

Labels & Labeling

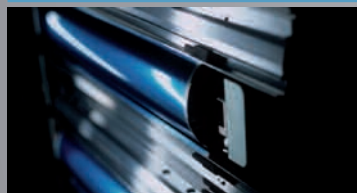
The wider world of narrow web

drupa special



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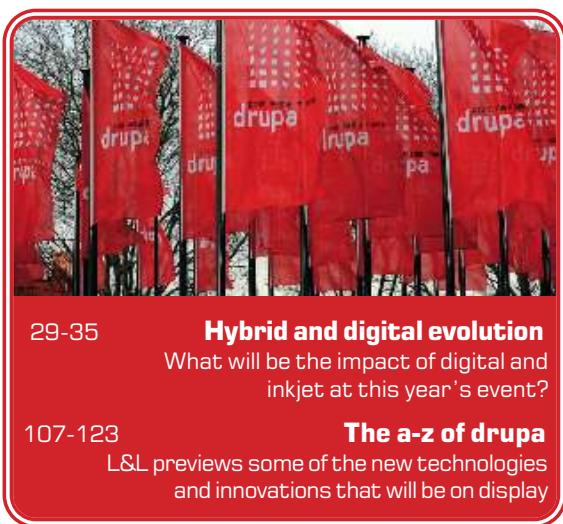


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Leader

Too many shows?

As label converters (and journalists), we are constantly bombarded by exhibition organizers trying to persuade us to visit their shows. The Big One approaching in May-June, of course, is drupa. This vast show takes in everything from newspaper and commercial printing presses to equipment for printing and binding books, to printing posters on large format inkjet presses.



Is it a show that label converters should visit? Well certainly, there are a number of dedicated narrow web exhibitors scattered throughout the show, and you can make a roadmap using the preview contained in this issue of *L&L*. But if you go expecting a Labelexpo you will be disappointed. Labelexpo remains the only show dedicated to the narrow web industry, and it will continue to be the arena for industry suppliers to show their new equipment and for the global industry to network.

“Gallus and Omet will be showing machines dedicated to carton production which you won’t yet see at a Labelexpo”

But drupa does provide an unparalleled opportunity to gauge the ‘state-of-the-art’ in the print industry as a whole. Of particular interest will be developments in automated JDF workflows; in in-line technology – cold foil, UV varnishing, die cutting – for sheetfed offset presses; and for assessing a range of digital technology aimed at the commercial print market, but which might one day have applications in the narrow web sector.

There will also be an emphasis on in-line carton production. This is an area which has died out almost completely at Labelexpo. Label converters generally have diversified more into films and flexible packaging than cartons. But Gallus and Omet, for example, will be showing machines dedicated to carton production which you won’t yet see at a Labelexpo.

One very important announcement which will be made is in the area of flexible packaging. Gidue and a number of companies which supply components to the ink and varnish industry will announce FDA food-contact approval for the first-stage components of UV inks and varnishes. A food contact UV varnish will be demonstrated at the show. This is highly significant. It will allow label converters to diversify into food grade flexible packaging on their existing UV-equipped presses, giving them a significant advantage over wide web competitors equipped with water-based and solvent machines in the short run sector.

Andy Thomas
 Group Managing Editor

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Labeling news

TLMI announces award winners

TLMI has announced the winners of the Eugene Singer Award for Management Excellence. One of TLMI's highest honors, this award recognizes excellence in business management measured and defined by an established set of growth and profitability ratios through the TLMI Management Ratio Study.

The Singer Award is given annually to four label-converting companies; each company within a certain sales range category. The 2007 TLMI Eugene Singer Awards were given to the following North American narrow web converting companies:

- Fountain Valley, California-based Coast Label Company won for the small company category. This is Coast Label's first TLMI Eugene Singer Award.
- Lenexa, Kansas-based SpectraGraphics, Inc. won for the mid-range category. This is SpectraGraphics' first TLMI Eugene Singer Award.
- Longwood, Florida-based Consolidated Label won for the medium company category. This is Consolidated Label's sixth consecutive TLMI Eugene Singer Award and the company's fourth time winning in the medium company category.
- DePere, Wisconsin-based Belmark, Inc. won for the large company category. This is Belmark's tenth TLMI Eugene Singer Award.

York Label acquires Chilean converters

York Label has acquired Etiprak through its Cameo-Marinetti joint venture, and a 50 percent interest in Etiquetas Industriales, both located in Santiago, Chile.

These Chilean acquisitions provide the platform for York Label to continue its aggressive expansion path. Combined with its existing Cameo-Marinetti joint venture, York Label says that these acquisitions create the largest single provider of label products in the Chilean market.

Founded in 1982, Etiprak was the first Chilean company to produce pressure sensitive labels for the wine industry. Etiprak focuses primarily on the wine & spirits and consumer products markets. In 2007, the company began the manufacturing of decorative shrink sleeve labels. Etiprak employs state-of-the-art equipment and technology which features high-end combination flexo, screen, foil stamping, embossing and laminating.

Etiquetas Industriales produces premium pressure sensitive labels primarily for the consumer products market. Launched in 2006 by Marinetti Packaging, the company employs the latest manufacturing technologies and provides York Label entry into the South American consumer products market.

Sandon wins EFTA silver award

Sandon Global has been awarded the European Flexographic Technical Association (EFTA) Supplier of the Year Award in the Silver class that honors companies nominated by EFTA members as their supplier of choice for 2007.

'This award is the result of the incredible efforts put in by the team of people at Sandon Global from sales through to manufacturing and service and reflects both customer confidence in our products and the rapid growth we have achieved since the company was founded in 2004,' said John Millington, managing director. 'We are delighted to have received this award in the face of strong competition from larger well-established groups of companies.'

The EFTA Annual Print Awards competition offers participating companies the opportunity to gain public recognition of their achievements and the outstanding degree of excellence the flexographic printing process has achieved. Lesley Hide, EFTA managing director, commented: 'To win an award in the Supplier of the Year class a company has to be nominated either by an EFTA member or by a company entering the Print Awards. The nominee is given points for each company nomination they receive. Once a company has

been nominated, we then look at the part they have played in the winning prints so Sandon has done really well.'

Established in 2004, Sandon Global manufactures laser engraved ceramic coated anilox and gravure rollers for the flexographic printing industry. The company serves an international market and has rapidly established itself as a key supplier to both privately owned and blue chip printing and packaging groups throughout the UK and Europe. The company also offers a full engineering service for both repairing rolls and sleeves as well as developing new concepts in roll and sleeve technologies. You can read more in the next issue of *Labels & Labeling*.



Pictured from left: Mike Boyle, MD of Nimble Shows & Media; Nigel Hedges, John Millington and Mike Foote of Sandon Global; and actor Shaun Williamson



EskoArtwork strengthens position in Japan

EskoArtwork has relocated its Tokyo office to a new and more spacious location. Serving as the central base for all Japanese operations, the move is aimed at supporting anticipated growth and better serve EskoArtwork's expanding customer base across the region.

Based in the Shinjuku I-Land Tower in Tokyo, the new EskoArtwork office provides a strategic location for its sales, marketing, customer support and logistics activities. Equipped with a demonstration facility and technical assistance center, it offers support to customers, distribution channels and partners in Japan. Complementing this new office is the existing EskoArtwork office in Osaka, providing extended coverage of the Japanese market.

Carsten Knudsen, CEO EskoArtwork, said: Japan is a very important market for EskoArtwork, even more so since Esko joined forces with Artwork Systems last year. The Japanese market for flexible packaging strongly relies on gravure printing, where we have been able to consolidate our position through the former Artwork Systems. In order to handle the many new opportunities that await our Japanese organization in the near future, we have expanded our management team by appointing Mr Hiroyuki Miyoshi alongside Mr Kaz Yamada. Together, they will successfully drive our growth in Japan.'

Hiroyuki Miyoshi brings extensive experience to his new role. Prior to joining EskoArtwork, he worked in various management positions for Canon, Adobe and Apple Computer.

Ronin takes stake in AVT

Ronin Investments Managing Company Ltd has acquired close to 25 percent of AVT (Advanced Vision Technology) shares. Ronin, managed by Ms Nurit Nahum, acquired the shares at the Frankfurt Stock Exchange where AVT is listed with a market value of approximately US\$80 million. AVT is a developer of machine vision-based process control and quality assurance solutions for the printing industry.

Ronin's investment in AVT follows its strategy based on investing in medium-sized companies, with long-term cash flow and growth potential. Ronin was impressed by AVT's achievements and results, and by the potential inherent in the company and its management. AVT has been managed for 10 years by Shlomo Amir.

Ronin Investments Managing Company is a private investment company, based in Tel Aviv, Israel, founded a year and a half ago. Ronin invests in a wide portfolio of companies in varied industries and geographical areas.

AVT's management is reportedly pleased with the investment and has expressed satisfaction that the Ronin Investments Managing Company has become an important shareholder.

CCL forms label business in Russia

CCL Industries has created a newly named label company, CCL-Kontur, which will service the territories of Russia and other CIS countries.

The new company is jointly owned by CCL Label and Ilgar Mamedov, a well-known entrepreneur in the Russian label industry. Mamedov has contributed the assets of two label businesses into the new company: Kontur Plus, based in a new state-of-the-art facility in Moscow, and Asterix, based in St Petersburg. CCL-Kontur had sales of approximately \$26 million in 2007. CCL is investing approximately \$16 million to acquire a 50 percent interest in these assets and to provide funding for additional capacity related investments.

Stork Prints to supply dedicated RSI units for Omet Varyflex

Stork Prints, manufacturer of rotary screen technology, has agreed to supply Italian press manufacturer Omet with dedicated RSI (Rotary Screen Integration) modules for the Varyflex 520mm and 670mm wide combination presses.

Suited for paper packaging and flexible packaging applications as thin as 12 μ m, the Varyflex is designed to maintain high productivity, with fast changeovers between different processes possible at all print and converting stations. The Stork units for the press simply slot into the main frame of the press, and are interchangeable with other processes such as flexo, gravure and foil stamping. The Omet press has a repeat size range from 12" to 33" and up to 12 colors.

The first two new RSI modules especially for the Varyflex press have been delivered to a flexible packaging printer in the US.

Labeling news



Harpers to receive ATEA award

The American Technical Education Association (ATEA) has announced that Ron and Katherine Harper, founders of global anilox supplier Harper Corporation of America, will receive the association's Silver Star Award at the ATEA's 45th National Conference on Technical Education this spring in Biloxi, Mississippi. This award is presented jointly by the American Technical Education Association and the National Technical Honor Society each year to recognize exceptional support and commitment to advancing postsecondary technical education.

The Harpers are legendary in the flexography industry for their philanthropy in flexo education. Today 21 high schools and 32 colleges in the US, Canada and Argentina have vocational programs based on the ones the Harpers helped initiate.

Avery pre-slit service

The Fasson Roll North America division of Avery Dennison is offering converters a new pre-slit service. Branded under Fasson Advantage service offerings, the Ready Width delivers narrow slit widths with low minimum order quantities on prime, variable and specialty products. Fasson Ready Width was recently introduced with ten specifications, including semi-gloss, cast gloss and matte litho papers, MDO and BOPP films, along with laser film products.

UK agent for Gidue

Gidue has appointed Global Print Services as its new agent for the UK and Ireland.

Based in Boston, Lincolnshire, Global Print Services (GPS) is an experienced print engineering company operating in Great Britain since 2004. Its four employees have over 100 years of engineering expertise on label presses and associated finishing machinery between them.

Alliance project for printed electronics

PolyIC, BASF, Evonik Industries, Elantas Beck and Siemens have announced the launch of a German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF)-sponsored alliance project called MaDriX to advance the development of high-performance printable RFID tags.

The current generation of RFID tags contains silicon chips and are mainly used for high-priced products because of the complex manufacturing processes involved. Printed electronic technology will reduce the cost of RFID tag production thanks to the development of new materials such as electrically conductive and semiconducting plastics that can be employed in high throughput printing processes. This will make printed radio frequency identification tags suitable for use in cheaper consumer goods so that they may even come to replace printed barcodes.

PolyIC leads the consortium engaged in the three-year joint project. The total investment sum amounts to some 15 million euros, with the BMBF contributing approximately 8 million euros. The project is funded as part of the BMBF's 5th Framework Program 'Key Technologies – Research for Innovations, Communications Technology Sector'. The German Aerospace Center, DLR, is acting as project sponsor. With MaDriX, the companies involved in the alliance and the federal ministry hope to secure Germany's current leadership as a research base in the printable electronics sector.

The close cooperation between the companies involved is a key to the success of the MaDriX project. PolyIC engages with the issues of component characterization, process development and setting up demonstrators. BASF, Evonik Industries and Elantas Beck will supply new materials to produce semiconductors and insulators for use in electronic circuits. Siemens is developing new real-time visual print inspection processes for quality control in the printing process. A number of universities and research institutes are also involved in the MaDriX project.

Apex establishes French operation

Apex Group of Companies, known for the development and production of anilox and metering rolls, has opened a French operation in order to cope with increased demands in that market. Apex France is headed by José Moreira, who remains responsible for sales in South-East France. Jean-Pierre Verne is appointed for sales in North-West France. He has more than 25 years of experience in several aspects of flexo printing, mostly involving inks. Nathalie Duval is hired as commercial assistant in the office, established in Montboucher sur Jabron in the south of France.

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A strategy for growth and profitability

In the first of a new series of features, **Mike Fairley** looks at the key challenges facing the global label industry and develops a strategy framework for growth, diversification, added-value converting and a more profitable future

There can be little doubt that the world of labels is undergoing another of its periods of change and evolution, with a whole range of issues from globalization to the environment and sustainability becoming ever more prominent in the challenges that the industry has to face.

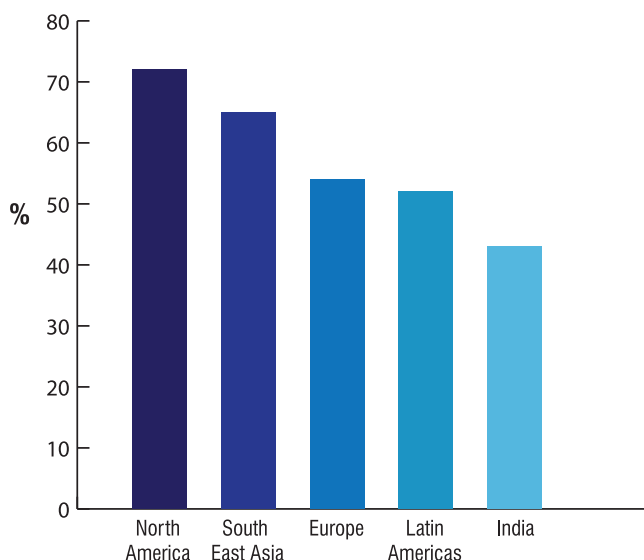
This is nothing new to the label converter. There have always been periods of significant change and challenge: the introduction of bar coding and variable information printing in the 1980s, the implementation of new standards of quality control and performance (ISO 9000) in the 1990s, electronic design and digital origination technology in the 1980s and 1990s. The industry has always faced new challenges – and successfully come through them fitter and stronger.

However, the challenges of today are coming in a time when label converters around the world are increasingly facing not only technology changes and new global growth and environment requirements but also when more and more converters seem to be on a treadmill of downward pressures on the prices they can charge, made worse by rising costs. In other words, they are experiencing declining margins and reduced profitability.

Look at the results of the surveys carried out around the world by *Labels & Labeling* over the past two years. In virtually every market surveyed (except India), more than 50 percent of label converters sited the downward pressure on prices as a major barrier to their future growth (Fig. 1). Indeed, in North America, the figure was over 70 percent. Even in India, a relatively new growth market, over 40 percent of converters still said they were experiencing price pressures.

A downward pressure on prices can be sustained for a time if converter costs are not also rising. Unfortunately, while prices obtained for labels have been coming down (largely driven down by global brand owners and retail giants, as well as increasing competition between

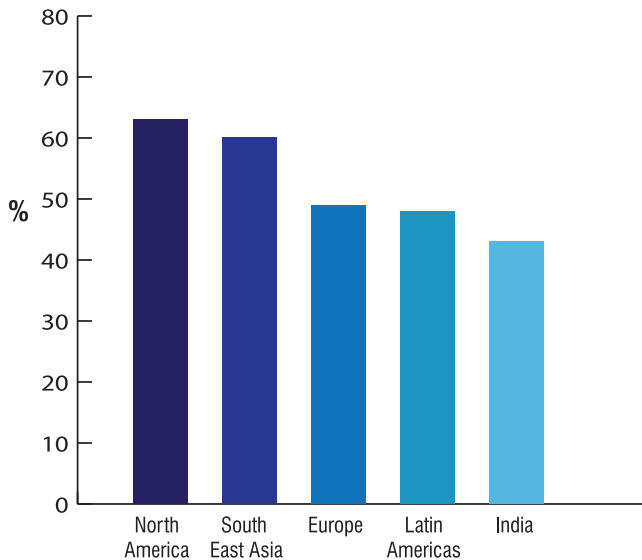
FIG. 1. Percentage of converters worldwide experiencing downward pressure on prices



converters) the cost of running a label business has been steadily increasing in recent years.

Well over 40 percent of label converters in all the main markets around the world today say they are experiencing rising costs, with 60 percent or so of converters in North America and South East Asia (Fig. 2) facing cost pressures. In Europe the figure is nearer 50 percent, but this is still substantial. This analysis can be seen in Fig. 2. Little wonder than North American converters are finding times hard when they are virtually leading the world when it comes to downward pressure on prices and rising costs.

FIG. 2. Percentage of converters worldwide experiencing rising cost



There are many reasons why costs have been rising: increased materials costs, environmental or other compliance costs, wage rises, increasing overheads, staff training, rising hourly costs for new machinery, increasing cost of investing in new equipment, etc.

Put together, somewhere between 40 percent and 60 percent of converters in virtually every market around the world today are achieving a profit on sales of less than 10 percent. The exception is Japan, where some 68 percent of label converters said they had a profit on sales of less than 5 percent. Indeed, 32 percent achieved no profit on sales at all. Even in North America around 17 percent of converters say they achieved a profit on sales that is below 5 percent.

From all these global converter statistics it can be seen that the label industry is facing a growing crisis of profitability which, long term, is likely to continue to grow if the various underlying issues cannot be addressed. Essentially, what the challenges of downward pressures on prices combined with rising costs mean to the label converting sector is that it will increasingly need to put as much energy – if not more – into managing the business for profit as it does into, say, production and sales.

There are probably two key routes to achieving improved margins and profitability which converters should be looking at:

- Adding value and growth by driving innovation, specialization and diversification.
- Reducing and driving down costs, and through improved financial management.

As far as this article is concerned, the intention is to outline possible strategy frameworks for achieving growth, added-value specialization and/or diversification. A subsequent article will look at cost reduction and improved financial management options.

So what are the possible options for converters struggling to find (profitable) new business and customers, to help them get away from competing on price with other converters – whether locally, nationally or internationally – to reduce turnover reliance on unprofitable business, and to hopefully add-value to their bottom line?

Well, the surveys conducted worldwide by *Labels & Labeling* help to pinpoint a way forward. Certainly label converters everywhere indicate that investment in new technology solutions and opportunities such as digital printing and RFID are an increasing part of their forward thinking. So too is brand protection, anti-counterfeiting, security printing and other forms of clever, intelligent labels.

Leading the way in considering digital printing and RFID as key opportunities for the future are North America and Europe, in each case with around 60 percent seeing these technologies as an opportunity for the future. North America already has the largest number of converters using some form of digital printing technology – and this is expected to grow after Labelexpo Americas 2008 when a range of new and improved digital presses will be introduced, including more sophisticated inkjet printing systems.

“Between 40 and 60 percent of converters in every market around the world are achieving a profit on sales of less than 10 percent”

Counterfeit deterrence and brand protection requirements on labels undoubtedly look set to grow rapidly as the problems of counterfeiting, largely undertaken by organized crime gangs operating on a global scale, continue to increase, not just on high added-value products but even on more mundane goods such as paperclips, copier paper and ‘biro’ pens. In the latest European label converter survey carried out prior to Labelexpo Europe in September 2007, some 44 percent of European converters indicated that brand protection/counterfeit deterrence would become a key opportunity for them in the future.

In the emerging markets such as Southeast Asia, Latin America and India the opportunities for future diversification and growth in the whole field of security labels, papers and inks are seen as being even higher: 69 percent of converters in S E Asia, 53 percent in Latin America and over 40 percent in India looking at these technologies. Perhaps there are major opportunities for European or North American converters already involved in brand protection and security label solutions to invest or co-operate with converters in the emerging markets.

Outside of digital, RFID or security label opportunities it is also apparent that label converters worldwide are increasingly

looking at other types of labels to complement their production and sales capabilities. In particular looking at in-mold labels, shrink labels, wrap-around film labels or cut-and-stack film labels, while yet others are beginning to use their narrow and mid-web press experience to move into unsupported film converting and flexible packaging applications. Indeed, around 30 percent of label converters in Europe, North America and India say they already producing some form of flexible packaging, pouches or sachets as well as labels. In Latin America the figure is over 50 percent.

Others are developing particular higher added-value specialist or niche markets in, say, high-performance industrial labels. That is, labels that will have to withstand water, oil, grease, chemical, acid, high temperature or low temperature, etc, conditions such as those found in the automotive, aeronautical, electronics or electrical sectors. Labels that have to be printed mechanically or electronically onto special filmic or synthetic materials, over-laminated, special adhesive coated, tested for compliance and maybe sheeted or uniquely die-cut. Some have even moved into the niche area of membrane switches and keypads.

Swing tickets and tags, hang tags, various garment tags and labels, leaflet labels, booklet labels, bottle neck tags, peel-off,

scratch and rub-n-reveal labels are also now seen as various niche areas which offer reduced competition and improved margins for the narrow-web converter. Sheet-fed as well as web-fed printing and converting may also be required by some converters to add to the range of solutions they can offer to their customers. In practice, over 30 percent of converters in every market of the world already complement their web-fed printing with sheet-fed capabilities.

Apart from being printers and converters of labels, the surveys indicate that more and more label and tag converters are not only producing labels and niche-related products but also distributing or supplying a wide range of related ancillary equipment and machinery such as applicators, print-and-apply technology, table-top thermal or laser printers, bar code scanners, hand guns, RFID verifiers and readers, tagging and stringing machines or counterfeit detection devices.

Put together, these various routes to growth, diversification and improved profitability that have been outlined for the label converter generally fall into one or more of around five categories or groups:

1. Production of other types of labels or high-performance label solutions

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Just having a framework strategy on its own is not enough. Nothing happens without management making decisions. This may require further research amongst existing or potential customers to determine the best route or routes to follow. It needs an evaluation of staff/employee capabilities, of existing production technology and operator knowledge and expertise, of innovative ideas, of what education and training might be required, the development of production, sales and marketing plans and, of course, investment plans and decisions.

This later items is perhaps one of the more key decisions that a label business has to take today. After all, if a label converter is already being heavily squeezed between declining prices and rising costs and making little or no return on their existing investments, it takes a brave management team to commit to new investment in technology, know-how and people. Yet doing nothing is not really an option. In a global market, with global competition and global (lowest guideline)

pricing and continuing cost increases, the problem of a low financial return is unlikely to be going away in the near future.

The bold solution should be to invest in niche markets, to diversify into less competitive areas, to find added-value opportunities, to go for more profitable growth. It can and is being done, but by too few converters. With Labelexpo North America coming up this fall, label converters should be defining their strategy options and using their show attendance to find the best technology route, product fit, growth opportunity, added-value or diversification solution. Plan the show visit in advance. Decide what should be investigated and have visit objectives. At the end of the day it is the label converter's future (profitable) business that needs to be defined and implemented if the industry is to survive.

Labels & Labeling is also looking to play its part this year in helping the label converter to make those important strategy and investment decisions for the future. Each issue of the magazine will undertake a more in-depth review of one or more of the various strategy options shown in the Fig. 3 flow chart. Hopefully this will help to clarify converter thinking before the Labelexpo show and, longer term, lead to a more successful and profitable industry. Why not make those investment and growth strategy decisions now before it is too late? ■



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The signing of the first sponsorship agreement between Labelexpo and FINAT on the 7th August 1990. L-R sitting: Mr van Eijk, FINAT president, Clive Smith, managing director Labelexpo. Standing L-R: Mans Lejeune, FINAT general secretary, Mike Fairley, publisher, Labels & Labeling

FINAT celebrates

Mike Fairley reviews the early history and evolution of FINAT and the successful role it has played in the growth of the self-adhesive industry over the past 50 years

The FINAT Congress at the Paris Rive Gauche Hotel and Conference Center, Paris, in June will be a unique occasion for all FINAT members, marking the start of celebrations for the 50th anniversary of the foundation of the organization back in 1958. It will also see the launch of a book on FINAT's history, as well as a series of special program features commemorating the association's successful growth and achievements over the intervening years.

To gain an appreciation of the importance of FINAT's history it might be useful to look back to the time before the foundation of the organization happened. This was a period when the European economic community of the six was founded. Europe was still divided into individual countries

each surrounded by tax barriers with the aim of protecting their national industry. Consequently national associations were, in those days, far more effective than international associations, and it was as a national body in France where FINAT had its early roots as far back as late 1940s/early 1950s.

It was at this time that André Strauss, founder of Archer Contact, and holder of a license for the production rights for self-adhesive labels in Europe, the Middle-East, Africa and the British Empire granted by the Archer Label Company of Los Angeles, established production facilities in France through a merger with Papier Gomme CY and also began to look for licensees in various European countries.

Apart from the UK, where Bill Sessions – through a direct

contact with Stan Avery – was already involved in the self-adhesive labeling industry, the Archer Contact Group of licensees was the first in continental Europe to introduce the manufacturing of sticky labels, a development which in fact created the initial embryo for a European label association.

In the years to follow more companies in France began manufacturing self-adhesive labels and in order to prevent a deterioration of this new industry André Strauss took the initiative to bring all the companies together in a national association. In 1953 the *Chambre Syndicale des Fabricants d'Adhesifs et Thermocollants sur Papier et Autre Supports* was founded.

This French association became the first national association in the self-adhesive industry and grew steadily. From these positive experiences of a national association and based on the ongoing strong developments within self-adhesive labeling in Europe, André Strauss as president of the French association initiated a meeting in Paris at which all the main European and American companies engaged in the manufacturing of self-adhesive labels were invited. The intention was to create a wider exchange of views and opinions and to check whether it would be possible to find a structure which would make it possible to give this new self-adhesive industry a face.

With only a very few exceptions all the companies that had been invited came to Paris and attended the two-day meeting – at the end of which it was decided to found an international label association. A provisional board of directors was formed

more from the organization, such as standards and improved technical performance. One of the early activities that FINAT undertook was therefore the establishment of a Technical Committee with the aim of developing standards and test methods. Though the start was slow, the work went on and over the years FINAT succeeded in developing test standards which are now applied all over the world – a tremendous support for the development of the industry.

Similar activities were started for heat-seal and great efforts were made to stimulate machinery manufacturers to develop high speed heat-seal label applicators like those on the market for pressure sensitive. Regrettably these activities did not bring the results hoped for which influenced the future of heat-seal labeling to a great extent.

Year by year in the 1960s FINAT continued to progress and was soon in a position to give an increasing level of service to members. However in 1969 a problem arose at the secretariat in Paris and the association decided to move the secretariat to The Hague, in the Netherlands. From then on Mans Lejeune built his services for FINAT, resulting in more committees, more action and consequently, a rapid growth in membership.

Undoubtedly the move of the secretariat to the Netherlands proved to be a great success. Following this move, André Strauss became Honorary President of FINAT and continued to attend meetings of the Board in the years to follow.

In 1979 the first international magazine for the label industry was founded by Mike Fairley and Ron Spring. Right from the very first issue, *Labels & Labeling* carried news items

50th anniversary

and the *Chambre Syndicale* was asked to draft Articles of Association and a working program. The organization known as FINAT was then officially founded in November 1958, with the next General Meeting scheduled in London in 1959.

In these early days FINAT had just 20 members and it soon became clear that growth of membership was an urgent priority in order to be able to have more money available to execute a program of action. At this time the secretariat of FINAT was still situated in Paris.

The Annual General Assemblies right from the start became a big success. The industry was new and a lot could be learned from each other, both through the working program, but most certainly also from the social program of the General Assembly. People from the self-adhesive industry came to know each other, which created a friendly atmosphere among competitors.

Thus the foundation of FINAT and the networking at an international level which had started in 1958 eventually proved to be a major step towards the global approach that FINAT has today.

However, the founding fathers of the association wanted

“The intention was to check whether it would be possible to find a structure which would make it possible to give this new self-adhesive industry a face”

about a FINAT study tour to Japan at the end of 1978 and the forthcoming 1979 FINAT congress in Tunisia. Leonardo Bucchi, chairman of the Board of FINAT at that time, also sent a telegram expressing the Board's wishes for a successful magazine launch. So began 30 years of liaison and co-operation between the magazine and FINAT, with Mike joining in with

FINAT study tours, attending Congresses and speaking at FINAT events.

Converters had also established a committee and succeeded in getting standardization accepted by the label-stock manufacturers – which helped them to increase efficiency in their production. Later came the input of a Marketing Committee and in particular its activities for promoting self-adhesive labeling, which proved to be of vital importance – initially through the labeling award competition which stimulated converters to upgrade their products and to work on new applications. Winners were promoted with great success in exhibitions worldwide.

The new and developing market for wine labels was additionally promoted by FINAT taking a stand at a wine fair in Bordeaux, where the applications of PS labels were demonstrated through a hand labeling machine. All these committee meetings brought members together and offered many opportunities for additional networking.

This networking was largely carried out during the annual congresses where CEOs of converters and suppliers came together for a couple of days in order to attend working sessions and for the international mix and exchange of information during the social programs. In addition to these congresses FINAT organized, every two years, a seminar where those ‘second in command’, either technical or marketing oriented came together for a learning curve and to meet their colleagues from companies abroad.

In the early 1990s another key milestone occurred when Mans Lejeune and the FINAT Board signed an agreement to become the sponsoring association for the Labelexpo Europe shows in Brussels. This sponsorship deal provided substantially increased funds to the organization and enabled further development and expansion to take place. FINAT also became the sponsor of a new fledgling Labelexpo Asia show which had been launched by Clive Smith in Singapore in 1990. FINAT remain as sponsors of the



Mans Lejeune and André Strauss

“In the early 1990s another key milestone occurred when Mans Lejeune and the FINAT Board signed an agreement to become the sponsoring association for the Labelexpo Europe shows in Brussels”

Europe and Asia (now in China) shows to this day.

Through all these activities FINAT has offered unique opportunities for contact over the years to thousands of delegates. But even for those who preferred to stay at home, membership of FINAT offered opportunities for ‘education’ and development. The FINAT News produced four times a year for example, and during the last decade, the FINAT website with the latest information on a day-to-day basis.

However that is not all that FINAT has offered its members over the years. The association contributed to cross-border communication by publishing and updating a glossary and dictionary in three languages and also unique publications like the Technical Handbook and the Educational Handbook.

Another area which has been unique is the inter-continental visits FINAT offered its member to Japan, the USA and recently India (2006) and China (2007), as well the development of survey and report studies for members to gain an understanding of market demands. With all these activities and visits FINAT successfully contributed to enlarging the self-adhesive labeling family and to give the industry the global stamp it has today –



FINAT organizes an exchange visit with Indian label converters in 2006

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but not without some turbulence and challenges.

Over the past 10 years, and now under the management of Jules Lejeune, the industry and the association have had to face increasing globalization, industry consolidation, and new market and industry structures. These challenges and the association's response have undoubtedly helped FINAT to position itself for the future.

With the completion of the European internal market in 1992, the introduction of the single currency 10 years later and the enlargement of the EU from 15 to 27 countries in 2005 and 2007, the scope of label companies has widened and the role of FINAT as the international label industry platform has increased beyond that of networking, information and standards (although these remain the main drivers). The IT revolution and internet have helped to reduce the distance and with the emergence of the younger generation, language barriers are slowly diminishing. In line with this evolution, the relationship between national label associations in Europe and FINAT as their European umbrella organization has improved considerably compared to 10 years ago. Beyond the EU27, more and more label printers from Eastern and Southeast Europe as well as Asia are turning to FINAT as a source of business-to-business contacts, know-how and expertise and standards.

With the general society trend of individualization and with the emergence of managers replacing the founder-owners and pioneers, the perception of association membership has undoubtedly changed, with associations now more and more driven by short term, monetary considerations rather than longer term gains. The challenge for FINAT in the increasingly promiscuous and volatile business environment of today is to maintain a sense of ownership of the industry's common future – with active involvement in FINAT being very rewarding. Help for the new generation of young industry managers through international reference sources and networking is also being



Spirit of co-operation. (L-R) Jan Frederik Vink, president FINAT, John Hickey, president TLMI, Roger Pellow, MD Tarsus Labels Group, Jules Lejeune, chairman FINAT at Labelexpo Asia 2007

developed.

There seems little doubt that sustainability of the industry for the future will also become increasingly important in the coming years. Here, FINAT's growing role as Europe's lobby portal on environmental measures and legislation to the EU in Brussels may well have global implications.

So where is FINAT as an organization in 2008? Today, it has approximately 500 members in nearly 60 countries around the world and continues to offer label converters and industry suppliers' major benefits in terms of information exchange as well as the opportunity to network internationally. It continues to go from strength to strength with its ever changing and growing activities and will undoubtedly continue to play a key role in the ongoing future of the self-adhesive label industry in the years to come. ■



FINAT seminar 1984

Plate production advantage

A Kodak packaging pre-press system has helped revolutionize plate production at UK converter Systems Labelling. **James Quirk** reports

The production of flexographic plates at Systems Labelling in Deeside, UK, has been revolutionized following the commissioning of a Kodak Thermoflex Mid Platesetter, Hyperflex Resolution Enhancement Software and Prinergy Evo Powerpack Workflow Software. The installation has been accompanied by new plate development facilities, which have eliminated the use of solvents within the pre-press department.

'We were previously producing flexo plates conventionally and the implementation of the new platemaking line has resulted in huge benefits, particularly in terms of the definition and quality of images that can be consistently created between shifts,' said repro director Robin Barker. 'The Hyperflex Resolution Enhancement Technology has allowed us to achieve excellent halftones and vignettes, with the result that customers are supplying us with much more complex designs.'

'Indeed, the change in the complexity of designs has been quite noticeable, as clients have gained confidence in our ability to reproduce halftones and intricate gradations with first class results time after time. Kodak's screening technology enables us to create extremely small dots on the plate and hold that dot while printing the job on one of our six 8-color Mark Andy UV flexo presses.'

The company supplies flexo printed labels to a wide range of markets from dairy and food to household goods and cosmetics, and includes major high street names among its client list.

Systems Labelling has also purchased Kodak Maxtone Hybrid Screening. Maxtone Screening is hybrid amplitude modulated screening technology that delivers enhanced detail, smooth vignettes and improved highlight reproduction by allowing a pre-press operator to restrict the minimum dot size and control the number of highlight dots in a frequency modulated-like manner.

The company, which employs 75 staff, operates its pressroom 24 hours a day, but the significant improvement in efficiency in pre-press facilities – throughput capacity has been quadrupled – means that the pre-press department can operate a double day shift.

'The press operators have commented on the improved quality of the image on the plates that they are now receiving,' says Robin Barker. 'This has enabled them to reduce makeready times and wastage, while producing a higher quality product. We now achieve longer run lengths from plates and if one gets damaged a remake can be carried out in a fraction of the time it used to take when plates were made conventionally.'

The heart of the new CTP system at the North Wales printer is a Kodak Thermoflex Mid Platesetter, which can expose plates up to 1,016 x 1,200 mm.

Systems Labelling has also installed Kodak's Prinergy Evo Powerpack software, which is a packaging-specific version of the Prinergy Evo Workflow System. The system is aimed at tag and label, flexible packaging, offset folding carton, corrugated and multi-wall bag converters looking to add an economical PDF-based workflow system, and who don't require database-driven job management. The software streamlines processes with template-based workflow automation, and offers tools for PDF file processing such as preflighting, normalizing, color management, trapping, optimizing, rendering and screening.

Robin Barker adds: 'There are significant pressures to push the boundaries in flexo quality, productivity and consistency, while at the same time reducing the impact on the environment. Our recent investment in leading edge Kodak platemaking facilities has enabled us to achieve all of these aims, and offer more added value services to our customers plus greater flexibility. This has already led to winning new business.' ■



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Release liner challenges

The global release liner industry is facing challenges from the environmental lobby and from the increasing price of raw materials. These issues and new technical developments were addressed at a recent seminar, as **Ann Hirst-Smith** reports

The Global Release Liner Industry Conference, hosted annually by AWA Conferences & Events, took place this year in Amsterdam, The Netherlands. 150 delegates from all corners of the globe got together at the Hilton Amsterdam Hotel to focus on the opportunities and concerns in a business which has seen considerable consolidation in recent years, and is facing up to of rising costs, reducing profitability, and environmental issues. A special additional feature of this year's agenda was an invitation from Loparex for delegates to visit their facility in Apeldoorn, The Netherlands.

Market data

Opening the formal conference proceedings, conference chairperson Corey M Reardon, president and CEO of market research consultant AWA Alexander Watson Associates, provided the first keynote address: his company's global update on the release liner market as a whole. North America is still the largest geographical market at 37 percent, he said, with Europe in second place at 30 percent – but across nearly all applications, these are mature markets, and growth is slowing. Asia Pacific's current share, 25 percent, is, however, likely to increase significantly: annual growth of nearly 10 percent means that the region will soon overtake the traditional market leaders in terms of volume usage.

Overall, AWA forecasts a continuing annual growth rate for the industry of 4-6 percent, but Reardon drew delegates' attention to a real concern. 'Of course,' he said, 'we must not

forget that the release liner industry is a producer of waste material after a self-adhesive application is completed. As it positions itself for the future, this becomes more and more of a critical issue.'

Less transactions, more partnership

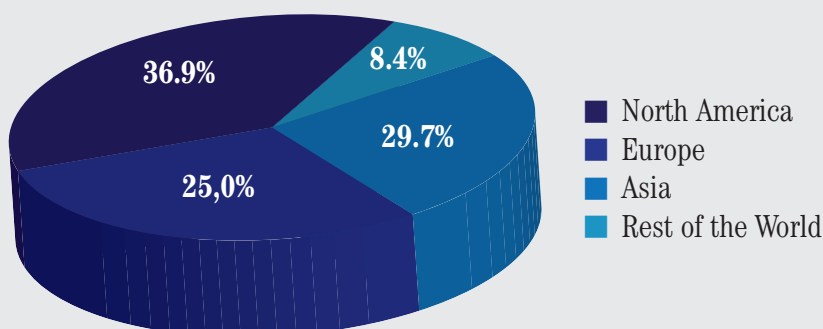
A second keynote presentation from Alexander van 't Riet, business line director, films, for Avery Dennison Roll Materials Europe, addressed suppliers, growth, and customer needs from two perspectives: that of a purchaser of release liner, and that of a leading self-adhesive laminate producer. His premise was challenging: the customer's agenda, he said, is 'ME, everything, now' – a wish list that highlights a genuine need for supply chain partnerships ('we are too often in transactional mode', he said). To grow the self-adhesive industry in the future, he told delegates, suppliers have a key role in developing cost-effective, innovative solutions in support of the multi-generation product plans which are already actively pursued in Avery Dennison.

Globalization

Globalization continues apace in release liner as elsewhere. Penti Kallio, CEO of the largest commercial release liner producer worldwide, Loparex Group, looked at drivers and challenges. In the labelstock market today, he showed, 50 percent of customers are global, and 50 percent local. In the hygiene, tapes, medical, and graphic arts markets today, most of the business is now global. However, he said, even global customers want local – and local language – service. Loparex's business model is designed to provide that, within the context of global R & D, raw materials purchasing, and manufacturing.

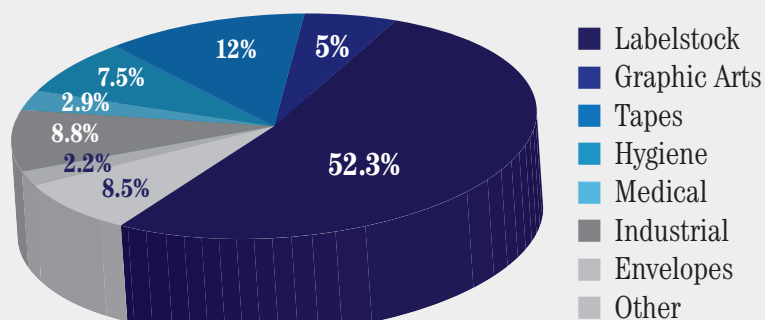
Kallio enumerated the risk assessment criteria for globalization as economical and political uncertainty; local competition ('never underestimate it', he said), the time perspective (it takes a long time to achieve ROI); internal challenges; and strategy – the choice of a stand-alone or joint venture. In the release liner industry, he

Worldwide market by region



Source: AWA

Worldwide market by segment



Source: AWA

observed, 'few manufacturers are able to globalize with their current company structure.'

Platinum challenges

Central to both the success and the problems associated with release liner is the catalyst, platinum. It was the subject of a joint presentation from Wolfgang Wrezesniok-Rosbach, head of marketing and sales, precious metal trading, from metal supply and financial hedging services experts Heraeus, and Norm Kanar, release segment team leader from Dow Corning. Platinum prices reached an all-time high in 2008 due to supply problems in South Africa – with Russia, one of the two

main sources. Platinum demand has exceeded supply for the last nine years, and is now in deficit (only 205 tonnes were mined in 2007). Low platinum systems and a changed chemical architecture must be the answer for silicone coating, Norma Kanar observed, and he concluded that 'thermal solventless silicones will be the system of choice'.

A holistic environmental approach

UPM-Kymmene's vice president of environmental affairs and corporate social responsibility, Marja Tuderman, demonstrated a route to a successful, holistic environmental approach to paper release liner. She identified the current environmental action points: climate change mitigation; the scarcity of fresh water; unacceptability of landfill and opportunities for waste recovery; minimizing chemical usage; and sustainable sourcing. Success, she said, demands that the emphasis must be on reducing the total environmental impact of the product or operation – not just one aspect.



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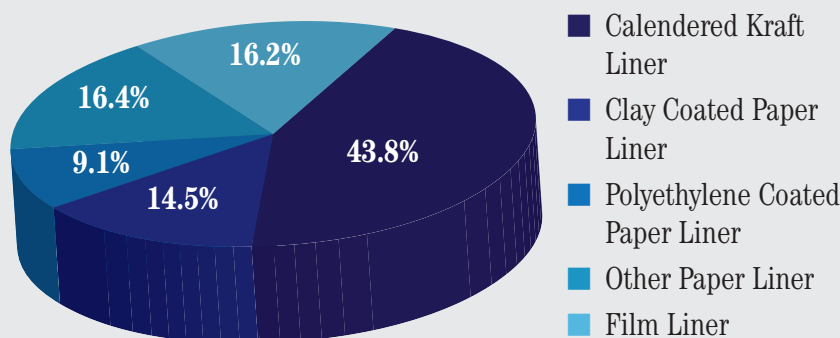
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The essentials of imaging

Unilever and the sustainability issue

The final keynote presentation on the opening day of the conference was a fresh and thought-provoking view of the sustainability agenda from a major multinational end user. Steph Carter, packaging sustainability director at Unilever, made a strong case for sustainability metrics, discussing what, how and why every company should indeed embark on such a procedure. 'Until you have the measures', he said, 'you can't set the targets!' He debunked the currently popular myth that reductions in packaging are the answer to everything. 'Packaging', he said, 'typically has about 10 percent of the environmental impacts of its contents. It preserves and protects far more than its impact.' When selecting packaging for specific applications, he counseled, 'it is wrong to choose materials simply because they have the lowest impact, or are perceived to be 'green'. Choose them for function and their real impact – not the perception.' He cautioned that release liner – like any aspect of product processing which the consumer does not see – is likely to become a bigger issue in the consumer arena in the future.

Worldwide market by substrate



Source: AWA

Film liners

Film release liner trends were the topic addressed by John C Forster, vice president, corporate development, for FLEXcon. Growing in the roll-label market at 5-6 percent per annum, film release liner is adapting to market needs in many ways. Reduced caliper; low extractable silicone systems and silicone free release systems; recyclability; two-sides coated; and modifications to the back side of the liner are some of the areas where there are developments today. However, silicone transfer to the print surface, and the relationship between film tension and heat, remain problem areas. 'FLEXcon would like to see these addressed,' said Forster.

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Technical troubleshooting

According to Hervé Vigny, director of Label Experts – an independent advisory laboratory for end users and converters in the self-adhesive label industry – release liner is the most important factor in creating a self-adhesive material: more so, in fact, than the adhesive itself. Vigny discussed the relationship between the laminate components and their influence on adhesive properties, and the so-called 'zippy release' phenomenon, which can result from an excess of platinum in the silicone layer after curing, or a high level of modulator in the silicone formulation.

Silicone – how much do you need?

'How much silicone do you need?', asked Dr Hans Lautenschlager, innovation manager for Wacker Chemie. There is no single answer: film or paper release base, application, and substrate are all factors that affect silicone coat weight. He looked at performance requirements in terms of release, cure speed, and smoothness, and showed how new silicone systems can offer an improved cost/performance ratio using lower viscosity for improved coverage or adjusted shear viscosity to cope with varying coater speeds.

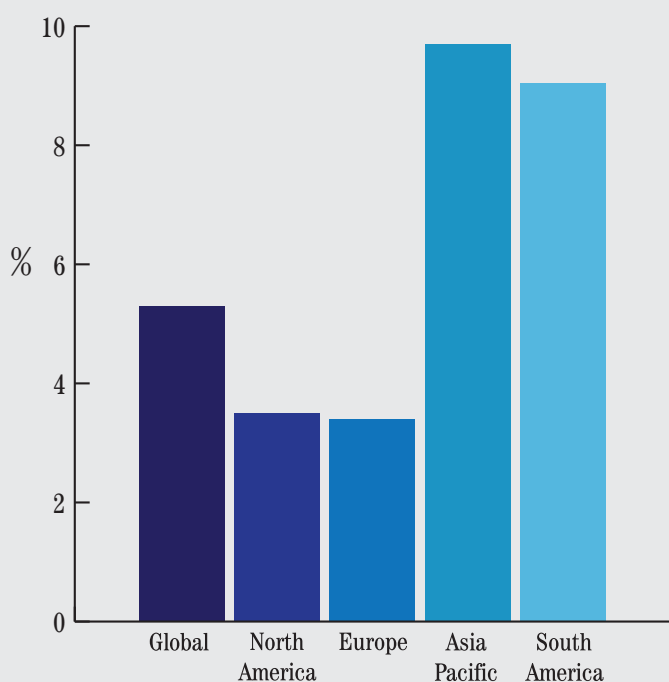
“Paper-based release liners can fulfil the requirements of everyone in the value chain for self-adhesive labelstock in terms of quality and efficiency”

Curing chemistry

Drivers for the release coating industry remain a delicate balance between quality and performance with cost reduction. Karsten Schlichter, global market manager for Bluestar Silicones, looked at curing chemistry, comparing the various systems and their place in an industry where release base downgauging and the need for greener solutions in reduced VOCs and toxicity, and increased recyclability are growing trends.

Thomas E Hohenwarter Jr of THresource looked at the healthy prospects for radiation-curable release coatings. With 20 years' experience behind it, radiation curing has proved itself, he said, 'here to stay', and he predicted continuing double-digit global growth for this robust combination of chemistry and technology.

Current Market Growth 2007



Source: AWA

Paper release base

Papers remain, globally, the release base of choice – and for good reasons, said Antti Heimola, director, technical marketing, for UPM-Kymmene. Paper-based release liners can fulfill the requirements of everyone in the value chain for self-adhesive labelstock in terms of quality and efficiency. This is true today even in partnership with film face stocks, said Heimola – thanks to UPM's investment in new paper production technology at its Tervasaari mill which delivers high paper purity and reliable release with less silicone.

Ismo Pietari, research and development director, UPM Raflatac, drilled down into these positive opportunities for paper liner and paper's many benefits – and the challenges in the label market that it faces from films, other labeling and product decoration techniques, waste directives, and linerless labelstock. He was uncompromising in his assessment of the future. 'Filmic liner will gain market share in more demanding applications if paper suppliers don't provide more innovative solutions', he predicted. He was confident that paper would remain the prime choice for partnering paper facestocks, and that environmental aspects would continue to favor papers. ■

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 drupa

Hybrid and digital — printing's new wave

As part of *L&L's* drupa special, **Andy Tribute** analyzes the evolution of digital systems and discusses the impact that digital and inkjet will have at this year's event

drupa 2008 will be the fourth drupa event in which digital printing has been one of the major technologies on show. From one drupa to the next we have seen significant developments that move forward both the state of the art of digital printing and customer's perceptions of what digital printing can do for them. At drupa 1995 despite the tremendous innovations of both Indigo and Xeikon, digital printing for most printers was not a relevant technology and few printers took it seriously. In fact they took the concept of D.I. printing with on the press CnP for more seriously at that time.

At drupa 2000 the arrival of the Xerox Docucolor 2000 series changed the perception of digital printing in the eyes of many printers and really started the move of digital printing into many offset houses. At drupa 2004 printers concerns about quality were largely dissipated with the quality being shown from HP Indigo, Kodak Nexpress and Xerox iGen3. Océ also indicated its way to the future with its Variostream 9210 monochrome printer as its future platform to grow into a four-color continuous feed printer. In the inkjet area the speed of the Kodak Versamark indicated likely developments for the future. Agfa's Dotrix continuous feed inkjet printer showed the opportunity of moving inkjet into the flexo markets previously not covered by digital printing and also showed how UV curable inks could open up new opportunities for inkjet printing. Perhaps the most interesting product however at drupa 2004 that showed how the technology could change the future market was the Riso HC5000 inkjet printer. This amazing product was the fastest sheet fed color digital printer at the show as well as being one of the cheapest.

It has already been said that drupa 2008 will be the 'inkjet drupa.' Up to now inkjet printing has had a major impact in the wide and super-wide format areas taking work predominantly from screen-printing. In this market



VX5000E – Kodak Versamark press

companies like VUTEk, HP Scitex, Nur, Inca and many others have changed the face of display, poster, billboard and point of sale printing. In this we have seen a whole new range of printed products that previously were not available, such as building and bus wraps. This form of digital printing using inkjet has largely taken over in the markets in which it is used. There will still be more developments of this at drupa with faster and higher quality printers, but also we will see major ecological pressures in this area as aqueous, UV curable and other eco-friendly inks take a share of the market from solvent inks. We can also expect further developments of this technology into the packaging area with equipment for printed corrugated and folding cartons at or close to the manufacturing locations for the products they are to package.

The key developments however at drupa 2008 will be in the up to 50 cm wide digital presses where the battle will be between inkjet and xerographic technologies. (I include HP Indigo's presses in the xerographic area as their 'Electrophotography'

technology is a form of xerography and their Electroink is liquid toner). In the sheet fed digital printing area that will predominantly stay xerographic, we will get digital presses going a little faster than today. I would however be surprised if any sheetfed color printer exceeds a speed of 150 A4 pages/min. In this market the battle is much more about quality than speed and having more than four colors may prove to be a key-selling message providing it does not impact too much on speed. Somewhat surprisingly I don't expect to see a 50 cm wide sheet fed digital color press. The key battles in this area will be in quality and cost. In the cost area we will see even more aggressive competition in the sub 50,000 euro market. Here the speed level for this price should get up 70 A4 pages/min or more. I also expect to see HP introduce its Edgeline inkjet technology into this area. I would also not be surprised to see a higher quality version of the Riso inkjet than the current HC5500 model.

The main area for inkjet technology however will be in the continuous feed color presses. At the last drupa we only had three products in this area, the Kodak Versamark, the Miyakoshi and the Agfa Dotrix. This drupa there will be many more. We already have the Dai nippon Screen Truepress Jet 520 and the IBM Infoprint 5000 that uses the same print engine as the Truepress Jet520. These use Seiko Epson printheads and

aqueous inks and a single engine will produce around 450 A4 color pages a minute.

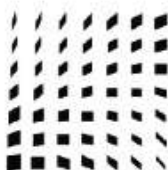
The reason we are now starting to see high-speed inkjet printers is due to ongoing developments in printhead technology that allow printer manufacturers to create full machine width print arrays that allow for the ink to be laid down in one pass of the paper under the head. In most wide format and desktop inkjet printers the print head has to make multiple passes over the paper to lay down the ink. At the recent Labelexpo Europe exhibition in Brussels in September 2007 there were a number of new inkjet presses that show how future inkjet presses may look. One of these is the Nilpeter Caslon press co-developed with FFEI. The following illustration of the Caslon's four-color inkjet printing system shows some of the characteristics of a single pass inkjet print engine.

In this the web substrate is moved from left to right over the curved print platen under the four print assemblies. Each assembly in the case of this 33 cm wide printer has five Xaar 1001 printheads that are physically and optically aligned (stitched) to give a full 33 cm wide print array with a resolution of 360 dpi with eight grey levels. The web speed at this resolution is 25 meters/min. It can run at up to 50 meters/minute with four grey levels which give a lower quality

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image. In terms of A4 images 25 meters/min is the equivalent of 115 A4 images/min. The ink in this print engine is UV curable ink and the curing takes place between each color and after all the colors have been printed. UV curable ink allows inkjet printing on a wide range of substrates and also is ecologically friendly. Currently the Caslon print engine is offered with imaging widths of 33 and 42 cm. In this latter case the print array has seven printheads stitched together. Later there are plans to produce Caslon print engines using an array of eight stitched printheads per color. All of these would have the same imaging speed of moving the web at 25 meters/min, however in terms of A4 pages/min this would increase to the speed to around 160 A4/pages/min.

The speed of inkjet printers is therefore based upon the linear imaging speed of the printhead. The speed of the head is based upon the technology used. Currently the fastest printheads are the continuous inkjet technology heads used in the Kodak Versamark V-Series product range. These heads however do not produce as good a quality as drop on demand (DOD) piezo printheads. In the piezo DOD area there are a number of different printhead approaches and this affects the quality of printed image and speed of operation of these heads. The fastest DOD heads are the Seiko Epson and Panasonic heads but these only produce a binary (one grey level) 600 dpi

“The main area for inkjet technology will be in the continuous feed color presses”

ink dot. The heads also use a piezo thin film actuator technology that limits the printer to using aqueous inks. This also limits the type of substrates that can be used. Most DOD printheads used with solvent inks for the super-wide format printers and for the presses using UV curable inks use a shear mode technology that allows either a binary (one bit) or a variable drop size (multiple overlapping drops), but don't run as fast as the thin film heads. The basics from this is that of the new inkjet presses that will be seen at drupa will either have a linear imaging speed of around 25 meters/min with excellent quality, or speeds in excess of 50 meters/min with lower quality and limitations on substrates that can be used.

These new inkjet print engines will be available in most cases as standalone printers in either single or dual engine mode that allows for single pass duplex printing. There will



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however be the start of the market for hybrid systems where the inkjet print engine will be added to an existing press or finishing system. We saw the first such product at IPEX in 2006 when Muller Martini and Kodak worked together to add Versamark printheads onto a Muller Martini offset press. In this situation the offset press would print the static data and the inkjet engine would add the changeable data. The Agfa Dotrix print engine had also been used to create a hybrid press when it was added to a Mark Andy label press. This project never succeeded and was dropped. At Labelexpo Nilpeter introduced a hybrid label press by adding the Caslon inkjet print engine to a Nilpeter label press. The development of inkjet print engines such as Caslon with its range of imaging widths is likely to start up a new market in hybrid presses when added to existing presses or even to print finishing systems.

In terms of new inkjet presses that I expect to see at drupa almost all of these will

“In terms of new inkjet presses that I expect to see at drupa almost all of these will use DOD rather than continuous inkjet technology”

use DOD rather than continuous inkjet technology. Kodak has a new development under way called Stream that is expected to move continuous inkjet to a new level of quality, flexibility and speed. This is likely to be previewed at drupa but I don't expect to see a high-speed color press product probably until 2010. In the DOD area the fastest product will probably be running at a speed of in excess of 1,000 A4 pages/min in simplex mode. This is the same speed as the fastest Kodak Versamark at present. The quality of such a press however will be higher than that of the Versamark.

In the DOD inkjet area there is another technology called thermal inkjet and this is the technology used by Canon, HP and Lexmark. This is a cheaper technology than piezo DOD inkjet but it is not as flexible. The technology of thermal inkjet is for the ink to be heated and as it boils it is expelled from the printhead. This technology can only use aqueous inks. The technology allows for high resolutions and the latest printheads allow for a large number of nozzles in the head. Unlike piezo based DOD printers the printheads have a limited lifespan and need regular replacement.

For the printer market the new HP Edgeline printheads are likely to have a major impact on the office and possibly graphic arts markets. The first products using these heads are a 6-colour photo printer with three printheads and a 4-colour printer with

four printheads with a speed around 60 A4 pages/min. Potentially HP can build a range of products using Edgeline printheads and these could be of a wide format for display printing or being built into wide print array for either sheet and continuous feed printers. I would expect to see some HP Edgeline developments at drupa.

From the above outline of developments in printers one might imagine that there are only future developments using inkjet technology. This however is not the case and there will be a large number of new products using xerographic based technology. At present in the 'light' color market of products running up to 70 A4 pages/min this is currently an almost 100 percent xerographic market. Only HP and Riso have inkjet products in this area. This is the area of the market that in the past two years has exploded with huge sales. It is where the entry-level products for digital printing will be found for printers still to enter the digital market. This area of the market is very competitive with products from Xerox, Ricoh, Konica Minolta, Canon and HP. We can expect a range of new products in this area that offer higher speeds, greater functionality and better quality. With the exception of HP and possibly Riso this will remain predominantly a xerographic area.

In the production color area again I believe this will remain a xerographic area. In the speed area of 70 – 200 A4 pages/min where offset equivalent quality is the primary requirement, xerography will continue to produce a higher quality than inkjet printing. I would expect that in the sheet fed area the fastest products will be approaching 150 A4 pages/min. In the offset quality continuous feed market I expect to see products approaching 200 pages/min. These engines are not imaging any faster than the sheet fed engines in fact they are slower but use two print engines printing both sides of the web concurrently. Also the engines from



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“As yet the inkjet print-heads are not good enough in terms of quality or speed to challenge conventional printing”

Xeikon and Océ print a 50 cm wide web so can print more pages across the web. It still surprises me that there is no 50 cm wide sheet fed color printer and I don't expect to see one at drupa.

There will however be a faster xerographic printer at drupa but this will be printing what is being referred to as business color. I expect the highlight of the Xerox stand to be their new continuous feed color press, the 490/980. This produces a quality that is similar to that of the high-speed DOD inkjet printers and is suited for transactional, direct mail and newspaper applications. This product sets a new price level for xerographic printing, however at a speed approaching 1,000 A4 pages/min and at a lower print cost than other xerographic color printers. This will challenge the new high-speed inkjet printers in opening up new markets for digital printing.

So will drupa 2008 be the inkjet drupa? Well the answer to that is both yes and no. In terms of yes it will be the arrival of a large number of new inkjet printing solutions that will develop and expand their role in the market over the next few years.

They will not however at this time challenge the existence of offset or flexo printing as certain have claimed. As yet the printheads are not good enough in terms of quality or speed to challenge conventional printing. In the quality area inkjet as yet will not be competing against xerographic approaches for offset and better than offset quality applications. It will expand its role in the wide and super wide format applications area and will open new markets for on-demand packaging applications. In the new area of high-speed transactional business color we will see inkjet and xerography competing against each other with similar performance and quality. The main message of drupa will be that inkjet will have arrived as a technology for opening up many new applications for digital printing particularly in the industrial printing area. Perhaps drupa 2012 will be the real inkjet drupa. ■

About the author

Andrew Tribute is managing partner of Attributes Associates and Editorial Consultant to Seybold Publications Inc. He consults for a wide range of clients throughout the world, both users and vendors of publishing and printing systems. In addition he is regarded as one of the world's leading independent authorities on specific subjects including computer to plate imaging, digital color printing, and digital developments in newspapers.

News in brief

Alien allies with SATO

Alien Technology, provider of RFID UHF products and services, has entered into an expanded RFID reseller and systems integration agreement with SATO America.

The announcement includes the addition of RFID tags and readers from Alien Technology to its product portfolio, and SATO's agreement to offer integration services to Alien Technology opportunities.

'We continue to see growth for UHF RFID and as a result we have expanded our product offering to include complete RFID integration solution services with tags and readers from Alien Technology,' said Mike Beedles, director of integration services and development at SATO America.

Sterling Colours hires Jeff Hulston as part of expansion plans

Sterling Colours, based in Knowsley, Merseyside, UK, manufactures flexographic and photogravure, solvent, water-based and UV inks used in an array of packaging. The company also makes a range of invisible security inks and has recently secured a contract for inks to be used to prevent counterfeit of high value goods.

Sterling Colours was founded by managing director Paul Boulger in 1988. The company has a current turnover of £3.6 million and employs 28 staff. Boulger said: 'We have grown steadily over the years but now have some exciting opportunities to significantly expand the business. We have taken on an extra 8,000 square feet of warehousing and production space and installed new state-of-the-art machinery which will increase production capacity by more than 50 percent.'

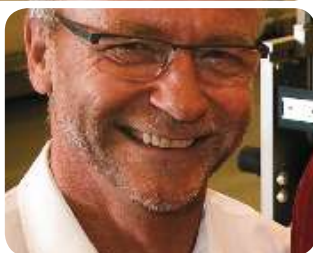
'We have raised a funding package of £240k to make this happen and as part of this we are also pleased to announce the arrival of Jeff Hulston as business director after taking equity in the business,' Boulger continued.

Hulston was founder of Tri-Colour Printing Inks and later joined Gibbon and subsequently Sun Chemical. He brings with him 25 years experience in printing inks and a total of 32 years in the printing trade. He founded Tri-Colour in 1991 and sold to Gibbon Inks and Coatings in 1996, a year later becoming a director of Gibbon Inks and Coatings Ltd. He eventually became MD of the liquid inks and narrow web division of Sun Chemical Gibbon when it was purchased by Sun Chemical.

Sterling Colours expects its turnover to reach £5 million over the next two years and will take on around eight new staff in the same period.



Torben Rasmussen
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Diaures creates recyclable PP liner

The launch of a product range based on polypropylene liner and acrylic adhesives is helping Italy-based Diaures create a niche in the self-adhesive materials sector. **James Quirk** reports

Modena, Italy-based Diaures recently launched its DDP range of products based on a polypropylene liner and acrylic adhesives. After rigorous testing by converters, end-users and a press manufacturer, the PP liner has been shown to offer numerous benefits: including 100 percent recyclability, high-speed printing without breakage, and a 15-20 percent increase in reel length compared to glassine. The DDP range includes vellum, machine coated, Eco and top thermal, white and clear PP, and white and clear PE.

Diaures has sought to create a niche for itself after entering the reel market in 2004. The company's self-adhesive division had been primarily focused on supplying its materials in sheet form. 'As a small company, it is difficult to find a niche in this sector,' says Stefano Casarini, sales director for the reel division. 'We are focused on specialty products, because the reel market has a lot of competition.'

The aim, says Casarini, was clear from the outset: create something totally new for the market. After talking to German customers who explained the increasing problem of matrix liner waste disposal, Diaures teamed up with UV silicon specialist

"There was pressure on us to create something special in order to survive in this market – we had to use our Italian creativity"

Evonik with the intention of substituting glassine for a recyclable polypropylene liner.

The result is a PP liner of 35 microns which achieves Diaures' aim of matching the cost of glassine. While UV silicon has been on the market for a number of years, this is the first time it has been integrated into acrylic adhesive for the self-adhesive sector. This process of producing acrylic adhesive with PP liner has been patented.

Testing began in September last year at eight German converters, and no problems were reported with registration and



L-r: Marinella Pinotti, international sheet sales; Auro Ascari, company owner; Stefano Casarini, sales director – reel division

die-cutting. End user tests were carried out with similar success, and the liner was confirmed as 100 percent recyclable by a German company in December. Italian press manufacturer Gidue was able to run the material at 120m/min without it breaking, and Casarini believes it is particularly well-suited to high-speed applications.

The converters and end users, with large, multi-national companies amongst them, reported a number of advantages when using the PP liner: the lack of inks on the clear material allows for recycling close to the end user, therefore cutting transport costs and carbon emissions; there was no paper residue to clean; stronger than glassine, the film liner is less likely to break during production.

The reel can be 15-20 percent longer than with glassine, therefore saving time, money and waste through fewer reel changes. Converters also reported that their die cutting plates lasted longer: despite its increased strength, PP is softer than glassine, resulting in less wear on plates.

These advantages can be passed on to the end user: having more labels on the reel gives greater application efficiency; the popular no-label-look becomes cheaper than standard labels with glassine. The end user can also sell the waste; 'a key point,' according to Casarini. 'One large French company we spoke to was spending up to 1 million euros on destroying glassine.'

'We are very proud to have created this solution, particularly as a small company,' he continues. 'Often it is the big companies which produce this type of invention, as they have the ability to invest heavily in R&D. There was pressure on us to create something special in order to survive in this market – we had to use our Italian creativity.'

Diaures is divided into three divisions: self-adhesive materials – which represent 70 percent of the company's business – holographic products and machinery. This latter division has been the company's core for the last 20 years, producing paper and film coaters as well as embossing machines for the Far Eastern tobacco industry.

Diaures was able to use the synergy between its divisions to manufacture a customized coater suited to producing the DDP range. 'A lot of changes were made to the machine,' says Casarini. 'We did a great deal of testing to find out the exact requirements.'

The company is not yet at capacity with this 1.5m coater, but

"The converters and end users, with large, multi-national companies amongst them, reported a number of advantages when using the PP liner"

expects to reach it soon due to market demand. Diaures' machinery division is currently working on a second coater which will be installed towards the end of this year. It will be dedicated solely to the production of the new liner and will greatly increase the company's current production capacity of 100 million square meters. Diaures' target is to be the first company to switch 100 percent from glassine use to PP.

Casarini believes that the in-house production of the coater was a key element to the company's ability to manufacture the PP liner. 'Our competitors would have had to consult their suppliers,' he says, 'whereas it was easier for us to adapt the machine.'

The new coater may also help the company achieve its target of a 30 micron liner. 'The current 35 microns is fine in terms of cost and quality,' says Casarini, 'but we are not finished – we want to continue to develop it.'

Diaures is building a distribution center – set to open in September – in Northern Germany, equipped with a slit and warehouse, to serve Germany, Benelux and Northern Europe. The Modena plant serves Southern Europe. 'Germany is a key market for us,' says Casarini, 'as it is very focused on waste issues.' Though focused on Europe, the company exports its products around the world, although Casarini admits that the weak dollar is affecting sales to the US and Latin America.

There are also interesting developments in the company's hologram division. Diaures has produced a hologram that can be applied to aluminum, making it ideal for blister packs in the pharmaceutical industry. The aluminum is embossed and therefore, according to Casarini, very difficult to counterfeit. ■

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Xeikon launches new digital press

Following extensive research and development Xeikon is creating a new generation of advanced digital printing technology.

Mike Fairley looks ahead to the upcoming product launch

It has been more than a decade since the first full and spot color digital label presses were installed in the label industry to provide short-run, high-quality, fixed or variably printed labels for a wide variety of end-use applications. Digital label printing has grown rapidly ever since and has evolved towards a mainstream process that makes up around 15 per cent of all new label press installations – a process which has been widely accepted by end-user label buyers worldwide.

Now a new-generation, leading-edge, digital label press is close to launch later this year by Punch Graphix. This advanced print engine is the result of extensive market and technology research initiated to build a machine that can meet today's increased demands for speed and quality in digital printing. The innovation will bring Xeikon to the forefront of the digital label printing world and will create a new milestone in the sector.

The aim of the Xeikon research project – was to develop a digital press that offers label converters and end-users a wide range of significantly enhanced substrate usage possibilities, an extended color gamut, higher screen rulings, increased productivity, improved toner coverage, a pantone certified

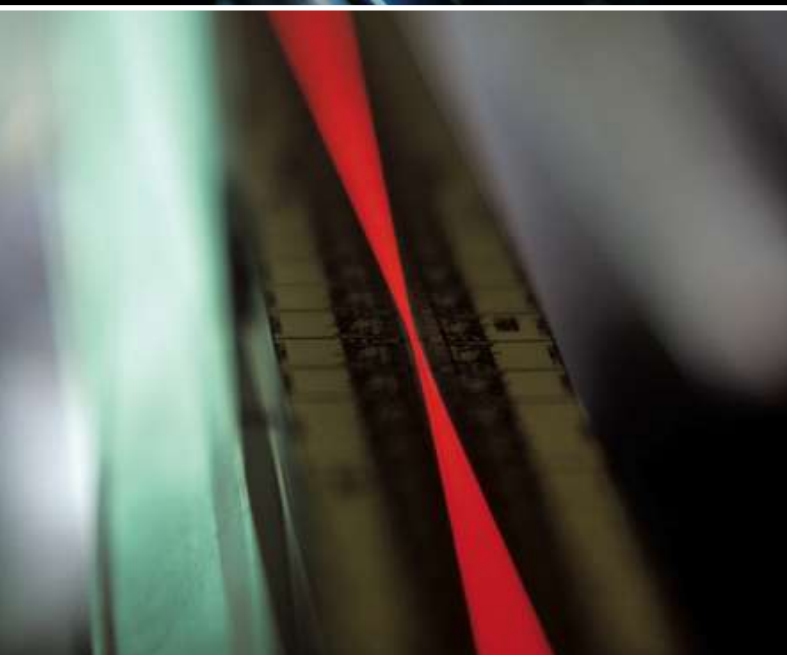
process – and all with the flexibility to use conventional substrates. Additional objectives were in building special brand protection and security printing capabilities into the digital engine.

Explaining the philosophy behind Xeikon's research and engine development, Filip Weymans and Gert Saey explained to *Labels & Labeling* that label printing and decoration have evolved into sales-driven tools that use sparkling images and graphics to seduce the consumer. It's crucial, they believe, that Xeikon's new digital press technology reflects these changes and challenges.

These challenges have led to a new high-performance engine that has the ability to print at a higher screen ruling of up to 240 lpi, made possible by a true 1200 dpi write-head capability with variable dot density (4bit) that



*Control station on the new
Xeikon digital press*



Elements of Xeikon's new digital press

provides photorealistic graphics. What's more, it has the ability to select the screen ruling for different elements in the design – for example to print a solid at 133 lpi and graphics at 240 lpi.

The newly developed, more robust print engine is claimed to be around 30 percent faster than the competition and is designed for 24-hours-a-day production. Automated density and registration during the print run free the operator up for other activities.

In terms of color gamut and consistency, the new Xeikon digital engine enables the use of ICC color profiles, a professional management tool with automated calibration, 'off-the-shelf' spot colors, and with the ability to create unique corporate spot colors.

Label converters who are looking to produce not only self-adhesive labels, but also other types of labels and unsupported film products will be able to print on a wide array of materials with the new Xeikon engine, such as flexible packaging, pouches, sachets, and most likely paperboard products. In the self-adhesive portfolio the options now include printing on co-extruded filmic materials – for example Global co-ex from Fasson – which provide a substitute for PE materials. Progress has also been made in the printing of metallics.

With brand owners worldwide confronted with questions

surrounding the integrity of their products, Xeikon is adding the ability to generate overt and covert brand protection features including 1200 dpi micro text capabilities, serial coding with numbers, 1D and 2D barcodes or Datamatrix codes and the use of visible or invisible security inks.

The press workflow system will enable worldwide networking, integration into MIS and the production of management reports. The machine will be able to take a PDF from, say, EskoArtwork systems, export it to the Xeikon press, add screen values and print parameters ready for output.

The key advantages of digital printing are well known. Being able to print only what's needed, allows converters to minimize waste, downsize storage and handling space – and therefore decrease costs. Compared to flexo and offset printing, on short to medium runs digital printing can reduce usage of raw materials and energy.

Xeikon has been recognized for its environmental approach to product manufacturing with a Belgian Environmental Award for sustainable product development in 2003-2004. In 2007 the company was honored again for its specially designed and re-usable packaging. Xeikon's printing process doesn't cause water pollution, enables easy paper recycling thanks to its 'deinkable' grades and doesn't emit any Volatile Organic Carbonates (VOC's). ■

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Installations



Glenmorangie invests in Domino labelers

In order to increase the quality and speed of case label printing, world-renowned Scottish single malt whisky manufacturer The Glenmorangie Company has recently invested in two Domino M-Series print and apply labelers.

Glenmorangie has integrated the M-Series printers into one of the company's new production and bottling lines. The M-Series offers high quality printing of GS1-compliant bar codes and product information, which ensures supply chain compliance for Glenmorangie, at a throughput of 40 cases per minute.

The M-Series range of print and apply technologies was introduced to enable Domino to provide a complete range of flexible end-to-end coding solutions, including the full complement of primary, secondary and pallet coding offerings. It comprises a fully modular system consisting of printers, applicators and accessories, which provide Glenmorangie with label application flexibility. Designed to support lean manufacturing processes, the M-Series maximizes production output with minimum disruption.

Pecas Vision ERP helps Multi-Color consolidate plants

MIS software supplier Radius Solutions has announced that Multi-Color Corporation has implemented Pecas Vision in three additional facilities. Multi-Color Corporation is leveraging Pecas Vision as its standard business information management platform across all of its operations.



The Galaxy screen press from Smag

Founded in 1916 and headquartered in Cincinnati, Multi-Color Corporation is one of the world's leading converters, serving over 650 customers in the US, Canada, Mexico, Central and South America. It is the world's largest producer of in-mold labels and heat transfer labels.

Multi-Color recently acquired NorthStar Print Group, the label manufacturing subsidiary of Journal Communications. 'Prior to the implementation of Pecas Vision in the additional facilities, we had very limited visibility into the NorthStar plants. They were independent and we never knew if we were comparing apples to apples when we looked at the same metrics. Today we can run standard reports, such as the waste report, for each plant, break things into standard categories, and allow an even comparison of the performance at each facility,' said Greg Myers, vice president of information technology for Multi-Color Corporation.

Robos installs Galaxy screen press from Smag

French press manufacturer Smag recently delivered a Galaxy semi-rotary screen press to label converter Robos.

Robos GmbH, near Stuttgart in Germany, is a medium-sized label converter with 65 employees and annual sales of 9 million euros. A lean, family-run business, Robos makes adhesive labels mainly for the medical and pharmaceutical sector, and screen printing is an essential part of the company's stock-in-trade.

'Our German-made screen printing

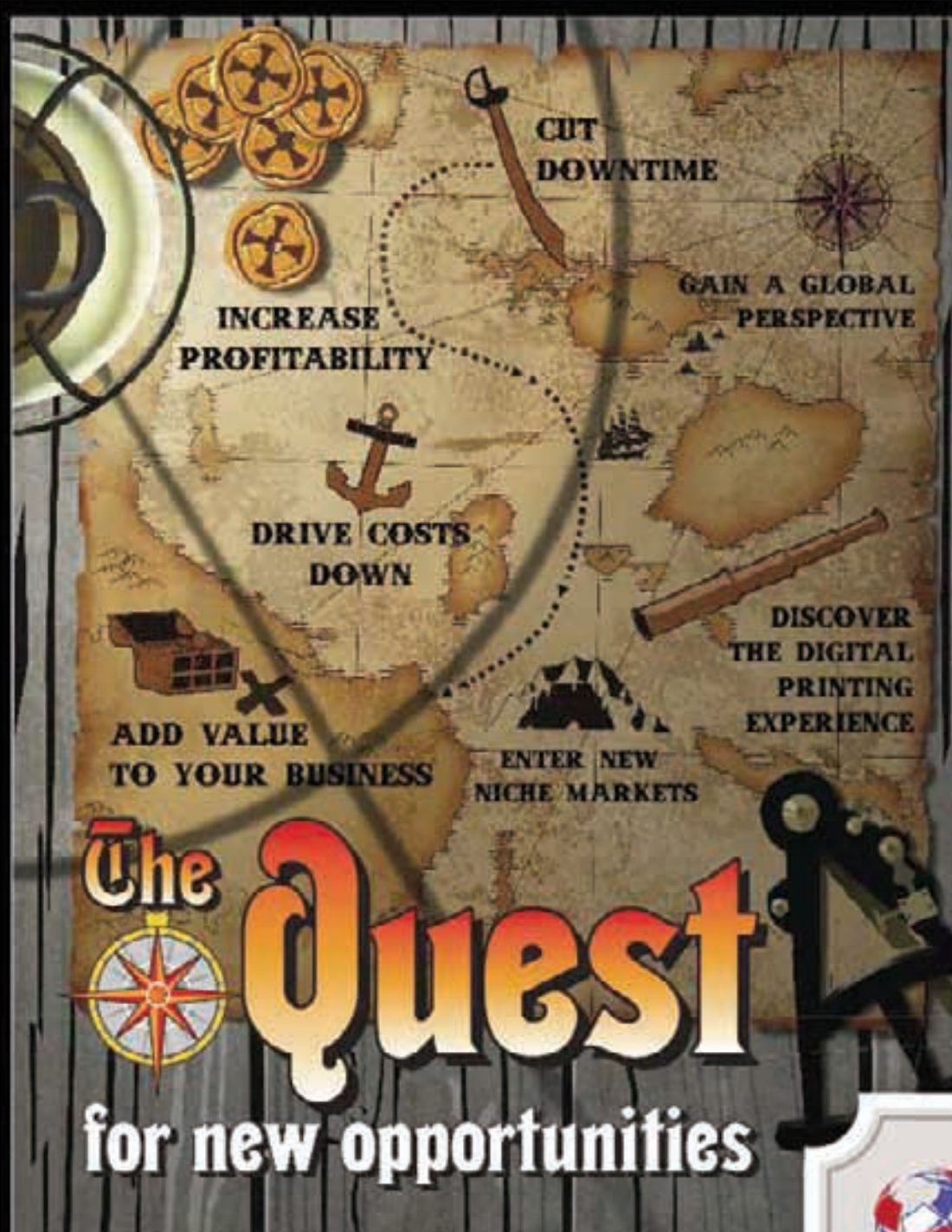
presses were coming to the end of their life,' explained owner-manager Harry Reuter. 'We needed a high-performance, modular screen press which could be cost-effective for short and medium runs – the best choice turned out to be a Galaxy semi-rotary machine from Smag.' Robos opted for the 3-color version with UV/IR curing, a laminating unit and semi-rotary die-cutting, a print format of 340 x 340mm and operating speed of 4000 cycles/hour (around 15 meters/minute).

Park Labelling chooses Visi-tech for web inspection

Visi-tech Systems, a subsidiary of the South Wales-based Girus Group, has recently installed one of its latest Ultra Fusion range of web inspection products at Park Labelling. Park Labelling is a family-run company established in 1984, and over the last twenty years has built a reputation as one of the South West's leading suppliers of printed packaging.

Recently the company found itself in need of a new web inspection system for one of its Mark Andy 2200 flexo printing machines, and chose the Visi-tech Ultra Fusion 90. The Ultra Fusion 90 is built on Visi-tech's Fusion Processor, a custom designed chip that reportedly provides greater integration and therefore greater functionality and reliability at a lower cost than competitive products. 'We aim to provide value for money to our customers,' said Mike Young, managing director of Visi-tech. 'The high specification combined with low cost of the Fusion product range allows us to do that.'

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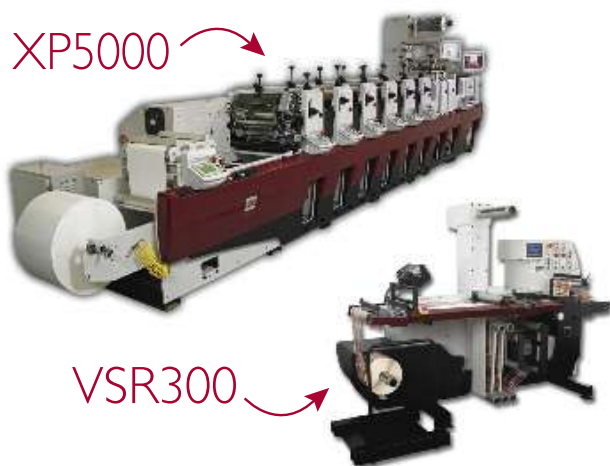


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HP Indigo launches new label press

Danielle Jershefske reports on HP Indigo's new ws6000 technology, which will be previewed at drupa, and the HP Dscoop conference

Hewlett-Packard hosted over one hundred journalists and industry analysts from around the world in Tel Aviv, Israel, for its HP Graphic Arts pre-drupa summit. The company unveiled a wide range of new innovations for the graphic arts industry – large format, Indigo advancements, a new inkjet division, and some innovations in its specialty printing systems – all of which will be demonstrated at drupa.

Most relevant to the label sector was the announcement of HP Indigo's new ws6000 digital press, based on the newly introduced 7000 series technology.

Tuned specifically for labels, it is driven by a new color engine claimed to increase print speed dramatically to match conventional equipment. Printing four colors, the ws6000 can run at up to 30m/minute; with two colors, it can print at up to 60m/minute (about 200 ft/minute). The speed is directly related to the number of colors used on a job. Christian

“We can now directly compete with a conventional press and still have the same Indigo print quality”

Menegon, current project marketing leader, labels and packaging, explained: ‘We can now directly compete with a conventional press and still have the same Indigo print quality. Performance on the ws6000 is geared toward volume; the 6000 is for high quantity users, ideally one completing more than 300,000 linear meters per month. It is intended to remain complementary to the ws4500.’

The press has a larger repeat format compared to the ws4500



L-r: Tomer Levin, strategic project marketing; Riki Tzirin, marketing manager labels and packaging; Christian Menegon, current project marketing; Yoram Hart, project manager ws6000

– up to a maximum 317 x 980mm (12.48 x 38.58in).

With the trend in the industry now moving towards producing mid-sized runs at smaller volumes, these jobs require a machine that is capable of a higher throughput – precisely what the ws6000 has been designed for. ‘The need for a higher productivity press is driven by high volume, existing customers that want to continue to grow their businesses,’ explained Alon Bar-Shany, VP/GM of the Indigo division. ‘We know that for some of our larger converters out there, the ws4500 is not productive enough given their high volumes and longer runs. The ws6000 meets their needs.’

The ws4500 is still seen as the entry-level digital press. ‘For an existing user of the ws4500, the ws6000 allows him to go for longer runs on which he will increase his margins, and develop new services to his customers based on these longer runs, which, until now, were not really do-able digitally,’ Menegon said. ‘All in all, we are talking about a significant expansion of the possibilities brought by digital printing.’

Indigo’s research has shown that the ws6000 significantly moves the breakeven point against analog equipment. ‘The ws6000 more than doubles the breakeven point,’ explained Bar-Shany. ‘With the ws6000, the total production cost of jobs up to 4,000 linear meters is considerably less than that of conventional technology. 80 percent of label jobs can be printed more economically with this digital technology.’

Another benefit of the new ws6000 technology is that the user does not need a full cycle to dry the ink, as Yoram Hart, ws6000 project manager explained. ‘There is no reason to slow the press. A user can continue at the same speed, even when using white.’

As with the ws4500, the inks are built up on the blanket and laid together on the substrate. But it is now possible to ‘tune’ factors such as pressure to avoid residuals on the blanket.

A new servo-controlled system has been implemented to manage and maintain steady web tension.

Energy consumption in the ws6000 is claimed to be 25 percent less per printed label than previous Indigo presses. The new press also has an imaging oil recycling system which reduces oil consumption by around one half.

Bar-Shany concluded: ‘The WS6000 has a small footprint for higher speed,

HP Indigo Environmental Stewardship

- ElectroInk 4.0 prints are de-inkable and recyclable
- None of the HP Indigo press waste streams are classed as a hazardous waste according to Federal EPA definitions
- HP ElectroInk products do not contain any substance listed under California Proposition 65

“With the ws6000, the total production cost of jobs up to 4,000 linear meters is considerably less than that of conventional technology”

requires less energy, is very quiet and can deal with a broad range of substrates. And with the one meter repeat length this enables additional applications.’

Supporting technologies

Longtime HP strategic partner EskoArtwork has developed a front end solution specifically for the new ws6000 technology. Part of the ‘SmartStream’ solution, this EskoArtwork-powered server gives users a color management focused workflow based around ICC profiles and capable of supporting up to fifty jobs a day. The RIP outputs in JLYT file format.

Users can also choose the labels and packaging Color Kit and VDP Tools set, both of which are powered by EskoArtwork. The Color Kit assists in matching Pantone colors, while the VDP Tools set gives designers more flexibility in producing complex jobs which include variable data and Adobe Illustrator formatted text and images.

The ws6000 supports an extended substrate range from 12-450 microns, allowing the press to handle flexible packaging, shrink sleeves and folding cartons. And now HP-manufactured



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The ws4500 compared with the ws6000

	# of labels	Share of label jobs	Volume of addressable labels
ws4500	Up to 60,000	65%	X
ws6000	Up to 120,000	80%	2.15 X
Improvement		23%	115%

**calculation based on 30 labels per linear meter. Supplied by HP Indigo*

ElectroInk is being packaged in larger ink canisters to reduce the number of ink changeovers.

Strategic finishing partner AB Graphic is offering its Series 2 Digicon range for in- or off-line finishing capabilities, including coating, foiling, embossing, slitting and rewinding. HP has also collaborated with ABG to offer an in-house coating solution.

The future

HP will introduce an entirely new division to its Graphic Arts portfolio at drupa: Inkjet High-speed Production (IHPS). The 30 inch wide, 600 x 600 dpi, 4-color inkjet format initially lends itself to the publishing and mailing world – but there could be a future use in the labels and packaging markets at some point.

In terms of future strategy, HP Indigo plans to focus on high-value color print production, and is anticipating a further 35 percent growth or more by next drupa in 2012. 'Our two main keys to growth are to move the breakeven point significantly, and to create new digital pages where "every page is different",' Alon Bar-Shany said.

'I believe the ws4500 and the WS6000 will coexist,' he stated. 'Larger converters will go with the ws6000, while many low to mid-sized will choose the ws4500. Both will be driven by the EskoArtwork front end. And we will certainly see customers that have several of our presses in one site.'

After Beta testing this summer, HP Indigo will be demonstrating the ws6000 at Labelexpo Americas 2008 in Chicago this fall, and will be prepared to take orders at that point. ■

HP Dscoop 2008

In the three years since the first Digital Solutions Cooperative annual user group conference, digital technology has made a huge

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“HP advised its Indigo users to standardize on one central workflow because a conventional CMS solution will work the same for way digital”

impact on the label printing industry. Attendance at this year's event nearly doubled to 1,200, and the sessions were focused on the technical side of digital technology rather than the basic justifications for going digital.

Digital process control

In the initial session for the industrial track, users were given some guidelines about digital process control. The environment surrounding the press was highlighted as a key factor in maintaining color consistency. Presenter Aaron Mallory of HP reminded his audience to rotate the site's substrate inventory on a regular basis because media quality

deteriorates over time and has the biggest effect on color. He suggested that, if possible, a converter should stick with one substrate supplier and one paper type to alleviate any inconsistencies.

As far as color adjustment on the press goes, HP discovered that many users were incorrectly calibrating the press, a task that should be done daily. Mallory said that operators really should be adjusting the Machine LUT Generation because it puts the press into a known, repeatable state. Simply calibrating the machine does not take into account voltage consumption changing frequently throughout the day. This irregularity of energy delivery prevents production of the same print color and must be compensated for by the operator. Lastly, users were reminded to regularly send their densitometers back to the manufacturer to be re-certified. X-Rite was cited as a supplier that is known to provide this service.

HP advised its Indigo users to standardize on one central workflow because a conventional CMS solution will work the same for way digital.

New applications

In the next session for the labels track, HP customers discussed some of the new applications being used in various markets,

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“The importance of creating a successful marketing plan was emphasized, something that 80 percent of businesses do not have”

such as flexible packaging, shrink sleeves and in-mold. The certification process a printer must go through in order to adhere to certain packaging regulations was also discussed.

The HP ElectroInk is FDA compliant for flexible package printing on the non-food contact side when used with three specific materials: low density polyethylene (LDPE) at least 40 microns thick, polypropylene at least 20 microns thick, or polyester that is at least 12 microns thick. Before starting the printing process, it is important to optimize the chosen substrate with a primer, a task that should be individually assessed for each application. In the case of shrink sleeves, oftentimes a varnish must be applied after printing to avoid scuffing during finishing stages.

Substrates

The label and packaging track wrapped up the first day of Dscoop with one group discussing digital substrate compatibility while another group attended an interactive session about the Tower of Production. Doug Watson from Masterpiece Graphics, an Indigo certified substrate coater and supplier, discussed the importance of the overprint varnish to print quality. Watson talked about the three material types: substrates with digital coating applied, those with a natural affinity for Indigo ElectroInks, and media that has been manufactured with the ink adhesion qualities ‘in the mix’.

Next, HP’s Ed Dedman discussed the use of substrates in the newer application areas for digital. Mitsubishi is the only Indigo qualified supplier of PET for shrink sleeves and flexible packaging at this time. However, HP is working with other partners to get more products certified. Klockner-Pentoplast and Plastic Suppliers currently have products pending. Shrink sleeve production on the Indigo, Dedman said, requires lane printing, an OPV to protect the ink during the shrink process and a heat sensitivity in the finishing process.

He said that in-mold labels demand a low-shrink OPV, typically a UV OPV. HP emphasized that there are little or no challenges with the ElectroInks used on an IML application because they are shrink tolerant and do not curl.

Variable data and coding

The next day’s track started with a presentation about variable data and coding on the Indigo press. An overview of the new

capabilities and uses stimulated a lively discussion about the uses for 1-D, 2-D and 3-D barcodes.

Sustainable practices

Presenters at the next session gave suggestions on how to implement a sustainable process improvement within a digital manufacturing facility. Bringing management into the decision making process was greatly emphasized.

Digital scheduling

Proper scheduling is a crucial part of the entire digital manufacturing process. Craig Curran from Nosco Inc., a pharmaceutical converter, reiterated the importance of color calibration and control. Before each job, he said that Nosco checks the control rider and the Digicon annotation marks. Continual vision checks are embedded into the scheduling time frame. Curran pointed out the need to test for media surface treatment consistency. After Curran’s presentation, ABG introduced the new color tile readable features on the Fleyevision, a feature especially useful for a highly regulated industry like pharmaceuticals.

Marketing digital

Successful digital label printers wrapped up the label and packaging track by sharing some of their marketing solutions. The importance of creating a successful marketing plan was emphasized, something that 80 percent of businesses do not have. Suggested plans focused on getting out there to find new leads to increase growth.

Digital and conventional converter: Tadbik Group

HP Indigo’s domestic customer, Tadbik Group, holds the largest market share of shrink sleeves and PS in Israel. And under the umbrella of the group, Tadbik also offers IML and cut and stack applications with all of the printing technologies – flexo, letterpress, digital, gravure, and offset. ‘When you work in a small market, you have to do everything,’ said Eli Shelach, export manager. ‘We were HP’s first roll-fed customer in the country because it offers a solution tailored to the small market’s needs.’

A good percentage of Tadbik’s business is within its borders, but the company very much has a global outlook. It has a similar plant located in New Jersey, USA and has a sales force throughout North America, in Johannesburg, South Africa and Moscow, Russia. The Tadbik Pack subsidiary of the Group specializes in the production of shrink sleeves and in-mold and blow-mold labels. By the end of 2008, the converter plans to have two new production facilities open in South Africa and Russia, where the plant will be opened in conjunction with a large, locally-established label company. ■



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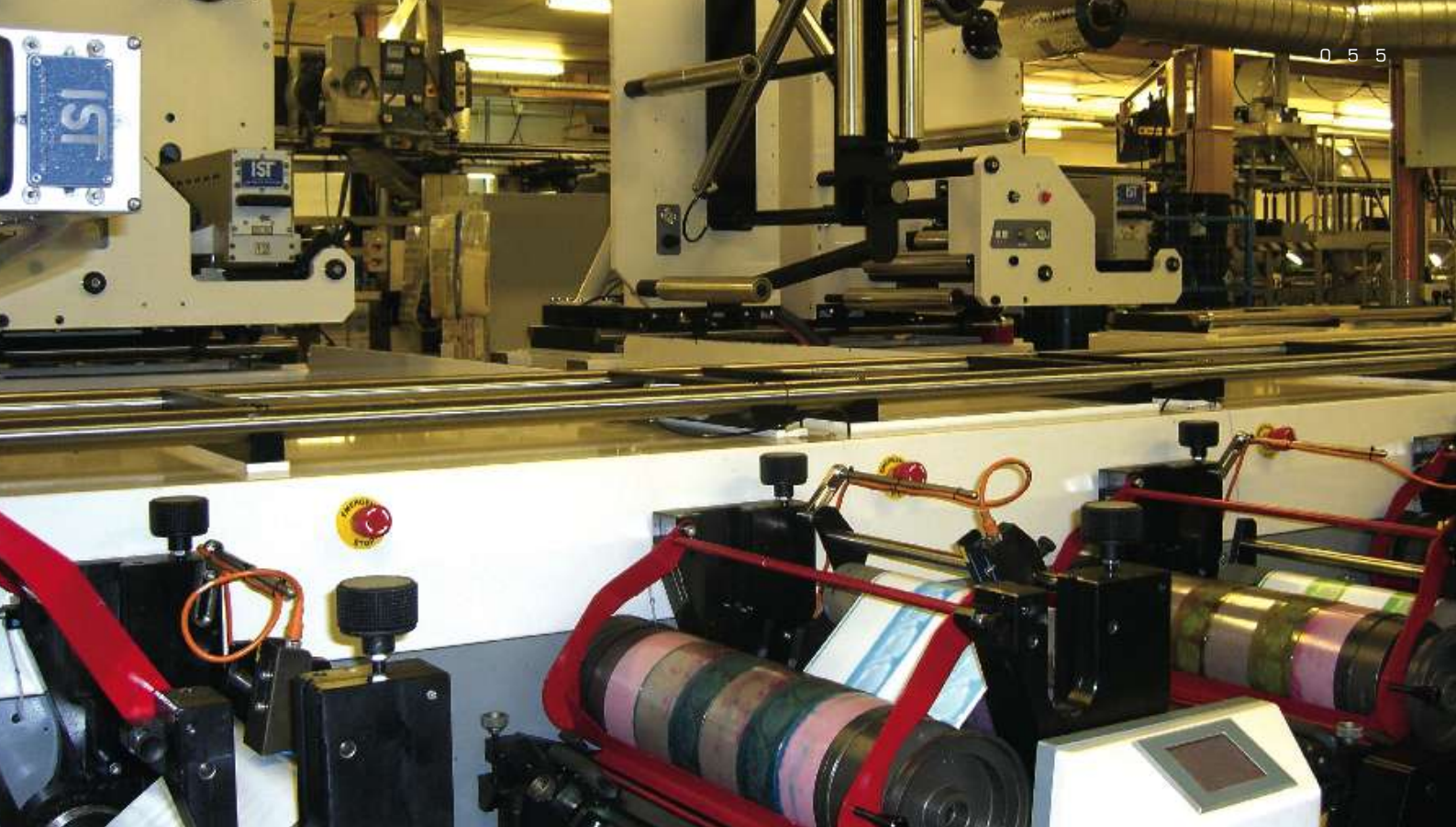
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A close-up of the Ultraflex press

Complex converting

SA Labels has worked together with MPS to develop a 17-unit press able to handle the most complex of label printing and converting jobs. **Andy Thomas** reports

SA Labels, founded in 1984 and located in West Yorkshire, England, has a long history of innovation stretching back to the company's role as a pioneer of cold foiling.

Today SA Labels has scored another first by defining the parameters of a complex converting platform then having it built by a major narrow web press manufacturer.

The 'Ultraflex' press project started after Tony Coulthard, operations manager, and Jonathan Hutton, managing director at SA labels, found themselves regularly presented with final artwork that was 'virtually impossible to print for one reason or another'.

The reasons usually came down to certain features of the design such as drop shadows, vignettes, or foil being placed in the wrong sequence.

Coulthard and Hutton looked around for a press manufacturer prepared to build a converting platform to their specifications, which meant they would never again have to reformat or turn down complex artwork.

After many meetings and discussions, the pair formed a partnership with MPS and with UV systems manufacturer IST to build a machine that would allow them 'to print any design which came through the door'. That project became the

Ultraflex MPS press.

The main press technology is based on an MPS EF410 platform and consists of 17 multi-function print heads, including several foiling heads and a delam-relam unit that can also be used for film lamination.

The press includes standard MPS EF410 'Crisp Dot' features: integrated auto register system that works from a single mark printed on the first unit; unison anilox-to-plate impression and plate-to-web impression systems; and non-driven rubber-covered impression cylinders. Web transportation is independent of the printing and converting functions using 12-inch servo-driven chill drums on each unit to enable it to cope with the temperature demands of a wide range of unsupported filmic substrates.

With this setup it is possible to produce designs of up to 17 'plug and play' colors including screen prints, hot foiling and cold foiling that can be introduced anywhere in the print sequence.

Tight register can be achieved when printing on unsupported film, along with the ability to second pass the web through the press if required. It is even possible to foil on the front and reverse of the film in register.



(L-r) Nick Tyrer, MPS Systems; Tony Coulthard, SA Labels; and Simon Mitchell, IST (UK) Ltd

All print heads and the cold foiling units are fitted with IST's latest MBS-5 UV curing system. Commenting on the specification of the UV system, Simon Mitchell, joint managing director of IST (UK) Ltd, told *L&L*: 'With an extremely high quality of UV combination print being produced, it was essential that the UV system could handle the versatility of both substrate and ink. With this requirement, the MBS-5 UV system was specified providing mechanical press speed curing and heat management of the different substrates involved.'

URS reflector technology makes it possible to use 140 W/cm lamps and achieve the same level of cure as 200 W/cm lamps with conventional reflectors, without compromising press speed or effectiveness of cure.

'With 16 UV units installed and operating using just 140 W/cm per lamp the reduction is significant,' says Mitchell.

Tony Coulthard said one of the main reasons for choosing the IST UV system was its 'large curing envelope', which offers good cure at the extreme ends of flexographic printing on difficult materials. Another important factor was speed of lamp change offered by the patented FLC (Fast Lamp Change) incorporated into the system and the easy cleaning of lamps and reflectors necessary for the press maintenance program. The curing system is powered by IST's latest ELC electronic supply units. Standby power requirements are low and their extended adjustment range means that the optimum lamp profile can be chosen according to the job requirements thus avoiding distortion of sensitive substrates even at low press speeds.

In operation

SA Labels' goal with the Ultraflex press concept – along with the claim of never having to reformat artwork – is to allow end users to differentiate themselves in the market place, and the press has already been showcased to select leading brand



The Ultraflex press

managers with this goal in mind.

Tony Coulthard explains that this is a two-part demonstration. The press is first shown printing unsupported film in a conventional format, before being put into its 'all singing all dancing mode', printing a 16-color job on film including hot and cold foiling and screen print with a tactile element. Coulthard says it only takes nine minutes to plug in the additional heads when changing from the conventional job.

To further demonstrate the machine's capabilities, SA Labels prints its promotional leaflets – normally printed offset litho – on the Ultraflex press, challenging observers to spot the difference.

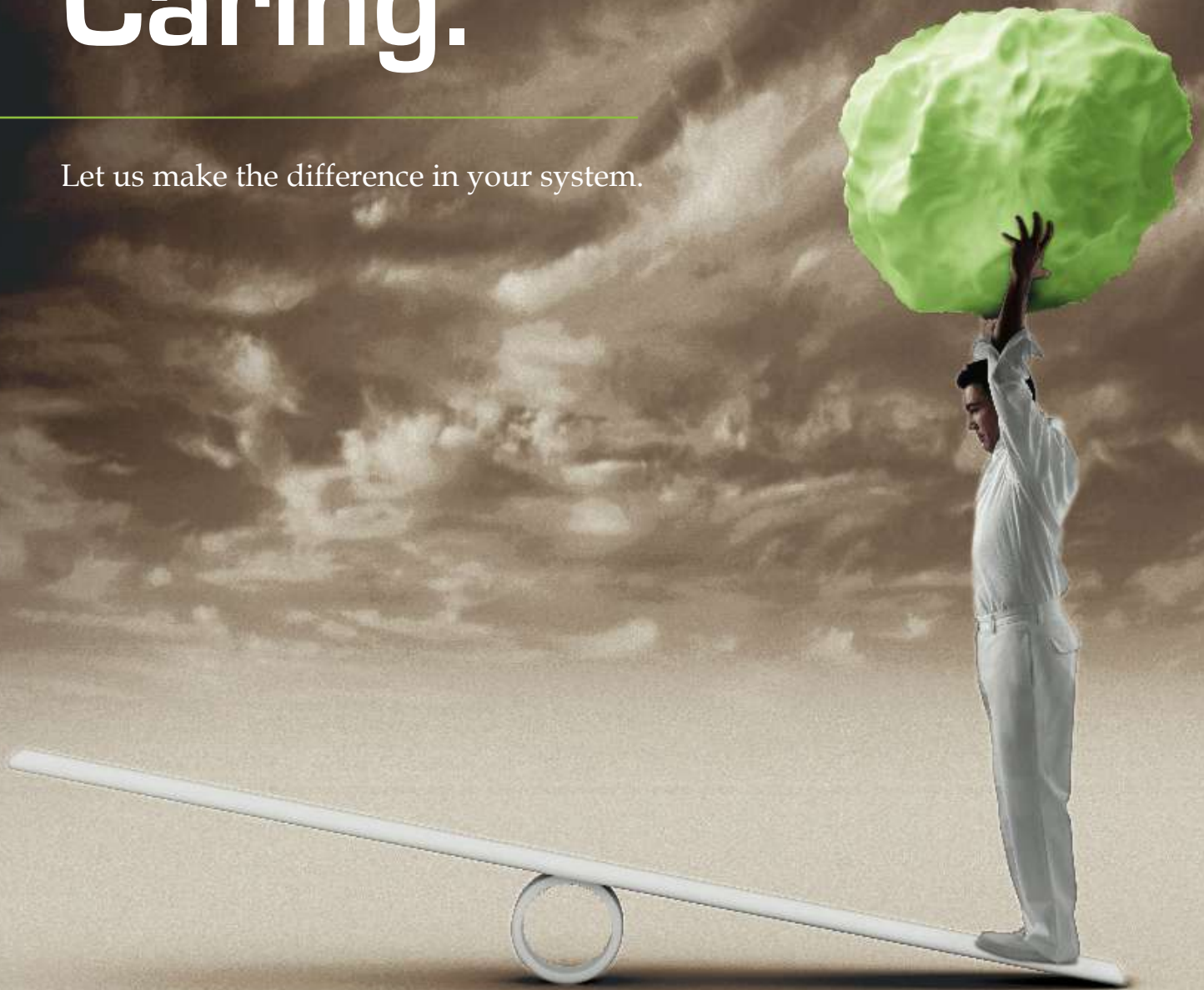
Last year SA Labels won a Flexotech 'combination' print category award for an Imperial Tribute Finest Malt Whisky label printed on the MPS Ultraflex press. The job was produced on clear polypropylene using Sun Chemicals' UV inks, 45 thou plates and Lohmann, Duploflex, double-sided tapes. The judges commented, 'An excellent print result consisting of cold foil, silk screen, luminescent colors, embossing and gloss varnish. The print sequence consists of 12 different steps and the special effects are impressive. Overall high quality, in fact an artist's masterpiece.'

Tony Coulthard says SA Labels was approached to print this award-winning label as a result of the print buyer hearing 'through the grapevine' that the Ultraflex press could print 'almost anything', and today the press is kept running 24/7 as more end users approach SA with equally complex jobs.

'Together with MPS we have created a press years ahead of its time,' comments Tony Coulthard. 'The select few who have witnessed Ultraflex in the flesh have not been disappointed. Ultraflex has a range of print disciplines to meet the complexity of today's and tomorrow's design briefs. It has thrown down a gauntlet to the design world to beat its vast capability.' ■

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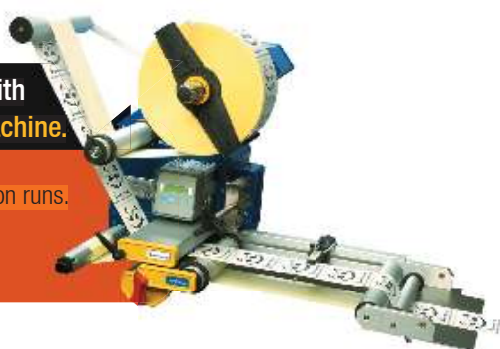


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drupa

UV innovation

GEW, set to enter the wider web and sheetfed markets at drupa with its Iso-Cure system, has come from humble beginnings to establish itself as a leading supplier of UV curing systems. **James Quirk** reports

When industry expert Mike Fairley visited GEW's booth at Labelexpo Europe in 1991, his verdict was unequivocal – there are too many UV curing system suppliers in the market, he told managing director Malcolm Rae, and success, therefore, would be a major challenge.

Fairley's concern was valid: at that time, a plethora of companies were supplying equipment for sheetfed UV curing presses and migrating their technology to smaller systems for the narrow web market. GEW, however, was able to survive – indeed flourish – by bringing genuine UV curing innovation to the narrow web sector.

Today, the company is a leading UV curing systems supplier in the narrow web industry, with an impressive portfolio of products and presence around the world. And the migration of systems in the early 1990s from sheetfed to narrow web is now being reversed as GEW displays its Iso-Cure system, specifically aimed at the wider web and sheet-fed markets, at drupa 2008.

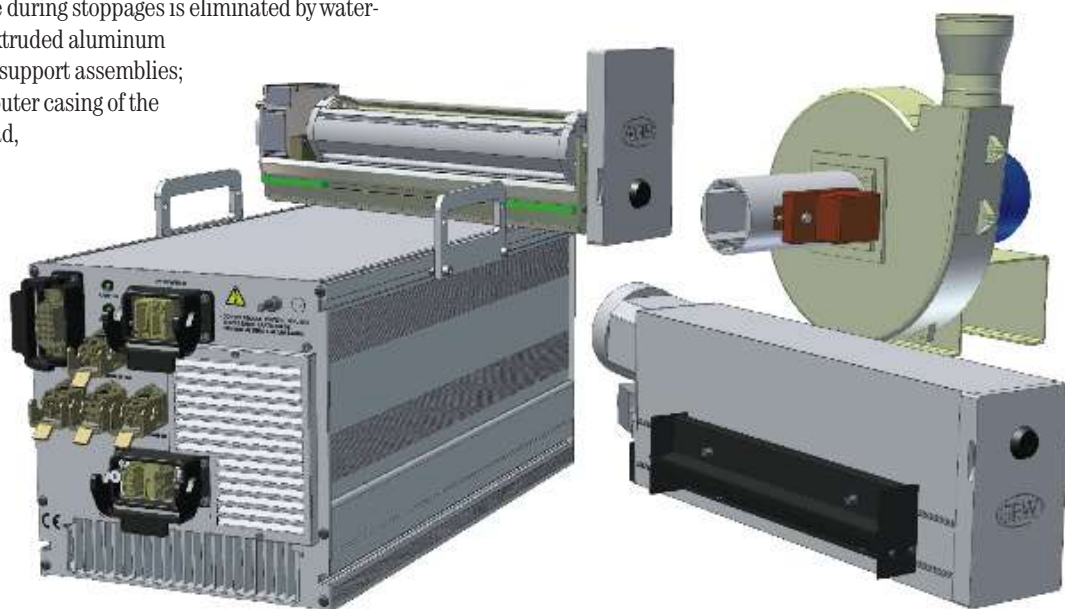
The Iso-Cure, which will be on display at the show on a GSD 7-color carton press, is UV a curing lamp head designed for processing a wide variety of substrates on printing and converting lines up to two meters wide. It features GEW's energy saving e-brick electronic power supply and a built-in heat exchange system that reduces exhaust air temperatures to a minimum. Heat transfer to the substrate during stoppages is eliminated by water-cooled extruded aluminum reflector support assemblies; and the outer casing of the lamp head,

also water-cooled, reduces heat transfer to the press to zero.

The Iso-Cure is one of a flurry of new products that GEW has developed in the past 18 months, including AirFilm, which allows heat management without the use of water-cooled rollers; SEEcure, an on-line monitoring system that measures output within the UV lamp head; QuantiCure, a chemical test kit that gives UV cure measurements at the substrate; and the e-System series of UV curing lines, including the e-System mini and e-System Inert.

The timing is no coincidence: GEW's e-Brick electronic power supply, launched at Labelexpo Europe in 2005 after two years of development, is now used to power all the company's UV lamp heads. GEW has now discontinued transformer and choke powered UV systems in favor of this more energy efficient power supply, which uses square-wave technology to drive more UV from the lamp while consuming less input power than a conventionally powered system.

'Power electronics are notoriously difficult to get right,' says GEW's managing director Malcolm Rae. 'The decision was taken in full knowledge of that difficulty; it's not for the faint hearted. But we have studied every aspect of



GEW's e-Brick electronic power supply is now used in all the company's UV lamp heads



Gillian and Malcolm Rae at GEW's Redhill, UK headquarters

the system and spent four years perfecting the technology. It is important to explain in simple terms the advantages of this equipment. It is a very technical subject, but it is technology that is used day in, day out, and we have made it user friendly.'

Indeed, the success of the e-Brick-powered e-System series has been such that GEW released impressive figures in April this year estimating the reduction in both costs and CO2 emissions that its customers had experienced. 'Since the launch of the e-System range, we calculate that, collectively, printers running with e-Brick have reduced CO2 emissions by 12,100 tonnes, based on the UK average of CO2 produced per kW hour generated,' says Rae. 'In addition, related cost savings of curing with e-System products amount to a staggering \$2.5 million. We can only imagine the impact of this as a contribution in reducing the carbon footprint of the printing industry.' GEW has benefited from increased concern over carbon emissions in recent years, and has now sold over 1,000 e-Brick systems around the world.

Early days

Based in a 45,000 square foot facility in Redhill, UK, since 1999, the company now has a manufacturing, sales, service and support facility in Ohio, USA, as well as sales and support offices in Germany, India and Australia. Indeed, GEW has come a long way since Malcolm Rae and wife Gillian founded the company in 1991.

The development of UV flexo in the narrow web industry in the early 1990s led Rae, a mechanical engineer, to see the potential in supplying small curing systems specifically designed for the sector. The couple set up an office in the spare room of their residential home in Reigate, Surrey, and took turns in using the one computer. Testing was carried out in the basement.

Innovation began with the first order: hard earned savings were used to purchase two extrusion dies to produce a simple product from aluminum, at a time when curing equipment was largely manufactured from steel. The company's first sale – to AB Graphic, still a customer today – came in August of 1991. By 1992, with the company still being run from the spare bedroom, GEW had taken on a premises and begun exporting. In 1999, the company won the Queen's Award for Export after doubling export sales figures for three years running.

'We changed the way UV systems were being built,' says Rae, 'Many other companies now follow a similar design to us. It was



At work on 3D computer aided design

a fast evolution from basement to our current site in just eight years. We were in the right place at the right time: we have experienced the growth that the label industry has experienced. But it is not only luck – it is a combination of lots of things.

'How we engineer our products, for example, sets us apart from our competitors. Engineering is about making for 50 pence what anybody can make for a pound. Year on year, you have to make your products cheaper. We have made UV systems into a commodity. When we started, they were regarded as something special; now they are everywhere.' Products can be turned around in a week, and – rare for a UK company – are often cheaper than European and even Asian competitors.

Design also plays an important part. 'OEMs, the press manufacturers, have helped the evolution of the product design,' says Rae. Five years ago, GEW began to use 3D computer aided design, which, according to Gillian Rae, 'has enabled greater efficiency and insight'.

Technical support – a crucial part of the company's ethos – is offered 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Trained personnel are available on every continent and the company's website has a dedicated and extensive service section. 'If someone buys our equipment,' says Rae, 'we look after it.'

Rae believes GEW to be the classic start-up business. Forty percent of the staff has been at the company for five years or more, with many there for over a decade. The company employs over 80 people at its Redhill site and a further 20 around the world. 'The quality of staff is crucial,' says Rae.

'Managing change and managing growth are the biggest challenges, especially as a manufacturer,' concludes Rae. 'Business has become risk-averse and mistakes get punished. It is important to keep focused and continue to innovate.'

This philosophy of innovation has allowed GEW to come a long way since 1991 – and, not least, to defy Mike Fairley's predictions. 'I am delighted that through their dedication Malcolm and Gillian have overcome the major challenges that I foresaw back in 1991,' says Fairley, 'and that the company has now become one of the leading UV systems suppliers. I certainly believe it is well deserved.' ■

On the next page, Malcolm Rae discusses inert gas UV curing

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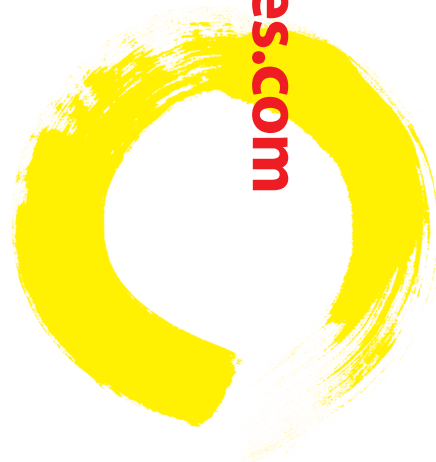


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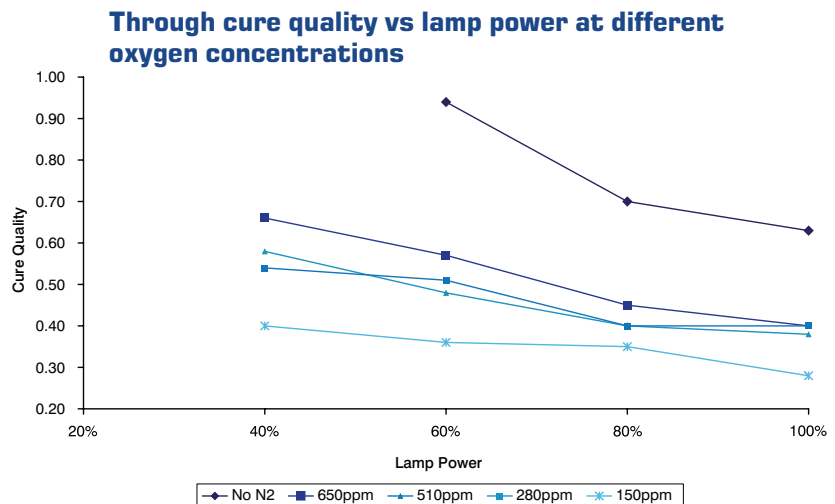
Malcolm Rae, MD, discusses how GEW addresses challenges of new applications and technologies with its inert atmosphere curing system

The continuing evolution of the printing and packaging industries and the demand for improved product quality and production efficiencies have in turn placed greater challenges on UV curing technology. New film substrates that provide both physical and aesthetic properties and that also reduce material thickness and costs have been developed in recent years bringing with them new challenges.

In the main, new substrates, along with the ink and coating chemistries designed to work with them, can be efficiently cured with conventional UV systems coupled with various forms of heat management such as cooling rollers and improvements in reflector design. With certain applications, in particular direct food contact packaging, curing has to be carried out under inert conditions that reduce oxygen to obtain the required degree of cross-linking that meet the challenges of the end user.

Oxygen in ambient air reduces cross-linking in photoinitiator-driven reactions. Inks and coatings are formulated to overcome this with the addition of aggressive photoinitiators that combine with oxygen. Curing of very thin coatings such as some silicones can only be achieved if the oxygen is excluded from the curing zone. Under these conditions, cross-linking is substantially improved on conventional inks and coatings. New applications in printing and packaging mean that there is now an increasing need for inert gas UV curing. Benefits include having the capability to process a wide variety of substrates, better chemical resistance and adhesion, faster cure speeds, thinner coating weights, lower photoinitiator levels, increased production speeds, reduced energy consumption and more consistent curing.

Either carbon dioxide or, more usually nitrogen, can be used to displace oxygen from the curing chamber, and gas can be delivered in compressed or liquid form. For all but the smallest installations, liquid gas has been the preferred source of nitrogen. There are differences between curing with carbon dioxide and nitrogen, but they are small. Liquid nitrogen is usually stored on site in large vertical tanks with an evaporator to boil off the gas. Liquid gas costs vary



widely depending on delivery distances and volumes used. Typically liquid nitrogen costs in the region of 45 Eurocents per cubic meter of gas with approximately another 30 percent for tank rental, constant flash off and delivery charges. An alternative and cost effective source of nitrogen is the nitrogen generator, which chemically removes oxygen from compressed air to leave nitrogen with a purity of 20-30ppm. These units can generate nitrogen for around 20 Eurocents per cubic meter. However, they only need compressed air to operate. There is an upfront capital cost for this equipment, but maintenance is low: there are no consumable parts and lifetime is at least 15 years.

Excluding oxygen significantly improves cross-linking and hence cure rate without changes to the ink or varnish. Curing speeds can be increased between two and four times. Recent tests we carried out with a food processing and packaging equipment manufacturer in Europe demonstrated how cross-linking on a coating was improved by passing it through GEW's nitrogen curing unit. Here cross-linking was critical to product performance for thermal transfer printing on a varnished label where incomplete curing of the coating leads to clogging of the print heads in the ongoing application process. The graph shows the effect on cure of increasing lamp power and

reducing oxygen concentrations, with the lower values indicating better cure. Inert curing is not a new process. Silicone and food packaging applications have been in existence for many years. But hitherto the cost of inert gas UV equipment has been high and this together with the cost of producing the gas itself has limited installations in the field. Equipment for high-speed web applications must be precisely manufactured and installed to achieve low levels of oxygen with modest levels of gas consumption.

At GEW we have introduced a range of precision equipment that when used in conjunction with a nitrogen generator makes inert gas curing a more cost-effective option. Applications for inert gas are manifold. We are already achieving four times the speed of conventional curing on CI presses for curing base white inks at over 400m/min. We are also curing at lower power levels to achieve full cure on thermo-sensitive materials without the use of water-cooled chill rollers. Reducing photoinitiators helps address the issues of initiator migration and odor essential for food industry compatibility, while also reducing ink costs. Curing of screen and gravure inks under inert atmosphere significantly improves consistency and cross-linking qualities. We see the uptake of inert atmosphere UV curing as the next step in the evolution of the technology, with limitations steadily being eroded by new do-it-all systems that can adapt to almost any printing and packaging application or end user demand. ■



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Paragon Label has become one of California's leading producers of unique, high-end wine labels, as **Danielle Jerschefske** reports



Wine success in California

Paragon Label was founded in 1998 as a branch of its parent company, Mrs Grossman's Paper Company, one of the world's largest producers of colorful stickers for scrap booking and stationary products. When Jason Grossman joined the family sticker business in the purchasing department in 1989, he thought it would be best to bring the manufacturing in-house rather than outsourcing it. After ten years the number of flexo presses at the facility had grown from one to a fleet.

All the stickers and labels have always been manufactured in the United States; however, by the late nineties, most competitors were their manufacturing to China which caused Mrs Grossman's to lose market share due to pricing and other factors which left some of the presses housed at the headquarters in Petaluma, California, idle too frequently. This manufacturing development triggered Jason Grossman to 'diversify' Mrs Grossman's product line by establishing Paragon Label, taking the company's printing experience into the fast-paced label industry.

The company quickly established itself in the label market as a reliable printer. Within a year, Grossman decided to extend into the prime label business, a convenient move considering the location of the plant – a mere fifteen minute drive to Sonoma, and a brief panoramic 26 mile drive to Napa Valley.

'Paragon focuses on flexographic printing because we believe that it produces superior quality at reasonable prices,' says Jason Grossman, president of Paragon Label. 'We want to prove that flexography is just as good as offset printing. Our jobs are usually not under a 175 line screen.'

The facility operates two shifts a day, four days a week, with 11 press operators, working in 110,000 square feet of space. Paragon has four sales representatives, supported by two customer service reps. The plant holds four Mark Andy 2200 presses in widths 7 inches to 13 inches, a 13 inch Mark Andy LP3000, a 10 inch Mark Andy 4150 and a 10 inch Mark Andy Scout. Grossman and his team have been supportive of Mark Andy's presses, not only because of their capability to produce high-quality flexographic print, but also because they are still manufactured in the US.

Rather than in-line ancillary equipment, Paragon uses mostly flat bed Iwasaki TR series and Franklin triple head hot stamping equipment.

'The main reason is because the tooling is cheaper,' Grossman says. 'It helps to keep our customers' costs down.'

From a customer's point of view

B.R. Cohn Winery invited *L&L* to visit its facility to evaluate a range of its wines and to analyze how the labels for each bottle are chosen. Winemaker Tom Montgomery has been in the corporate wine making business for years. He has only been working for the privately held B.R.Cohn for the past three years, driving the business to over triple its' growth in that time. The winery's signature label is quite a bit larger than a traditional wine bottle label. 'We have chosen the big, "flaunty" label,' explains Montgomery, 'because people don't forget it. It pops out at the consumer.'

'The elegance of a label,' Montgomery continued, 'the "pop" of a label, depends on the market. There is such prestige pricing in the wine market that we must be in tune to who the customer drinking the wine is.' For example, within Cohn's rich portfolio, the middle range cabernet sauvignon has a silver foiled border around the outside of the label, with embossing on the winery's signature olive branch. Its background is a clean crème color. This Silver Man's Cab or 'every man's cabernet' as Montgomery calls it, is a mid-range, pleasant tasting cabernet sauvignon. With this appropriate label, giving a broad consumer appeal, the 'high quality wine for a good price' notion is conveyed to the consumer. 'We have chosen to source our labels from Paragon because they are reliable, they work well with us and they produce a high-quality label – no scuffs and it's appealing,' Montgomery said. 'They can make us any look we want to create.'

While B.R.Cohn has chosen to keep the wine labels for his signature wines classic, neat and clean, he has ventured into some flashier labels for his younger, spicier wine 'connoisseurs'. As we've seen, the wine industry has grown tremendously since 1974 when Bruce Cohn first purchased what is now known as the Olive Hill Estate Vineyard. Wine drinkers now include



President Jason Grossman on the shop floor

Environmental responsibility

Paragon Label has always had a strong awareness of its environmental impact and responsibility. It has been recycling its set-up material and matrix waste since 1993. Rather than going to landfills, as a large share of waste material from the label industry does, the material is now recycled and used to make corrugated containers for a variety of consumer products.

Also, in 2001 Paragon Label installed a water treatment plant within the building to help reduce the strain on the California sewer system and to further reduce its environmental impact. According to current environmental regulations, water-based inks can be washed down the drain. Nonetheless, with the new filtration system, the water discharged from the facility is cleaner than the water coming in. The tank stores up to 3,000 gallons of wastewater at a time, releasing polymers that attach to any solids in the container. When the water is drained only the solids are left which cause no harm when disposed of in a landfill. Paragon recently was granted an energy award from PG&E, its local electric company.

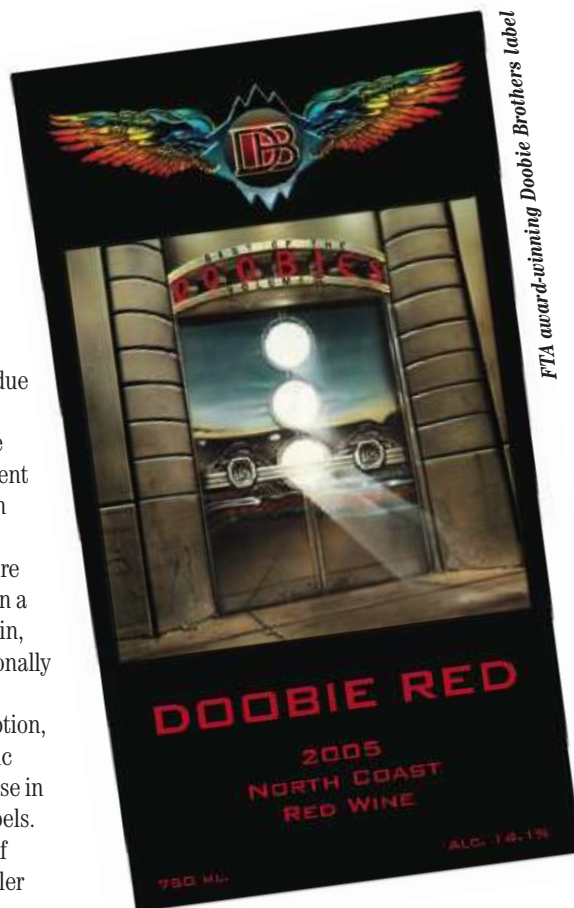
many in the younger generations who have an eye for an edgier label.

According to the Napa Valley Register, the per capita wine consumption in the US rose 17.7 percent from 2005 to 2006, mostly due to the millennial generation, ages 13–30 for a number of reasons. One reason, for example, is that 37 percent of the wine sold in the US is through restaurants – statistically, the millennial generation dines out more often. Another is that there has been a rise in online wine sales where, again, the millennial generation is traditionally more computer savvy.

This recent rise in wine consumption, specifically amongst such a dynamic generation, directly relates to the rise in demand for shorter runs of wine labels. Personalized labels, little batches of specialty blended berry types, smaller wineries and anti-counterfeiting applications all dictate a short make-ready time to fill these types of on-demand orders. About a year ago, Paragon invested in an HP Indigo ws4500 press. 'Digital makes short-order jobs more affordable,' Grossman said. 'And it is more convenient to complete sequential numbering and other variable data.'

Up to now, Paragon has not produced many mixed technology labels, such as flexo and digital offset, but Grossman is confident that the combination might prove useful in the future. Grossman also says that, 'It is exciting to see digital approaching offset quality and offset speed. There is definitely a need.'

A distinctive highlight of many of Paragon's labels is laser cutting detail. Paragon Label has a one of a kind laser cutter that was first purchased to give some flare to Mrs. Grossman's stickers. But it has become an invaluable part of their unique offerings which sets them apart from the competition. Built by Lasercraft, the 4500-watt laser has two channels that move very slowly. To avoid striking through the liner, the machine separates the substrate from the liner before the laser burns the unwanted material away, leaving behind a finely detailed, ornate cutting that beautifully decorates any bottle.



FTA award-winning Doobie Brothers label

Paragon Label has successfully applied skills gained from sticker production to become an exemplary leader for artistic label production. Grossman says, 'we enjoy working with our customers because they are creative and are willing to push the limits. My staff has the ability to do just about anything they are asked to do.' And they do. ■

FTA award winner

In this year's FTA 2008 Excellence in Flexography Awards Competition, Paragon Label submitted ten labels, winning seven awards. A highlight was the B.R. Cohn Winery winning entry – Doobie Red 2005 North coast red wine label, pictured – part of a collector's series featuring three Doobie Brothers album covers. This brightly colored label represents ten percent of the work Paragon does for the label industry. It is the exact opposite of the antiquated eggshell colored, expensive vintage wine look. 'We do all sorts of detailing on labels to catch the eye of the consumer,' Grossman says. 'Our sales team works closely with our clients to give them the look they want for the market they are trying to sell into.'

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Spear's founding facility in Mason, Ohio

Clear focus on PS

Rather than diversify, Spear has focused more intensely on the pressure sensitive beverage sector and introduced major efficiency and environmental initiatives. **Andy Thomas** reports

At a time when many converters are seeking to diversify their product offerings, Spear, headquartered in Mason, Ohio, has maintained a clear focus on clear pressure-sensitive labels for the beverage, food and personal care industries. 'Better Labeling – Clear and Simple' is more than a slogan – it is a focus that has led the company to international success.

'We don't try to be everything to everybody,' says Dan Muenzer, VP marketing. Muenzer believes it is this sustained focus that has helped Spear earn business from some of the largest beverage manufacturers in the world.

The company was founded in 1982 as a flatbed screen printer. By 2007 Spear had three facilities in North America and one in Europe. Late in 2007, the company opened a new 5,500 square meter facility in Johannesburg, South Africa, starting operations with its second new Cerutti rotogravure press. Processes now include rotary screen, UV flexo, gravure, hot stamping and combination printing.

Spear's expansion has been driven primarily by the beverage industry's continuing use of clear pressure sensitive labels, which offer possibilities for better color, more creative designs and the flexibility to use clear, opaque, and metalized films.

Spear understands that a long-term supplier needs to be

Automating winding cuts waste

Spear is an enthusiastic advocate of automated splicers and rewinds and has a total of thirty-one pieces of Martin roll-changing equipment – including MBS and MBSF butt splicers and LR automatic transfer rewinds. Initially, Spear looked to Martin's non-stop splicing technology to reduce downtime, but automatic splicing has also delivered significant waste reduction benefits.

'Our splice-related down time was dramatically reduced and our materials waste was reduced by 3-4 percent,' reports Muenzer. The Martin equipment supports a variety of printing platforms including Comco, Gallus, MPS, Chesnut and Spear's own make – a GMC. Spear purchased the New Hampshire-based press manufacturer in part to build special presses for their expanding operations.

'Our customers are under increasing pressure to minimize their packaging waste and be more environmentally responsible,' says Muenzer. 'Using efficient equipment like our Martin splicers and winders is helping us make great strides in waste reduction and energy efficiency.'



Matrix waste into energy

Spear has partnered with New England-based International Paper Products Corporation (IPP) to create the 'Matrix Program' at Spear's New Hampshire facility. This program involves mixing label matrix waste with packaging materials, films, coated and other non-recyclable papers, wood, plastics, and textile scrap to manufacture Enviro-Fuelcubes. Enviro-Fuelcubes are a clean energy-dense renewable biomass fuel product used in commercial power plants and process boilers to replace coal, oil, or wood for the generation of electricity.

The Matrix Program helps reduce waste disposal costs and eliminates 85 percent of Spear's waste that would otherwise end up in landfills. At its current business load, Spear's New Hampshire facility alone will divert 1,010 tons of scrap waste per year to IPP for the production of a clean biomass fuel.

Spear is proud of its environmental initiatives. Comments Karl Patnode, quality manager at Spear's New Hampshire facility: 'The Matrix Program has been so successful for Spear that when IPP expands their operations, we will be expanding the program to all our North American plants. That could result in about 3,535 tons of waste being converted into energy instead of adding to regional landfills. It's good for the environment and it's good for business – definitely a win, win solution.'

IPP currently serves New England, with plans to expand operations nationally. For more information on IPP and their Materials Life-cycle Management Program, visit www.ippbiomassfuel.com.

Other eco-friendly measures adopted by Spear include the use of recyclable adhesives, biodegradable materials, and water-based inks.

close to the market for more than financial reasons. Long distance shipping extends delivery time, while close proximity to customers makes press approvals easier and more timely. Duplicating processes across its five facilities also allows Spear to offer process redundancy: 'this assures our customers of critical production capacity and underscores our ability to



Above left: Dan Muenzer, VP marketing; above right: GMC press with Martin rewind

"Spear understands that a long-term supplier needs to be close to the market for more than financial reasons"

deliver on time,' says Dan Muenzer.

Spear's intense focus on pressure sensitive technology is supported by high value-added services based around patented processes and application engineering. 'Today, printing high-quality labels is not enough,' explains Muenzer. 'We take a more holistic approach and get very involved in our customers' entire labeling process—helping them optimize applications for the best possible quality and production. I guess that's why so many of our customers think of us as the no-risk option.'

So, what's next? Spear is looking to expand internationally and is considering Mexico, Thailand, Vietnam and China. No matter where the company builds its next plant, it is determined to maintain its pressure sensitive label focus while continuing to be good stewards for the environment (see boxout: Matrix waste into energy). ■

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Fifty-seven companies were present at the event at HP's Demo and Training Center in Barcelona

Making a case for digital

Labels & Labeling was granted exclusive access to an event organized by HP Indigo at its new Demo and Training Center and nearby customer Apesa. **James Quirk** reports from Barcelona

Fifty-seven companies from all over Europe were hosted by HP Indigo at its new Demo and Training Center in Barcelona. With seventy percent of attendees yet to invest in digital equipment, the event provided HP with the opportunity both to present the business case for digital printing and to demonstrate the technology in action at nearby customer Apesa, a pharmaceutical label converter.

More diligent readers of this magazine will remember Apesa as a company revitalized last year by investment in Spain's first HP Indigo ws4500 press (*L&L* April/May 2007). In the time since this writer's last visit, owner and MD José Manuel Gil's initial excitement in the technology has matured into the unshaken belief that Apesa's future lies in digital printing. A second ws4500 will be installed shortly, and Gil plans to sell his existing flexo and letterpress equipment in order to accommodate further investment in digital presses from HP.

Prior to the purchase of the ws4500, Apesa was printing pharmaceutical labels – which make up 40 percent of the company's business – on a Nilpeter 6-color letterpress. Gil reports that setting up the jobs took 60 percent of the press's running time; therein, he says, lay the case for digital.

'For pharmaceutical label printing, digital is a revolution,' says Gil. 'We can achieve greater accuracy and faster delivery times, while seeing increased profitability in comparison to conventional printing. For Apesa, the future is completely digital. Our business was flat, but our sales force and our product offering have been revitalized.'

Apesa's two buildings are a short drive from HP's Demo and Training Center, which was moved to Barcelona from Maastricht

last summer. This geography has had benefits for both parties, says Gil: 'HP has given us a great deal of support. It is a great collaboration and the proximity has helped. They have brought their customers to see our machine in action, and have given us help with leads and marketing.'

Visitors to the event were therefore able to see a variety of pharmaceutical, cosmetic and gourmet label jobs, ranging from 4-6 colors, in action on Apesa's digital press. Also on display was the company's AB Graphic Omega Digicon converting line, which was installed shortly after the purchase of the ws4500.

Demo and Training Center

HP's Demo and Training Center, based in Sant Cugat just outside Barcelona, is a 3,000 square meter facility for staff and customer training for the company's Indigo, Scitex and DesignJet businesses. Two HP ws4500 presses, along with a Digicon and Digicoat from AB Graphic, are on display in a demonstration room, while a 1,000 square meter training area houses 20 machines. Six of these are dedicated label presses: one ws4050 and five ws4500s. More presses are to be installed soon. A total of six students work on each machine and there are three different levels of training to complete. The facility therefore allows HP customers to train staff without sacrificing the productivity of their own presses.

In a presentation to visitors, Enric Martínez-Abarca, HP's European sales manager, outlined the benefits of digital printing in 'the changing label market': citing its 'greater efficiency and ability to react to problems' as key advantages in the current climate of shorter runs, quicker turnaround times and reduced margin for error.

'Digital is not only a printing press,' he said, 'it is a business



(L-r) Studying at the Training Center; Apesa's ABG Omega Digicon converting line

solution. With our machine, you can print 100,000 labels and each one can be different. Try doing that with a conventional press.'

LBA – Label Business Analysis

Syd Roberts, business consultant for HP Indigo Industrial Products EMEA, gave visitors an introduction to HP's Label Business Analysis (LBA), a tool to help potential customers build a business case for digital printing.

The program compares digital with conventional at a job by job level – showing which work would be handled more effectively by digital printing. Results can be printed or exported as a PDF, and can therefore be used as part of a business justification to a bank or board of directors. Roberts gave a case study based on real data supplied by a European label printer. The company ran an average of 550 jobs per month on five UV flexo, offset and letterpress machines. Sixty percent of the work involved runs of below 2,000 linear meters in length. Over fifty percent of the monthly production capacity of 1,210 hours was spent setting up presses.

The LBA calculated that 92 digital jobs were required each month for the business to break even, and identified 165 jobs that would be handled more efficiently by a digital press. It predicted a 365 euro (\$565) average production cost saving per job and an 8,643 euro (\$13,377) waste saving per month.

After taking into account investment costs in printing and finishing technology and site preparation, the LBA discovered that a positive cash flow could be achieved in seven months, and that the

company would see a return on investment in 16 months. By month 60, said the program, the company would see a 589 percent return on capital.

A flexible packaging version of the LBA is due to be launched in the coming months.

Panel session

Four HP Indigo customers took part in a panel session to discuss their experiences with digital technology: José Manuel Gil of Apesa; Fabio Butera of Aurofex in Italy; Cees Schouten of Dutch converter Geostick; and Steve Baker of UK-based Baker Labels.

All four companies cited an increase in short run work as the primary reason for moving into digital, while variable data was regarded as one of the main areas of opportunity that digital technology brings.

'For us, the biggest learning curve was the repro side,' admitted Steve Baker. 'The press was up and running very quickly and it was the best installation we've had from any press supplier. But after two years we are still learning about the full capabilities of the machine.'

Baker reported that 30 percent of the company's work now runs on its two digital presses, though one takes the bulk of the work as the second machine was only installed in recent months. 'That's running one shift, and up against three Nilpeter flexo machines and one letterpress – so it demonstrates the digital press's productivity.'

'They say that conventional presses take five years to make your money back,' he continued. 'With digital, the investment was repaid in two years, so price is not an issue.' ■



Visitor reaction

UK-based converter Piroto Labelling was one visiting company thinking of investing in digital technology. Managing director Leigh Mann is in the process of negotiating for two contracts that will give the company a business case for digital, but he admits he may move into digital anyway and look for jobs afterwards. 'The demo center is one of the most impressive things I have seen in the label industry,' he said. 'It demonstrates HP's commitment to this product's success. The event clarified a number of things for us: understanding the "click charge", for example, where HP believes this machine will work and why people are buying it.'

Frédéric Lagier, manager of French converter Europrocess, expressed concern at what he perceived as a lack of competition in the digital market. 'It is not normal to have one company so dominant,' he said. He cited 'a lack of alternatives to HP Indigo technology' as a reason for hesitation in entering digital printing, but admitted that it was most likely only a matter of time.

'The event has cleared up a lot of questions,' said Lagier. 'It was very interesting to talk to printers from other countries. I was very impressed with Apesa – it is a company with an open mind.'

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(L-r) The AS1000 Trojan parts washing system and the PC Series flexo plate cleaning system

Alphasonics opens house

UK ultrasonic cleaning equipment supplier Alphasonics launched two new products at a recent open house. **James Quirk** reports

Alphasonics recently welcomed over 60 delegates to its Liverpool, UK headquarters for a two-day open house event to mark the launch of two machines: the PC Series flexo plate cleaner and the AS1000 Trojan parts washing system.

Visitors came from throughout Europe and included representatives from the company's worldwide network of distributors, industry partners as well as existing and prospective clients.

'We decided to take advantage of a traditionally quiet time in the industry to mark the start of our countdown to Labelexpo Americas in Chicago by bringing our partners and clients together and letting them have a close look at the PC500 and the AS1000 systems in action,' said managing director David Jones. 'We wanted them to be as excited as we are about the new machines and were keen to hear their comments and feedback.'

PC Series flexo plate cleaning system

The design of the PC Series utilizes Alphasonics technology to ensure that expensive, high screen flexo plates can be microscopically cleaned without the risk of damage. The cleaning process involves zero contact with the plate's image area and is completely automated so the operator needs no specialist skills. The system can be specified with a tank width from 250 millimeters up to three meters and can clean up to eighty plates an hour.

The AS1000 Trojan parts washing system

The AS1000 Trojan uses low pH chemicals, making the cleaning process safer and allowing the wastewater to be cleaned and reused. The cleaning of the water is achieved using a process known as flocculation, which changes the molecular polarity of the ink pigment causing it to coagulate and fall out of suspension. The resulting doughy residue can be filtered out, compressed and disposed of economically. The clear water can be reused for further washing cycles which as

well as being environmentally friendly also saves the customer both time and money.

The new machines were well received during the open days: Neil Stephenson of Gallus Group UK commented, 'The PC Series plate washer will be a welcome addition to the industry. With margins becoming smaller the focus will always be on automation where possible. If that means a printer or helper can be doing something else while the plates are being cleaned then it should help with their efficiency.'

Larissa Eitner from Novum Graphics in Russia said of the PC Series: 'I think for larger narrow web and, of course, wide web printing houses, this is an interesting investment to consider, since it can save a lot of labor and plate cost by not damaging the plates as it is done so often at present.'

The Alphasonics AS1000 also drew considerable praise. Barry Derri of Flint Inks believed that the AS1000 was the first practical application he had seen that could be used to minimize hazardous waste and eliminate the environmental problem of printers washing ink residue down drains. 'As well as being compact, well thought out and fitting very well with the narrow web philosophy, the AS1000 is also a fast and effective parts washing system,' he said. 'The flocculation option is one of the best value added product options that a printer can offer to the ever more environmentally conscious supermarket chains. This really lets the printing house excel in its duty of care for environmental responsibility.'

Alphasonics MD David Jones was keen to acknowledge the significant contribution made to the development of the AS1000 by Milan Kramarik and his team from S+K Labels in the Czech Republic as well as that made by Panflex, the Alphasonics agent for the region. 'We appreciate the invaluable assistance both organizations gave us and we feel privileged to be able to work with such dedicated individuals,' he said.

The new systems will be displayed at Labelexpo Americas in Chicago in September. ■



Opening the new China coater l-r: Dagang Li, VP and general manager Roll Materials China; John Quinn, VP and general manager, Roll Materials Asia-Pacific; Dean Scarborough, president and CEO Avery Dennison

Avery Dennison invests in India and China

Avery Dennison has opened coating plants in quick succession in the booming markets of China and India. **Andy Thomas** joined Avery Dennison CEO Dean Scarborough on a tour of both sites

China and India are rapidly positioning themselves as global economic superpowers, with growth rates far outstripping the developed markets of Western Europe, the US and Japan. This in turn has meant phenomenal growth in the labels markets of both countries, driven by a newly affluent urban middle class and by global brands outsourcing production.

Avery Dennison has responded to these trends by investing in new coating capacity in both China and India. L&L recently accompanied president and CEO Dean Scarborough to the opening of both plants.

China

Avery Dennison's involvement in China began in 1930, when a young and adventurous R. Stanton Avery visited – and was enchanted by – the country and its people. Five years later he started the Avery Adhesive Products Company. In 1994 Avery Dennison opened its first office in mainland China, and a year later its first coating plant began production on an industrial estate in Kunshan, on the outskirts of Shanghai.

China is an important component of Avery Dennison's global operations. The company's four divisions in China employ some 14,000 people - more than 30 percent of its global workforce.

Avery Dennison's roll labels business in China employs 700 people. The company as a whole has 20 facilities throughout this vast country including



Dagang Li, VP and general manager Roll Materials China, Avery Dennison

plants at Guangzhou, Nansha, Panyu, Shanghai, Kunshan, Suzhou, Tianjin, Chengdu, Fuzhou, Qingdao, and Hong Kong. Avery Dennison is also the largest producer of pressure-sensitive label materials, tags and tickets for the retail apparel markets in China.

To meet the growth in demand for PS labelstock, Avery Dennison has been investing heavily in coating capacity, and in January commissioned a second, state-of-the-art coater at its plant in Guangzhou, South China, in an investment worth more than \$20 million.

The plant, located in Guangzhou's Eastern Economic & Technological Development District, was set up in 2000, with the first commercial product rolling off the line a year later. Certification to ISO90001 and ISO14001 followed in 2003.

Installing the new 100 meter-long emulsion coater and its associated roll handling and slitting equipment meant increasing the production area by 20 percent to 16,000 sq meters. Including storage areas and offices, the whole site covers some 33,000 square meters and employs 300 people. The workforce is expected to grow by 15 percent by the end of this year.

Phenomenal growth

In his speech commissioning the coater, Dean Scarborough said: 'we fully expect China to continue to build on its phenomenal economic growth record of the last 20 years, spurred by an unprecedented surge in its consumer market. The new coater will enable Avery Dennison to expand our partnerships with our local customers, provide them with industry leading products and technology and give them the edge they need to successfully compete in this dynamic market.'

According to John Quinn, vice president and general manager, Roll Materials Asia Pacific, this is 'largest and most productive' PS coating line in the Asia Pacific region. 'This new coater incorporates global best practices from all previous investments and provides us with the best available technology in the world,' said Quinn.

The plant will service China and the wider Asia-Pacific region and will take full advantage of Avery Dennison's recent investment in the Philip M. Neal Research Center in Kunshan. This is the first corporate research center Avery Dennison has built outside of the United States. Named after the company's fourth chief executive officer, it is dedicated to pioneering new research into material sciences, polymers, precision coating and printing



A lively Q&A at the Guangzhou plant Town Hall

"The quality control expectations of global brand localizing products in Asia and local brand owners are becoming much tougher and are equivalent to the highest standards in the world"

processes. 'We will use this facility and the outstanding team we have employed to localize some of our raw material components and develop new products to best meet the unique needs of our local Chinese and regional Asia Pacific customers,' says John Quinn.

Quinn points out that every manufacturing operation is driven by the demands and expectations of its customers: 'Chinese label printers are learning fast. In fact, the quality control expectations of global brands localizing products in Asia and local brand owners are becoming much tougher and are equivalent to the highest standards in the world.'

Avery Dennison is also implementing its Exact programs to assist local converters trying to maximize productivity on new press investments.

The new coater brings Avery Dennison's total investment in China to more than US\$265 million over the last 13 years and it should exceed US\$300 million by 2010. Other investments last year included new manufacturing facilities for its Retail Information Services Group and new capacity for its Specialty Tape business in Suzhou and Kunshan. In addition to these investments, Avery Dennison acquired the global label and tag maker, Paxar, which has facilities in Panyu and Hong Kong.

Town Hall

Before the formal opening of the new coater, Dean Scarborough made himself available for a Q&A session with the plant staff – what Avery Dennison refers to as its 'Town Hall' sessions.

This turned out to be a lively occasion.

Scarborough began by praising the staff for winning Avery Dennison's global 'division of the year' award for the fourth time. He pointed out that Avery Dennison is unusual among US corporations in employing local managers at its Chinese plants. Dagang Li, vice president and general manager for Roll Materials



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RUCO's new "3 in 1" system for label printing using combination printing machines is based on the new UV-curing UVFX flexo ink series as well as the 985UV/NV ink series for high-speed rotary screen printing. Printing lacquers of series 960UV for different application techniques ideally round off the system and enable high resistances and eye-catching advertising effects to be achieved.

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Dean Scarborough opening the Guangzhou coater

China, has been with Avery since it first started operating in China.

Scarborough stressed that Avery Dennison 'is adding real value to its customers in China and not simply competing on price'. An important educational asset is the company's Converting College, located in the same compound as the coating plant at Kunshan. Scarborough also announced a scholarship program for promising students in China.

'We can also use our experience from the US where our 6-Sigma experts have gone to customers to teach them to use our materials faster and better – and we get more business in return. Anybody can go to a customer and offer lower prices, but we need to make them more successful.'

In the free ranging Q&A session which followed, Scarborough was quizzed about Avery Dennison's investment plans in China and whether training in manufacturing techniques should be in the local language rather than English.

Scarborough confirmed the company's commitment to invest in China's PS sector, which is growing by up to 20 percent a year, and committed the company to more positive local action: 'We need to help you with more training and investment to progress your careers. We need to transfer management systems and culture from the US, and this training needs to be in the Chinese language.'

Interestingly, Dagang Li also stressed the need for the workforce to improve its knowledge of the English language: 'I did not know any English until I was 36, so it can be done!'



Raj Srinivasan and Dean Scarborough in front of the Pune coater



Good luck ceremony: Raj Srinivasan, MD Materials, India (L) and Dean Scarborough

"Anybody can go to a customer and offer lower prices, but we need to make them more successful"

Dean Scarborough stressed that Avery Dennison globally is acknowledging the importance of China – particularly with the Olympics approaching. 'In fact Avery Dennison co-sponsored a float in the Tournament of Roses New Year's Day Parade in Pasadena, California, celebrating the Beijing 2008 Olympics. The float included more than 100 Chinese performers.' The Tournament of Roses Parade is one of the largest parades in the world and is seen on television by hundreds of millions of viewers around the world.

Scarborough was asked what are the biggest challenges in running a global business and how he maintains work/life balance given all the travel he undertakes: 'I'm glad my wife is not here to answer that!' joked Scarborough. 'The truth is I work smarter and not harder. And I make sure I have good people around me. You can't make all the decisions in a company. I make sure I spend time with my family. I have two teenagers, so I do know how to text!'

Going forward, Scarborough stressed that China formed a central plank of Avery Dennison's global PS strategy, along with a continued concentration on development of new, thinner materials. 'We also want to grow and realize productivity synergies from the Paxar acquisition and integrate it with RIS so it feels more like a single organization. These investments will be financed by increasing cash generation from our office products business.'

Scarborough said that a significant growth area for Avery is RFID, which is expected to generate \$50M in revenue this year.

India

From the commissioning of the South China coater, LL flew with the Avery Dennison team to the opening ceremony for the new coating plant in Ranjangaon, near Pune in India.

By chance, the Indian prime minister was visiting China at the same time, emphasizing the increasingly close links between these two fast developing economies.

The new hot melt tandem coating line at Ranjangaon



represents an investment of over \$8M, and brings Avery Dennison Roll Materials Group's total investment in India to more than \$30M.

The Pune site covers more than 25 acres with plenty of room for expansion. The new coating line started up in July 2007 and is already a major contributor to Avery Dennison's PS sales in India. 'We are seeing more than 30 percent growth in India year on year,' noted Dean Scarborough. 'After being operational for less than six months, the new line is filling up, and at this rate of growth I think we will need a new plant next year.'

The new coater is a hot melt system and will primarily be producing paper substrates. But with the retail boom in India, demand for film constructions is now growing.

Avery Dennison now has two coating facilities in India, with the first established at Gurgaon in 1997. There is a network of sales and distribution centers in Delhi, Mumbai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Chennai and Kolkatta, with a Retail Information Services plant in Bangalore. The company now counts over 1,100 employees in India.

Dean Scarborough acknowledged that the first years were tough ones for Avery Dennison's pressure sensitive business in India. It only really 'caught fire' in the last 3-4 years and today has reached a 'critical mass', winning Avery's 2007 Leadership Excellence award for best global division with under \$100M turnover.

This difficult early period was recalled in a speech by Raj Srinivasan, managing director, Materials, India, who paid handsome tribute to India's pioneering label converters.

'The printers who founded the industry were uncertain as to how to proceed. Avery Dennison was among these pioneers and entered the market before the industry was ready. These were challenging and difficult times but you held on, and that gave us the courage to do what you needed us to do. Today's biggest facilities are as a result of your vision and putting your own money into what you believed in.'

Srinivasan said that today, the concerns of Indian label converters are closer to those of their US counterparts: 'investing to grow your businesses, worried about keeping up with technology and worried about the cost of materials. But



Avery Dennison's coating plant in Ranjangaon, near Pune, India

Indian converters are going straight to world class equipment, and our products are produced to world standards because label converters here demand that.'

Srinivasan sees great prospects for further growth: 'Now India will become a major sourcing point for the world, and PS is still such a small part of the overall decoration market.'

Pune Town Hall

In the 'Town Hall' Q&A, Pune staff were most anxious to know about Avery Dennison's future investment plans for India. 'Our Indian business is growing at more than 30 percent,' answered Dean Scarborough. 'In another ten years India will be generating \$600-800M. So we will continue to look at acquisitions and new DCs. We do not want to be too slow in building new capacity to gain market share in India.'

Scarborough told the assembled employees he sees very strong domestic growth propelling the PS business in India, along with a strong aptitude for new technology.

'India will bypass old technology and leap into the new. I already know of one CEO of a major Indian retail group



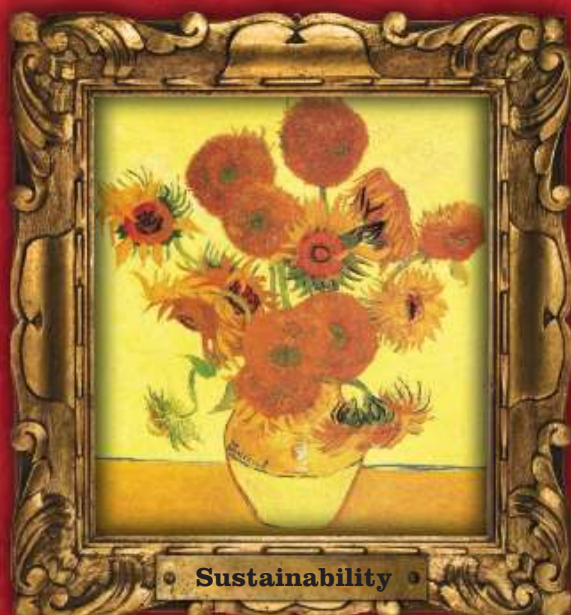
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Raj Srinivasan praises the courage of the converters who founded India's PS industry

interested in going directly to unit RFID tagging, for example.'

Scarborough pointed out that with GDP growth rates of 8.5 percent a year, India has moved from 12th to the fifth largest economy in the world, supported by massive investment in the retail infrastructure.

'Avery Dennison has been investing heavily throughout the Subcontinent, not just in India, but in Sri Lanka, Pakistan and Bangladesh,' said Scarborough. 'All the elements for sustained growth are here.' Scarborough said that Asia as a whole for Avery Dennison now represents about 15 percent of the company's business, compared to 2 percent ten years ago, and has grown at 20 percent a year for the last ten years.

In response to other questions, Scarborough gave staff a number of 'watchouts': 'Always remember that our customers are small entrepreneurs. Humility is important: our customers are spending their personal money and it's important to build the relationship and to listen.'

Scarborough acknowledged that competition will grow, with competitors selling standard products on price. 'So we must be better on quality and innovation, and help our customers grow by sharing education and training with them.' ■

Management speak

L&L had an opportunity during the China-India visits to take a close look at Dean Scarborough's management style – and discover his take on the current state of the labels industry.

It was clear from the 'Town Hall' debates that Scarborough wants and requires feedback from the troops on the ground, and also that the company maintains, wherever possible, a flexible management structure.

'We do have a flat management structure,' confirmed Scarborough. 'We have a weekly leadership team meeting and an expanded leadership group meeting twice a year. I spend 15-20 percent of my time on shareholders and board matters, with regular review processes and planning meetings every June for the year ahead. I try to get in front of customers, and that's why Labelexpo is a great show – in Brussels I can get in front of 50 customers.'

Above all, Scarborough believes that you have to build your business on strong ethical foundations – and make that a key part of the culture. 'In our case that is backed up by an internal ethics counsellor and hotline.'

Looking at the state of the wider industry, Scarborough notes the trend towards consolidation, but says it is too early yet to predict the consequences. 'The question is, will consolidation among converters, suppliers and buyers be a good thing or will it reduce overall efficiency? We have not noticed any



slackening of the pace of innovation, and there are still a lot of people trying to grow new PS applications in beer and beverage, for example.'

On the environment, Scarborough believes the industry must tackle the issue of liner waste. 'I believe release liners will either go away or become much thinner. Ten years ago we were actually recycling liner, but we stopped because it was uneconomic. Now the move to environmental awareness is being driven by retail giants like Walmart, which is today the biggest proponent of 'green' in terms of its store environments and packaging. All stores must be energy neutral and 50 percent of its products eco-friendly - but without adding to the cost. That should be seen as a source of innovation and opportunity.'

New products

News in brief

Mark Andy introduces Max service brand

Mark Andy, provider of narrow web printing equipment, has introduced 'Max', the new customer service and support initiative supporting Mark Andy, Comco and UVT product lines. A corporate-wide initiative, Max is dedicated to helping printers and converters get the most out of their equipment.

With a large team of technicians and parts specialists, Max is involved in all aspects of Mark Andy, Comco and UVT products – from design and engineering to installation and maintenance. Max personnel are equipped to service customers, providing them with the tools to most effectively produce the highest quality product for their end-user.

Anderson & Vreeland to distribute Polywest sleeves

Polywest Sleeve Systems has appointed Anderson & Vreeland, manufacturer and distributor of flexographic printing materials and equipment, as a distributor of Polywest sleeves in the United States.

A&V will sell Polywest sleeves and provide technical support utilizing its staff of technical sales representatives and nationwide distribution network. The company's focus on flexographic printing sets it apart from other suppliers.

Channeled Resources to open recycling center

Channeled Resources has announced the opening of its Northern California Recycling Service Center on March 17. The service center will begin with specific focus on providing solution for 'spent liner' (silicone coated release liner) and used hot stamp foil (metalized PET).



Evonik introduces radiation technology for Latin America

Evonik Goldschmidt Corporation has introduced two radiation technology systems for labeling applications for the Latin American market that are claimed to lower energy costs, reduce production space requirements and provide fewer restrictions on materials, including those that are temperature sensitive.

These RC silicone systems are acrylate modified silicones, specifically designed to cure (dry) with ultraviolet light (UV) or electron beam (EB) energy. TEGO RC Silicones are silicone functional polymers that are 100 percent oligomeric and solvent-free. The technology is commonly used in applications for bottle, cosmetic, hygiene and food labeling as well as industrial applications.

The two UV curable silicone release systems produce release coatings without the use of heat, but differ in their underlying chemistries. The first is based on silicone acrylate and cures via a free radical mechanism, while the other release system uses epoxy silicones and cures in the presence of a cationic photo catalyst. Standard medium pressure mercury UV lamps (arc lamps) or microwave induced UV lamps (as used in normal UV printing and coating processes) can be used to cure both types of silicones.

Additional technological advantages of

the cured silicones are that they can be used with heat sensitive films (PE, PP, PET, BOPP), they have absolute lay flat performance of paper backed substrates and there is a cost reduction because of the down-gauging of films. The cured silicones can operate at high line speeds and provide stable release value for most PSA's.

The free radical curing silicone acrylates do not require a catalyst for UV curing. The curing mechanism is very robust and unaffected by impurities of the substrates. This allows the use of any substrates for siliconizing, especially any sort of paper substrates. The free radical curing silicones provide an unlimited choice of silicone base papers (SCK, Glassine, CCK, and PEK).

They also can be used with alternative low cost papers (printing, label face, magazine papers and with all filmic substrates including colored films and PVC). The free radical curing silicones have an extremely fast curing cycle and there is no need for post-curing.

New tamper-evident films from Hanita Coatings

Hanita Coatings, a supplier of topcoated polyester label face, recently added two new films to its range of tamper-evident security face stock. These brightly colored films contain a covert message only



revealed when the label is peeled, leaving a residual 'void' footprint on both the applied surface and the lifted label. Even if the label is resealed, the color change void message can still be seen at a distance, clearly indicating illicit activity.

Available in vivid green or dark blue, these 50 micron polyester films are offered with a standard 'void' print, or with a personalized message, image or logo to enhance brand integrity. Films are topcoated to ensure optimal print adhesion by conventional print processes and thermal transfer, ideal for tough pharmaceutical, electronic and food packaging applications.

'Hanita Coatings provides over 40 different types of tamper-evident PET films to the label industry, ranging from transparent, non-visible void films to metalized holographs, with a full gamut of white, silver, colored, glossy or matte films in between,' explained Nir Dvir, Hanita's print substrates product manager. 'But these new two color films deliver an exceptionally clear, irreversible indication that the label has been tampered with.'

MacDermid launches two plate products

MacDermid Printing Solutions has introduced two new sheet photopolymer products – Digital MGC and MAX. Digital MGC is a digital plate designed for corrugated board print applications and MAX is an analog plate for use in most package printing applications.

Digital MGC is the digital version of

MGC, the analog sheet photopolymer for corrugated board applications that was introduced by MacDermid in February. Digital MGC is said to offer all the features of MGC, such as quick wash out and the ability to hold fine detail, plus the excellent resolution and imaging capability expected from a digital printing plate. Digital MGC is available in thicknesses from 0.112 in (2.84mm) to 0.250 in (6.35mm), and in format sizes up to 52 x 80 inches (1,321 x 2,032 mm).

MAX is the newest hard, analog sheet plate from MacDermid. MAX delivers low dot gain in process color printing with smooth ink lay down for bold solids. This 60 durometer plate has excellent drape characteristics, making it well suited for applications involving small diameter cylinders on narrow web presses. MAX is also an extremely low tack plate allowing for long, clean running print performance.

Raflatube leads new squeezable tube range

UPM Raflatac has launched a new range of labelstocks specifically designed for squeezable tubes used in segments like personal care and the food and pharmaceutical industries. The tube range combines technical functionality for repeated squeezing, shelf-appeal and cost-efficiency. Two adhesives for standard and demanding end-uses are available on three face materials that bring out the best in any design – a white and matt-transparent PE, and the new, ultra-clear Raflatube (pictured).

News in brief

Atlantic Zeiser expands activities in Malaysia

Atlantic Zeiser has expanded its sales and service activities in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The company's existing service department in Kuala Lumpur now develops into a fully registered sales and service office. To support this expansion, a new regional sales manager has been appointed.

Surfscan appoints European agency

Web inspection systems designer Surfscan Technologies has appointed WM-Systeme as its European agent to promote, sell and provide technical support to its range of 100 percent inspection systems. WM-Systeme has its headquarters in Euskirchen, Germany.

Record 2007 in Italy for AB Graphic and Franchini

AB Graphic International has announced record sales of its label converting equipment in Italy through its Milan-based distributor Franchini & C. SRL. The company reports the installation of 15 product lines throughout Italy comprised of five Vectra slitter/rewinders, seven Omega inspection rewinders and two Omega label converting lines.

Gidue Australia & New Zealand becomes Universal Print Partners

Gidue Australia & New Zealand has changed its name to Universal Print Partners. The Victoria-based company offers advice, technical and economic consultancy, on-site service and spare parts delivery. Despite the name change, the company has reiterated its continued confidence in the Gidue press range. In less than three years, the joint forces of UPP and Gidue have installed 10 machines in the region.

Corona and flame treatment

Dr Werner Eckert, Arcotec, discusses the different methods of improving adhesion on label substrate surfaces

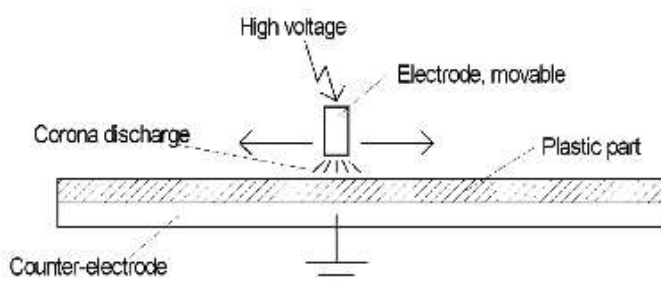
For decorating the surface with a paint, lacquer, glue or coating a good adhesion between surface and decorating fluid is necessary. Surface treatment is performed to increase the adhesion properties of surfaces. In principle two conditions have to be fulfilled: the decorating fluid should wet the surface and the fluid should be adapted to the substrate enabling a good chemical link.

Among other methods physical treatment methods like corona, plasma or flame treatment are wide-spread. The advantages of these compact treatment units are that they can easily be integrated in the production line providing good treatment results even at high working speeds and that they do not produce any significant waste. Which method is best-suited depends strongly on the kind of material and the form of the part to be treated.

Principle of Corona treatment

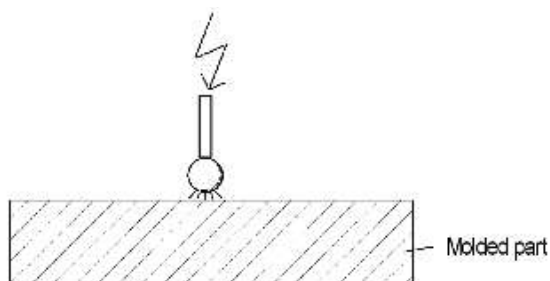
The working principle of a Corona treater is given in fig.1. A high voltage electrode is positioned in a small distance from the surface to be treated. The counter electrode which is contacted to electrical earth is covered by the substrate to be treated. Due to the high AC voltage (several kV, 25-50 kHz) a discharge plasma is created in the gap between the two electrodes. Activated molecules in the plasma like oxygen can be deposited into the surface of the substrate cracking the long-chain molecules of plastics. By that polar molecules are created on the surface of the plastic increasing the surface tension and wettability of the surface and enabling the ink, paint or glue molecules to a better link to the surface. For electrically conductive substrates the electrode or the counter electrode should be coated with a dielectric (e.g. silicone or ceramic).

Fig. 1: Principle of Corona treatment



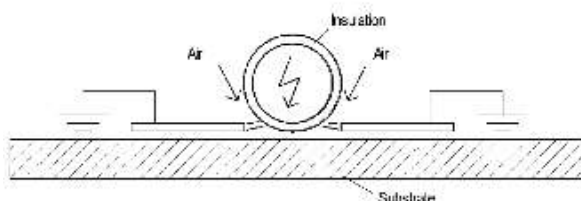
Especially for the treatment of grooves or small round parts of a surface an arrangement of a free discharge electrode (fig.2) might be used, if a very high voltage (more than 15 kV) is applied. For the treatment of substrates which cannot be covered by a counter electrode (e.g. molded parts) tangential arrangements might be used. In this case the plasma created between the electrodes is blown onto the surface by an air stream (fig.3).

Fig. 2: Principle of free discharge electrode



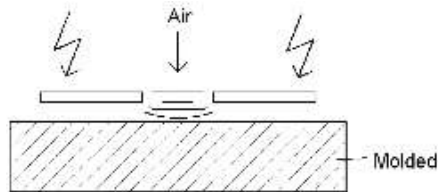
A different way of tangential Corona treatment is the atmospheric plasma or LF Corona. This process uses a system of two bare electrodes which a series of short circuit flash-overs is created in between. A spark plasma is created by blowing out the arcs of the flash-overs by a stream of air (fig.4). The spark plasma has several cm in length and looks like a flame.

Fig. 3: Principle of a tangential arrangement with insulated electrode



To improve energy density the arrangement of the electrodes has to be optimized. So heads are available with a small, cone shaped plasma 'spot'.

Fig.4: Atmospheric plasma process



Principle of flame treatment

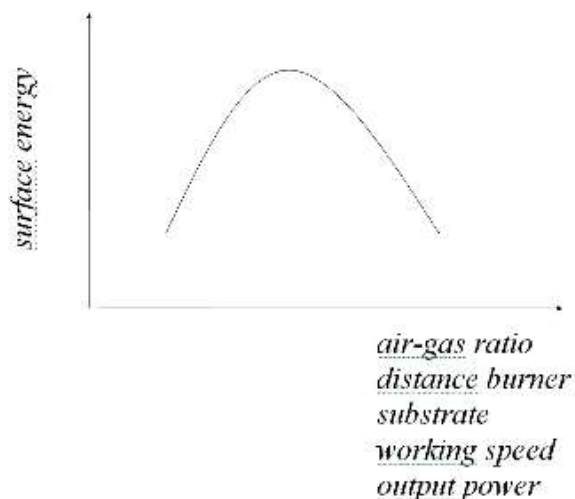
The treatment of surfaces is simple. You have to pass a flame over the surface of the part to be treated. Choosing appropriate parameters the surface energy is increased. Alternatively the part may be moved through the active part of the flame not being in motion. The latest one is often used for treatment of foils. The impact of the flame on the surface depends on the properties of the surface and the flame.

As mentioned above thermal activated atoms and molecules are created in the hot flame. These activated species can be deposited into the surface leading to an increase in surface tension. As they form polar bonds with the long-chain hydrocarbons of the plastics the increase in surface tension is mainly due to an increase in polar part of the surface tension.

Further effects influencing the surface are the cracking of the long-chain molecules in the surface. This improves the possibility of a chemical link between the decorating fluid and the surface. The activated molecules in the flame are preferentially deposited at the cracked surface molecules (oxidation).

An important influence on the treatment results is given by the burning parameters (fig.5). These are the mixing ratio, the distance between burner and surface, the heat power of the burner and the working speed. For a good treatment result it is often useful to have some excess oxygen in the exhaust gas which passes over the surface. This can be achieved by adjusting an air flow slightly higher than stoichiometric air/gas mixing ratio.

Fig.5: Schematic drawing showing the dependence of the surface tension from the flaming parameters

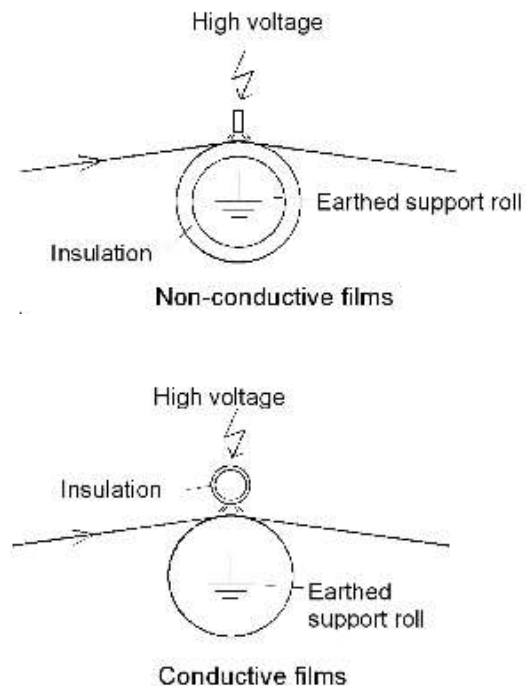


Treatment of films and foils

A typical Corona treater device for web material consists of a roller which is connected to electrical earth and an arrangement of electrodes around the roller at which the high voltage is applied. For single sided treatment there are three classical arrangements commonly used (fig.8, 9):

- Bare electrodes and insulated roller for non conductive substrates. This system is the most effective Corona discharge system. It should be used whenever it is clear that only non-conductive films are to be treated.
- Electrodes insulated by ceramic and a bare roller. To avoid short circuits the electrodes have to be insulated e.g. by putting a conductive tube into a ceramic tube. This arrangement also allows the treatment of non conductive substrates. So this device can be considered as a good 'all-round solution'.
- Insulated electrodes and insulated rollers for sensitive substrates e.g. foam. With this combination a very even and homogeneous discharge is created which helps to avoid perforation (pin-holes) due to disruptive discharges. But on the other hand it is the most ineffective treatment system and should only be used if absolutely necessary.

Fig.8: Principle of Corona treatment of films



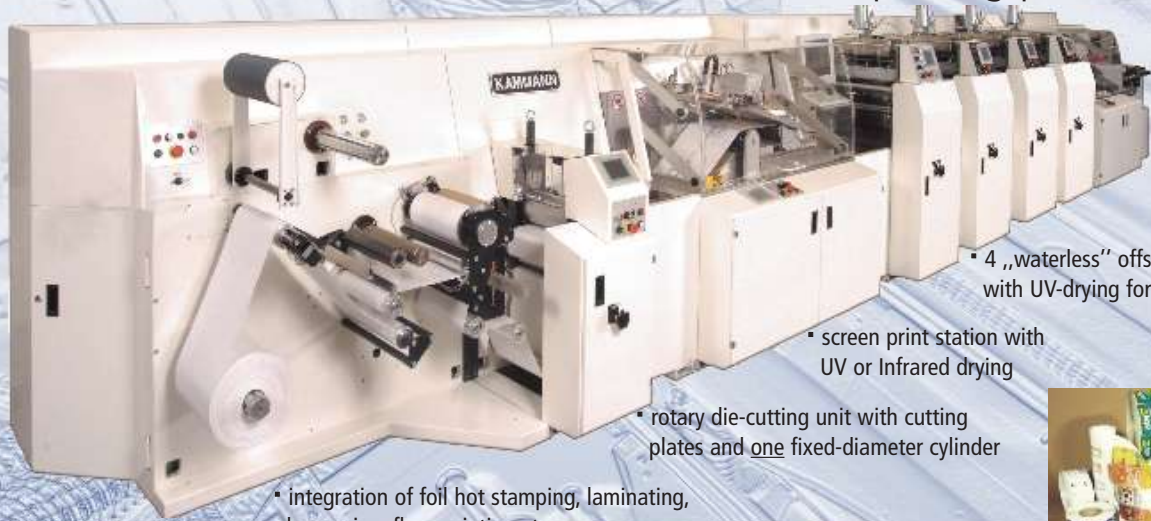
It should be mentioned that, in many cases, you could not completely prevent a slight treatment of the back side of the substrates with this arrangement which in some cases can cause problems.

There are a number of applications in which a double side treatment of the web is necessary. The best method to achieve this is an arrangement of two discharge units. Such a system works very well but takes a lot of space to fit it onto a machine and often needs two Corona generators and high voltage transformers for operation. An alternative for double sided treatment is the use of a contoured roller.

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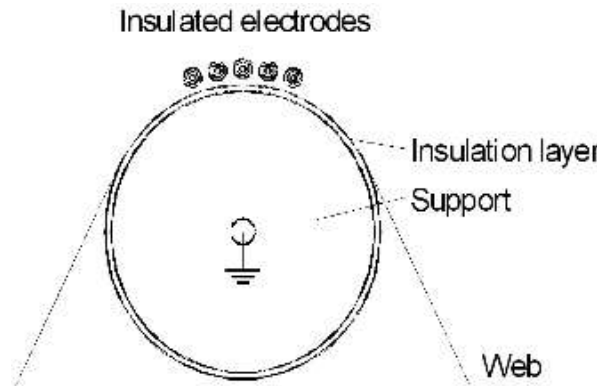
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Fig. 9: Principle of Corona treatment of sensitive films



For flame treatment of web material the typical arrangement consists of a burner which flames onto the web guided by a cooling roll. Besides web guiding near the flame the roller has the task to hold a defined distance between web and flame and to remove excess heat out of the system. For large web width the burners should be cooled, too. A housing built around the flame unit may be useful for removing the exhaust gas arising during the flaming.

Flame treatment of films and foils is used in a wide range of applications: printing, gluing, laminating, pasting, coating... Increasing surface tension and improving adhesion on polymer films as well as on metal foils, paperboards or polymer-paperboard composites are possible.

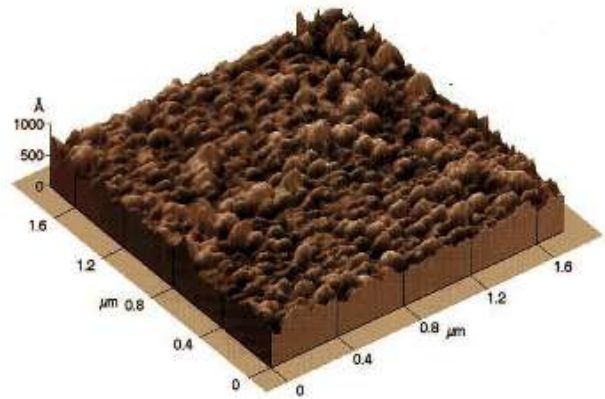
Flame treatment units can easily be integrated into a coating machine. Having large working width or high heat power, respectively, an exhauster is required. The flame should fire on a cooling drum. With this heat removal and a defined distance between flame and substrate is ensured.

Besides cooling drum and exhauster the flame treating unit consists of an air/gas controller and special burners. The controller together with a special mixing chamber provides the air/gas mixture by controlling the air flow and the gas flow. A rather exact and fast measure of flow rates can be carried out by mass flow meters. These devices measure the mass flow instead of the volumetric flow which is independent on temperature and gas pressure. Additionally a measurement of the oxygen content in the process air is feasible for monitoring reasons.

The burners are connected to the controller unit by special gas hoses or pipes. Due to a special design the burners create a homogeneous flame even at large working widths up to several meters in length. To avoid heating up burners should be cooled. On the other hand the temperature of the cooling water should not be too low to prevent the formation of condensed water. So it is advisable to use a cooling/heating unit for the burners and the cooling drum.

Originally the main application field of flame treatment has been (heavily structured) molded parts due to the large active zone of the flame enabling the treatment with varying distances between surface and burner. Corona treatment which

Fig.10: Picture of the surface topography of a silicate layer made by AFM



have been widely used for many years for treating even surfaces like foils and films present some disadvantages which make flame treatment interesting. Dependent on the special production process high working speeds together with large working widths could favor flame regarding costs for acquisition and operation. The flame always treats one side of the films while Corona treatment influences both sides of the film. Back side treatment often is not desired because of higher probabilities of the formation of wrinkles. Working with very thin films there are risks of perforation of the film due to inhomogeneous disruptive discharges. If long time stability of the treatment is required flame treatment often provides better results.

For optimal treatment results the flaming parameters should be set carefully. In general the working speed is given due to the following coating process and the allowed speed of the rewinding machine. The appropriate other flame parameters heat power, air/gas mixture, distance and type of burner should be found out by trials. Doing like this heat power and gas consumption could be reduced drastically. Further taking into account that the working speed of rewinding machine is increased step by step to maximum speed within several minutes a power regulation with speed control can save energy as well as waste material (not treated material during the start period of the machine).

Silicoating

Further improvements on adhesion may be achieved by the new silicoating technique. A silane precursor is mixed into the flame. The silane burns to silicate which is deposited on the surface forming a thin invisible silicate layer on the surface to be treated. The amorphous structured layers have a thickness of about 20 nm. By the silicate layer the surface tension and the adhesion properties are improved. Specific requirements on adhesion can be fulfilled such as stability against moisture, protection against corrosion, diffusion barrier. Long time stability of the surface activation is improved.

Like conventional flaming the silane containing flame has been passed over the surface to be treated within the active region of the flame. Preliminary investigations of the treatment effect

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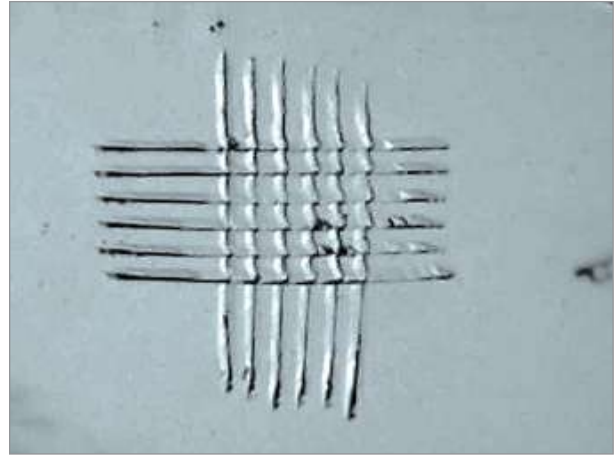
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Picture of the surface after tearing off the bond



Adhesion "grid" test after silicoating and painting



can be done by measuring the increase in surface tension with the test inks. Adhesion tests give more precise results.

The silicoating method is used for dental applications since more than ten years. Up to now only small parts have been coated. Latest developments in burner technology and silane dosages made it possible to expand the applications to higher working width and working speeds. Systems with working widths up to one meter and more are available.

The silicoating flame treating device consists of a conventional flame treating system supplemented with a silane dosage. The silane dosage which evaporates the silane fluid is connected to the flame treater via a pipe. Typically the silane consumption is below 1 percent of the gas consumption. Though, in principle, it is possible to use standard burners, special silane burners with special air/gas flow characteristic should be used to reduce the probability of burner contamination. Flame color of the cover flame is changed from dark blue to slightly red color which can be used for an optical proof of the presence of silane in the flame.

Applications of the silicoating method is conceivable in the area of film and foil treatment. Metal foils like copper, aluminum or steel could be coated for protection against corrosion as well as for improving adhesion. In case of copper the silicoated copper surface is protected against oxidation which could be demonstrated easily by flaming different parts of the surface with and without silane. The silicoated parts do not change color at temperatures around 300 deg C while the non-silicoated parts change color to black indicating an oxidation of the surface. This effect can also be used for proofing the silicoating.

Comparison between Corona and flame

Now the question arises: which method is best suitable for a given substrate? This question cannot be answered commonly. It strongly depends not only on the kind of substrate but also on

the conditions of production (application, requirement on adhesion, substrate handling, speed of the production line and so on). Therefore the best method should be determined by trials in the application technology.

From our experience we could say that the domain of Corona treatments are substrate with flat surfaces like films, foils, or thin sheets where a simple configuration of electrode and counterelectrode is possible. Also rotationally symmetrical parts like cups and tubes can be treated by Corona treatment.

Due to its larger working depth flame treatment is used for strongly structured molded parts. For large web widths and web speed flame treatment could be an alternative to Corona treatment concerning treatment effects as well as economical aspects. If only one-side treatment is required, flame treatment should be applied. Furthermore flame treatment avoids the formation of 'pin-holes' which may occur during Corona treatment owing to disruptive discharges. Often flame treated substrates show a better long-term behavior of the treatment

Heat sensitive substrates, small parts or the treatment of small areas (e.g. stripes on the surface) may be favored by the LF-Corona systems.

Conclusion

Corona- and flame treatments are well-established methods for increasing surface tension and adhesion properties of molded plastics as well as films, foils and paperboards. Further developments in technique and a better understanding of the processes ensure product quality and demands in the future. The question which method is best suited for a given adhesion problem cannot be answered commonly. It has to be found out by trials as the composition of the base substrate e.g. by additives in case of plastics. Silane precursors dosed into the flame may lead to further improvements of adhesion. In principle other precursors are conceivable creating layers with custom-designed properties. ■

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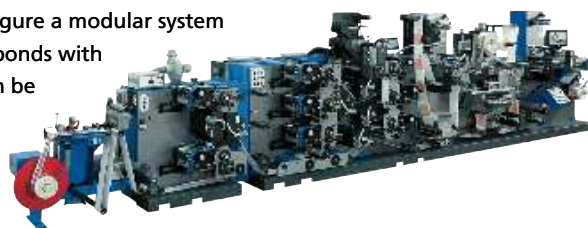
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CTP without chemicals

With the demand for label converters to show a more 'environment-friendly' face, two German offset printers have switched to Presstek's chemistry-free CTP solutions, as **Andy Thomas** reports

End users are increasingly demanding that printers demonstrate a reduced environmental footprint. One area where this can be achieved is in the platemaking department, by reducing or eliminating the use of chemicals at the plate processing stage.

This has opened up opportunities for Presstek's chemistry-free offset CTP solutions, and *L&L* asked two label printers in Germany about their experiences in using the system.

Hans W. Bracht, managing director of Digikett Formular-Etikettendruck und Laminiertechnik GmbH in Glücksburg, was the first label converter in Schleswig-Holstein to invest in the chemistry-free Presstek CTP system.

The advantages seen by Bracht cover both quality issues and the increasing requirement to be seen acting with concern for the environment: 'I never cease to be amazed at how clean, easy and convenient our Presstek Dimension CTP system and Anthem Pro plates have

proved to be. Such an increase in quality would never have been possible previously. Also, whenever an environmental audit is carried out, we always come out looking good. As Presstek does not use chemicals when making plates, our plant has the sweet smell of a rose.'

The plates require no prior or subsequent baking or gumming and offers consistency over run lengths up to 100,000 impressions, according to Bracht.

Established in 1997, the print shop now has 15 employees and mainly produces printed materials and labels to be used on laser printers within the office environment. This portfolio includes integrated labels, customer service cards and self-adhesive labels. The most important products are the 'Digiketten', a smart solution combining forms and labels for major mail order companies and the DiCard, a plastic customer loyalty card incorporated in a letter, ready for

personalization by laser printing. This product is generally used by insurance companies for their advertising brochures.

Digikett has benefited from faster platemaking times, a marked decrease in paper waste and a less complicated makeready – a considerable advantage



Smart label constructions from Faubel



Imaging the Anthem Pro plates on Presstek's Dimension CTP imager

Workflow solutions

A new venture for Presstek is the development, with partner Beta Service GmbH, of a digital workflow solution developed specially for label printing. Faubel is a reference site and has been closely involved in the development of the PrintPilot modular workflow system over the last year.

At Faubel, PrintPilot is hooked into the company's administrative and costing programs. Basic information for any new order – for example order number and customer ID – is made available in digital format to the prepress department. This generates an HTML-based job ticket, cutting down on manual inputting and reducing the introduction of errors.

The prepress department adds other order-related information, such as RIP control and special screen data, screen ruling and screen angle. The RIPped file can be viewed as a composite file or as individual separations, allowing the operator to control colors, overprint modes, trapping and other print parameters. Prior to CTP imaging, a layout proof can be created on a high-resolution inkjet printer. The final file is then ready for imaging using the Presstek CTP system. The job ticket is always passed on with each job.

given the expensive consumables required for UV offset printing. Bracht also points out that the system can adjust to up to six different print formats. 'We are able to image significantly more plates than before,' explains Bracht. 'Since the plates cost less, additional proofs are not a problem. If the customer wishes to exchange the plate after a given number of prints, Digikett is willing to do so.'

Faubel

Faubel GmbH, based in Melsungen near Kassel, invested in its first Presstek Dimension450 Excel CTP platesetter two years ago. 'The Presstek CTP platesetter was a major step for us,' reports managing director Reinhard Kuge. 'It enabled us to produce plates for label printing not only faster and more cost-efficiently, but also in a more eco-friendly way. Our customers in the pharmaceuticals industry appreciate this very much.'

A second system is on order to cope with a big increase in print volumes, and will allow Faubel to move from single to double-shift operation.

Faubel is a medium-sized label converting operation with 118 employees, and runs a diverse range of machinery including



sheetfed, book printing and offset and flexo web presses. It converts mainly adhesive roll labels, but also a range of patented label systems developed in-house. These include the Faubel Compact Label, a packaging leaflet and a label-in-one that can carry up to 80 wrinkle-free sides of product and client information. Another special product is the '1 + 1 = 3' Sandwich Label, which can be printed on the front and back as well as on the adhesive surface.

Faubel uses a lot of special colors that would be difficult to reproduce with flexographic printing, and this is why the company intends to further expand the offset side of the business – including the addition of digital prepress workflows in the future.

Pre-press manager Jens Pöppe uses the Dimension CTP platesetter for making up to seven different plate formats in the shortest possible time. 'No other CTP platesetter can perform to this level. As the system is operated entirely without chemicals or any other processing equipment, once the printing form has been set up, it takes us just a few minutes to fit the plate in the printing machine. Last minute changes are not a problem for us.'

Presstek's daylight-safe Anthem Pro ablative thermal plate just need to be washed with water after imaging, and work with the full range of inks and fountain solutions used at Faubel. Jens Pöppe says the plates show no signs of quality deterioration when stored for long periods of time or exposed to sunlight.

The maximum resolution of the Excel CTP imager is 2540 dpi with a maximum line screen of 200 lpi and imaging speed up to 17 plates an hour. The Anthem Pro plates will hold a 2-98 percent dot at 200 lpi. ■

Press perspective

Gallus was one of the first press manufacturers to trial Presstek CTP plates, and Christoph Schönenberger, Gallus' process technology manager, says that Anthem Pro plates are being used on the company's TCS 250 and RCS 330 presses with equal success. 'One of the advantages for the press manufacturer is the very wide ink/water latitude of the chemistry-free Anthem Pro plate, allowing the correct ink/water balance to be easily obtained.'

Adds Schönenberger: 'We are happy the plate is daylight-safe, requires no gumming and is easily cleaned with most cleaning agents. With respect to UV compatibility, the plate is highly resistant to UV light, UV inks and UV detergents.'

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The fine art of sheeted labels

Sheetfed label printers may face many business challenges, but their production methods are arguably the finest available, as **Barry Hunt** reports

Wet glue labeling has been hit hard from several directions. The universal switch from glass to plastic bottles has increased the demand for film or paper wrap-around labels and film sleeves. Many beers and other drinks are now sold in direct-printed cans rather than glass bottles, while self-adhesive wine and spirit labels have increased in volume. Nevertheless, wet glue labeling still accounts for roughly one third of total output in most established markets. Quality standards are universally high, from labeling commodity products to premium beverages. Furthermore, wet glue labeling still offers end-users the lowest total labeling costs outside direct printing, using a large installed base of fast-running bottling and canning lines.

As widely known, most wet glue labels are produced on sheetfed offset presses with off-line finishing. Really long runs may be printed on gravure or web offset presses. What many roll-fed label converters may not appreciate is just how sophisticated sheetfed production has become. In most cases it involves standard or oversized B1 and B2 formats: roughly 105 x 72cm (41 inches) and 70 x 50cm (28 inches) respectively. Unlike the crowded narrow web scene, just four manufacturers account for the majority of specialized label presses: Heidelberg, MAN Roland, Komori and KBA. Most of

them are supplied with six color units, one or more varnish coaters and extended multiple pile deliveries. Modern in-line coating units reflect advances in UV flexo, using fine-cell anilox rollers and chambered doctor blades. Some presses include precoaters to lay down metallic or opaque white effects, while single or double downstream flexo towers can apply solid or spot varnishes with matte or gloss finishes, including tactile effects. In-line processes now include the latest cold foiling and foil embossing technology, with in-line die cutting having recently emerged as a further option.

Label presses come with combinations of hot-air and IR dryers, as well as UV curing units, arranged in various inter-unit and end-of-press combinations. Typical UV lamps have an output of 200 W/cm, but as on roll-fed presses more systems offer 160 W/cm lamps and reflectors with computer-generated profiles. The latest electronic power units have also helped raise overall curing efficiencies and contributed to longer lamp life. A few label printers who are regularly printing film sheets have installed inert gas UV systems, mainly from IST Metz or Eltosch. The use of nitrogen to replace ambient air and oxygen enhances free radical curing levels using fewer lamps. The process requires special inks and



Komori LSX-629 with in-line coater, foiler and embosser

“Wet glue labeling still accounts for roughly one third of total output in most established markets”

varnishes, but with fewer photoinitiators they allow users to reduce UV energy output levels.

Inert systems are intended for printing heat sensitive materials, while their low odor levels make them ideal for all forms of food labels and packaging. A more general indication of advances in this field comes from the joint initiative by Heidelberg, MAN Roland and KBA to cooperate with UV system suppliers and set agreed standards for certifying and validating equipment and materials.

Having access to the latest offset pre-press systems and digitized workflows is something that wet glue label printers take for granted. Most now use computer-to-plate systems, producing comparatively inexpensive plates in a matter of minutes. The nature of medium-format platemaking also gives another often under-considered benefit: the flexibility to mix different label formats and even separate jobs on the same sheet. Improved color management techniques have made composite production involving different spot colors even easier. For example, the FMsix system from PrinTech Systems BV exploits FM screening's ability to reduce the required number of given spot colors. FMsix is said to print any motif in any of the CMYK colors, plus two of the three FM six spot colors, using standard or UV-curable inks supplied by Sun Chemical.

Press technology

Heidelberg accounts for the majority of sheetfed label presses sold around the world, based on the long-established CD 74 and CD120 models. Therefore the recent announcement that John Watson & Co in Glasgow had installed the world's longest B2-format press was a timely development. The firm produces wet glue labels, tube and box wraps for the Scotch whisky market. They represent 90 per cent of its business. Its latest CD74 press has nine color units, as well as a flexo precoater with UV unit and hot-air dryer, a post-print double coater with two interdeck UV units and dryers, and an extended delivery fitted with more of IST's UV lamps. JWC also plans to add a FoilStar cold foiling



HiPrint in-line coater on a Roland 700

option between the sixth and seventh print units.

The new press is part of a \$4 million investment plan that includes a six-color CD 74 installed last September and a third Gietz embossing machine. The precoater produces metallic, white or pearlescent effects that are applied to stock before printing. Besides the aesthetic benefits, precoating reduces the cost of buying in specialist papers and boards, as well as creating the potential for new substrates. In JWC's case, laying down an opaque white coat also serves to both improve the legibility of barcodes on all packaging and provide a base for color control bars. Robert McLachlan, joint managing director, says the whisky label market has changed in recent years: 'Higher sales of premium Scotch whisky blends and single malts, especially in the fast-developing Asian markets like India, has meant more money is being spent on promotional packaging, rather than selling solely by name. For us it means adding more value,

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Heidelberg CD102 at IST's training center

such as extra foil blocking and embossing, and more colors with specific varnishes.'

As for MAN Roland, its label customers tend to buy variants of the B2 format Roland 700, including the new HiPrint model, or the smaller Roland 500. In-line modules include a cold foil unit for the 700, and single or double UV flexo coating units for both models. Some users buy their materials in rolls and sheet them on an off-line or in-line sheeter. The latest Mabeg model has features that minimize surface scuffing, reduce electrostatic problems in the feeder and pretreat surfaces to improve ink adhesion. Following a philosophy of aiming to reduce make-ready times between jobs as a top priority, MAN Roland offers variations of its PPL and APL automatic plate changing systems. Another option is QuickChange Surface, a special treatment for the ink fountain designed to reduce total wash-ups times by up to the half that required by conventional ink fountains.

Packaging and label printing accounts for around 15 per cent of Komori's sheetfed sales in Europe. At drupa it launches the six-color SX629 with optional in-line cold foiling and embossing to augment UV flexo coating. It joins the B2 format LS29 series, but the sheet size of 610 x 750mm is 12.5 percent larger to further enhance the composite planning of labels and small cartons. The top printing speed without foiling and embossing is 16,000 sph. New features include a brushless feeder, improved self-diagnostics and KHS-AI Smart Sequence, which automatically controls operations from the end of one job to the start of another. Komori recently developed

"Having access to the latest offset pre-press systems and digitized workflows is something that wet glue label printers take for granted. Most now use computer-to-plate systems, producing comparatively inexpensive plates in a matter of minutes"

an in-line magnetic die cutting system for the SX series.

KBA's main offering for printers of labels and cartons is the six-color Rapida 105 and Rapida 105 Universal in B1 format and with extended deliveries. Both offer automatic plate changing and a unique type of shaftless feeder that uses no timing gears, so contributing to an above-the-norm top speed of 18,000sph. The UV flexo coating towers offer quick action clamps for changing varnish plates.

Paper and film materials

Many different ranges of coated, uncoated and metalized label papers from 60 to 400 gsm are available for offset printing, including distinctive linen and brush texture surfaces that characterize the finest labels. Some metalized grades give mirror-like finishes that are printable with metallic inks. Hot-foil embossing is synonymous with wet glue labeling, but cold foiling, or 'die-less' foiling based on printable adhesives is a growing alternative.

Cut-and-stack, spot patch, wrap-arounds and in-mold labels have been around for years as film-based alternatives to paper labels. Beverages ranging from premium beers to carbonated drinks make up the majority of applications, with packaging grades of oriented polypropylene (OPP) as the main material. Besides offering many distinctive decorative effects, they are also said to reduce the waste and downtime associated with curled or wet paper labels and require less glue for adhesion. They also resist moisture while combining scuff-free durability with good printability.

ExxonMobil with its Label-Lyte grades, AET Films and the Treofan Group dominate the market for multi-ply OPP films. They come with various transparent, opaque white and metalized surfaces, but have not emulated the widespread success of PSA filmics. Richard Brittan, a Treofan product manager, acknowledges the niche market status of spot patch labels for example, but states they offer label



John Watson & Co-joint MDs Allan McDonnell (R) and Robert McLachlan (L) with the world's longest B2 press

buyers several distinctive advantages: 'The clear grades offer the popular no-label look at roughly one half the price of self-adhesive filmics. The use of water-based cold glues, rather than hot melt types, means end-users can apply spot patch labels on conventional bottling lines. The thickness of spot patch films has also reduced from 80 to 70 microns, even though they are made with up to five cavitated layers.'

OPP films are supplied in rolls direct from the manufacturers. As the MAN Roland reference mentioned, some sheetfed printers are already using high-speed, multi-substrate sheeters. This allows them to buy materials more economically in rolls direct from the mills, rather than as reams of sheets; often purchased through a paper merchant. Of course, the success of this method depends upon the sheeter delivering perfectly flat, clean-cut sheets into the feeder assembly with no risk of curling, especially when printing premium labels at high press speeds. This becomes even more critical when printing plastic films or metalized foils. Fortunately, the latest high-speed gripper assemblies and sheet handling techniques – plus a liberal use of anti-static bars – have it more of a trouble-free operation. Press manufacturers also recommend fitting a corona treater after the delivery unit to boost surface dyne levels and improve ink adhesion.

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Roland 700 + foiler

The rise of JDF

The adoption of standardized digital workflows – first as CIP3 and now CIP4 – characterizes offset's position as the premier process for commercial and packaging printing. One aim has been to optimize quality standards within managed color parameters and introduce other production benefits. It centers on JDF (Job Definition Format) files to transfer job data automatically into the production process. Feedback on a job's status and progress can also be sent to a firm's management information system (MIS) via JMF messages (Job Messaging Format). Furthermore, operators can import job data during the set-up process via an on-line MIS link to the pressroom. The same interface also takes presetting data from the pre-press system, as well as repeat job machine settings, for input into the control console. Real-time press and operating data is returned to the MIS as a JMF message for actual costings to give a precise evaluation of every print job.

The major press manufacturers offer variants on CIP4 workflows that integrate with JDF-based pre-press and post-press applications, as well as third-party MIS processes. Heidelberg offers the Prinect portfolio, which includes MIS Prinance for connecting production via JDF/JMF. MAN Roland's Printnet, KBA's Opera and Komori's DoNet are all open architecture systems that allowing users to link their presses with MIS, pre-press, post-press and other peripheral equipment according to standardized CIP4/JDF specifications.

“Sheetfed printing of wet glue labels looks like remaining a strong force in the overall labeling scene for many years to come”

As can be seen, sheetfed label printers derive many benefits from the latest technical developments. The growth in in-line processes is especially important since it meets the growing demand for added value decorative effects, while boosting overall productivity on fast-running presses. This still leaves the various off-line finishing processes of guillotining, punching and counting labels batches prior to banding and wrapping ready for the hoppers or magazines of end-users' packaging lines. Although highly automated, it sounds a long way from the economies of roll-fed label production with its various in-line processes. Nevertheless, the bottom line is that despite shifting changes in demand and packaging methods, sheetfed printing of wet glue labels looks like remaining a strong force in the overall labeling scene for many years to come. ■

Labels & Labeling Trivia

The trivia section is a way for you, our readers, to reinforce your knowledge of the label printing industry. Train, plane or automobile – take your copy of *L&L* with you. Topics will vary from smart labels and emerging market trends, to environmental issues and general market statistics. Our introductory subject spotlights some of this year's highlights in the industry, including drupa 2008 and the anniversary of FINAT. Stay tuned for prizes in the future. **Enjoy!**

- At drupa, the printing industry's 'Olympics', Germany wins the 'gold medal' for exhibition floor space, taking up 745,100 sq.ft. Italy has taken the 'silver medal' with 148,200 sq.ft. Which country has earned the bronze medal?
 - The Netherlands 120,500 sq.ft.
 - India 100,500 sq.ft.
 - Switzerland 142,600 sq.ft.
 - United States 142,600 sq.ft.
- FINAT was first founded fifty years ago in Paris, France. What year did the association move its headquarters to its present location in The Hague, The Netherlands?
 - 1962
 - 1969
 - 1978
 - 1982
- For fifty years, Dusseldorf has been the host city for Drupa. The city's football team Fortuna Düsseldorf can trace its beginnings all the way back to the mid-1800s. In what year did Fortuna win its first German championship?
 - 1898
 - 1914
 - 1933
 - 1937
- Düsseldorf is known for what regional drink?
 - Weissbier
 - Schwartzbier
 - Jungbier
 - Altbier
- FINAT was established for numerous reasons, but its chief purpose is to:
 - promote the interest of the self-adhesive label industry
 - create an open line of communication amongst industry leaders
 - support its worldwide membership of label converters and suppliers
 - analyze industry movement to the betterment of its members
- There are fifteen members on the FINAT board of directors, representing nine countries. Three countries have two or more members on the board. Which one does not?
 - Netherlands
 - Germany
 - United Kingdom
 - Italy
- 'In our age of internet and digital media, the competitiveness of print is a recurrent theme of discussion. But the facts show print to be as solid as ever. Today more paper, cardboard, foil and other materials are printed than ever before. The annual global total is almost 500 million tonnes.' Who said this?
 - drupa president Albrecht Bolza-Schünemann
 - FINAT president Jan Frederik Vink
 - TLMI president John Hickey
 - Labels & Labeling* founder Mike Fairley
- 2008 marks a significant anniversary for a number of worldwide label printing industry trade associations. Which one is NOT celebrating a milestone this year?
 - FINAT 50th
 - TLMI 75th
 - LATMA 25th
 - FTA 50th

Answers: 1)d 2)b 3)c 4)d 5)a 6)b 7)a 8)c

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The a-z of drupa

L&L previews some of the new technologies and innovations that will be on display at drupa 2008 – the print industry's largest exhibition

With over 1,800 exhibitors spread across an exhibition area of more than 170,000 square meters, 400,000 visitors expected and some 3,500 journalists from around the world, drupa 2008, to be staged from 29 May to 11 June, will be bigger than ever before.

'What the Olympic Games mean to sportsmen and women is what drupa means to the print media industry,' said Werner M. Dornscheidt, president and CEO of Messe Düsseldorf, in his address at a pre-drupa press conference.

In today's age of internet and digital media, print's longevity and competitiveness is a recurrent theme of discussion. The facts, however, show that the industry is flourishing.

"What the Olympic Games mean to sportsmen and women is what drupa means to the print media industry"

'Today more paper, cardboard, foil and other materials are printed than ever before. The annual global total is almost 500 million tonnes,' said Albrecht Bolza-Schünemann, president of drupa and president of Koenig & Bauer AG.

At drupa 2008, the international supplier industry will present an abundance of innovations, integrated solutions and market-ready refinements that could give printed products the edge in competition between the media. 'The feel, emotional power and high quality of printed products provide a substantial competitive advantage over electronic media, for example, at the point of sale, in brand communications, personalized mailings and large-format advertising,' added Bolza-Schünemann.

The event will see a pick-up in commitment by suppliers of digital solutions – a reflection of current technological developments. Compared to drupa 2004, this thematic area has expanded by about 10,000 square meters of exhibition space. The two new halls, 8a and 8b, to the north of the fairgrounds, will play a central role in this segment. Together with halls 5 and 9, this will be the stage primarily for exhibitors with a focus on this product category (e.g. Agfa-Gevaert, Canon, Eastman Kodak, Epson, Fujifilm, Hewlett-Packard, Konica Minolta, Ricoh Company, Xerox Corporation).

Other drupa 2008 pillars:

- Halls 1 and 2: Heidelberger Druckmaschinen AG, Polar-Mohr
- Halls 3 and 4: printing, materials, services (e.g. Presstek Europe Ltd, Sakurai Graphic Systems Co.)
- Hall 6: PrintCity with MAN Roland, its network partners and other international exhibitors active in print finishing
- Halls 10 to 12: paper converting, packaging production (e.g. Bobst S.A.)
- Halls 12 to 14: bookbinding, print finishing (e.g. Horizon International Inc., Müller Martini)
- Halls 15 to 17: printing machinery, bookbinding and finishing (e.g. Cerrutti Officine, Ferag AG, Goss International, Koenig & Bauer AG, Kolbus GmbH & Co. KG, Komori International, Mitsubishi Heavy Industries, Ryobi, Windmüller & Hölscher KG)
- Hall 12: used machinery market with over 70 dealers

Visitors to drupa 2008 can look forward to seminars, workshops, talks, individual tours of the trade fair as well as special presentations such as the 'drupa innovation parc presented by HP' and 'drupacube' add up to unparalleled knowledge transfer for international experts.

drupa initiative tailored to print buyers

With the drupacube, drupa 2008 will for the first time provide a special event aimed at the print buyer target group. As will be the case in the 19 halls, here too the spotlight will be on printed products – with one key difference. At the event inside the pavilion, the focus will be squarely on marketing-driven applications for printed products. The technology that makes this possible will play a subsidiary role. This shift in perspective offers the advantage that heads of marketing and publishing directors, production managers, account executives and creative directors will be able to take in print's potential in the marketing mix in a compact format.

'With this tool, we intend to attract print buyers to drupa 2008 in greater numbers. Undoubtedly, many of the exhibitors also have products that cater to this target group. But at a technology fair of drupa's kind, this type of information is often in danger of being drowned out,' said Manuel Mataré, drupa project director. 'The drupacube acts as a portal for print buyers by serving up concise infotainment on all things print communications and guiding them to exhibitors' stands.'

The diversity of the print buyer target group will be matched by the multifaceted offerings in the drupacube. Symposia and workshops will tackle the most varied topics, with each day dedicated to a specific area. As an example, one day will be given over to newspapers and/or magazines, others to direct marketing, catalogues and corporate communications. Also in the pipeline are cross-sectoral symposia, addressing for instance, brand protection, green printing and the relationship between the arts and print.

'We plan to engage people in the topics they have to deal with every day,' explained Mataré. To ensure this, the relevant associations have been called on to assist with the planning and design and the following associations have already committed to the project: the German Direct Marketing Association – (DDV), Forum Corporate Publishing (FCP) and the Media Production Association (f:mp). Newspaper, magazine and free sheet publishers have also given their support to the concept.

One of the chief attractions of the drupacube will be its location off the actual fairgrounds but in their immediate vicinity – that is, in front of the Congress Centre South, on the banks of the Rhine. The site of the drupacube sets it apart, making it clear that it serves as a separate access point to the trade fair for a specific target group.

With its 160 exhibitors spread across some 3,000 square meters, the 'drupa innovation parc presented by HP' in Hall 7.0 promises to be the hotspot for new software technologies which open the



drupa 2008 at a glance

Dates: May 29-June 11, 2008

Show hours: 10am-6pm, Monday-Friday; 10am-5pm, Saturday-Sunday

Place: Dusseldorf Fairgrounds, Dusseldorf, Germany

Exhibitors: 1,800 expected

Attendees: 400,000 expected

Exhibit halls: 19

Size: 1.8 million square feet

door on online interfaces and production opportunities for the printing industry. 'Following the highly successful debut at the last drupa, we have optimized the concept and will be offering topic-based visitor guidance,' said Bernd Zipper, coordinator of the drupa innovation parc. The following eight theme parks address the latest forward-looking technologies:

- 'printbuyer integration parc powered by AlphaPicture'
- 'creative production parc'
- JDF experience parc powered by Heidelberg'
- 'document management parc'
- 'PDF + xml production'
- 'digital picture parc'
- 'online communication parc'
- 'print + publishing parc powered by Agfa'

Highlights Tours focusing on ten customized topics

To smooth the way for trade visitors to gain an overview of individual industry themes, guided tours spotlighting current

developments will be staged. The palette of topics runs from workflows and web to print through offset and digital printing to packaging production and finishing. The Highlights Tours take visitors by the hand and lead them to between six and eight selected exhibitors on each tour. Aside from German and English, the tours will for the first time also be conducted in Chinese, Spanish and French.

The Compass Sessions are two-hour intensive workshops staged daily on topical issues regarding technology and new lines of business in the printing industry. The program is as diverse as it is topical with themes ranging from digital/inkjet printing through offset printing, premedia and web-to-print solutions to digital workflows, printed electronics and packaging printing. Each Compass Session is devoted to a different theme. Held from 9am to 11am and combined with a light breakfast, they form the ideal start to the drupa day. Further information can be found online at www.compass-sessions.de.

A preview of some of the technologies that will be on show at drupa 2008

Agfa

Agfa will launch a variety of products across its four major market segments: commercial printing, packaging, newspaper industry and sign & display market.

A polyester-based synthetic paper for offset printing presses, Synaps, will be introduced. It is based on a modified polyester base and is said to have a fast drying time. Developed by Agfa engineers, Synaps uses a patented manufacturing process which creates voids in the polyester substrate to make it white and opaque. The material is coated on both sides with a special ink-receiving layer which the company says gives it a unique printability, a distinct look and the feel of a luxury paper.

The company will launch a new workflow solution, Apogee Suite, which integrates all content, project management, pre-press and production functions. Apogee Media, a module of Apogee Suite which deals with content integration and management, will be on display in both Agfa's booth and the drupa Innovation Pavilion.

In addition to these new products, Agfa will demonstrate its single pass industrial inkjet press, the Dotrix Modular, for flexible packaging and folding carton applications.

AKL Flexo Technik

Stork Prints Group subsidiary AKL Flexo Technik introduces a program of durable hard-coated and cushion mounting sleeves for narrow web applications.

The sleeve's aramid fiber reportedly offers high memory properties, ensuring constant clamping force and eliminating the problem of slippage during printing.

Thanks to a tough vinyl ester outer skin, the sleeves maintain their stability and assure total indicator reading (TIR) of within 20 µm, even under extreme humidity and high temperatures on the press. This provides a firm basis for consistently high,

repeatable print-register results, over a long lifespan. The cushion sleeves also deliver improved quality, by assuring consistent compression over the full print width. The sleeves, available in all standard lengths used in the narrow web market, are suitable for most new-generation flexo printing systems.

Alwan Color Expertise

Alwan Color Expertise will present the latest innovations in its line of color management products for the desktop environment. A new series of ICC color management software will be unveiled at the drupa innovation park.

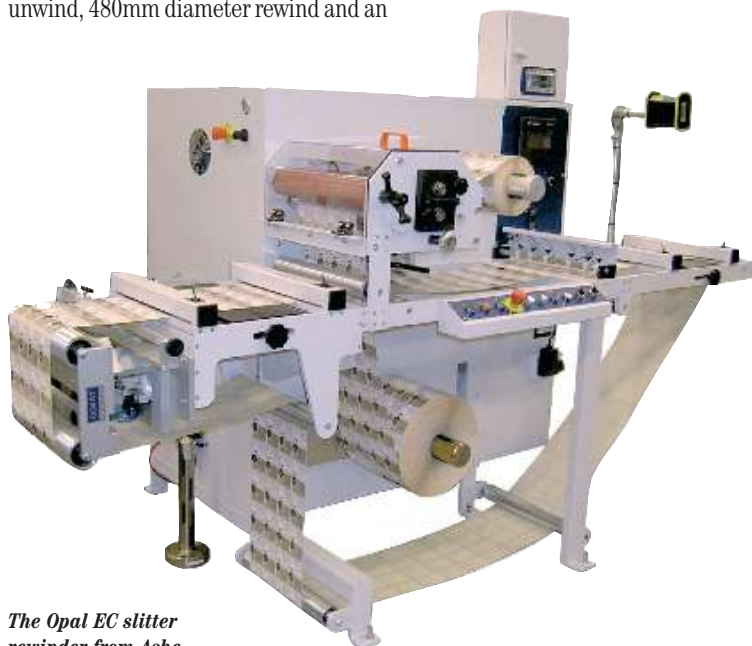
Alwan will launch two new Adobe Photoshop plug-ins at drupa. Version v2.0 enables Adobe Photoshop CS3 users to apply ICC DeviceLink Profiles within Photoshop for print-oriented workflows. The new plug-ins reportedly enable non-color experts to benefit from features such as the calculation of individual inks and the total ink consumption to print an image.

During drupa, Alwan Color Expertise will also present its full range of CMYK Optimizer software, while the company's standardization and optimization software for color separation of PDF files will be updated to version 3.5. Alwan Color Expertise will also update its four CMYK Optimizer packages. These different editions are adapted to address the different color management and standardization needs of each segment of the graphic arts industry.

Ashe Converting Equipment

Ashe Converting Equipment will show its Sapphire S2, the Onyx slitler rewinder and the Opal 2 label inspection slitler rewinder at Drupa – as well as launching a new development, the Opal EC.

This new addition to the Opal family of label inspection slitler rewinders, the Opal EC is a compact, ergonomically designed machine designed and configured with low capital outlay as the primary driver. With an 800mm diameter unwind, 480mm diameter rewind and an



The Opal EC slitler rewinder from Ashe

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Atlantic Zeiser offers its inkjet technology to OEM partners

operational speed of up to 230 meters per minute, the Opal EC will be available in standard widths of 330 and 410mm.

The Sapphire S2 is a machine for the processing of film, flexible packaging, laminates, etc, at speeds of up to 700 meters per minute.

The Onyx is an all-electric duplex slitter rewinder which is capable of accommodating web widths of 1300 to 1600mm and with a maximum speed of 300 meters per minute.

The Opal2 is the latest generation of Ashe Converting Equipment's slitting and label inspection rewinders. The Opal meets a wide range of requirements including label inspection slitting and rewinding with the ability to die cut in register to print. The Opal is also available with the latest 'glue-less' turret rewind technology.

Atlantic Zeiser

Atlantic Zeiser will display its new Omega 36 HD high-resolution inkjet printing system. The company also recently launched the SmartCure Series, a new eco-friendly LED UV curing solution.

The new Omega 36 HD digital inkjet printers can be integrated into most existing equipment, and Atlantic Zeiser now offers its inkjet technology to OEM partners for integration into third-party systems.

The printers are particularly suited to web applications. With a resolution of 720dpi – compared to a resolution of 360dpi for the Omega 36/36i – the Omega 36 HD (High Definition) ensures clear and crisp printing

of extremely small characters and produces barcodes with excellent readability and clarity, according to the company. The Omega digital inkjet range prints on a wide variety of substrates, including paper and carton, as well as specialized materials such as aluminum, polymer foils, and plastics.

The Omega printheads are claimed by the company to achieve the quality of flexographic printing, with the significant advantage of printing variable data. This versatile inkjet system prints variable data on all types of plastic cards and packaging, and can also be adapted for high-quality mailings, personalizing ID cards in security print and printing labels, particularly those with special coatings.

With the SmartCure Series, Atlantic Zeiser presents its second generation of LED UV curing. This new LED UV curing solution is also eco-friendly due to a low energy consumption compared to lamp-based systems, a ten times longer lifetime, no ozone generation, and lower cooling requirements. Its compact size allows for easy integration and it comes equipped with an instant on/off functionality that eliminates energy consumption during machine stops.

Dalim Software

Dalim Software has been one of the major drivers of JDF connectivity in the industry, with a leading role in the CIP4 Committee. The company is using its new Dalim Twist JDF connectivity package to connect to and drive applications like Alwan CMYK Optimizer directly from the workflow.

The JDF connectivity package in Dalim Twist is able to send files automatically from the workflow to, for example, the Alwan CMYK Optimizer ink management software solution, allows the files to be processed in the application, and returns the files to the Dalim Twist workflow. As it does so, it can drive the settings of the ink optimization solution directly from the workflow via the JDF communication standards.

At drupa 2008, Dalim Software will introduce version 3.0 of Dalim Mistral, its production automation and project management/job tracking system. The highlight of the new version will be Publisher's Production Flatplan, specially catered to non-technical users for faster approval of pages. While other page applications show flatplans of designed work, Mistral 3.0 shows true PDF images of complete pages that have been produced through a production workflow. The new, easy-to-use interface speeds up the process for these users, with more helpful information. Other new Dalim Mistral 3.0 features will be revealed at the show.

Domino Printing Sciences

Drupa will be Domino's platform for a series of product launches, including version 4.5 of the Bitjet+ binary printer offering high speed in-line digital printing. The show will also mark the European debut of the Domino L400 thermal inkjet printer, the first offering in the new L-Series range, as well as the BaseLine inkjet mailing base, designed to complement the company's range of inkjet solutions for the commercial print and mailing sectors.

The latest generation of Domino's solvent-based binary inkjet technology, the Bitjet+ version 4.5 can be easily integrated into existing production lines. This is one of Domino's most versatile solutions which, with text, barcode and graphics printing capability, combined with very fast drying inks, is suitable for almost all substrates. A wide print head-to-substrate throw distance also enables integration on a variety of print and

print finishing equipment.

A number of new features have been designed to make a step improvement in print quality. These include a new print head, which can be rotated to an angle to produce increased print resolutions of up to 180dpi – a unique development for a high speed binary printer.

A third generation of Domino's piezo DOD technology, the versatile K150 inkjet printer uses both low-VOC solvent and UV-curable inks to deliver high resolution print, designed specifically to meet the increasing demands for late stage customization, predominantly within the mailing and addressing sectors.

The K150 complements the existing products in Domino's K-Series range, the K100 and K200, also providing high definition print onto a wider range of substrates, including aqueous and high gloss. However, the K150 is specifically suited to mailing applications thanks to its print format and price position. Depending on production requirements, each K150 printer can deliver a print width of 71mm, a resolution of up to 180 x 360 dpi, and print speeds of up to 120m per minute, equating to 20,000 products per hour.

Drent Goebel

Drent Goebel has joined forces with Energy Sciences Inc, (ESI), IST Metz UV and Air Liquide. The four companies will show their latest technologies incorporated in Drent Goebel's VSOP press at drupa. ESI and IST will present their latest inventions in EB and UV curing respectively; Air Liquide will supply the nitrogen used for both curing technologies.

The Drent Goebel VSOP on display will have a web width of 33 inches and features variable sleeves to allow for fast job changeovers with an infinite range of print repeat lengths. The press is said to provide 'superior' print quality due to the use of energy curable offset inks that are cured with either inerted UV or EB technology.

ESI will showcase its EZCure EB unit which was specially developed for the VSOP line of presses. IST Metz installed its new BLK-5 lamp with an inert system on the press. Air Liquide, supplier of medical and industrial gases, will also demonstrate its nitrogen delivery system on the systems.

Converters in the flexible packaging, folding carton and food packaging industries will be able to see live demonstrations to showcase the VSOP's throughput and quality while being solvent and VOC free. During the day Drent Goebel will show the 6-color VSOP printing on film for wrap-around labels, shrink-sleeves and flexible packaging and board for folding carton.

Dupont Packaging Graphics

DuPont Packaging Graphics will demonstrate new integrated workflow systems and also will have some



Domino will launch version 4.5 of the Bitjet + binary printer

answers for brand owners and print buyers increasingly concerned with environmental sustainability.

Four demonstration areas will showcase the most recent technology innovations for flexography and packaging graphics from DuPont: high volume flexible packaging; automated multipurpose flexo workflow; digital corrugated workflow; and sustainability.

DuPont Packaging Graphics and EskoArtwork will present various developments at the show that are a result of the companies' close cooperation. The new Flexo Vertical Solutions, based on the strength and value of fully digital and digital thermal flexo workflows, address the production needs of flexo trade shops and packaging printers.

The new DuPont Cyrel/EskoArtwork Vertical Solutions include products and services tailor-made for all of the different segments and applications – tag and label, flexible packaging, corrugated board, etc.

To further support the advancement of the flexo industry, at drupa 2008, DuPont and EskoArtwork will also offer financing options to customers all over the world willing to invest in new sustainable technologies.

Edale

Edale will be exhibiting its Lambda 'plug and play' printing and converting press at drupa. The Edale Lambda will be fully operational producing RFID tickets in a single pass, demonstrating the versatility of this press.

The focus of the stand will be on commercial security, with RFID technology being one of the key applications. Along with the Lambda, there will be static displays of Edale's complete range of narrow web flexographic printing and converting machinery, including the Alpha compact press and the modular in-line Beta and Sigma presses. The company will also display details of its latest development, the servo-driven Gamma flexo press.

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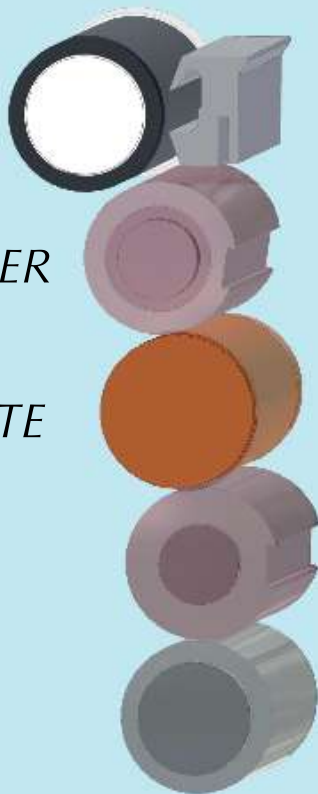
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EFI Jetrion

EFI Jetrion's 4000 full color label inkjet printer will be on display at drupa. The system supports webs up to 12 inches wide (30.5 centimeters) and uses Jetrion's 4- or 6-color UV ink sets to produce full color imaging across a variety of substrates. With its robust industrial design, integration with EFI's OneFlow and Fiery XF workflow solutions and multiple finishing options, the Jetrion 4000 is production-ready and brings volume and scale to the dynamic world of industrial inkjet imaging, says the company.

EFI will also present the recently-launched production printing solution Fiery XF, providing technology for the wide and superwide format printing market for both production and proofing requirements.

Erhardt + Leimer

Erhardt + Leimer will present new software functions for its print inspection system Nyscan. For the first time it is now possible to monitor spaces. This new feature requires very little effort on the part of the operator; the target values for the spaces are simply entered via a graphic interface. It is further possible to monitor a multiple of these spaces as repeat length. Any direction of measurement can be defined, down web, cross web or a used-specified diagonal to the web. A patented calibration system from Erhardt + Leimer compensates inaccuracies due to distortions by the camera lens.

Erhardt + Leimer will also present a new multi-camera system for 100% print inspection. The high resolution, fast line cameras allow for speeds of over 200m/min at highest resolution level. 12,000 to 18,000 active pixels are available for web widths of 1000mm and beyond. This high resolution is aimed at meeting the high demands of quality assurance in packaging, forms and foil printing.

EskoArtwork

EskoArtwork will present a comprehensive overview of its integrated software and hardware solutions and associated services, organized along themes that reflect the different customer communities and industry segments the company serves. Software product highlights include the new Studio and Studio Toolkits for boxes and for flexibles, production color management workflow featuring a.o. Equinox, and a series of product upgrades incorporating the results of EskoArtwork's efforts to cross-integrate its various workflow lines. On the equipment side, there is the CDI Advance Cantilever for sleeve imaging, the CDI Spark 4260 Auto, and the Kongsberg XP series for high-performance digital short-run converting.

ETI Converting Equipment

Canadian company ETI Converting Equipment is launching a new machine at drupa 2008 – an offset-flexo hybrid press.

The Exagon-OM will allow switching from offset to flexo on the same station in less than two minutes, says the company, and reportedly is faster to set up and consumes less space and money than the traditional tower/cassette system.

The Exagon-OM also has the ergonomic advantage of compatible sleeves for flexo and offset: 'The hard Alu-sleeve surface assures you no compromise on printing quality comparing to traditional

Flexo4All alliance to promote flexography

Nineteen companies have joined forces and resources to set up a partnership under the name 'Flexo4All'. Flexo4All is the natural evolution of 'Flexo the Alternative', an agreement between independent businesses initiated by DuPont Packaging Graphics over 20 years ago.

Flexo4All is a strategic cooperation which combines worldwide expertise from independent companies; suppliers of the graphic arts and packaging printing industry. The members work together in partnership, sharing their experience and knowledge to perfect Flexographic packaging printing while also promoting the advantages and innovation. Born to be a strategic cooperation and not a commercial joint venture to sell complementary products or services, Flexo4All is aiming at:

- Encouraging networking within the flexo industry to create active co-operation among all partners
- Connecting the competence of all members to deliver knowledge and added value solutions worldwide
- Promoting the value of flexography as the best technology to satisfy all printing needs
- Achieving improved and sustainable service for the Flexographic Packaging Printing industry

While Drupa 2008 expects to host more than 2,000 exhibitors and over 400,000 visitors in Düsseldorf, Flexo4All has plans to alleviate the difficulty of navigating such a large show.

Flexo4All has prepared a guided tour to accompany people to the Flexo4All partners' stands to help visitors find the most relevant booths for their business.

The Flexo4All Paths inside Drupa aim at informing and demonstrating workflow solutions suited to a wide range of packaging applications: flexo printing onto any substrate type – thin extensible films, aluminum, paper, thin carton or thick corrugated boards – with different ink types, etc.

The Flexo4All partners are Bobst, Comexi, Degraf, DuPont, Eckart, EskoArtwork, Fischer & Krecke, Gallus, Gidue, SunChemical/Hartmann Druckfarben, Lohmann Tapes, Omet, Praxair Surface Technologies, Rotatex, Siegwark, Soma, tesa, Uteco Converting, Windmüller & Hölscher.

composite fiber sleeves,' said the company in a statement. Also available on the Exagon-OM are rotogravure, silk-screen and hot and cold foil units.

Fujifilm

drupa 2008 represents a milestone in the development of the Brillia High Definition range of CTP products, a plate range giving 1-99 percent resolution and FM capability for all plates, whether they be processed, chemistry-free or processless. Fujifilm's PRO-T processless plate, launched in 2006, will be supplemented at drupa 2008 by the launch of Brillia HD PRO-V, a chemistry-free violet photopolymer plate with the same quality and productivity as its existing violet plate, Brillia LP-NV.



The Master2 slit from Jurmet

Also in the pre-press arena, Fujifilm will be demonstrating a range of improvements to its cross media workflow solution, XMF, including enhancements to its online proofing and approvals engine and a new module to assist in image processing. In the pressroom, Fujifilm is launching a range of new pressroom chemistry alongside a new solution designed to improve press performance and quality management.

Fujifilm has developed Taskero Universe; a suite of diagnostic tools designed to put printers in control of their operations and confirm color across a number of output devices and locations.

Gallus

Gallus will display the latest developments in its line of folding carton machinery.

Gidue

Gidue, Italian manufacturer of narrow and mid-web printing presses, will display its Xpannd and Athena presses at drupa.

The Xpannd is a hybrid flexo/offset/silkscreen machine featuring converting capabilities including hot stamping, cold foil, embossing, and die-cutting. Gidue will show in Düsseldorf a 370mm version of the press, combining Flower technology – the company's patented flexo head – and an enhanced offset unit. Advantages are said to include increased ink transportation; continuous check on printing quality output and new temperature, dampening and inking controls which are aimed at reducing start-up waste. Color consistency is guaranteed up to the press's maximum speed of 150m/min. Also on display will be the UV flexo sleeve press Athena, available at widths of 530 to 730mm, which is aimed at printing food packaging and shrink sleeves for the beverage and cosmetics sectors.

GSE Dispensing

GSE's dispensing system highlight is the relaunched Colorsat Compact for the flexo / gravure paper, board and flexible packaging converter. Solvent and water-based ink recipes, in batches of up to 20kg are dispensed 'on-demand', in as little as two and a half minutes, to an accuracy of 1g.

The new version offers greater modularity: the converter chooses the specification level that enables a fast return on investment for their business. Any number of base ink containers is possible

between 12 and 32 components. Special features include a combined wet and dry cleaning unit, stainless steel horizontal plates to prevent ink clogging, a modular tray design and simplified drum connections. Buckets can be placed or removed at an ergonomic working height.

The company will be demonstrating the latest version of its proprietary IMS (Ink Management Software), which powers the ink dispensing systems. IMS 3.61 includes features such as anilox roll correction, 'bucket parking' to save losing partly dispensed recipes, and a user interface in several languages.

Heidelberg

Heidelberg's hall will be divided into two parts: special applications & large format and integrated packaging production. As well as launching new wide format machines, the company will focus on integration solutions and introduce a range of platesetters from the Supraformer series.

HP

HP will launch new machines for the commercial and industrial print markets, including the latest in its ws Indigo series of presses for labels and packaging. See pages 47-52 for more information.

Intercolor

Intercolor is launching its Interact range of special printed effects at drupa. Intercolor is the UK operation for parent company Zeller & Gmelin and will be exhibiting this new range of inks on the Zeller & Gmelin stand. The Interact range consists of a number of UV curable special effect inks that offer various eye-catching, tactile and functional effects useful for a wide range of applications. The range includes coin reactive coatings, textured and tactile lacquers, glow-in-the-dark phosphorescent inks, thermochromic inks, metallic ink effects, photochromic inks, pearlescent inks and UV fluorescent inks.

Various colors in the multi-florescent product range include three yellows that under normal light look the same but under UV light all look different, making the product suitable for brand protection applications.

JM Heaford

JM Heaford will exhibit a range of mounting and proofing machines featuring new features. The new generation, front loading, gravure proof press (model SCOF) will be exhibited for the first time at a major show. This latest design has been developed specifically with off-line job approval in mind. A sleeve dedicated and gearless (servo drive) mounting and proofing machine features a new and advanced video system. Heaford's latest generation sleeve dedicated mounting only machine, which also features the unique camera system and servo drive indexing, will also be exhibited. Heaford has also launched a narrow web plate mounting machine.

Jurmet

Jurmet, manufacturer of slit rewinders for plastics, laminates, paper and other flexible packaging materials, will present its latest machine at drupa. The Master2 slit runs at a web width of

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1300mm and has a rewind diameter of 800mm. The slitter is equipped with an automatic knife positioning system, new dust free friction clutches, an automatic core positioning system and an integrated control system.

Kodak

Kodak will demonstrate the new Stream Concept Press publicly for the first time at drupa 2008. The higher resolution, smaller ink droplet size, and faster generations of drops involved in stream technology will 'take inkjet technology to offset class quality, productivity and cost', says the company.

With stream technology, mild heat fluctuations of the surface of the ink results in the formation of ink droplets at high speed. Capable of producing 2,500 A4 (letter sized) pages per minute, stream technology uses pigment inks to provide permanence on coated papers and a range of other commercial printing substrates.

Kodak's range of pre-press solutions, including proofing systems, CTP platesetters, digital plates, and the Prinergy workflow system for offset and flexographic printing, will also be present at the show.

For packaging converters, Kodak is expanding the capabilities of the Flexcel NX digital flexographic system. The Flexcel NX System will now be able to produce plates up to a maximum size of 800 x 1067mm, allowing converters to use it for a broader range of applications. The Flexcel NX digital flexographic system is designed to deliver greater latitude on press, improving the consistency and repeatability of the printed result. Capable of high resolution flexographic printing, it is claimed to achieve offset class print quality on a wide variety of substrates, including paper, flexible film, foil, and labelstock.

Kodak Print On Demand Solutions Group

Print On Demand Solutions (PODS) Group, an independent unit of Kodak's Graphic Communications Group, presents Nuevo Technology, the new Creo Color Server system for the graphic arts industry, at drupa 2008. At the core of Nuevo Technology is a new high speed system architecture that will serve the entire Creo Color Servers product line. This technology addresses high production markets with increased performance and speed. The new architecture introduces scalability, advanced functionality, parallel operations, advanced batch editing solutions, and process automation.

Kohli

Kohli will display a single print station of its Kronos 509 ELS gravure press. The unit will have an individual servo drive system and a web width of 1250mm. Also on display will be the company's new Zeus 188 slitter rewinder, which runs at a speed of 450m/min with a web width of 1300mm.

Komori

Komori will launch a range of presses at drupa 2008, including the 6-color Lithrone SX629 with in-line cold foiling, UV coating, embossing and optional die-cutting. The machine is the latest in the company's LS29 series.

The Lithrone SX629 offers a sheet size of 610 x 750mm, which



The Kodak Print On Demand team announce developments at a pre-drupa media conference

enables multi-image layouts, such as labels, smaller cartons, such as pharmaceutical, paper back, DVD and CD covers. UV drying provides gloss finish possibilities and enables users to varnish and emboss a wide variety of plastic and metallic materials.

Körber PaperLink

For the first time at drupa, all the group's paper companies, including E.C.H. Will, Pemco (with the brands SHM and Wrapmatic), Kugler-Womako and Winkler+Dünnebier, will be assembled together under the same roof. They will share a stand with common corporate design to demonstrate the integration of Winkler+Dünnebier within the Körber PaperLink Group.

Körber PaperLink will showcase its system solutions for paper sheeting, converting and packaging. Overall eight different systems will be presented at the fair. The range of products varies from Pemco folio-size sheeting solutions to Kugler-Womako solutions for the stationery and book binding industries. Winkler+Dünnebier will display a wide range of envelope and pocket machines, including new cutting solutions for the production of folding boxes.

LMC Duo

LMC Duo, European importer of the Japanese company Sanjo, a provider of semi-rotary offset waterless and letterpress machines, will launch its new semi-rotary letterpress ES 150 – known as the 'Baby'. The machine comes in a maximum width of 150mm and is suitable for high quality short run printing or in cases where only a second pass is needed.

The ES 150 is available in 2 to 5 colors with the following additional equipment: hot stamping, flexo; flexible die and/or laminating unit.

Martin Automatic

Martin Automatic will be presenting the MDR (magnetic driven roller) system, a solution for handling light webs at lower tension levels and higher operating speeds. The new MDR technology can be applied to both web transport systems and to Martin's line of unwinds.

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Nilpeter will show its Caslon inkjet unit

Martin will also be showing an MBS butt splicer at its booth. The MBS offers non-stop splicing in narrow and mid-web processes. It is a versatile splicer, handling substrates from unsupported film to paperboard.

At the Labelmen booth in hall 10 the compact STS automatic butt splicing unwind will be running in conjunction with the STR automatic turret rewind. A press or process equipped with the STS and STR will not need to slow down or stop for roll changes. The STS and STR will be running pressure-sensitive labels.

Muller Martini

Muller Martini will display its Ventura book sewing machines, which are now equipped with Asir 3 quality control technology. Asir 3 automatically tests to make certain that book sections are in the correct sequence and that they open in the right place. This can be performed by Asir 3 either in image comparison mode or through barcode recognition.

Nilpeter

Nilpeter, the Danish manufacturer of narrow web label presses, will demonstrate Caslon, a new four-color inkjet press designed for industrial strength reel-fed platforms. The print engine uses the latest drop-on-demand piezo print heads from Xaar, based on the company's side-shooter technology for printing UV-curable CMYK ink sets. Caslon was designed and developed jointly with FFEL, a UK-based software developer and systems integrator. Caslon is intended to augment a converter's existing press room capabilities without requiring a separate printing environment and production work flow.

The machine currently comes with two maximum web widths: 420mm (16.5in) or 340mm (13.5in). As a modular unit mounted on a standard Nilpeter FA-Platform, Caslon can be configured as a stand-alone digital printing engine with web unwind and rewind for applications not requiring any in-line printing or converting processes. Alternatively, the module can be integrated in an FA-Line UV flexo press. This includes in-the-field upgrades for existing FA-presses. Caslon modules can also be supplied for integration with other web-fed printing and converting processes.



The Presstek team at a pre-drupa media conference

Non-impact inkjet technology allows Caslon to print on all standard paper and filmic labelstocks, as well as thin unsupported films without the need for precoating. A Corona treater after the unwind ensures ink adhesion on all films, while a tacky roller removes dust and debris from the web prior to printing. Caslon modules incorporate FFEL's UV technology for inter-color curing.

Omet

Omet will be present at drupa with its narrow web machines, including the rotary Varyflex press.

Suited for paper packaging and flexible packaging applications as thin as 12 μ m, the Varyflex is designed to maintain high productivity, with fast changeovers between different processes possible at all print and converting stations.

Presstek

Presstek will feature its environmentally friendly DI digital offset presses, combined with Momentum Pro workflow, at drupa 2008.

Presstek's DI presses offer chemistry-free platemaking, waterless printing and substantially less waste than conventional printing processes, according to the company, and are able to go from file to sellable color within 20 sheets. The Presstek DI's ability to produce as few as 20 sheets of make-ready waste per job is good for the environment and has a direct correlation to profitability, since PIA/GATF estimates that the cost of paper accounts for 22 percent of a printer's sales revenues.

Presstek will also showcase its latest generation of chemistry-free CTP plate-making solutions. Metal platemaking systems, including the versatile 2-page and 4-page Dimension Excel series, Dimension 800, and the Vector TX52, will be featured. Presstek will also show its Momentum Pro workflow.

Ricoh

drupa 2008 is the platform for Ricoh to introduce the Ricoh Pro C900 and C900s, a new color digital printer and multi-function device offering heavy production capacity. Also launching is the Ricoh 'Pro' brand, for easy identification of its production printer portfolio.



The MW 60/80 medium web sleeve press from Rotomec

RK Print Coat Instruments

At drupa, color communication system and coating technology specialist RK Print Coat will show a range of systems and equipment that aid various users and producers to obtain consistency in their operations.

The FlexiProof 100 and FlexiProof UV are compact, stand alone bench top units suitable for a variety of flexographic pre-press purposes. The FlexiProof can be sited wherever necessary, for instance in the pressroom, in a laboratory, in a research or educational facility, or indeed wherever quality control or product trailing is required. A scaled down version of a flexo production press, the unit is used for the preparation of customer preparation samples, for computer and other forms of color matching, and to determine printability, i.e., gloss, durability, rub & scuff resistance of a given substrate. Undertaking pilot runs on a FlexiProof frees up a flexo production press for income generating output. An additional benefit is that by color matching off-press, on-press waste is minimized and press uptime maximized.

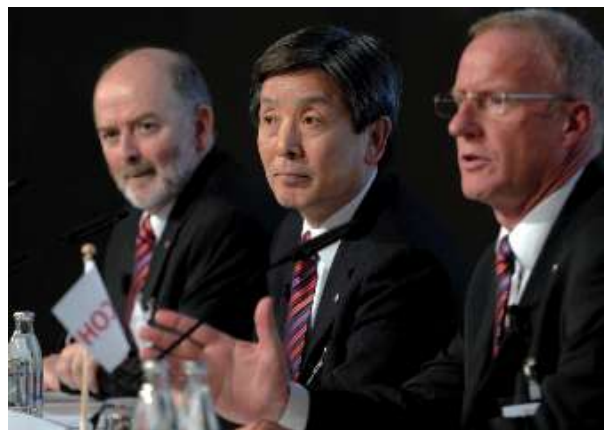
The FlexiProof UV differs from the original FlexiProof only in that it has an integrated miniaturized UV curing unit, enabling users and producers of inks to monitor and/or resolve any issue surrounding the use of UV flexo inks.

The VCM or 'Versatile Converting Machine' was unveiled only as a concept at drupa 2004. Since then the VCM has become a reality with a number of bespoke systems provided for research and develop, short run production and quality control purposes to manufacturers and converters, etc throughout Europe.

Rohm and Haas

Specialty materials company Rohm and Haas will present solvent-free laminating adhesives at drupa 2008. These adhesives products are said to enhance environmental benefits and productivity for food packaging.

Through water-based acrylic technology, Robond adhesives offer properties that are aimed at drupa's European converter attendees, who are challenged by increasing regulation and informed, highly aware consumers. Rohm and Haas's second-generation Robond technology offers environmentally advanced



The Ricoh team discuss developments at a media conference

formulations, excellent food safety and faster processing during packaging, according to the company.

Robond adhesives provide high shear strength that allows faster slitting to streamline the laminating process, thereby allowing converters to lower inventory and reduce delivery time to customers – key productivity advantages in the very competitive flexible packaging market, which is currently experiencing high customer cost pressures. More versatile, new second-generation products now offer enhanced capabilities that handle general and medium performance applications, as well as selected, higher-performance applications such as triplex structures containing aluminum foil used in the packaging of aggressive foodstuffs.

The company recently signaled its firm commitment to this technology by investing two million Euros in its Mozzate, Italy facility to support its ELM series production. The company has introduced a number of advances in this technology arena, most recently including the first solventless adhesive for foil retort packaging and the first 'no barrier' solventless adhesive for fresh-cut packaging.

Rotomec (Bobst Group Italia S.p.A.)

Rotomec (Bobst Group Italia S.p.A.) will be present at drupa 2008 with a display of its gravure printing and coating & laminating equipment for flexible materials, both on Bobst Group stand A04 in hall 10 and in the Demonstration Center of Bobst Group Deutschland in nearby Meerbusch.

Rotomec's gravure press models on show in Düsseldorf will include different solutions, each addressing and delivering specific customer benefits in the various market sectors of the flexible materials gravure printing industry: from the RS 4004 HS for high volume print runs with production speed of 600m/min, to the trolley automation and dedicated washing systems of the RS 4004 E; from the standardized RS 4003 press model, to the MW 60/80 press for very short runs.

Rotomec's latest developments in the field of integration of the electronic line shaft technology and register control will be of particular interest to all converters seeking less waste and more productivity from gravure printing lines.



Soma's Flex Imperia press

As for converting technology, alongside the new CL 850 duplex laminator for flexible materials, Rotomec will present its custom-built solutions for the production of pressure sensitive labels, using a variety of different process applications, including solventless silicone and hot melt or water-based coating.

Screen

Screen, focusing on the 'Print on Demand' market, will display a wide variety of technologies at drupa 2008. For digital offset printing, the company will display its Truepress 344, first launched in 2004. The machine images at 2400dpi resolution and prints with the conventional offset process using standard inks and water.

Screen's first system for the high speed variable data POD sector is the Truepress Jet520 continuous feed, single-pass system. Previewed at Ipex, the Truepress Jet520 is now commercially available and unites Screen's pre-press and color management technology with the latest developments in inkjet printing. The company's first major inkjet system, the press uses Epson's latest multi-tone Piezo DOD (Drop-On-Demand) inkjet print heads and water-based pigment inks.

Soma Engineering

Soma Engineering will unveil a new flexographic printing press at drupa 2008 that will be on show with the company's new Pluto II slit rewinder and Lamiflex E laminating machine.

Brand manager Pavla Vernerova of Soma said: 'We are keeping the specification of the new Soma Flex Imperia under wraps until drupa where it will be shown in operation running live printing jobs. At this stage, I can say that the design and operating features are based on input from printing companies and operators in the field. Because of this the press includes many features to assist operation and reduce waste and downtime, while at the same time increasing production and profitability.'

The new Pluto II slit rewinder is also aimed at greater efficiency and clever design features are claimed to reduce waste and down times. With its larger unwind and rewind diameters and simplified job changeovers, Pluto II is a machine for long runs with in-built features for operator comfort. These include automated slit edge removal, 'knife positioning assistant', shaftless unwind with integrated loading and programmable rewind core positioning. Slitting is through razor blade for fast set-up and rotary knives for high quality.

Stork Prints

Stork Prints will unveil RSI-2 – an improved version of its RSI (Rotary Screen Integration) module, at drupa 2008.

With its modernized design, RSI-2 can be integrated into the architecture, software and mechanics of the latest-generation printing presses. Key benefits are said to include full interactivity, better user-friendliness, faster make-ready and a shorter learning curve.

Far from being a stand-alone unit, RSI-2 can be controlled through the main panel of the press. This provides simultaneous, centralized monitoring of all rotary screen positions, alongside other printing and converting operations. A greater number of signals can be viewed at a glance, so that problems are detected almost instantly and remedied in a much shorter time.

Other rotary screen highlights include the re-engraveable RotaMesh screen for the RSI systems, and the re-usable RotaPlate screen for non-Stork systems. Both feature the electroformed pure-nickel construction.

Sun Chemical

The company's inks will be used on many of the presses that will be running at the exhibition, and there will reportedly be 'numerous surprises' for visitors to Sun Chemical's stand.

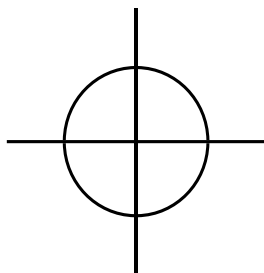
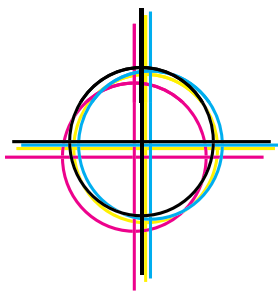
Felipe Mellado, Sun Chemical's corporate vice-president, marketing, said: 'drupa will be the perfect showcase to demonstrate our latest innovations as part of the strategic direction driven by Rudi Lenz, our new chief executive officer and president. These will range from the latest low-migration products in packaging; new technologies for newspapers; new environmentally-friendly Sheetfed inks in the commercial market; and new products for very large format graphic printers. We will also be unveiling the latest developments in color management, such as SmartColour.'

Surfscan

Surfscan will demonstrate its Check rewinder system on the Ashe Converting Equipment booth. The company has invested heavily to develop the algorithms to produce 100 percent defect identification with accurate and repeatable results. 'Many companies use linescan cameras as we do, but it is the configuration to meet the precise needs of an application that makes the difference,' says general manager Damian Harvey.

The Check rewinder is used at the final stages of the print process, and is frequently used in combination with the company's Check press software. It can be customized using advanced computer programming techniques and can be installed on any press – even very wide web.

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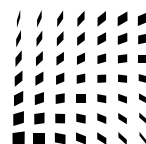
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tesa

tesa will display its Softprint product line, designed use on mid web printing machines. The company will also present a range of products that cover the need for save splicing, simple end tapping, and best roller wrapping for anti adhesive function. The tesa UV strip will also be shown in live demonstrations.

theurer.com

theurer.com presents its C3 MIS system for labeling and packaging. theurer.com C3 covers areas such as estimating, order processing, CRM, production planning, job costing and logistics.

In the estimating area, theurer.com presents customizable estimating templates for labels und flexible packaging materials. C3 determines, based on sales-relevant characteristics, the technical suitability of specific machines as well as the cheapest way of production per quantity.

theurer.com will also demonstrate the latest optimization functions in the graphical scheduling board, in particular the Job-Sequence Optimization, to drastically reduce make-ready times. For planning, any individual criteria can be used, such as material and web width, color system, special colors, printing cylinders and more.

Furthermore, the company will present the recently developed W-Lan mobile devices for shop floor data collection and inventory management. Shop floor data such as actual production times and status information can be captured with these devices. These mobile devices are also used for inventory control and roll stock capture with EPSMA-Codes.

Univacoco

Univacoco Technology, provider of hot stamping and cold foils, will present two new products at drupa 2008, including a cold foil specifically designed for high-speed offset printing.

Offset continues to enjoy a major share of the printing market, but many printers are troubled by the problem that quality and speed cannot be achieved by simply purchasing an offset machine. Without suitable foil and glue, the on-line printing and stamping process can't run at maximum speed.

Cold Foil CF5.0 is specifically designed for high speed offset presses. Working well with both water-based and UV glues, Univacoco's CF5.0 allows sheets to be run at more than 10,000 sheets per hour.

Printers can offer shorter lead time to customers and arrange more printing tasks without extending working time. Additionally, CF5.0 can perform excellently in precise definition with 5pt fine print, featuring good over-printability with above 44 Dyne level after stamping.

Univacoco will also exhibit seamless holographic foils at the show. This new foil will help printers increase process efficiency, decrease the waste of semi-finished printing, and facilitate printers to organize plates in the process.



Uviterno will launch two UV radiation heads at drupa

Uviterno

Uviterno will launch two UV radiation heads at drupa. The SRK-A4, an air-cooled radiation head, and SRK-B4, a combined air-/water-cooled radiation head have been designed to meet the requirements of modern rotative as well as intermittent narrow web printing machines with a print width of 21".

Both the enhanced lamp and reflector geometry and the protective quartz plate with new high-tech coating (WSF-T1) form part of the standard equipment. The heat-absorbing filter (WSF-T1) contributes to reducing the temperature of the substrate. In addition, the transmission efficiency of the UV dose is improved due to this special coating technology.

Xeikon

For an exclusive article on Xeikon's new label press, see pages 41-42.

Stop press: Flint Group

The new Flint Group Flexographic Products Division will present the nyloflex infinity technology for manufacturing endless printing forms. As another highlight, the new ready-to-image photopolymer sleeves nyloflex ITR Thin and nyloflex ITR Classic will be presented. nyloflex ITR sleeves are seamless printing forms inclusive LAMS layer ready for digital imaging, especially developed for high-quality flexographic printing. Easy operation, faster make-ready and improved press speed helps to make the use of photopolymer sleeves nyloflex ITR Thin and nyloflex ITR Classic more cost effective than conventional plate mounting. And finally a new nyloflex plate especially developed for UV printing will have its debut at drupa. ■

Tests reveal carbon content

Smith & McLaurin is claiming a world first by subjecting its new compostable adhesive and 'environment friendly' face materials to carbon content testing. **Andy Thomas** reports

Smith & McLaurin has raised the bar in defining which products can be classed as 'environment friendly' by releasing data on the 'green' carbon content of its compostable EP7000 adhesive, which is manufactured from certified sustainable crop sources.

The carbon content tests, carried out by US-based research organization Beta Analysis Inc, based in Miami, Florida, utilize the same concepts as radio carbon dating. They are designed to indicate the percentage of 'green' bio-based (for example corn starch) and fossil-based (petroleum-based) materials in a product. The test results – seen by *L&L* – show that Smith & McLaurin's recently developed 'home compostable' EP7000 adhesive has 58 percent 'green' carbon content compared to 3 percent for standard permanent adhesives. The company says EP7000 has the same adhesion properties as its conventional SP8000 adhesive.

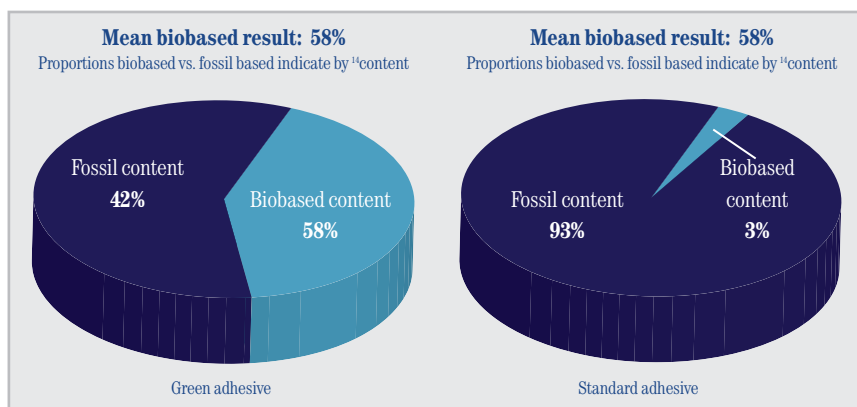
'The tests we've conducted on different constructions and adhesives from our AdaptEco range offer true and never seen before proof of the actual renewable content of our products,' says Elaine Williamson, product development manager at Smith & McLaurin. 'We felt that with the high levels of skepticism and ambiguity in the marketplace regarding environmental issues and standards, having clear and factual tests by an independent third party specialist was the best way to get the market to sit up and listen and establish ourselves as the supplier of first resort when it came to eco-friendly packaging solutions.'

Smith & McLaurin is matching EP7000 with a range of 'environmentally friendly' paper stocks including its 100 percent recycled, NAPM-certified ReECO paper. The combined products have a renewable content of approximately 94 percent, according to the same test criteria.

Beta Analysis has also applied its carbon measuring techniques to EarthFirst PLA films, which are claimed fully compostable – in the appropriate industrial facilities – and are made from renewable plant sources. When measured in a laminate construction with EP7000 adhesive, they were shown to have a renewable content of approximately 90 percent. Smith & McLaurin is the first UK co-branding partner of Plastic Suppliers (Sidaplast UK), which distributes EarthFirst PLA.

Smith & McLaurin now claims one of the most extensive FSC-certified range of papers on the market, including top coated direct thermal papers, Eco Matt & Eco Satin papers – which include both recycled and FSC pulp – FSC tags and ticket board and FSC gloss papers. Its NCSP mineral paper is UV photo-degradable and breaks down into harmless chalk powder.

The company also markets a range of white and clear films made from regenerated cellulose. 'Another market success for us is our adaptable, film-to-film dri-peel constructions using water based technology,' says company sales and marketing manager Craig Monks. 'This highly adaptable system works with a number of face substrates and is currently very unusual in the label industry.'



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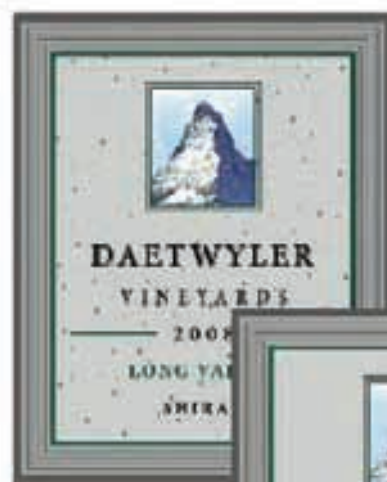


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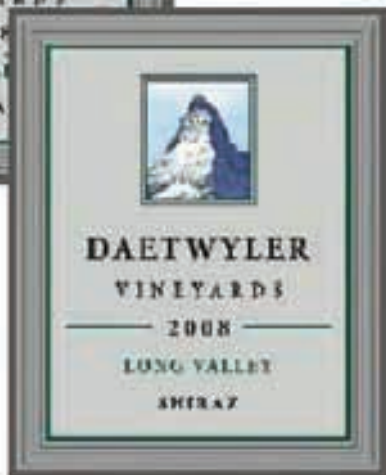
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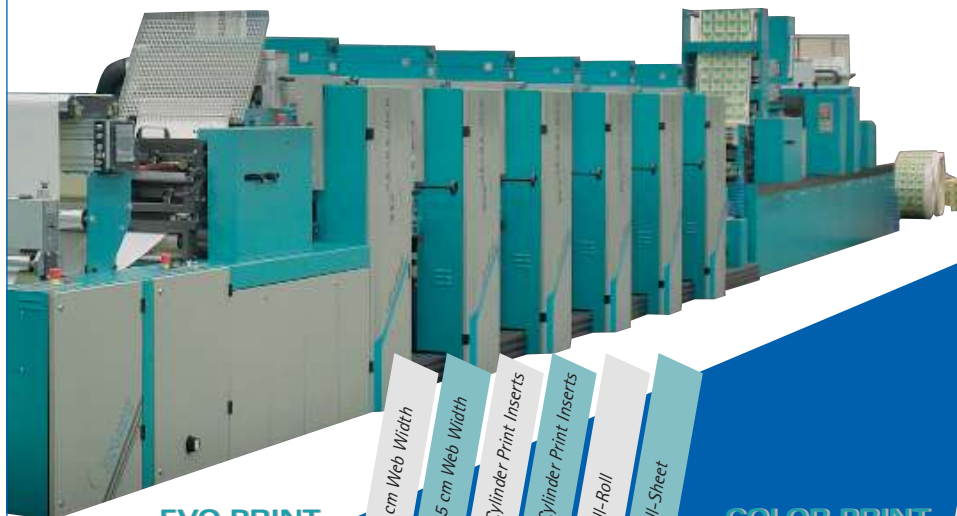
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Labels/Flexible Packaging	✓		✓		✓	
Folding Cartons/Commercial Work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

COLOR-PRINT

	52 cm Web Width	72 cm Web Width	76 cm Web Width	2 Cylinder Print Inserts	3 Cylinder Print Inserts	Roll-Roll	Roll-Sheet	Roll-Signature/Newspaper Folder
Labels/Flexible Packaging	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	
Folding Cartons/Commercial Work	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

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Paper substrates

L&L rounds up the latest news from manufacturers of paper face papers, release liners and adhesives for paper labels

Fasson division, Avery Dennison

Fasson MaxFlex Silver with digital topcoat

The Fasson Roll North America division of Avery Dennison has added Fasson MaxFlex Silver DTC to its portfolio of products pre-optimized for use on HP Indigo ws2000 and ws4000 series presses. Fasson MaxFlex Silver DTC is a premium finish, metalized paper that provides a highly-reflective silver appearance, thus enabling a metallic look in labels produced digitally. This flexible paper facestock makes it ideal for demanding tight wraps or small mandrel applications, for example neck band labels on wine bottles.

MaxFlex Silver DTC is paired with S100R adhesive, well known throughout the wine industry for its wash-away properties which allow consumers or recyclers the ability to cleanly remove the label from a bottle after immersing in water hotter than 100 degrees F.

Boise

New core release liner technology

Launched by Boise is the AvantEdge range of silicone-coatable release liners utilizing the company's proprietary Adaptive Coating & Calendering (ACC) technology – claimed to combine the best properties of glassine, super calendered kraft (SCK) and clay coated kraft (CCK).

Boise can now leverage a single core technology that can be geared to meet the specific demands of the label, graphics, tapes, and industrial sectors. These new capabilities are available thanks to the completion of the expansion project at Boise's Wallula, Washington facility.

Daniel Brown, director of marketing and strategic planning for Boise's Label, Release & Specialty Papers business, said that the new technology enables Boise to broaden its offering into other end use segments such as auto applying labels: 'Our technology expands the set of options by changing the established paradigms that have constrained various end use applications to SCK and Glassine.'

Two of Boise's AvantEdge family of release liners are of particular interest to label converters. AvantEdge Auto Applying (AA) Label Release incorporates effective light transmission and is engineered for applying labels at speed on both prime and variable information automatic dispensing systems. AvantEdge Label Release is intended for roll and layflat label applications and is claimed to provide effective die cutting across a wide range of facestocks while optimizing basis weight at the desired caliper.

MACTac

Prescription direct thermal labelstock and dissolvable labels

MACTac has launched MACScript, a direct thermal labelstock for prescription labeling applications. The product is claimed to offer outstanding environmental resistance, 'virtually eliminating' the need for a press-applied UV overcoat – which can add cost, slow the printing process, inhibit full image density and cause premature print head wear.

'Image fade on a label can cause serious problems, especially in the prescription industry,' said Kathy Magyar, MACTac printing products. 'This labelstock can withstand extreme exposure to heat, moisture and certain chemicals, making it the most durable prescription label currently available.'

Compatible with both high speed and low voltage direct thermal printers, MACScript has high image density and medium to high thermal sensitivity. It incorporates MACTac's ST-95 acrylic adhesive, which allows for short-term repositionability and excellent mandrel hold, says Magyar. Service temperature ranges from negative 75 to 200 degrees.

- MACTac Printing Products has also launched a labelstock that completely dissolves in water – face, adhesive and all. Labeled containers can be put directly into dishwashers or boiling water without the possibility of labels clogging drains or contaminating food. The product's part number is WDP3201 and it features a dissolvable uncoated, 40# facestock and MACTac's new MP332 acrylic emulsion adhesive, and a 2.5-mil (40#) super calendered kraft liner.

Ahlstrom

Developments in Silca Speed release coating system

Ahlstrom has tested its Silca Speed release coating at speeds over 1600m/min, maintaining silicone anchorage and consistent coverage. The company has also developed a surface treatment which allows silicone coat weight to be reduced while maintaining stable release values. Reductions of over 20 percent compared to standard glassines are not uncommon, says Ahlstrom.

Good anchorage properties allow a higher flexibility in silicone formulations, which have been modified to cope with increased speed – for example with the use of anti-misting agents – or to offset the increase of raw material costs, such as in low-platinum content formulations.

With the trend towards filmic PS constructions, Ahlstrom is



Torraspapel Reduces carbon emissions

Torraspapel, part of the Lecta Group, has succeeded in reducing its CO₂ emissions per ton manufactured to 0.40 t.CO₂/t over the last two years.

This significant reduction in specific CO₂ emissions is the result of various measures, such as replacing fuel oil by natural gas, improvements in production processes, implementing plant-specific energy-saving projects, and giving priority to railway over road transportation.

Reducing greenhouse gas emissions is an environmental necessity that is incumbent on society as a whole to ward off the climate change resulting from a greenhouse gas build-up.

Among the greenhouse gases released through the manufacture of pulp and paper, carbon dioxide (CO₂) is clearly the most significant.

All Torraspapel mills run controls on CO₂ emissions and strive to improve the energy efficiency of their processes in order to scale back those emissions as far as possible, in line with the Kyoto Protocol, thus contributing to reducing the greenhouse effect.

Torraspapel has also been involved in planting trees in a forest in a north western region of Spain devastated by fires in the summer of 2006. This 'Trees against Fire' project is the company's seventh forest restoration program with the Spanish NGO Acci natura. Torraspapel has planted nearly 20,000 trees in the Iberian Peninsula and Brazil since 2004.

optimizing its supercalendered release base papers for lamination with film face-stock. Die cutting film generates higher stress on the substrate, particularly with harder and thinner label materials. Greater pressure is needed on the die to perform the cut, especially if the die shape is deformed and less sharp due to long usage.

'The best liner performance in this respect can be obtained by controlling the density (ratio between weight and volume) and the thickness consistency (normally expressed by a low standard deviation value), so that there are no points where the die could cut the face-material entirely, or, where it might cut partially into the backing,' says the company.

Gombau New adhesives for blood bags and wine bottles

Gombau Group has launched a new pharmaceutical adhesive, CH20, which has obtained ISEGA certification for blood bag labeling, complying with the rules of DIN ISO 3826.

CH20 complies with the demands for non-migration properties and is able to withstand exposure to autoclave, gamma

radiation or ethylene oxide sterilization.

CH20 is offered in combination with pharma papers as well as white or clear films and is claimed to show excellent mandrel hold performance, making it suitable for small diameter container labeling. CH20 is designed for adhesion on polyethylene and polypropylene tubes, used increasingly as pharmaceutical containers.

Also new from the Gombau Group is the water-resistant adhesive IE08, developed to meet the needs of the wine labeling sector. It is especially suitable for ice-bucket applications such as for champagne, spumanti and cava labeling. Resistance to ageing and high clarity also allows its use in combination with clear films.

M-real Landmark for Simcastor papers

M-real Consumer Packaging is celebrating reaching a two-million tonne landmark in the production of its Simcastor one-sided coated papers, made at the Simpele Mill in Finland. The Simcastor range is designed for use in many different flexible packaging and label applications including dry foods, drinks, dairy, confectionery and pet foods, as well as pharma and healthcare.

Mondi Coating of Zeltweg, Austria, and a long-standing customer of M-real, was delighted to be awarded the two-millionth tonne: 'M-real Simpele has been a reliable food packaging partner for many years now, and we really appreciate the good consistency of Simpele's papers,' said Auke Wessels, senior procurement manager at Mondi Coating.

Paper production first began at the Simpele site in 1906 with brown wrapping paper. Since the 1980s Simpele has been producing the Simcastor range of one-side coated papers for flexible packaging and wet-glue labels.

UPM Raflatac Digital label paper, environmental accreditation and VIP materials

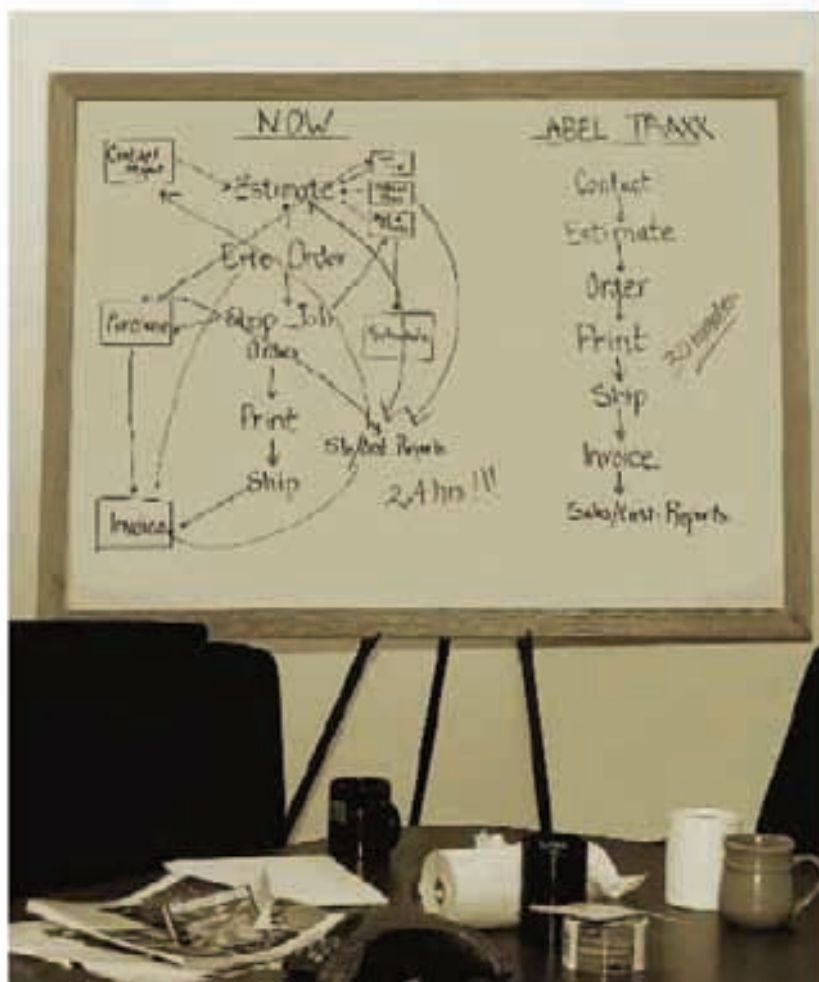
UPM Raflatac has introduced a new label paper to complete its existing HP Indigo range. With no additional topcoat, Optimum 80 gives a quality digital print result on HP Indigo presses as well as by conventional means without specific press adjustments.

Optimum 80's flexibility as a single material for long or short print runs is matched by the wide range of labeling applications it covers, from food and home care to retail and logistics. Once printed, Optimum 80 should be overvarnished to protect the label from abrasion.

UPM Raflatac has meanwhile announced the award of PEFC and FSC Chain of Custody certification for a range of labelstock produced at its Scarborough factory in the UK. PEFC (the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification Schemes) and the FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) are the main certification schemes related to the sustainability of wood used for the production of papers. The Chain of Custody verifies that the wood used in a product originates from sustainably managed and certified forests.

The UPM Raflatac range of PEFC-approved products consist of Vellum, Raflacoat and Raflabrite materials, which target bulk end-uses such as food, retail and logistics labeling.

Also new from UPM Raflatac is Thermal Top 200 direct thermal labelstock with a single topside coating. In end-use applications where the risk of product abrasion is high, the latest coating technology provides good top coat anchorage with a high level of scratch resistance to optimally secure the thermal image throughout the life of the label. ■



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Slitters and rewinders

Andy Thomas rounds up the latest news from manufacturers of slitting and inspection-rewind machines

AB Graphic Multi-purpose film rewriter

AB Graphic International has added the FSR film slitter rewriter to its range of Omega label converting lines. The FSR is designed specifically to meet the demands of inspecting, slitting and rewinding extensible and unsupported films for applications such as wrap around, shrink sleeves and tamper evident closures, but can also be used to convert traditional label and packaging materials.

Tony Bell, sales manager, said: 'With the increased use of servo-driven printing presses many of our customers are now required to convert a wider range of materials so we needed to provide a system that would enable them to process all the substrates they utilize including films.'

The FSR includes a driven unwind, closed loop taper tension control, slow down festoon with a splice table and web clamps and a twin rewind module with twin lay-on rollers and dancer tension control. Models are available with a comprehensive range of options to handle maximum web widths of 330, 410 and 510mm.

Arpeco Premier SD-2020

Arpeco has launched its servo-driven Premier SD-2020 inspection slitter-rewinder incorporating shuttle retrieval. The Premier SD-2020 inspects and re-inspects labels as they go through the shuttle to ensure that any defective or missing labels have been removed, with the aim of eliminating human error.

Typical applications would include security and pharmaceutical labels. Arpeco reports continued success for its Tracker and Premier TRP5 systems with Quick Load Die Cutting.

Ashe Converting Equipment Opal EC

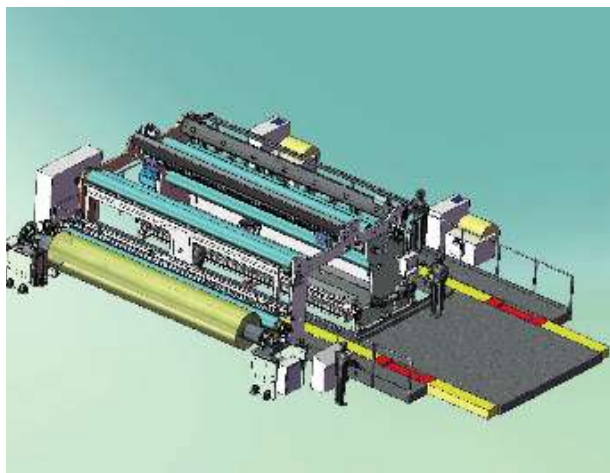
Ashe Converting Equipment has launched its Opal EC label inspection slitter rewriter, a compact, ergonomically designed machine 'designed and configured with low capital outlay as the primary driver'.

The Opal EC includes the proven Opal inspection path and driven rotary shear slitting capability. With an 800mm diameter unwind, 480 mm diameter rewind and an operational speed of up to 230 meters per minute the Opal EC will be available in standard widths of 330 and 410mm.

Keith Fordham, chief engineer for Ashe Converting Equipment, commented: 'The Opal EC will appeal not only to start-up companies, possibly those operating in markets with a low skill base, but also to many other types of label converters.'

For instance, those operating in more developed and mature markets who are on the alert to ways to fine tune their operations in a time of squeezed profit margins, higher operating costs and tougher market conditions.'

Ashe has also announced an order for a 6.2 meter wide 'Primary' film slitter rewriter for a major North American film manufacturer. Weighing in the region of 40 tonnes, this machine is designed for the fully automatic handling, direct



Ashe's 6.2 meter wide 'Primary' film slitter rewriter



FSR film slitter rewriter from AB Graphic

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This 'centre surface' slitter minimises adhesive 'bleed' and provides better balance of rewind tension in finished reels, producing the highest quality rewind packages.

The latest Atlas technology also includes a new, unique rewinding technique for filmic/synthetic material as low as 60 micron, at speeds in excess of 600m/min (1970ft/min). Quality & productivity in harmony!

Atlas automation systems also dramatically reduce machine down-time for job changeovers.

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Daco SI Inspection Rewinder

from an extrusion line, of 8,000 kg parent rolls.

The parent roll storage system is fully robotic and includes slitter machine loading and empty core return. With fully automatic rotary shear knife setting of 15 knives and equipped with 20 rewind arms, this machine will slit and rewind rolls from 250mm wide to 1600mm wide and measuring 1,000mm in diameter. Finished rolls will have wrapping facilities and off-load conveyors to weighing stations and reel handling for palletizing. All idler rolls are driven and are of lightweight carbon fiber design.

In addition, this machine will be equipped with the Ashe high-speed traversing trim winders for 750mm wide and 750mm diameter rolls with easy unloading and low winding tension.

Bobst Group

Titan compact twin-shaft ER610 rewinder

The Bobst Group has introduced the twin-shaft Titan ER610 cantilever slitter rewinder to complement its established Titan SR8 model.

The Titan ER610 'Eco-logical Rewinder' is the fruit of extensive market research and design and development work by Atlas Converting Equipment and Bobst to produce a machine with a low carbon/energy/emissions footprint. Power consumption has been reduced, while hydraulics have been eliminated for oil-free, hygienic operation.

The system uses unlubricated compressed air for zero oil/air emissions. The ER610 is designed as a one-piece construction for rapid installation and start-up, shipping in one 20ft container for reduced logistics.

The ER610 addresses the needs of converters who produce lower volumes of flexible materials. It can also be offered as part of a Titan 'combined slitting solution package' in conjunction with the automated SR8 machine, ideally suited to larger converters wishing to address more comprehensive

production requirements.

The ER610 is designed to process 1350 and 1650mm (53 and 65in) web widths at a maximum running speed of 450m/min (1,476 ft/min). The minimum slit width is 50mm (1.97in) with a maximum rewind diameter of 610mm (24in) on twin cantilever differential rewind shafts.

The machine also features an integral edge-trim extraction system and an integral shaftless fixed-height unwind stand with pneumatically controlled braking system. A digital edge/line guide system controls lateral movement of the unwind reel to +/- 50mm.

Slitting systems available are shear, rotary razor (burst) or razor slitting in air or groove. Optional features include a static electricity control system, laser (line) core positioning, EU safety guarding, laser scanners and unwind roll loading trolley.

The Titan ER610 has been 'Carbon Footprint' approved (for more information, see www.carbonfootprint.com).

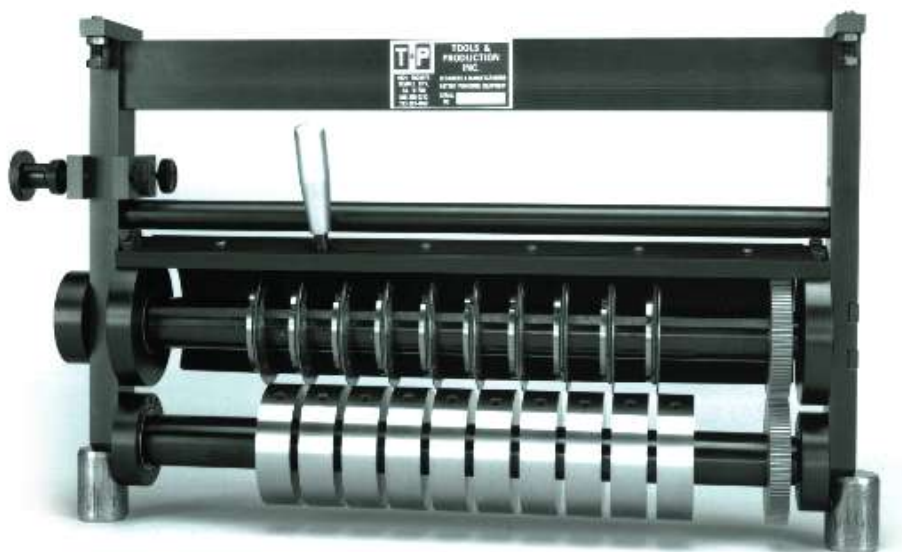
Daco Upgraded SI range

The Daco SI range of inspection/rewinding equipment has been upgraded to include as standard an open inspection platform with splicing and fault editing tables, web advance, quick set rotary slitting station, taper tension control for the unwind and rewinds, speeds of up to 300m/min and a touch screen operator interface.

Daco's Mark Laurence commented: 'We took a whole new approach to the new SI. We spent many months working with several leading label manufacturers and working with operators to produce a machine that would make their lives much easier.'

The end result is a machine that is easy to set, has many functions as standard that other manufacturers charge for or do not have available and a touch screen operator interface that is both user friendly and informative.'

The SI is available in 330mm (13") and 410mm (16") with a 762mm (30") unwind and the HSI with a 1m (40") unwind with roll lift in 508mm (20") web width. Both models include a 457mm (18") rewind.



Drop-in shear slitter for press die stations from Tools & Production

Grafotronic 530mm slitter is company's widest

Grafotronic, the Swedish manufacturer of slitter rewinders and die cutting machines, will introduce a new machine this spring. The Grafotronic 530 will be the widest slitter and die cutting machine in the company's portfolio with its 530mm web width.

'With our new Grafotronic 530 machine we feel that we are more complete and can offer machines in all the widths from 10 to 20 inches,' said Mattias Malmqvist, vice president sales at Grafotronic.

'This spectrum of machine widths, together with our new servo options that can be applied on all our models, gives us the possibility to run all the different types of applications from mono-film to cardboard.'

Grafotronic recently opened a new assembly facility to handle growing demand.

'Now we can assemble and test ten Grafotronic machines at the same time in a modern and efficient working environment,' said Mattias Malmqvist, vice president sales at Grafotronic. 'At Labelexpo in Brussels and shortly thereafter we sold more than 20 machines in Europe alone and now we have the capacity to meet our increasing business also from other areas such as South America, Asia and Africa.'

Prati Servo-driven VEGApplus

Prati has launched its servo-driven VEGApplus modular inspection slitter-rewinder machine, developed to accommodate a wide range of substrates – including aluminum foil for blister pack applications in the pharma sector. This allows pharma label converters to offer end users a complete inspection solution.

At Labelexpo Europe the company showed a VEGApplus machine set up to inspect and finish pharmaceutical labels. Print quality was controlled by a BST Shark camera, with an Atlantic Zeiser ink-jet system numbering head capable of decoding bar-code marking data. The system comes with a wide range of options including glueless turret rewinder.

Rayven Installs new Deacro Model C800A slitter

Rayven, a provider of laminating, coating and converting services, has installed a new Deacro Model C800A slitter in the company's manufacturing facility. The new slitter is a customized version of the model C800A specially outfitted to handle

narrow slit widths (0.75" to 1.25") of silicon coated film release liners. The 63" wide Deacro brings Rayven's slitter count up to seven machines and adds to the company's converting capabilities.

In addition to increasing slitting capacity, the new C800A can produce much larger diameter rolls. The larger rolls have considerably more linear feet per roll. The longer rolls equate to less roll changes, which will increase Rayven's efficiencies and reduce overall costs.

'The sales growth of our "Any-Pak" release liners created extended lead times for narrow width products,' commented Rick Mercado, director of sales and marketing at Rayven. 'A third slitter was needed due to the near full capacity levels reached with our two current slitters. The addition of the Deacro machine with its superior speed and tension control will allow us to more than double our "Any-Pak" release liner capacity.'

Rotoflex eDrive inspection technology

Rotoflex has released a brochure explaining its eDrive technology is implemented on the company's latest VSI & VLI slitting and rewinding machines. Areas covered include web transport and third-party peripheral integration – including vision fault detection. A central focus for Rotoflex is on converting tension-sensitive substrates with precise rewind control.

A copy of the eDrive Inspection Series brochure can be requested at <http://www.rotoflex.com/Literature.html>.

Tools & Production Drop-in shear slitter

Tools & Production Inc has launched a drop-in shear slitter for press die stations. This unit, which slides into the sheeter station of the press, includes shear slit tooling for widths as small as 5/8".

The results of cleanly slit product has proven particularly beneficial for ticket and tag companies, who have been looking for smoother cleaner cuts with a reduction of the 'dusting' that can be created by more traditional metal to metal crush slitting. ■

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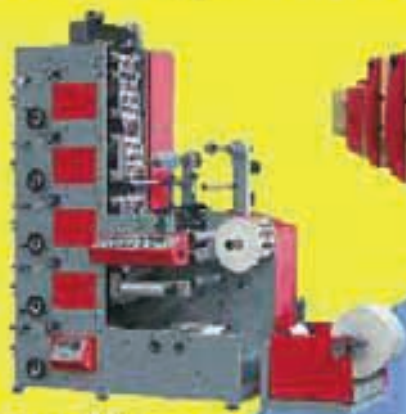


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