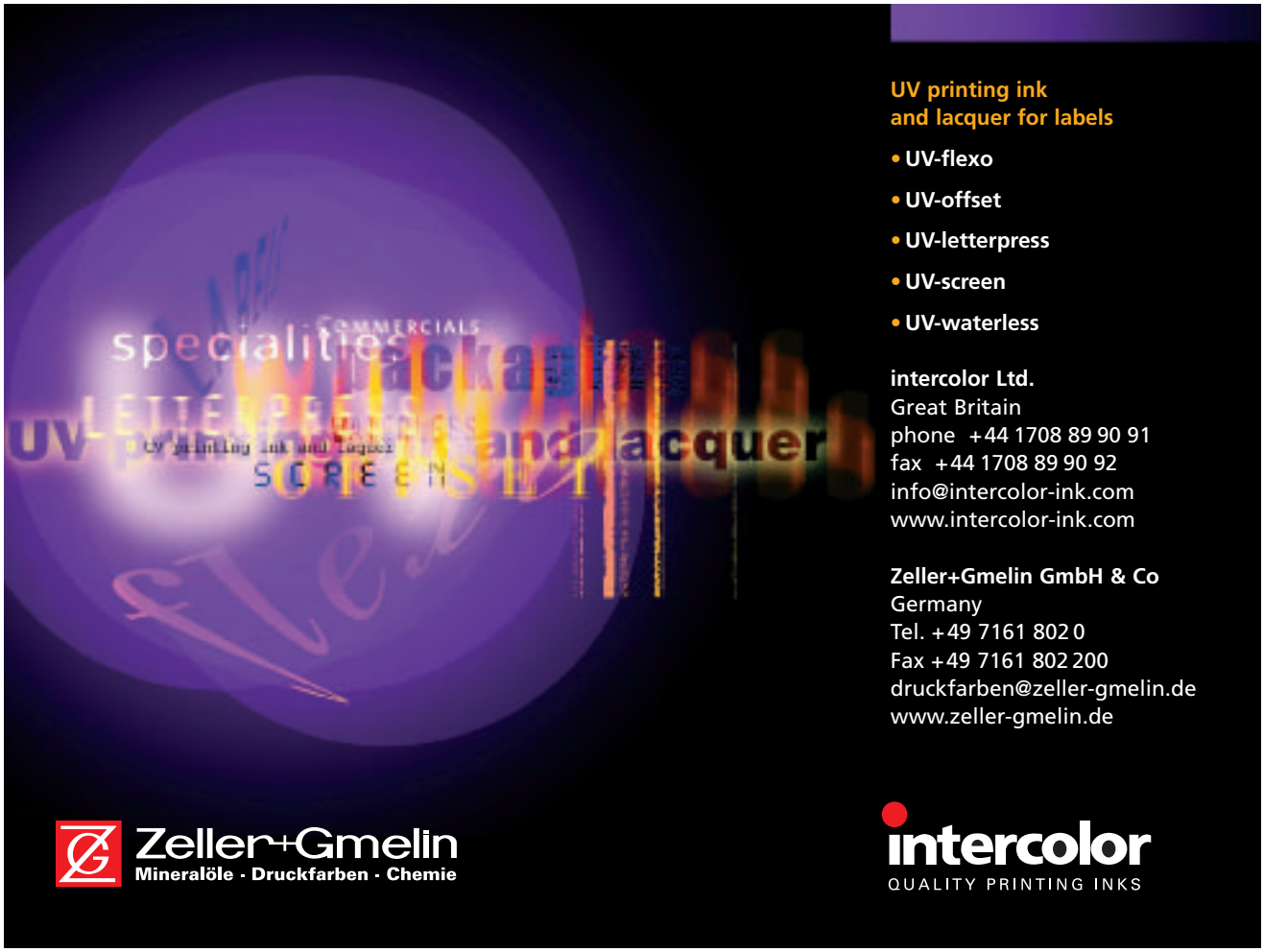
The system incorporates servo drive technology for precise tension and re-register diecutting capabilities. The RotaCom RC Series is flexible with hundreds of option combinations to choose from. Like all RotaCom equipment, the RC Series is modular, allowing for continual expansion and adaptation.

Avery Dennison
Semi-gloss facestocks and optimized hot melt adhesive

Avery Dennison Corporation has enhanced its Fasson Prime Paper portfolio with next-generation semi-gloss paper facestocks. In addition, it has optimized the formulation of its hot melt. Higher performing, Fasson 54# Semi-Gloss and Fasson 60# Semi-Gloss Elite products uphold a brighter, whiter appearance to intensify ink snap and contrast. The company says: 'Improved gloss for rich, deep graphics and higher opacity for greater cover-up accentuate 54# Semi-Gloss products, while 60# Semi-Gloss Elite grades feature increased ink holdout with a smoother print surface for better printability at 175/200 linescreen. The enhanced line of coated products maintain a blue-white shade, keeping pace with consumer shelf appeal trends while allowing for a broader reach of application usage.'

Fasson C2500 has been optimized. Using the same chemistry and components, the formula maximizes initial tack and adhesion properties. Printers will experience the same convertibility while achieving, on average, 30 per cent higher initial tack and 34 per cent higher ultimate adhesion on commonly used substrates, says Avery. The modified formula will affect all products coated with Fasson C2500 including the enhanced 54# & 60# Semi-Gloss products.

e No.215



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Technology News

Avery Dennison Graphics Division

Whiter face papers

Avery Dennison Graphics Division Europe are brightening up leading products in their Fasson range of self-adhesive sheets with whiter facematerials, claims the company. The change applies to Fasson Crack-Back Plus Glossart and Fasson 'no cracklines' Glossart papers, and to Fasson Offset Vinyl Gloss and Matt White. The upgrading is in line with the Fasson offset team's commitment to maintain state-of-the-art print substrates in their sheet-fed offset products that will deliver high-impact full-colour print results.

The new paper facematerial on the top grades of Fasson Glossart is available with permanent, removable, and SuperTack adhesives.

Fasson Offset Vinyl's new white gloss and matt face films, with both permanent and removable adhesives, are now also enhanced with a thicker backing – Hygrorest 128 gm2 instead of Hygrorest 100gms – making the products suitable for offset printing with UV-curable inks.

Avery Dennison Roll Materials Europe

Fasson MC Plus Paper labelstocks

Avery Dennison Roll Materials Europe announces a new addition to its white Fasson-brand self-adhesive machine-coated paper labelstocks, with the introduction of Fasson MC Plus. Fasson MC Plus is a white, 85gm2 semi-gloss, one-side machine-coated paper with on-press characteristics, suitable for single or multi-print and for applications where a semi-gloss appearance work is required, claims the company.

Available as standard with Fasson permanent adhesives Fasson S20000N and Fasson S2045 and BG40 Brown glassine liner, Fasson MC Plus can accommodate the needs of today's narrow and wide web presses, deliver conversion, offer optimal diecutting and matrix stripping and dispensing.

Matt Soft Touch transparent films

Avery Dennison Roll Materials Europe has introduced Fasson Soft Touch matt transparent films with a face structure that eliminates the contrast in feel between the container and label. Fasson Polypropylene 65μm – PP Soft Touch – is specially suited "where an exceptionally soft, velvety feel to the surface" because it is supple, yet tough enough to withstand tearing, and is designed for use as either an overlaminate or a printing film.

The alternative, Fasson Polyethylene 100μm – PE Soft Touch – designed primarily as a printing film, offers similar softness, but creates a sensation of friction when stroked. Both products are compatible with the major printing processes, although Fasson PE Soft Touch allows outstanding results to be achieved with screen, often used in health and beauty labelling for creating eye-catching base white opaques and high-lustre features, in-line.

For best ink-adhesion results with either film, corona treatment is recommended prior to printing. Both products come with Fasson S692N clear, permanent adhesive, which offers excellent UV resistance and good adhesion, even on apolar substrates.

Technology News

Wolstenholme
Software calculates metallic options

With the release of Wolstenholme International's free, Inkantation calculating tool, an opportunity to select the most cost-effective metallic finish for a variety of printing applications has been introduced, claims the Lancashire-based company.

Inkantation's calculation formulae are based solely on application comparisons between different metallic effects, such as inks, metallised substrates and hot and cold foil stamping. It allows the printer to quickly estimate the most cost-effective metallic option per print job before purchasing raw materials. In addition, it provides the designer and marketer with an insight into the range and the costs of value-adding, special effects before committing to a final design. To facilitate the selection process, this tool is available free of charge and can be accessed via the Wolstenholme International web site.

Inkantation is easy to use and enables the operator to key in over 150 printing variables, such as print quantity, paper selection and the process and finish most appropriate for carton and label printing.

Rad-Cure
UV Cold Foil transfer adhesives

Rad-Bond 329CF Series, UV Cold Foil transfer adhesives, are the most recent additions to Rad-Cure's line of specialty coatings and adhesives. Available for Flexo application, this one-component product is designed specifically to replicate the process of hot stamping, but at considerably lower cost, claims the company. The adhesive can be applied over wax-free inks, including water-based, on either film stocks or good holdout paper stocks. The cold foil is then laminated and UV cured through. Separation of the substrate and foil will leave foil only where the adhesive has been applied, providing a durable high quality foil print.

Herma
Resistant PETP white gloss

Herma has developed a new material, Herma PETP white gloss. Designed for labels that meet extreme requirements, especially in the automotive and supply industry and also in the chemical and logistics industry, it is distinguished by its resistance to heat, ageing and chemicals. Even high aggressive lubricants, dropping battery acid and shower and salt water cannot harm this polyester film, which has already obtained the UL listing. The main reason for its high performance is new UV cured acrylic adhesive, claims the company.

A special surface treatment ensures that Herma PETP white gloss produces a high quality finish for screen, letter and flexo printing. This quality also provides an optimal printing result via thermal transfer and laser printers. This material is suitable for the production of labels which are used as type plates, for example in the engine compartment of cars or for reliable marking in difficult production processes.

The product range at present comprises various PETP qualities including white matt, transparent matt and silver matt. There are also a variety of PE and PIP qualities and special films.

Inprint
Anti-counterfeiting labels

Leaflet labeling company Inprint has launched its new range of made-to-order labels that are able to incorporate an array of anti-counterfeiting and tamper evidence measures.

Inprint is able to incorporate a range of overt and covert anti-counterfeiting measures into traditional labels for flatsheet printing, including RFID and EMID technology, as well as specialist inks and security strips. Such features ensure consumer safety as well as brand protection. Technology such as RFID and EMID is also ideal for track and trace purposes, which can significantly improve supply chain continuity.

'We are confident that with such a wide range of ACMs available, we can provide a flexible and cost-effective solution to customers' security requirements,' commented Andrew Walker, Inprint's business development director.

Leaflet label for blisters

Inprint has introduced Blister Inseal, a new leaflet label format that can be attached directly onto a blister pack to reduce packaging and provide added child security. Blister Inseal is based on Inprint's Inseal label used in pharmaceutical applications.

Blister Inseal is applied to the flat, foil surface of the blister pack and its self-adhesive base firmly attaches to the tablet pack, creating a more secure barrier that is significantly harder for children to break through. This base is micro-perforated or crosscut to allow the tablets to be pushed through when the laminated label 'cover' is opened.

The Blister Inseal leaflet label contains multiple pages that can be printed with a large volume of product information in a variety of languages, removing the need for further, loose leaflets. In some circumstances, Blister Inseal also removes the need for a carton, thus reducing costs. It also eliminates the difficulty of removing a blister pack from a carton that contains a thick, folded information leaflet.

For small batch runs of drugs used in clinical trials, Blister Inseal is ideal in that no additional outer packaging is required for the blister, helping to reduce costs. Because of its added security, Blister Inseal also provides a vehicle for over-the-counter (OTC) medications such as paracetamol to be dispensed

New York Label Success Gallery

Vice President.....Chris Freddo

Business.....Label & Box Printer
New York Label & Box Corp.
New York, NY

Established.....1948

Specialty ..Packaging prepress and platemaking

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Annual labor savings 28.5%

Annual material savings.....$220,000

Annual makeready savings .....800 hours

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— Chris Freddo, VP, New York Label

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Technology News

from vending machines in a safe, cost-effective way. This method of OTC drug dispensation already exists in the USA and is gaining popularity in Europe.

Blister packaging is predicted to grow in popularity as legislation dictates that the majority of prescription drugs dispensed to patients in Europe must be provided in unit dose packs. Blister Inseal also provides compliance with the legislation that the essential details contained within a Patient Information Leaflet (PIL) must accompany the medication in question.

MAP80

Enzyme wash fabric label solution

Marks & Spencer-approved labeling solutions provider MAP80 EAST has announced the launch of a new enzyme resistant fabric label solution that will allow manufacturers to produce their own labels for enzyme washed garment ranges.

MAP80 East has developed a unique combination of processed label fabric and specialist ribbon that makes the print resistant to harsh enzyme washes used by many garment manufacturers.

A major benefit to manufacturers producing their own labels is that the MAP80 East solution allows them to start producing their own enzyme resistant labels without having to invest in additional hardware.

Jerry Foster, managing director of MAP80 East is confident of the real benefits the new solution offers garment manufacturers: 'Our new enzyme wash labeling solution is easy to introduce to an existing labeling system and has no special requirements or set up costs attached. By producing the enzyme-resistant labels themselves manufacturers can eliminate delays in production waiting for labels to arrive and because exact quantities can be produced there is no wasted label stock either. For manufacturers this is an instant saving in time and cost.'

This solution is available in major needle point locations around the world.

KPG

Enhanced software for Matchprint virtual proofing

Features in the latest software for the Kodak Polychrome Graphics Matchprint Virtual Proofing System expand the global reach and capabilities of the monitor proofing technology.

Software enhancements include color profiles to meet FOGRA color standards and a built in FOGRA color check feature for users to evaluate their proofing set up and ensure compliance to FOGRA settings. The new software also supports the Apple Safari web browser, allowing users to proof using the default OSX browser and to enjoy the benefits of proofing in the fastest Mac web browser.

'This software extends the benefits of color critical monitor proofing to customers throughout Europe and improves collaboration with their colleagues and partner organizations in the U.S.,' said Rob Pipe, business director, Virtual Proofing, KPG. 'These features further deliver on the Matchprint Virtual Proofing System's promise of monitor proofing to save time, eliminate geographic barriers, and deliver consistent, accurate color.'

The Matchprint Virtual Proofing System's new software also includes a Matchprint Virtual Private Label Option, which allows Private Label users of Matchprint Virtual to present their clients with their own online proofing web portal, through a unique URL customized with their own look and feel.

Private Label includes two powerful online proofing workflow tools – a customizable proof approval workflow that enables customers to define custom roles for end users and set permissions while managing their own unique proof approval process. When activated the proof approval function requires the user to authenticate their approval and also allows users to lock down a file or project once it is approved, which prevents users from uploading new versions or adding additional annotations. In addition, Private Label offers a new "multiple-index view" and "compare" feature set, allowing simultaneous collaboration on and streaming, viewing, annotation and comparison of two images in high resolution. The "compare" function immediately identifies the changes between the two versions, whether text or color related.

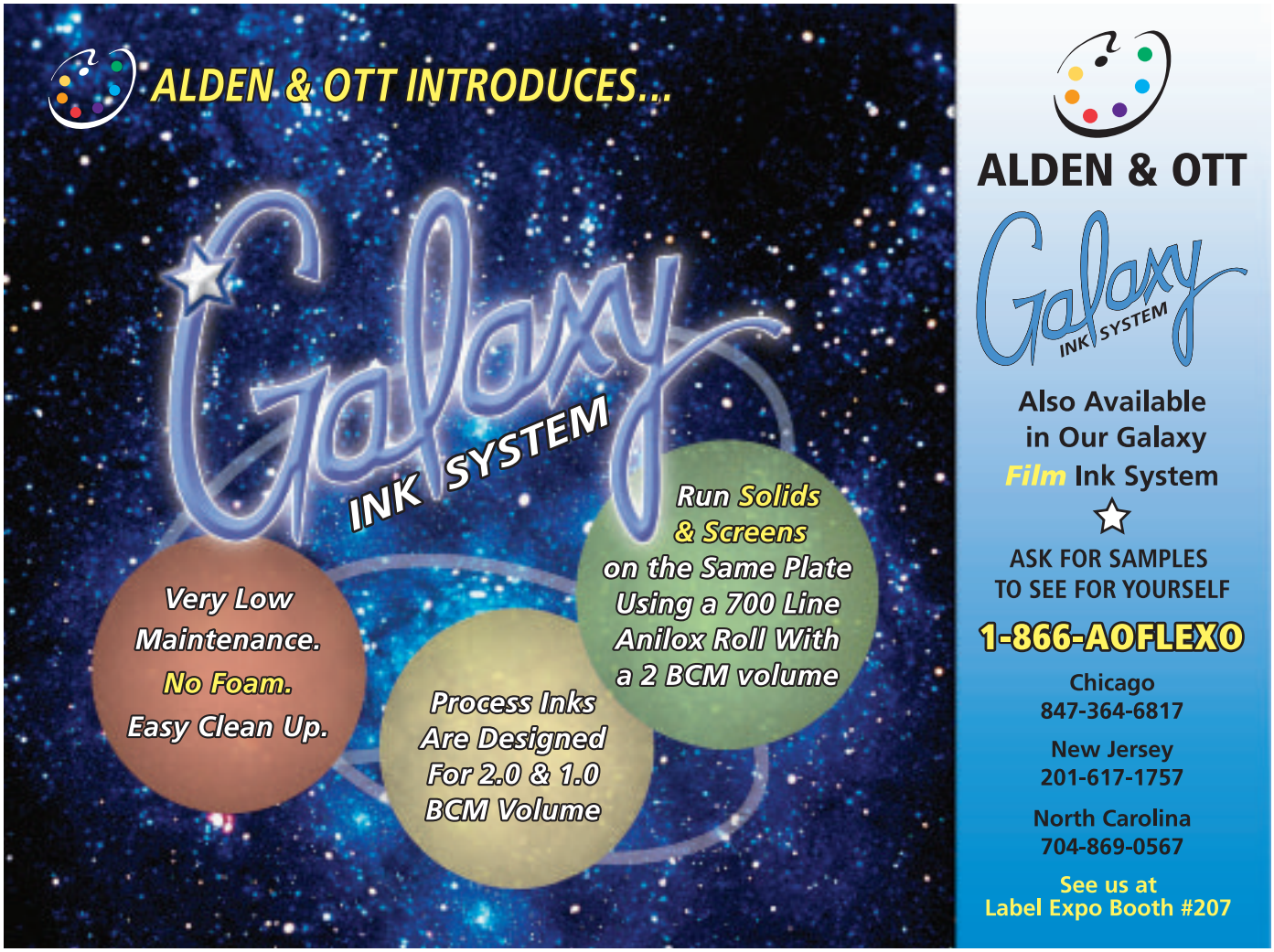
SATO

CX400 desktop printer

The CX400 direct thermal/thermal transfer printer is the latest in the Compact series, a new generation of SATO's desktop printers with a small footprint. The CX400 has a 32-Bit high-speed RISC processor accessed directly from standard Windows applications, as well as SATO's specially designed labeling software 'Label Gallery'. Suitable for low volume printing needs, it is able to print text and fine detailed graphics, as well as smaller size 2-D codes, such as Maxicode and PDF417.

It has a printing speed of 4 inch per second and comes with a standard Centronics interface, a flexible interface module (RS-232C), and optional interface modules including 100Base-TX LAN adapter, 10Base-T LAN adapter and USB (all via the parallel port). In addition, you can choose to add on 2 or 4MB Flash memory for additional data storage.

To enquire further about any of the above items, please use enquiry number e No.600 and be sure to mention company name and product.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No.209

Technology News

PharmaFlex UV Inks
Water Ink Technologies

PharmaFlex UV inks claim to be BP free, low odor, safety driven UV inks that offer consistent color, low viscosity and high strength. These inks can achieve good mid-tone and shadow reproduction with no plate softening. Water Ink has eliminated all hazardous and chemically suspect materials from all PharmaFlex UV inks.

The inks are ideal for pharmaceutical, cosmetic, food, beverage, and medical packaging, as well as health and beauty applications. The inks are also balanced for use with The Water Ink Technologies Ink Mixer computerized ink blending system, so you can mix standard industry colors and custom formulations.

Avery Dennison Roll Materials Europe
Durables range enhanced for electronics labels

Avery Dennison Roll Materials Europe has launched a dedicated range of adhesives and face materials to answer the growing demand for long-life product identification labelling of electrical appliances.

This range simplifies and streamlines the selection of labelstock for warning and track-trace labels, claims the company. Components for these applications are subject to the most stringent criteria, because they have to perform throughout the product's lifetime.

Fasson Durables provides the answer to specifying labels for extreme environment challenges, such as chemical resistance, exposure to extreme temperatures, UV light and difficult substrates. Products are available in quantities from only 300m2, with delivery lead-times from 72 hours. This enhances the converter's ability to offer a competitive service in value chains where low, frequent, fast deliveries are the norm.

Emulsion-based acrylic adhesives include the all-purpose Fasson S333, combining high initial tack with low adhesive ooze, and the new Fasson S8020, offering excellent UV-resistance and good performance on apolar substrates.

Aellora Digital
SureFire digital print engines

Aellora Digital has introduced its new SureFire Digital Print Engines for piezo drop-on-demand (DOD) ink jet printing of opaque, UV-curable inks.

These digital print engines offer system integration configurations for either continuous or intermittent printing, and provide a low cost, quick turnaround, quality solution with value-added personalization capabilities. Aellora claims that ongoing in-house reliability testing has already demonstrated over 15,000 failure-free operating hours, which includes no unrecoverable jet-outs.

MACtac
PressGold 710VHP

This new hot-melt adhesive, featuring the converting characteristics normally attributed to acrylic emulsion adhesives, is designed for faster, wider converting and easier application of labels.

It provides adhesion to a variety of low surface energy substrates such as HDPE and corrugated board and can convert successfully at speeds up to 750 feet per minute. This adhesive can also be converted wider (up to 20 inches) than conventional hot-melt adhesives with a minimum application temperature of 20°F.

UV Process Supply
CON-TROL-CURE's TFC-9000

The TFC-9000 rapidly measures the exothermic heat reaction from a polymerizing sample through a highly sensitive sensor and analyzes the data to produce useful results: time to reach peak temperature measured in BTU's, the slope of the temperature rise, and the total energy emitted by curing reaction in BTU's.

Rad-Cure Corporation
329CF-cold foil transfer adhesive

The RAD-BOND 329CF Series, UV Cold Foil transfer adhesives, available for Flexo application, are the most recent additions to Rad-Cure's line of high-performance specialty coatings and adhesives. This one component product replicates the process of hot stamping at a low cost and provides durable, quality foil prints.

Precision AirConvey
Wastepac Densifier to process waste bricks

Precision AirConvey has introduced the Wastepac Densifier, a machine that converts plastic film, foil, poly-coated paper, loose scrap and other waste into valuable, manageable bricks ready for reuse or disposal.

Developed for converters, compounders, film processors, contract packagers, recycling and waste handling companies, the Wastepac Densifier product data sheet features detailed schematics to demonstrate how the PAC equipment automatically compresses both dirty and clean material into rigid bricks with a dramatic compaction ratio of 40:1.

To enquire further about any of the above items, please use enquiry number e No.600 and be sure to mention company name and product.

"A new member of TLMI, I am delighted by the shared knowledge and support. A number of members have even turned into customers."

John Parsons
VP-General Manager/Flexo Division
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Installations

Hub Labels

Hub Labels takes second Gallus RCS 330

Hub Labels, Inc. has announced the purchase a second Gallus RCS 330 combination UV flexo/rotary screen press from Gallus.

Hub's first RCS 330 was the first such press in the United States. Hub Label's version camn produce labels in any combination of UV flexo and rotary screen up to 8 colors, with hot-foil stamping, lamination or varnish, and die-cutting. Registration, pressure, and color control are all set, monitored and maintained by a computer-controlled system that allows consistency at speeds of up to 400 feet per minute. The waste matrix removal system allows non-stop operation. Features including automatic wash-up of aniloxes to drastically reduce changeover times.

Hub Labels produces prime labels for the product identification market - food and beverage, cosmetics, health and beauty, wine and spirits, pharmaceutical and industrial, as well as direct mail and other promotional markets.

Bud Dahbura, president, Hub Labels Inc. said, 'With the addition of another Gallus RCS 330 to our press family, we are establishing ourselves to our existing customers and to new customers as the premiere provider of distinctive labels to make their product packaging absolutely shimmer. It should also be mentioned that with our recent additions of digital direct-to-plate technology and offset-quality Indigo digital label printing press, we are virtually unique in terms the range of capabilities and top-shelf quality.'

No.601

X-Label

X-Label manufactures own laminate

One of the leading label printers in Germany, X-Label, has bought an ETI Cohesio machine, a system fully equipped for the production of pressure sensitive substrates of any kind.

X-label gave two main reasons for the purchase: first as an improvement in the printing process - no need for costly lamination and the possibility of printing under the adhesive, for example - and the savings realized on raw material costs.

X-Label will use its current printing capacity to pre-print the face stock – not the laminate - at high speed, and the Cohesio will afterward apply the silicone and the adhesive, then laminate and die-cut the rolls into finished labels.

ETI also announced the sale of two Metronome flexo printing presses at Drupa and expects to have a similar success at Labelexpo Chicago 2004.

No.602

Caribbean Label Craft

Rum label printer takes production proofer

RK Print Coat Instruments has installed a FlexiProof 100 at Caribbean Label Crafts in Barbados, a premium quality label producer for the drinks industry, most notably rum.

Caribbean Label Craft operates four 10-colour presses on a 3-shift basis and are regularly required to flexographically print multiple spot colours, all of which must be printed with no color shade difference.

According to Caribbean Label Craft's Paul Evelyn: 'The company are very pleased with the FlexiProof 100. It's saving us time in colour matching and 'fine tuning' the presses so that we produce a consistent product, one that meets the agreed colour specifications.'

The flexiProof is a scaled-down version of a flexographic production press, equipped with quick-change ceramic or steel anilox roller. It eliminates the need for pilot runs to be undertaken on a production press, and is ideal for quality control purposes and for ensuring the consistency of performance of inks and substrates over time.

RK Print Coat Instruments unveiled a new FlexiProof development at Drupa - the FlexiProof with UV curing. Leading label producer Skanem and UK ink manufacturer Mirage Inks have purchased this new version.

No.603

Stratus

Stratus looks to future expansion with E-Combat

GiDue has supplied an E-Combat shaftless press to Stratus Packaging for the production of pressure sensitive and filmic substrates. Equipped with eight UV flexo printing units, the E-Combat brings to 34 the number of label presses in the Stratus stable throughout Europe.

Stratus Packaging is one of the largest printing groups in Europe with four strategically placed sites in France and Benelux that serve an international customer base. It offers a wide range of labels and flexible packaging to the pharmaceutical, health and beauty, food and automotive industries that include in-mould labels, inserts, leaflet, scratch-off, security and cartons printed through litho, UV flexo, screen and digital printing.

Jose Arias of Stratus Packaging commented: 'We selected the E-Combat from GiDue because it seems to us the best choice with regard to the current label market and our strategy.'

The E-Combat design uses servo-driven controls for all press functions and with the benefit of electronic drives will enable Stratus Packaging to print and convert substrates in the region of 15 micron film to up to 350 grams per square metre carton board. The specification includes twin cold foil units, laminating and delaminating/ relaminating units with option for future installation of the GiDue IML delivery system for in-mould labels.

No.605

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Exhibiting among the 175 companies will also be around 20 of India's leading label printers, showcasing their capabilities.

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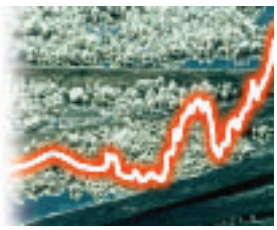
Defending Release Coating Operations Against the Rising Price of Platinum



A Vital Resource in Short Supply

Of the nearly 27 billion square meters of release liners and films coated globally each year, more than 80 percent utilize silicone release coatings catalyzed by platinum. In these applications, platinum is an absolute necessity:

- It converts a coating from a pourable liquid to a hard rubber film in little more than a second.
- Release liners made with platinum cured silicone chemistry require minimal post-cure and exhibit no reversion, which are essential factors, especially for in-line lamination operations.

Despite a significant research investment, the silicone industry has yet to find an alternative that can match platinum's technical performance.

Rising Prices

Unfortunately, increasing demand for platinum in other industries has seriously depleted the global supply, causing prices to rise sharply. Over the past three years, the cost of platinum metal on the global commodities exchange has doubled, and continuing shortages are expected to keep platinum prices unstable for many years to come.

A Seemingly Irreconcilable Problem

This puts silicone release coating suppliers in a very difficult position. While platinum continues to be the best choice for their customers in terms of performance, suppliers can no longer absorb the rising cost.

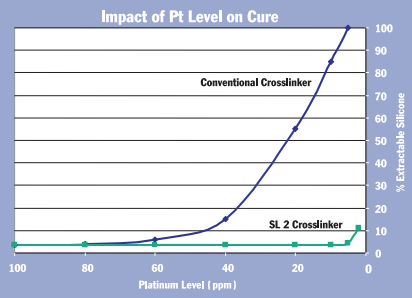
For years, they have attempted to shield customers from the effect of rising platinum prices by upping their productivity and cutting costs from one end of the supply chain to the other. Unfortunately, they have finally reached the point where they must either raise their release coating prices or jeopardize their ability to meet customer needs for technical innovation.

Innovative Solutions for Paper Coating Operations

While higher prices for platinum-catalyzed silicone release coatings are an unavoidable reality, silicone suppliers are searching for innovative ways to help their customers offset the added cost. This is especially important for coaters and converters using paper substrates.

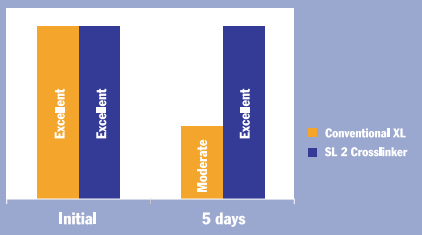
Syl-Off® Advantage Series Performance Profiles

Cure



The Advantage Series' proprietary crosslinker architecture enables excellent cure with very low levels of platinum.

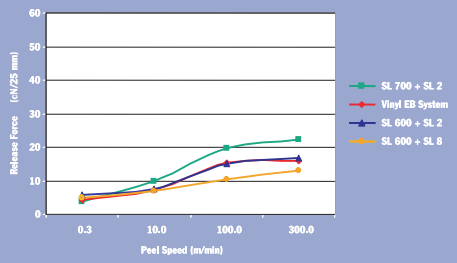
Anchorage



Even at low platinum levels, Advantage Series crosslinkers yield substantially improved humidity-aged anchorage performance vs. conventional crosslinkers.

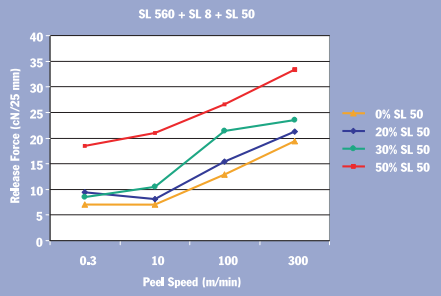
Release

Against Emulsion Acrylic Adhesive



Due to their proprietary architectures, Advantage Series polymers yield flatter release profiles across the peel speed range.

Release Modification



Advantage Series release modifiers allow coaters to tailor the release profile to their end use specifications.

> **The Advantage Series** enables significantly lower platinum usage – 20-50 ppm vs. the 100 ppm or more that conventional systems require. In many high-volume applications, this can result in a 10-15% cost savings.
>
> – Luc Dusart
> *Global pressure sensitive industry marketing manager*
> *Dow Corning Corporation*

In response, Dow Corning Corporation has developed an entire "toolbox" of proprietary, low-platinum silicone release coating components especially for use on paper.

The Syl-Off® *Advantage Series Reduced-Platinum Coatings "Toolbox"*

Luc Dusart, Dow Corning global pressure sensitive industry marketing manager, says, "We designed *Syl-Off*® Advantage Series to help our customers defend themselves against skyrocketing platinum prices and other cost issues *without* sacrificing performance.

"The Advantage Series enables significantly lower platinum usage – 20-50 ppm vs. the 100 ppm or more that conventional systems require. In many high-volume applications, this can result in a 10-15% cost savings."

Syl-Off Advantage Series is a complete solventless, platinum-catalyzed, thermal-cure release coating system. It includes a comprehensive selection of base polymers, crosslinkers, release modifiers and catalysts that enable flexible control of cure characteristics, release profile and costs. One of the unique benefits of the Dow Corning system is that users do not have to compromise on bath life, anchorage, line speed or release stability to achieve this control.

Two versions of the system are available to accommodate divergent needs for low-temperature cure vs. needs for longer thin-film bath stability in hot, high-speed processing operations.

According to Associate Industry Scientist Loretta Jones, "In customer trials, these new polymer and crosslinker architectures have yielded remarkable cure performance with very low platinum requirements." Jones also reports that converters are able to achieve faster stripping speeds during label converting, due to the flatter release profiles available from the range of Advantage Series coatings.

Suitable for a wide range of adhesives and applications, *Syl-Off* Advantage Series silicone release coatings can be used to augment or replace a coater's current product line. Moreover, they are designed to minimize the processing and performance difficulties that users sometimes encounter when changing release coating formulations. Advantage Series products have viscosities similar to those found in Dow Corning's standard platinum-catalyzed, solventless silicone release coating line. Equipment, substrate, cure and dwell requirements are also similar.

Supportive Services

To ensure the successful implementation of *Syl-Off* Advantage Series, Dow Corning's technical support team offers comprehensive changeover and trouble-shooting assistance, including pilot coating and application testing support.

With Dow Corning's pilot coater, customers can determine in advance how the Advantage Series coatings will coat and cure on their substrates under various temperature and dwell time conditions.

Process Optimization Solutions

Another way release coating suppliers can help customers compensate for platinum-driven price increases is by providing them with cost-saving, process-optimization solutions. Dow Corning's Luc Dusart says, "We are working with our customers to help them manufacture robust products at the lowest possible cost. In addition to product solutions, Dow Corning also provides process optimization expertise, such as oven and coating line setups that promote optimal coat weights, eliminate waste and speed production."

For More Information

Consult the Dow Corning pressure sensitive industry website (www.dowcorning.com/psi) or visit the Dow Corning team at Labelexpo – Americas booth #3535 or Singapore booth #B65.

Syl-Off® Advantage Series Low-Platinum Solventless Silicone Release Coatings

- Reduce your vulnerability to price swings in platinum metal prices
- Reduced platinum requirements – 10-15% cost reductions possible in high-volume applications
- "Toolbox" approach enables broad flexibility in controlling release, cure and cost
- No need to compromise bath life, anchorage, line speed, or release stability
- Formulated for convenience, process efficiency and flexibility
- Suitable for a wide range of adhesives and applications
- Designed to minimize changeover concerns

e No. 122

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Installations

Green Bay Engraving
Green Bay tradeshop takes global proofing on-line

A prepress trade house for flexographic printers in Green Bay, Wisconsin will use the Kodak Polychrome Graphics RealTimeProof online proofing solution to expand its customer base globally. Green Bay Engraving purchased RealTimeProof Express and RealTimeProof Private Label from Kodak Polychrome Graphics (KPG) at drupa.

'Green Bay Engraving is committed to providing the highest level of technology and service to our customers,' said Paul Lancelle, VP technology development, Green Bay Engraving. 'Adding these two RealTimeProof products really strengthens this promise to customers.'

Green Bay Engraving serves flexographic printers and consumer products companies across North America with a staff of 30. With RealTimeProof Express and RealTimeProof Private Label, the prepress trade house can offer customers around the world highly customized solutions for the unique workflows used in flexographic printing.

RealTimeProof is a suite of web-based proofing solutions providing accurate image quality for monitor and remote proofing. Using patented streaming technology, Pixels on Demand, gigabytes of high-resolution files can be viewed in seconds, even over a dial-up connection. Users need only a web browser on a Mac or PC and a free downloadable plug-in to proof their original files from anywhere, at any time. The technology is now integrated in workflows from Heidelberg, EFI, Esko-Graphics and Artwork Systems.

No.606

ImageLinx
Deskpack aids design integrity at ImageLinx

Packaging graphics service provider ImageLinx has invested in Esko-Graphics' Deskpack software for their offices in the UK and the US. The company provides global solutions for the effective translation of graphic content for printed packaging. Based in Nottingham in the UK, ImageLinx has offices in Europe and North and South America as well as Asia.

The company's core business is collecting and analyzing relevant data to influence the final print result. The company focuses on local market adaptations, shorter approval cycles and rapid prototyping to give their customers keen reductions in costly development cycles and time to market.

Their technicians produce master templates with a mix of variables where artwork is layered and combined with the reprographic assembly data including dot-gain curves, ink ranges, calibration data and the effects of blankets and water balances. These variables integrate with profiles of comprehensive data on substrates and materials. The whole focus is to ensure consistency in the final printed graphics.

'Esko-Graphics software can and will give us what we need for the future for packaging design,' says Darren Smith, general manager for ImageLinx. 'Their technology in this arena is the very best. Because of the open architecture of the Esko-Graphics software, we have maximum flexibility when it comes to client files,' continues Smith. 'DeskPack enables us to work with files in a portable format using Adobe Illustrator. Printing rules and specifications can be embedded into separate layers of the files and we can import CAD layouts to view designs in interactive 3D. But most importantly, clients get the files back in their original format.

'We deal with world leaders in the packaging sector such as Duracell, Gillette and Proctor and Gamble. These companies require consistency of content for file transfer worldwide,' continues Smith. 'With Esko-Graphics DeskPack, we can relay accurate and consistent information to the end user - the printer - with full confidence that we are maintaining company brand integrity. With master templates we can work the designs across a company's full packaging portfolio.'

ImageLinx is now reviewing the wider range of possibilities of Esko-Graphics SCOPE software. 'We are forging ahead and looking at BackStage and other modules.

No.607

Litografia e Imprenta
MIS for Costa Rica's leading converter

Litografia e Imprenta LIL S.A., of Costa Rica - one of the largest printers in Central America – is implementing the DiMS! MIS system in their printing facility to handle all business processes for the broad range of printed products they produce, including forms, books, folding cartons, labels, commercial print and office products.

Improving control of their manufacturing processes, as well as enhancing customer service and consequently increasing profitability, were LIL's major motivations to select DiMS! as their new integrated system. Additionally the web-enablement of this system was an important factor. LIL S.A. will be using the entire DiMS! system. Mario Salazar, general manager of Litografía e Imprenta LIL S.A, comments: 'We have big expectations of DiMS! in order to improve the control of our manufacturing processes and to enhance customer service, and accordingly, we anticipate it will increase our sales opportunities in Central America and the United States, with a very high positive impact on the finances of our company.'This installation is part of a major push by DiMS! in the Spanish language market.

No.608

Out of the rough

Nilpeter sponsored the FINAT 2004 Golf Trophy, and will sponsor the next event which runs alongside the FINAT congress in Italy next year

Left to right: Mikael Dahl, Nordvall Sweden
Bjarne Svensson, Flexiket, Denmark
Iwata Masato, Iwata Labels, Japan

First prize winner, men:
Left to right: Colin Phillips, Herma, UK
Jakob Landberg, Nilpeter, Denmark
Lars Eriksen, Nilpeter, Denmark

First prize winner, women:
Left to right: Lena Sillanpää, Raflatac, Finland
Jakob Landberg, Nilpeter, Denmark
Lars Eriksen, Nilpeter, Denmark

Second prize winner, men:
Left to right: Don Stroebe, Avery Dennision Roll Materials Europe, NL
Jakob Landberg, Nilpeter, Denmark

Second prize winner, women:
Left to right: Gisela Lange, Lange AG, Switzerland
Jakob Landberg, Nilpeter, Denmark

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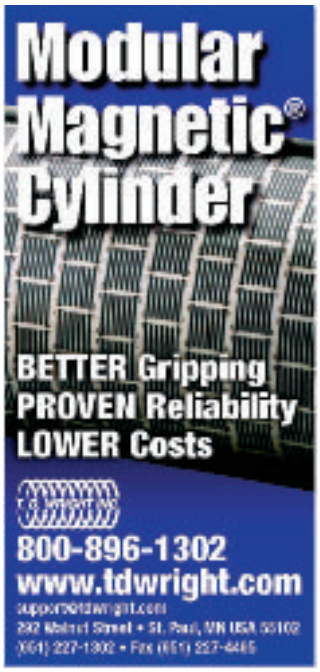

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