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Anniversary



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Analysis



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Technology



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Leader



In recent discussions between *L&L* and key global brands and retailers, some interesting themes have emerged. Firstly, and not surprisingly, we can expect end users to continue demanding a cut in the overall cost of producing and applying labels.

At the same time, there is an acceptance that a viable supplier base is a necessity, and that converters must be allowed to make enough margin to invest in new technologies and in the high levels of service and quality which these global players now take for granted.

There is no contradiction here. These global buyers seriously believe that label converters could make money at these prices if only they would cut waste out of their own operations and implement world class workflow systems.

“Global buyers seriously believe that label converters could make money at these prices if only they would cut waste out of their own operations and implement world class workflow systems”

What emerged was an intense frustration with the slow speed with which the label converting industry is moving towards these efficiency goals compared to the huge strides made by the commercial print sector and by the carton and flexible packaging industries over the last 10-15 years. This has often been a painful process, and has involved considerable consolidation and rationalization, but it has resulted in sectors dominated by the concepts of automated workflow from estimating to dispatch, eliminating waste BEFORE the finishing stage – rather than simply identifying and removing defective labels at the rewinder – inventory control, maximizing press uptime, improving ink handling, helping reduce the environmental impact of all supply chain partners, and so on.

These end users go further. So desperate are they for the industry to move towards best practice, that they are willing to work directly with label converters to show them exactly what a Lean Operation looks like, using the vast experience gained by optimizing their own supply chains – and sharing the practices of the best of their label converter base.

This is a serious issue. If we cannot continue to cut the Total Applied Cost, particularly of pressure-sensitive labels, then end users under intense cost pressure themselves could well shift their attention to competitive packaging systems where these efficiencies have been realized.

Andy Thomas
Group Managing Editor

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Labeling news

Food and Drug Administration approves UV technology for direct food contact

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the Food Contact Notification (FCN) 772 to allow direct food contact with UV or electronic beam formulations. The FCN772 clears that the UV or EB cured formulations may be used as coatings or components of coatings (both including inks) on polymeric substrates, paper and paperboard, metal substrates, or as a component in adhesives.

FCN772 has been promoted by the Food Notification Alliance that includes Gidue within its members as the only labels and flexible packaging press manufacturer. Gidue is a member of the Food Contact Notification Alliance, a sub-group of RadTech USA, starting from its establishment in 2004. Since then the company, in conjunction with all other members (worldwide leading chemical industries and packaging manufacturers), has financed and promoted the

notification applying to the FDA.

Since 2004, the FDA has evaluated the work done by the Alliance and after long and accurate analysis provided the notification's clearance that allows any combination of cleared materials in direct food contact, and it is expected to widen the use of UV and EB in food packaging.

'The FCN772 clearance dramatically changes the perspectives of packaging and label printing press manufacturers,' claimed Federico d'Annunzio, president of Gidue, 'This achievement discredits a number of false beliefs connected with UV curing. It is immediately clear which benefits will be introduced in the packaging printing environment, a sector where traditionally tight and strict rules are applied for indirect food contact.'

This is the first time that a regulation institution defines measurable threshold values under which the use of UV technology for food packaging is allowed.



Federico d'Annunzio, president of Gidue

'The goal achieved by the Alliance marks out a radical change for packaging printing,' continued d'Annunzio. 'UV technology is restored into its strategic role within the packaging industry evolution, in opposition to water or solvent-based technologies.'

The next step is to wait for the European Institutions' evaluations and clearance about the regulations regarding UV and EB formulations utilization.

Gidue expands; sells E-Combat into China

Gidue has added 2,200 square meters to its headquarters in Turate, Italy while waiting for its new facility to be completed in 2010. The enlarged plant will be equipped for the manufacturing, assembly and final testing of these hybrid machines.

The design of the building under construction, located two kilometers away from the present headquarters, includes 8,220 square meters for manufacturing and already incorporates the possibility of extending the total production surface to 12,330 square meters.

- Gidue has announced the sale of a 10-color E-Combat 370 to Suzhou Jantan Packaging & Printing through its Chinese subsidiary, Gidue China. The press is equipped with the company's Flower flexo heads, two silkscreen units and two cold foil units, and will be used to print labels and light cardboard. Suzhou Jantan, founded in 1992, is located in Wujiang City, Jiangsu Province, and is engaged in label and packaging printing for worldwide brands in the pharmaceutical, cosmetics, food packaging and electronic sectors.

TLMI/Labelexpo golf challenge day

The TLMI Scholarship Golf Challenge, organized by the Labelexpo Global Series and *Labels & Labeling* magazine, takes place every year at Lake Barrington Shores Golf Club, Illinois, to raise money for students who are interested in pursuing a career in the tag and label industry. In its ninth year, the event will take place on July 21 and include a full program of entertainment for its participants and visitors.

There will be 18 holes of golf along with a number of contests, such as the Betting Hole contest, Longest Drive and Closest-to-the-Pin contest. Complimentary drinks and snacks will be served, and visitors will have an opportunity to meet new people and network over a relaxed atmosphere at lunch and dinner. A raffle will also take place with prizes donated from TLMI, CTE and various suppliers.

The funds raised at the event go to the education and career development for students looking to advance their career in the printing and labeling industry. Last year's Golf Challenge raised \$12,800, putting the total funds collected in eight years at just over \$100,000.



Omet's president Angelo Bartesaghi holds the 2008 FTA Innovation Award at the recent event in Dallas, Texas

Omet wins FTA 2008 Innovation Award

Italian press manufacturer Omet was a 'clear winner' of the 2008 Innovation Award according to the FTA, which presented the trophy on Sunday April 27 in Dallas, Texas.

The company had submitted its new X-Flex narrow web press line in the FTA Innovation Category and the judges were impressed with the design that offers 'unmatched production flexibility, efficiency, and the capability of handling a range of products from film labels to multi web jobs'.

The X-Flex, which was launched at Labelexpo Europe 2007 in September, will handle substrates from 12-micron unsupported film to 250-micron carton board, and offers a major reduction in set-up times and waste levels, thanks to its short web path. The first X-Flex machines are now being shipped to customers.

NAPIM & EMA join SGP Partnership

The Sustainable Green Printing Partnership (SGP Partnership) has welcomed two new partners in the effort to further the sustainability movement within the graphic communications industry – the National Association of Printing Ink Manufacturers (NAPIM) and the Envelope Manufacturers Association (EMA).

NAPIM is the only trade association representing the United States manufacturers of letterpress, gravure, lithographic, flexographic and non-impact printing inks. The association was formed in 1917 and represents more than 70 percent of US manufactured printing inks. NAPIM joins as a Partner Association and, as such, will be in a position to represent the ink community as SGP programs are developed.

EMA is the world's largest association devoted exclusively to the growth and prosperity of the envelope manufacturing and paper-based communications industry. For 75 years, EMA has provided its members with powerful advantages to enable these world-leading companies to thrive and prosper in a dynamic global business environment. The EMA and its members provide an essential component to printing and will be joining the SGP Partnership as a Supporting Association.

Chesapeake's plant first in China to receive pharma certification

Chesapeake Corporation's manufacturing plant in Kunshan, China recently became the first facility in China to receive PS9000:2001 certification after meeting requirements for developing and implementing a quality management system for producing printed pharmaceutical packaging.

The guidelines for PS9000:2001 certification were developed by the Pharmaceutical Quality Group of the Institute of Quality Assurance to provide a standardized baseline for Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) and to offer a framework of the best practices to be used within the pharmaceutical packaging supply industry. PS9000:2001 certification combines the principles of ISO 9001:2000 with the GMP requirements endorsed by the pharmaceutical industry to create specific quality guidelines for printed pharmaceutical packaging materials.

The Kunshan plant recently joined Chesapeake's global network of pharmaceutical packaging plants. The new plant offers design services and houses equipment for digital plate making, digital label printing, high-gloss varnishing, foil stamping and laminating. The 36,000 square foot facility complements Chesapeake's other plant in Kunshan, which manufactures plastic bottles for the pharmaceutical market, by adding the production of paper-based packaging for domestic and multinational customers.

Loparex Group to sell Loparex Oy, Loparex Ltd, and related businesses to Mondi

Loparex Group has signed a share purchase agreement with Mondi Coating BV (part of Mondi Group listed at London and Johannesburg stock exchanges) concerning the sale of Loparex Oy, Loparex Ltd, as well as Loparex's printing and slitting terminals located in Poland and Thailand.

The Loparex Group going forward will consist of: Loparex LLC with operations throughout the US, including the Willowbrook, Illinois head office. Loparex BV in the Netherlands, Loparex Asia Pacific in Guangzhou, China and an office in Hong Kong, and Kaygee-Loparex in India, a fifty percent joint venture.

Labeling news

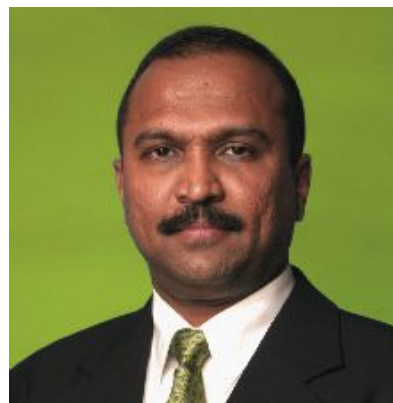
EskoArtwork opens subsidiary in Bangalore

EskoArtwork has opened a fully-owned subsidiary and Global Resource Center in India to support collaborative software and systems integration projects around the world, and to provide enhanced service to its expanding customer base within the booming Indian packaging, printing and publishing market.

The subsidiary will be led by Dinesh Chandra, pictured, who joined EskoArtwork in 1996 and has developed the company's Indian operations since 2000. The main focus of the newly established Global Resource Centre will be to support sophisticated systems

integration projects, currently originating mainly in Europe and North America.

Chandra commented: 'Unlike many other companies, EskoArtwork is not moving low-skill jobs to India. On the contrary, we are building a completely new business model around an enhanced service offering. We have chosen to base our new Global Resources Centre in one of the world's fastest developing pre-production and IT market clusters. EskoArtwork has more and more collaborative software, systems integration and workflow management projects in the pipeline and we need access to top talent.'



Dinesh Chandra has developed the company's Indian operations since 2000

Berkshire Labels launches compostable self-adhesive labels

UK converter Berkshire Labels claims to be the first company to offer a fully biodegradable and compostable self adhesive label range that conforms to EN13432 in its own right.

The BioTAK range includes a fully biodegradable and compostable adhesive which has recently been accredited with the Biodegradable and Compostable packaging standard EN13432.

The BioTAK range includes a white semi gloss paper, kraft natural unbleached paper, white and clear PLA and Natureflex, which is available in white, clear and metallized. BioTAK is suitable for chilled and ambient conditions; and is currently being used on beauty and healthcare products, food packaging, drinks and stationary.

The success of BioTAK has been realized worldwide with customers in Australia, USA, Africa and Europe. The BioTAK S100 adhesive has not only enabled Berkshire Labels to produce a range of self adhesive labels, but is also being used on compostable tapes, overlaminating film, a retail glue and as a laminating adhesive.

Berkshire Labels, also known as The Green Label Company, has been accredited to the Environmental Standard ISO14001 since August 2007.

The company has been working on this project since 2001 and have trialed green inks at its premises in Hungerford, as well as offering customers collection and recycling of backing paper to reduce the amount of waste to landfill.

FINAT launches Young Managers' Club

FINAT, the self-adhesive trade association, has launched an organization to provide for the managers of the future. The Young Managers' Club intends to provide a 'fast track' to the future for today's junior managers who will be taking over the leadership of their companies as their careers progress.

The need for the Young Managers' Club stems partly from the shape of the self-adhesive industry, with many small-to-medium label printers having been created by founders who are now nearing retirement age and who need to ensure a succession of leadership for the future. Too often these firms do not have the facilities within their organizations to provide outside experience for their younger managers and one of the club's functions will be to widen appreciation of what is being done across the industry.

President of FINAT, Jan Frederik Vink, said: 'The Young Managers Club should provide a platform for first generation founders as well as second or third generation owners or managers from the label industry below the age of 40 to meet, exchange experiences, initiate common projects, study tours and exchange programs and to identify best practices in areas like succession, leadership, intercultural management, lean management, innovation etc. Industry research indicates that over the next 5-10 years, 25 percent of small and medium sized enterprises in the developed economies will be handed over to the next generation of owners and/or managers.'

- FINAT has recruited Harveer Singh Sahni, managing director of India's Weldon Celloplast group, to its membership committee.



Torben Rasmussen
R&D Manager



Erik Jørgensen
Printing Technician



Jakob Landberg
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TLMI celebrates

Danielle Jerschefske reports on the history and evolution of the Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute

So much has changed in the label printing industry since the Tag Manufacturers Institute (TMI) was founded 75 years ago in 1933. Four years after the start of the Great Depression in 1929, the 19 founding members of the US tag industry gathered to discuss how best to cope with the newly created National Recovery Administration (NRA). The NRA became the federal government's hammer for forcing industry leaders into setting minimum prices and creating industry codes for fair competition.

President Roosevelt believed that powerful corporations were behind the economic instability which sparked the depression in the first place, and his programs were intended to not only empower labor unions, but also to tax big business in an effort to prevent 'unfair competition'. The prevailing opinion was that the label industry needed to organize a trade association in order to deal effectively with the NRA intervention, and thus the TMI was unanimously voted into existence.

The early years

With the advent of R. Stanton Avery's invention of the self-adhesive label, the industry was able to grow dramatically. For 30 years thereafter, the industry expanded, matured and evolved

to include companies devoted exclusively to manufacturing pressure-sensitive labels. So much so that in 1962, pressure-sensitive manufacturers were added to the group and the TMI became the Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute (TLMI). Similar to most of the industry now, membership consisted then of mostly small entrepreneurs, running small- to medium-sized companies, co-managed by family members and friends. The TLMI created a platform for these leaders to interact, build relationships and gain information on issues that they wouldn't otherwise have had access to. Committees were formed to address material and product standards, gather statistics, produce industry-focused publications and increase membership.

The benefits provided by TLMI membership allowed the label industry to progress along with the evolution of the modern American consumer.

'It all started with the large tag companies, but it was the squeezable bottles in the 1950s that were the great advent for PS labels,' explains Mark Andrews Jr, son of Mark Andrews, founder of Mark Andy, the flexographic printing press company. 'TLMI evolved so beautifully into this whole new era of self-adhesive labels. It was so good at bringing together customers and



75th anniversary

suppliers. R&D is expensive and TLMI provided the opportunity to sit down with a customer, over a cup of coffee, and discuss our press. It created shortcuts to the long R&D cycle and allowed us to work more closely with our customers to advance the industry. All of this openness was so good for the industry.'

TLMI past president 1968-69, Price Gwynn, saw the industry really start to take off with the introduction of the computerized cash register and the supermarket. The computerized register sparked the use of barcodes and scanners to identify products. 'Suddenly the speed at the checkout doubled. It enabled supermarkets to carry more options because products were referenced automatically,' Gwynn says. 'This started a whole new buzz of concern within TLMI. Suddenly everyone wanted to know if flexo was precise enough to print so the barcodes would read consistently. We all asked what the liability was if an expensive tenderloin rung up at the price of a can of soup. We needed to know if the label printer was liable.'

At the time, printers would purchase barcode scanners in order to test their jobs before sending them out to customers in what became a regular quality control check.

'Suddenly customers wanted to know how to get a barcode onto a lipstick container or a cigar,' Gwynn says. 'The industry was afraid that flexo wasn't precise enough – it was. When it was printed properly, it worked.' This demand from product companies for new, higher-quality labels forced label printers to become more scientific and professional in their approach to job requests. TLMI meetings provided them with the opportunities

to discuss current and emerging technologies within the industry and, through its networking events and conferences, helped its members continue to prosper along with the changing market.

Computerized growth

Once desktop computers became readily available and affordable in the 1980s, advancements were made often and quickly throughout every industry. In the label industry, in particular, the documentation of a print job – from order placement to delivery – moved to computers. By the late '90s, computerized sales, pricing, administration, finance and logistics tracking was the norm. 'Prior to these advancements, flexo was considered a second-class citizen in the eyes of the industry,' remembers Pat Patrick, past president 1991-1993. 'But with the improvement brought by computers, flexo printers were able to compete with other printing processes on both quality and price.'

As CPGs continued to develop new marketing campaigns and branding ideas, the pressure to source higher-caliber label supplies increased. Manufacturers rose to the challenge and invested heavily into R&D to expand their product options and capabilities. In answer, printers moved from alcohol-based inks to water-based inks, and, at the same time, made the shift from rubber plates to photopolymer plates, greatly improving both label quality and consistency.

Similarly, the huge growth in and development of substrates and adhesives allowed printers to stretch the limits of printing



press and rotary die technology at that time. All these changes, together with the open discussions and evaluations of technology within TLMI, truly advanced the label printing industry.

The most notable change over the past few decades, perhaps, was standardization and the acceptance of process colors – a concept virtually unheard of in the 1980s. 'It was possible to see the quality of labels ameliorate each year during the 80s and 90s,' Patrick says. 'It was really an incredible time for the industry.'

The cooperation fostered between converters and suppliers at the TLMI gatherings allowed attendees from all factions within the label industry to work together and improve as a whole. 'The TLMI brought about a feeling of camaraderie,' says Andrews. 'There was not a strong element of competition. We were working together for the benefit of the industry.' For emphasis, Andrews relates one of his most memorable moments at an annual meeting, when the founder of Webtron played a game of ping-pong with Andrews' wife. 'It helped break the ice between two direct competitors.'

Suzanne Zaccane, first TLMI female president, 1998-2000, says: 'The TLMI is conducive to information sharing of a non-competitive nature with other converters. It also stimulates relationships between our suppliers so we can continue to challenge each other with new opportunities, and review new technologies.'

'Being involved has definitely added a dimension to our business that we might not have otherwise experienced,' Zaccane continues. 'Not only does it address for us opportunities such as networking, and discussions on best practices and new ideas, we have the chance to measure how we stand up against industry leaders through both production and management awards and surveys.'

TLMI's first label competition in 1978 started a healthy form of competition amongst its members. It achieved instant success and popularity, and by its second year, had 56 entries from 13 companies. It encouraged the production of high quality labels then, and continues to do so now. 'It is a beautiful formula for success,' Andrews says.

"An Environmental Pioneer...Smith & McLaurin is proof that "green" can not only be profitable - it can turn around your business"

Labels & Labeling March/April 2008

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'Because of it, and the World Label Awards, there is no doubt that there is going to be a continued improvement beyond imagination,' says Patrick. 'In 1980 if you had told a converter about some of the high-quality labels we see today, they'd have said "no way".'

A new concern

Cost pressures became the most prevalent topic for discussion amongst the printers in attendance at TLMI meetings throughout the 90s, and it still is. Patrick believes that it was THE most important industry issue: 'Rising costs and decreasing margins were the most threatening issues.'

Zaccone also ranks margin decline as the most critical business matter during her term and beyond: 'During my time with the TLMI, the most pressing issue amongst members has been the commoditization of our products by end users. By allowing them to do this, we've had to deal with the punishment of the reverse auction and the ensuing price pressures that were sometimes given for the wrong reasons. Buyers have now started to realize the value of a good printer and the amount of skill that goes into producing the best label.'

A more personal note

'I joined TLMI to make industry friends who would share knowledge and advice,' says Patrick. 'During my time with the association I accomplished that and more. I made good business friends and close, personal friends that I still maintain relationships with.'

'The TLMI has also been a source of great personal friendships for me, Bob, and our entire team,' Zaccone said. 'It is comforting to talk

Notes to TLMI members:

"It's a great industry, peopled by fascinating individuals – get to know them. Exert responsible leadership and for gosh sakes enjoy the ride."

The two most fun times of my life was college and the TLMI"

Price Gwynn

"People are your only asset that appreciates that does not depreciate. If you treat people right and train them, they will become more valuable than anything else"

Pat Patrick

"Continue to communicate with the industry and share technological innovation in a manner that inspires new growth for the industry"

Mark Andrews

'Get involved' Suzanne Zaccone

'You have to assume that what is today will be different tomorrow. Never stick to the same old thing'

Pat Patrick

to someone about a production or management problem that truly understands the issues that are specifically important to the industry. My association with TLMI has addressed those

Success Begins with the Finish

When top brands launch a winner, they demand packaging that says "excellence."

More designers are turning away from last year's sparkly gimmicks and opting for the elegant metallic sheen of brushed films and papers made by Brushfoil.

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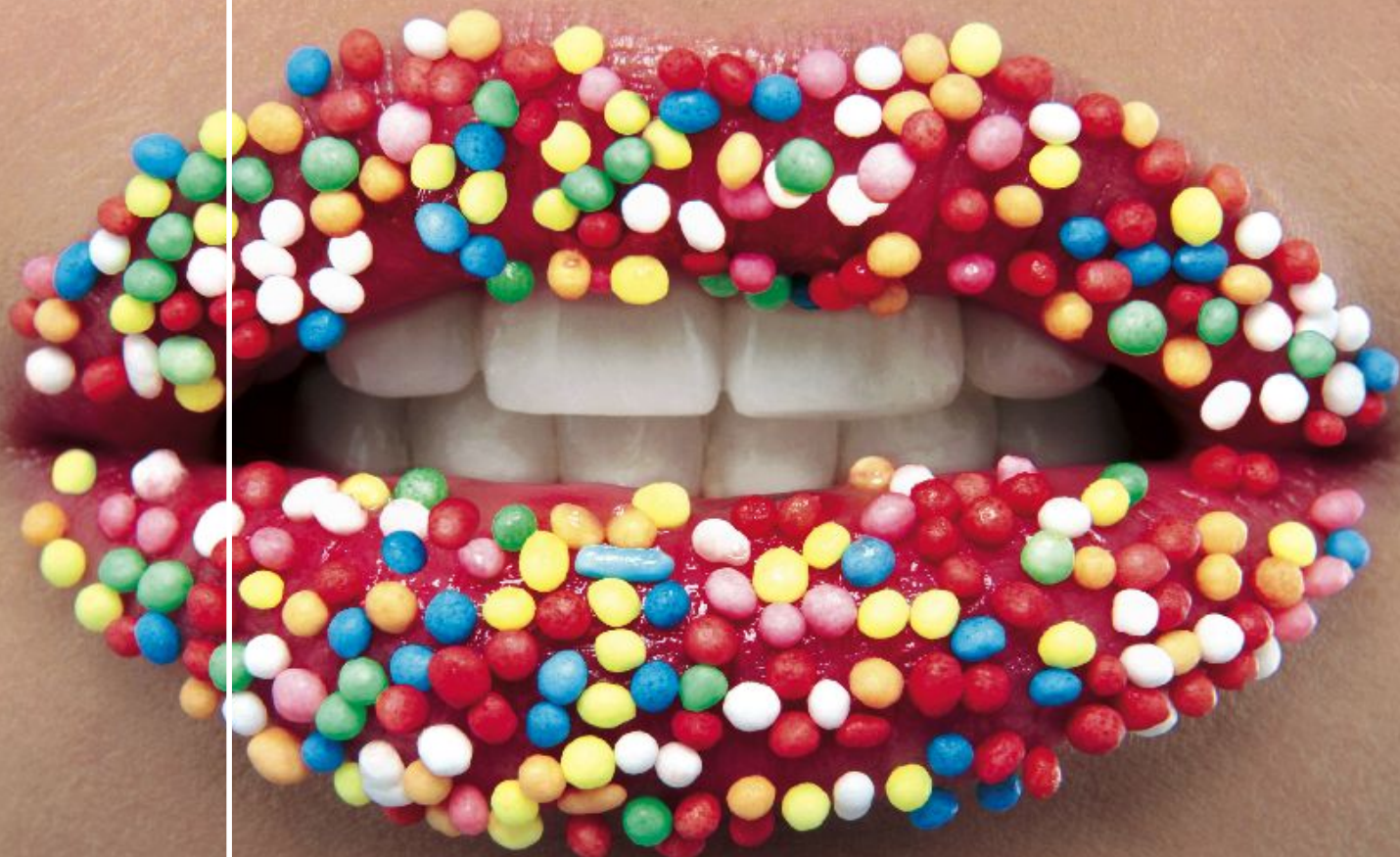


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needs and has afforded me some wonderful friendships that I will treasure for the rest of my life.'

Price Gwynn remembers trips to drupa with TLMI peers and their wives: 'There was a group of us that became very close. The TLMI helped us create relationships that enriched our lives.'

TLMI reaches out

Over the last thirty years, there has been a growing affiliation between FINAT, the European self-adhesive label association, and TLMI. The continued cooperation between the two groups culminated with a joint meeting in 1993. It was perceived as a necessary step for the label industry. 'When I assumed the role of the presidency, the pond began to really shrink and it felt vitally important to solidify our relationship with the group,' Patrick recalls. 'The first combined meeting was a truly momentous occasion.'

After Labelexpo Americas hosted its first show in 1989 in Rosemont, Chicago, Mike Fairley, founder of *Labels & Labeling*, and Clive Smith, chairman of the Labelex Cowise Group (now part of the Tarsus Group), arranged to have a meeting with the TLMI board to explore the possibility of TLMI sponsoring the show. Through the development of a close, personal friendship between the men, the partnership developed into an ongoing relationship between Labelexpo and TLMI.

'It was a great opportunity for both parties to gain more exposure,' explains past president and key advocate of the deal, Dick Schwartz. 'The partnership was made because of how valuable it was to TLMI members. It allowed money to be put back into the industry and helped the association remain self-managed. It also provided a link to the global market and economy, a topic that was growing to more prevalence by the late 1990s.'

As for the future of the industry, 'it's never been brighter,' says Zaccone. 'With the onset of printed electronics we have only just begun to see the possibilities. At this very moment the industry is working to bring this opportunity to the world of flexo.' She sees the TLMI as a valuable resource to making this happen.

The Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute's impact on the North American label industry over the last 75 years has been monumental. It has played a key role in developing the industry and its leaders in North America, and has allowed the industry to reach out around the world to play its part in a globalized world. It is certain that the association will be critical in years to come as the label industry continues to innovate and transform. ■

Board Chairman

2006-2008	John Hickey	Smyth Companies
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TLMI presidents

2004-2006	Scott Pillsbury	Rose City Label Company
2003-2004	John Bankson	Label Technology, Inc.
2002	Jim Valestrino	Los Angeles Label Co.
2000-2002	Michael Dowling	CL & D Graphics Inc.
1998-2000	Suzanne Zaccone	Graphic Solutions, Inc
1996-1998	Thomas J. Cobery	Label Art
1994-1996	George Noah	Lewis Label Products
1992-1994	Pat Patrick	Label America
1990-1992	Darrell Dochstader	Gar-Doc, Inc.
1989-1990	Richard D. Schwartz	Aladdin Label, Inc.
1987-1988	James English	Kalamazoo Label Co.
1985-1986	Paul Dunphy	Design Label Mfg.
1984	Jerry Nera	Professional Tape
1982-1983	Donald W Buchta	Mid America Tag & Label
1981-1982	Leonard J. Peterson	Label Art, Inc.
1980-1981	Jack L. Page	Kalamazoo Label Co.
1978-1979	David L. Peirce	Denney-Reyburn Co.
1976-1977	Robert D. Fletcher	Avery Label Co.
1974-1975	William W. Muir, Jr	Grand Rapids Label Co.
1972-1973	Richard J. Pearson	Avery Products Corp.
1970-1971	Richard H. Gifford	H.M. Gifford Manufacturing
1968-1969	Price H. Gwynn, II	Package Products Co.
1967	Howard E. Gorton	Dennison Manufacturing
1965-1966	John S. Torrey	Avery Label Co.
1964	L.F. Gehrig	Ennis Business Forms, Inc.
1962-1963	Robert W. Swet	American Tag Co.
1959-1961	George E. Phelps	Allen-Bailey Tag Co., Inc.
1957-1958	Howard E. Gorton	Dennison Manufacturing
1955-1956	D.M. Swett	American Tag Co.
1953-1954	H.C. McElroy	Ennis Business Forms, Inc.
1951-1952	W.C. Bailey, Jr.	The Reyburn Manufacturing
1949-1950	Gibbons G. Cornwell	The Denney Tag Co.
1947-1948	A.G. Shennan	International Tag & Salesbook
1944-1946	P.M. Pope	A. Kimball Co.
1941-1943	W.C. Bailey, Jr.	The Reyburn Manufacturing
1940	A.P. Williams	Dennison Manufacturing
1939	A.G. Shennan	International Tag & Salesbook
1938	A.P. Williams	Dennison Manufacturing
1937	E.J. McKay	Robinson Tag and Label Co.
1934-1936	E.M. Anderson	American Tag Co.
1933	Elmer Floback	Acme Tag Co.

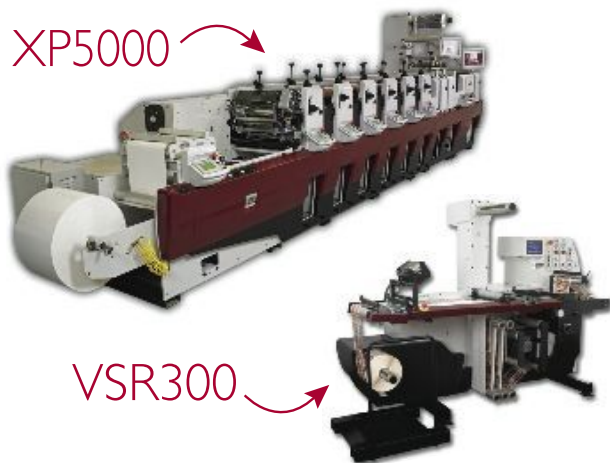


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TLMI converters gather in Mexico

The 2008 TLMI Converter Meeting in Los Cabos, Mexico was a great success. At the three day gathering North American converters were encouraged by various presenters to embrace international business and to further open the channels of communication within the continent and around the globe. An awards dinner on the last evening wrapped up the gathering to celebrate the successes of the Institute's winners of the World Label Awards. TLMI members earned 10 awards out of 27 categories, and two honorable mentions.



Tom Spina, Scott Pillsbury,
Joel Carmany, Frank Gerace



Ron and Patty Green



Dave & Elaine McDowell, Dawn &
Jay Luft, Wendy & John McDowell



TLMI Eugene Syner Award Winners
from L to R: John Hickey, David
Carmany, Craig Moreland, Ted
Williams, Kevin Briggs and Ron Green



Craig Moreland, Brian Hurst,
Cheryl Caudill, Art Yerecic,
Rich Thomas, Linda Cuca



Randy and Geri Wise, Trevor Mauder



Art Yerecic and Brian Hurst



Karin & Chris Valenti



Laura and Mike Ritter, Alys and
Thomas Dahlbora



Cindy White, Marisa and Jose Alfonso Rubio, Mike White



Mary & Paul Taylor, Ken and Kimberly Kold



David & Rita Baumgardner, Dawn & James Lundquist



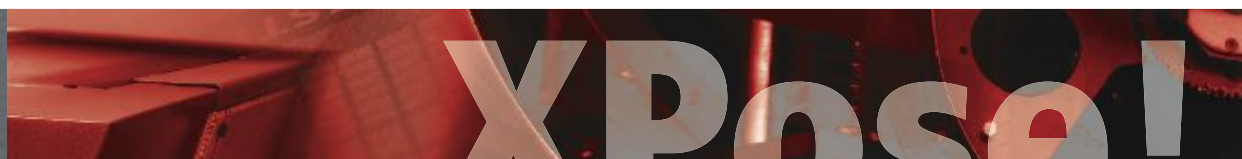
New members Peter Schanbs and John Dowling



Jennifer Alders, Doug Kopp, Walt Zeek, Rob Alders, Dan & Mary Kay Taylor

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2007 TLMI winners of the World
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Investment stimulus

Linda Reed, from investment specialist National City Manufacturing Finance, looks at the opportunities opened up by a key measure passed by the Bush administration

In an effort to encourage business spending, on Wednesday, February 13, 2008, President Bush signed the new economic stimulus package into law. It consists of two significant tax breaks both of which are in the form of larger depreciation write offs. With the interest rates at an all time low and tax gifts this big, it's an opportunity to finally get the plant equipment you need to increase your plant production and efficiencies.

Depreciation bonus

Thanks to the new law, 50 percent first-year bonus depreciation is allowed for qualifying new (but not used) assets that are both purchased and placed in service during calendar 2008. This also covers new (not used) cars and light trucks that are used for business. Unlike the Section 179 deduction benefit, 50 percent first year bonus depreciation is available to even the largest of corporations. However small and medium businesses can take advantage of both Section 179 and the 50 percent first-year depreciation bonus.

To qualify, the asset has to meet the following criteria:

- New equipment only
- The property can not be acquired under a written binding contract entered into before January 1, 2008
- The asset is manufactured, constructed or produced by the taxpayer and for the taxpayer after December 31, 2007 and before January 1, 2009
- The asset must have a depreciable period of 20 years or less
- Most software is eligible (see our CPA for more details)
- The company can not use the depreciation bonus or Section 179 to write the profits down to a negative income.

Though the asset has to be installed and in service by 12/31/08, the Bonus Depreciation will be allowed for

certain property placed in service in 2008 and 2009.

To do so:

- The asset has to have a recovery period of at least 10 years
- Is subject to the Uniform Capitalization Rules (Section 263A- see your CPA)
- Must have a production period exceeding one year and cost more than \$1 million

Section 179:

This bill expands on the existing tax benefits for qualified assets installed in 2008. This benefit can be used when:

- The company spends up to \$800,000 in equipment
- The equipment is new or used purchased in 2008
- Companies can expense up to \$250,000 in purchases as long as they do not spend over \$800,000
- If the company purchases exceed \$800,000 in new or used equipment, the deduction begins to be reduced dollar for dollar by the amount it exceeds \$800,000
- In 2009 and 2010, the maximum deduction will go back to \$125,000 (Plus any inflation adjustment) unless Congress takes any further action

Because of the increased threshold at which the deduction phases out (up from \$125,000 in 2007 and capped at around \$500,000) companies can purchase more plant equipment and are eligible for Section 179 deduction. For 2009-2010, the phase-out threshold will revert back to only \$500,000 unless Congress makes any changes to this. ■

This article is for informational purpose only. Please contact your CPA for verification of this information. Linda Reed can be contact at Linda.Reed@nationalcity.com, website www.nc-4.com



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UPM goes for US growth

UPM Raflatac has put into place the last piece of its film manufacturing strategy in North America with the opening of a new plant in Dixon, Illinois. The plant completes a geographical triangle, with manufacturing in the South and Midwest and distribution in the East.

Construction of the new plant began two years after the opening of UPM Raflatac's second coating line in Fletcher, North Carolina. Ninety-two potential sites throughout the Midwest were eventually narrowed down to Dixon, Illinois, located 100 miles outside of Chicago. 'The operating environment, the people and culture of Dixon,' explained Heikki Pikkarainen, president of UPM Raflatac, 'matches our company profile.'

The site is in close proximity to UPM Raflatac's customers in the region and gives the additional production capacity the company was seeking in North America.

Commented Jouko Lahepelto, senior vice president, UPM Raflatac Americas: 'The service capability, because of the proximity to the Midwest, can provide excellent lead times. This plant will considerably increase our ability to service the important North American marketplace and allow us to further develop our business here.'

"We believe that we will be successful, even in tough times"

UPM Raflatac's three Eastern locations – Fletcher, Dixon and Wilkes-barre, Pennsylvania – cover the region where the company estimates eighty percent of the market to be. The three locations, both production and distribution, are run and managed as one operation. 'With two production facilities we can now optimize the product range by picking and choosing where we want to complete an order. This way the customer can garner the same benefits from any facility,' Lahepelto said.

At a time when the US economy is in a slump, UPM Raflatac had no hesitation in completing its investment in the new plant: 'We believe that we will be successful, even in tough times,' Pikkarainen said to the 300+ guests who attended the opening ceremony.

Over the last eight years, UPM Raflatac has invested over

\$250 million into the North American market. 'The North American market has been a key contributor to UPM Raflatac growth in the last seven years and I believe it will continue to be that way,' said Lahepelto.

Danielle Jerschefske reports on the completion of the company's investment plans in North America

\$250 million into the North American market. 'The North American market has been a key contributor to UPM Raflatac growth in the last seven years and I believe it will continue to be that way,' said Lahepelto.

The nearly 220,000 square foot plant is fully automated. UPM Raflatac is producing its own labels, in-house, for plant logistics, using a robot to apply the label to the rolls. 'At any given time, the system knows where a specific material is inside the plant and what to use,' Pikkarainen explained. 'It allows for consistent quality. The whole design of material flow and software flow is proprietary.' Another plant currently being built in Poland and scheduled to be completed by the end of the year will have the same automated process.

UPM Raflatac designed the facility to be as environmentally friendly as possible by minimizing energy usage and keeping down waste by eliminating manual handling where possible. The facility only uses solventless adhesives. UPM Raflatac expects to have FSC and ISO 14001 certification at the Dixon site by the end of this year and at all of its manufacturing facilities by 2009. ■



L-r Dan O'Connell, VP, UPM Raflatac, Inc; Heikki Pikkarainen, president, UPM Raflatac; Jouko Lähepelto, senior VP, UPM Raflatac; Craig Burghardt, GM, UPM Raflatac, Inc



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Training partnership

A recent open house at the Flexo Trade School demonstrated the benefits of partnerships between converters, industry suppliers and training institutions. **Danielle Jerschefske** reports

A recent Open House at the Flexo Trade School in Fort Mill, South Carolina, USA, hosted 100 converters and nearly 70 vendors at its facility. New Mark Andy presses loaded with the 'bells and whistles' – AAA Press UV units, an ADT hot stamp unit, Amagic cold foil and PTS inkjet printer – were shown by students running live with the aid of an instructor. DuPont's Cyrel Fast exposure units and EskoArtwork's DeskPack and Artios CAD file software were also demonstrated to show the school's increasing scope over recent years.

'Since being involved with FTS, we have seen it grow and grow,' said Mary Sullivan, global marketing leader for Mark Andy. 'The school's expansion into more workflow solutions like finishing/rewinding and prepress has been a natural evolution. FTS remains focused on providing the latest and most extensive education by making so many tools available.'

Set up as a member-based company, FTS members, both converters and suppliers, can use services at the school to support their company. These benefits include converting services for overflow jobs, plate making, on-location training and temporary press operators.

For companies like EskoArtwork, DuPont and Sonic Solutions the R&D benefits are paramount. Not to mention that making the equipment available to the school provides an opportunity for the younger generation to gain knowledge about their products right from the start. EskoArtwork's representative at the event said, 'With the training provided here, students gain at least a general knowledge of our software. And converter members can send their employees to be trained before money is spent on new workflow solutions.'

'Mark Andy benefits in many ways through the FTS,' explained Sullivan. 'First and foremost, it allows us to partner with one of the industry's leading educators and consultants. We all share the common goal – to build a better industry through education, training, custom programs and production consultation. It is exciting to have the new Mary Andy

Flexographic Trade School changes name

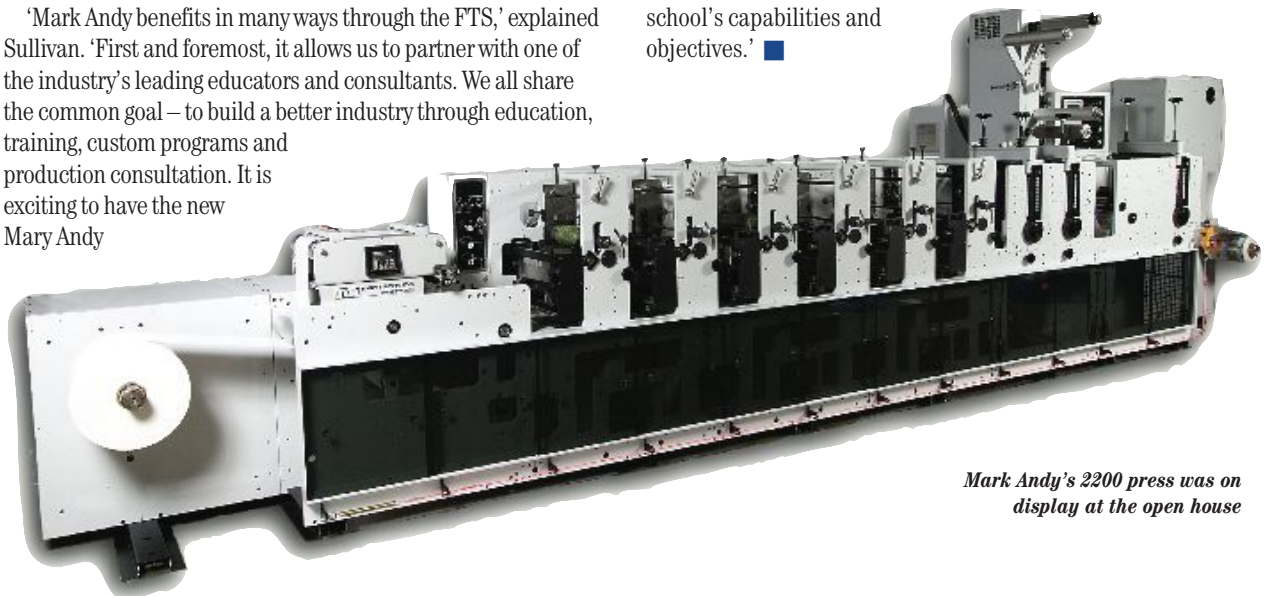
Flexographic Trade School has been restructured to now fall under the parent company Flexographic Trade Services (FTS), made up of technical and training services, the trade school, temp services, and trade shop and supplies.

2200s and VSR300 installed at the school because it is so important to have the latest technology available to students, converters and suppliers. Testing and research are also great benefits of our FTS relationship.'

J. Michael Rivera, vice president of Amagic Foils, continually uses his membership benefits. 'It's great,' he said. 'Rather than paying per job for tradeshow demo materials, we send Amagic foil samples to the school where students create labels on time and with fantastic quality. For us it is a win-win situation.'

The school, most importantly, works closely with its converter members on every level to improve the industry. 'From basic flexo training to application support and R&D, and custom on-site operational improvement programs, to a network of industry expertise, the FTS is an indispensable partner for converters,' Sullivan said. 'It offers unrivaled support not found anywhere else in the industry. Perhaps one of the most unique benefits is the ability to source a skilled temporary operator to a plant when a converter needs one.'

'Overall the FTS Open House was an event that gave us an opportunity to really celebrate our long-lasting relationship with the FTS as well as continue building awareness of the school's capabilities and objectives.' ■



Mark Andy's 2200 press was on display at the open house



Patrick Wack (left), owner of 5/7 Etiquette, next to the Codimag Aniflo Viva 420 intermittent offset press

Anilox offset first

French converter 5/7 Etiquette is the first commercial user of Codimag's Aniflo anilox inking system for offset plates.

Andy Thomas reports on the company's experience with this innovative technology

When Codimag unveiled its 'Aniflo' offset system (see *L&L* issue 4, Aug-Sept 2007), using an anilox roll to ink the plate, it created widespread interest in the labels industry. The question in many minds was whether it could be made to work as a commercial process on a narrow web, waterless, intermittent press.

The answer to that question has been provided by 5/7 Etiquette, based near Avignon in Provence, France, which has bought the first Viva 420 Aniflo production machine.

The principle of anilox (or 'short') inking for offset plates is not new. Heidelberg has implemented the technology, which it calls Anicolor, on its water-offset Speedmasters and KBA has its own waterless system. This, however, was the first implementation on a narrowweb machine.

5/7 Etiquette – a history

The decision to buy the Aniflo Viva 420 was made by Patrick Wack, managing director and owner of 5/7 Etiquette.

Wack has a long history in the labels industry. Before buying 5/7 Etiquette back in 1995, he had worked for a French pre-press division of the UK-based Wace Group, specializing in color retouching and separation.

'I knew some subsidiaries of Wace which worked in self-adhesive labels and thought this was an area where a small company could operate,' recalls Wack.

5/7 itself was founded 40 years ago, and when Wack took over, the company was specialized in labeling fresh produce – and particularly the melons which flourish in this beautiful part of the world. 'Since then I've changed everything,' says Wack.

“On our Viva 420 offset press we can print multiple jobs on one plate, and there is less than 100 meters of waste when starting a new four color job’

Wack was particularly attracted to 5/7 because of its Barco-equipped pre-press department – unusual for such a small company. ‘It was necessary for them because of the very short timescales involved in fresh food production. I moved the focus from reactivity to pre-press quality and added value.’

Today 5/7 has diversified into high value food, spirits and healthcare markets – and of course into wine.

‘Wine continues to move to pressure-sensitive labels, and over half of French wine labels are now PS,’ explains Wack. ‘Often the same customer asks for PS for the front label and wet glue for the back. Wine represents around 30 percent of our business, but is highly cyclical, so we don’t want that to increase that too much.’

Interestingly, most wine labels are printed flexo, and not offset. ‘Since we started using CDI digital flexo plates very precise text reproduction is no longer a problem,’ explains Wack.

In 2001, 5/7 Etiquette moved to a purpose-built factory, which projected a better image to customers and allowed the development of a more efficient workflow.

5/7 had historically been a Gallus letterpress house. The company made the move into UV flexo with two Gidue 370 Combat UV flexo presses. It also ran two Codimag Viva 340 intermittent presses, one letterpress and one waterless offset, and two SMAG silkscreen presses.

The ‘Aniflo’ Viva 420 replaces the Codimag letterpress. ‘These are good machines but to have such a mixture of processes is too complicated,’ notes Patrick Wack. ‘We will concentrate on high quality UV flexo – our next press will probably be a servo-controlled press – and offset.’

Wack is not yet considering digital. ‘We have a digital workflow, but digital presses are expensive and difficult to manage. On our Viva 420 offset press we can print multiple jobs on one plate, and there is less than 100 meters of waste when starting a new four color job. The short inking system makes it much quicker to manage the ink chain. All of this helps us compete with digital.’

The Aniflo project

‘We started discussing the Aniflo project with Codimag one year ago,’ recalls Patrick Wack. ‘In July we were among the first to see the new machine. The mix of offset and using an anilox



Aniflo uses four cylinders of equal size. An anilox roller delivers a constant ink film to a form rubber roller, which transfers ink to the plate and from the plate to the blanket

distribute the ink interested us very much. The speed of the machine was in the flexo range, giving us the possibility to produce quickly and in high quantities and to produce short runs with a low cost pre-press.’

5/7’s Codimag Viva 420 is an intermittent 5-color offset press with hot foil, embossing and a flexo varnish unit. It runs at up to 60 meters/minute, with speed depending on the repeat length. Print width is 420 mm (16 1/2in), and repeat length is variable between 8-17in (200-432mm).

The Aniflo technology replaces the offset inking train with four cylinders of equal size. An anilox roller delivers a constant ink film to a form rubber roller, which transfers ink to the plate and from the plate to the blanket.

‘We did not have the any fear of testing something new,’ says Wack. ‘I could not see how it would not work. Our production manager, who has worked with Heidelberg machines, had the opinion that waterless machines were low quality – now his opinion has changed.’

5/7 Etiquette is working closely with Codimag on standardizing the ink, anilox and blanket specifications for the Aniflo process, building on 5/7’s flexo experience.

‘We are more than half way to the point of controlling these variables,’ says Patrick Wack. ‘We have found that temperature control is the most important way to change the ink distribution on the blanket. This is very important, because it means we can adjust the inking without changing the anilox. We can then store these temperature profiles in the press memory for repeat jobs.’

The less we have to change the temperature the better.'

Wack says that changing between light (7gsm), medium (9gsm) and dark (12 gsm) PMS colors represents the biggest challenge. 'Currently it is easier to do jobs with PMS colors with flexo, where they are managed by anilox selection alone. On the Aniflo you need to change the anilox and adjust the temperature. We are looking for a standard temperature for each job and for each type of ink and substrate.'

Temperature can be adjusted at two points in the Aniflo chain: at the anilox, which is slow to have an effect, and at the blanket, using an infra-red temperature control system. It takes 2-4 minutes to decrease the roll temperature from 50 to 25 deg C.

Perhaps the biggest challenge for a 'conventional' offset operator using Aniflo is a loss of control over individual inking zones. But for Patrick Wack, that is a positive benefit. 'I was looking for a loss of control over the inking zones! I want technology to manage inking, not luck. I want this company to have a high level of repeatable quality and not that every press operator brings his own 'craft' to this machine. It is the file which needs to be good and any problems should be solved in pre-press, and not on the machine.'

Flexo vs offset

Using both flexo and offset presses, there is no 'preferred' route for a particular label job at 5/7 Etiquette. 'Each system has its own advantages,' notes Patrick Wack.

'Offset has a lower pre-press cost than flexo. The plates are cheaper and take less time to make and software file preparation is easier – for example around trapping. You don't need to clean and store offset plates like flexo plates, because it is cheap and fast to produce new ones when you have a repeat job.'

On the other hand, flexo is preferred for clear-on-clear work, for metallic inks and where PMS colors are required. 'Vignettes might push you towards offset, but with Esko's Samba hybrid screens you can get very good flexo vignettes – it's just harder work than doing it in offset.'

Color management is key to the whole operation. 'We use Esko's Kaleidoscope ink management software and Gretag measurement systems together with ICC profiles for each press,' explains Wack. 'We want to achieve the same result for a job printed flexo or offset, with the same smooth workflow for the file.'

Patrick Wack is pushing customers to use 4-color process where possible. 'The less we have to use PMS colors the better. When we quote a job, our Gretag system looks at the press ICC profile and shows us whether we can replace PMS colors with process colors at a delta value that the customer will accept. This is where offset is certainly cheaper than flexo – where a 6-color flexo job can be printed out of four process colors.'

Concludes Wack: 'You can reach the highest quality in flexo today, but it's easier in offset. Also offset is the choice for uncoated papers. Gear marking is also an issue if you are running jobs on flexo presses without servos.'

Talking about quality issues, Wack notes that the Aniflo system has eliminated 'ghosting', since there is a direct 1:1 relationship between the inking cylinders, the plate and blanket cylinders.

Managing information

The Aniflo Viva 420 sits at the heart of an efficient digital workflow based around an MIS (management information system) supplied by Belgium company CERM. 'We have implemented JDF links to our Esko Graphics management software,' says Patrick Wack. 'In the next months we will be working with Codimag on how JDF can link the press memory into our MIS, so we can improve set-up times for repeat jobs.'

Wack's ambitions for JDF extend to linking the measurement systems on the press into the MIS. 'Information on downtime, machine speed and so on is measured twice now – once on the machine, then again on the MIS. When the press is directly connected to the MIS, we can automatically measure the real cost of a job in terms of machine time, materials and inks cost. Our aim is to improve the accuracy of our estimating system – particularly for repeat orders.'

Wack even wants to include information on wastage rates in customer quotations. 'Also, knowing how much material is left over allows us to run just the right amount on a repeat order.'

The MIS links together all parts of the business, and allows the press operators on the Viva 420 complete control over their own workflow. A console linked via the CERM database server displays all the jobs scheduled for that machine. The monitor shows a green light against a job (again via JDF from the Esko Backstage server) when the customer file is ready to go to the CTP unit. The printer controls the order in which the plates are made, allowing him to group jobs which use the same color sequence, for example, or a similar sequence of converting units.

'He can do this with the time saved from not having to adjust the Aniflo machine,' says Patrick Wack. 'That's time better spent managing his own work in the most efficient manner.'

Learning experience

Commenting on his experience installing and running the press at 5/7, Codimag's Aniflo project manager Philippe Piant says: 'Patrick is someone willing to push the limits of quality, and running PMS colors is where 5/7 has pushed us most. You do not have to adjust temperature on 4-color jobs, but when using PMS colors you have to make some adjustments. This information can then be saved for when you run the job again.'

Philippe Piant and his team have been working with 5/7 on anilox selection when running, for example, gold inks, finding the best combination of inks and anilox to get the best out of the press.

One major modification has been the introduction of a blanket on a steel base, which makes it easier to mount.

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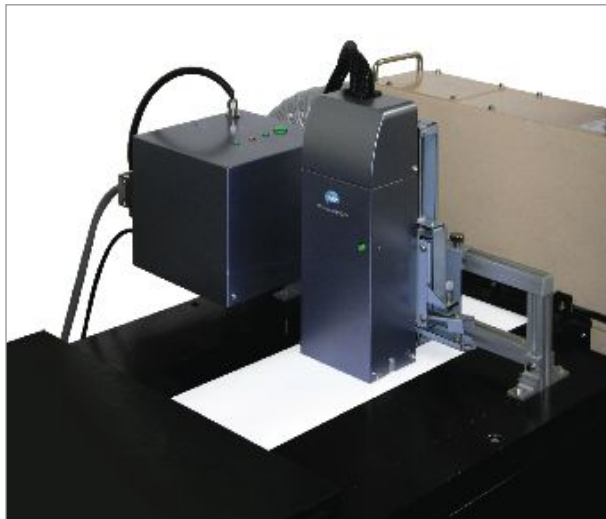
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New products



Konica Minolta IJ Technologies has introduced an inkjet print unit for over-printing barcodes and variable numbering

Hardening die

Suron

Suron, an Israel-based supplier of flexible dies, has launched a new hardening die. A unique coating is applied to the flexible dies which are then going to heat treatment giving them extra strength and durability. This new technology was developed to suit label printers demand for mass production and long runs.

The company has also announced plans to expand its plant by 400 square meters. The new space will consist of new offices and the extra space will be used to enlarge Suron's production floor. Building began in April and the company will move into its new offices and production floor by the end of 2008.

The expansion is the result of significant growth over the last two years, with the company beginning to supply markets such as Australia, India, Russia, Cypress and more. Suron has 30 years of photo-etching experience and advanced engraving technology to allow the production of top quality cutting tools.

Inkjet print unit for fine characters and barcodes

Konica Minolta

Konica Minolta IJ Technologies has introduced SP-M0320HR, a high resolution monochrome inkjet print unit for over-printing barcodes and variable numbering.

The new SP-M0320HR is the second product in the inkjet print unit series introduced last year, featuring printing of fine characters and barcodes, which was difficult to reproduce previously. The SP-M0320HR consists of three units – a printhead unit, a sub-tank unit, and an ink cartridge unit – and its compact design allows each unit to be located flexibly according to the space availability.

The print unit is designed to be used with the Konica Minolta's new cationic UV ink, and possible to print over various media including coated paper, uncoated paper and PET film.

Compared with conventional UV inks, it is easier to handle and environmentally sound, safer and emits far less odor.

Thanks to the single pass printing method, a practical print speed of 20m per minute has been achieved and ensures efficient productivity. In addition, the maintenance necessary for the inkjet printing unit can be easily carried out just by following the instructions on the computer screen.

The printhead unit, employed for the SP-M0320HR is KM512, a shear-mode piezo on-demand inkjet printhead that has won acceptance in the industrial market. Since piezo on-demand inkjet ejects ink drops by deformation of ink chambers by applying electric fields and requires no heat, it allows lower power consumption. Thus, it is considered to be an environmental conscious technology.

High volume RFID strap production

Muehlbauer

The FCM 20000 from the Muehlbauer Technology Group is said to provide an efficient and flexible system for high volume RFID smart label strap production.

The new fully automated high speed line is especially designed to meet the demands of chip manufacturers or strap users in mass production with a maximum throughput of up to 20,000 UPH. Its wafer mapping capability speeds up the production process, as immediately only good dies are used for the assembly process. The flexibility of handling all chip types and sizes from 0.4 x 0.4 mm to 3.0 x 3.0 mm on wafers with formats of up to 12 inches, the proven ACP/NCP assembly process and the high final bond accuracy of $\pm 40 \mu\text{m}$, guarantee highest yield and thus, lowest possible strap costs.

The FCM 20000 concept includes high class testing for high product quality. This is realized by an integrated electrical test as well as a marking unit. Thereby the die itself as well as the functionality of the complete strap is controlled.

As the FCM 20000 is able to produce in a multi-row process, there is an additionally system available, which slits the strap tapes into a maximum of 12 rows, directly linked to the FCM 20000. A specific hot melt slitting and lamination process is also available in separate equipment, called ISL 250.

Together, both systems form a turnkey solution for easy and efficient strap production with best price/performance ratio.

Printable films swatchbook

GPA

GPA has released its new Ultra Film printable films swatchbook.

Each swatchbook includes a printed sample of GPA's low-peel/repositionable vinyl, window cling vinyl, styrene, ultra synthetic paper, ultra green film tree-free paper and rigid vinyl. On the back of each sample is a comprehensive product description complete with advantages, limitations and applications to help guide the customer to the right solution.

New to the Ultra Film family of products is Ultra Green 100

New products



Custmo customized storage and work modules are built to serve the dual purposes of a cabinet for storage of tools and accessories

percent Tree-Free Film, which is composed of inorganic stone and made entirely without the use of water, bleach or toxic chemicals. This new substrate is part of GPA's response to the demand for environmentally conscious options.

The design and vivid colors highlight the printing capabilities of Ultra Film. This swatchbook was printed offset on a Man Roland 706 press using UV inks and a gloss UV coating.

HP-certified coating

Michelman and Utopia Digital Technologies

Michelman and Utopia Digital Technologies have teamed up to develop a new printing surface designed to enhance the printing of polymer and plastic media on HP Indigo presses.

The HP-certified coating, called Extrema CS3, was developed collaboratively by Michelman and Utopia and is a modification of Michelman's DigiPrime, a technology used by film producers and converters around the globe. To take advantage of the new coating, Indigo users need to order through GPA, a supplier of paper and film substrates based in Chicago, Illinois, and specify substrates with the Extrema CS3 coating. GPA is the exclusive distributor for the technology, which is currently available only in North America.

Extrema CS3 is pre-applied to the substrate, eliminating the need for press owners to handle chemicals. It is said to offer a full suite of beneficial properties never before available to HP Indigo press operators, and is available on PVC and synthetic sheets. 'The coating produces consistent color development from sheet-to-sheet and lot-to-lot, excellent ink and coating adhesion, and most importantly, superior functional performance,' said the company in a statement.

Functional performance is demonstrated by absolute flatness of the substrate before and after printing; no shrinkage, warping or registration issues; a surface that slips uniformly and consistently with no sticking to press components or other sheets, resulting in less downtime and fewer torn blankets; a reduction in static build up; faster drying; and the ability to repel fingerprints and other contaminants.

Extrema CS3, like DigiPrime, is non-yellowing and because it's

water-based, can extend blanket life when compared to solvent-based primers. Using substrates coated with Extrema CS3 can also increase the printer's efficiency and profitability by minimizing downtime, waste and maintenance costs.

Customized cabinet modules

Custmo

Niels Rasmussen of Denmark, a press engineer, has designed and built customized cabinet modules for some of his clients after seeing a lack of functional and organized work and storage space around the presses on which he worked.

The cabinets have proved so practical and popular that Rasmussen started Custmo as a company to design and build customized cabinet systems to fit each printing press's storage and work needs.

While regularly pulling presses apart and putting them back together, Niels experienced how space around a press can and should be optimized to offer functional and time saving storage. Custmo cabinetry helps to organize parts, materials and tools nearby where they can be easily and quickly reached. As a result, job changes are faster and smoother.

Custmo customized storage and work modules are built to serve the dual purposes of a cabinet for storage of tools and accessories, with the cabinet top also functioning as a sturdy steel work surface. There are eight different types of durable modules assembled in combinations best suited to the work process and the specific needs of the press.

Labelstock for moist surfaces

Neptun

Condensed water on surfaces of transport boxes can lead to labeling problems. The self-adhesive label may not get sufficient bond, which can result in it slipping. This in turn can lead to error messages in automatic scan procedures. Sometimes the label drops off completely, which is particularly critical, as the traceability cannot be guaranteed anymore.

Neptun Technologies, manufacturer of water soluble label materials, has developed a labelstock which aims to fulfill these requirements. The new product, Neptun Label 3300, consists of a water-soluble adhesive and a splash water resistant label paper. A special feature of the adhesive is its ability to absorb water and therefore adhere to substrates with damp surfaces.

The label is suitable for permanent marking of boxes as well as for applications where the label should be washed off after use. The cold water soluble adhesive dissolves in the washing process and leaves a clean surface. Increased washing temperature and increased alkalinity accelerates the solubility of the adhesive.

Semigloss paper

Technicote

Technicote, in recognition of label manufacturers' need to control costs in this time of rising prices, recently introduced a 50# economy grade, C1S, white Semigloss at its Terre Haute, Indiana manufacturing facility.

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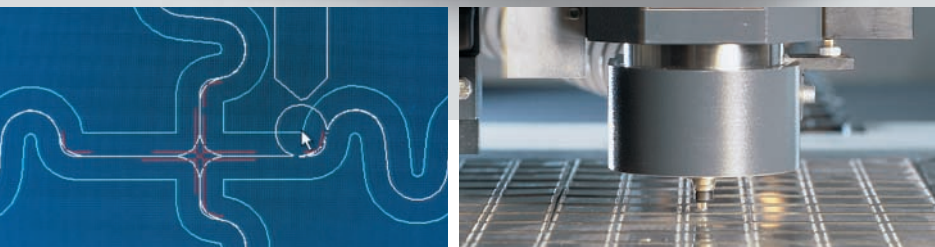
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Niche players drive New Zealand forward

Servicing a domestic market of 4.1 million people and located a long way from the major global markets, New Zealand label converters were forced at an early stage to learn the meaning of today's buzzwords: niche, lean, innovation and globalization.

Like the general population, New Zealand converters have been early adopters of new technology and are strongly internationalist in outlook, following domestic manufacturers as they migrated offshore, first to Australia and now to China and SE Asia.

Those converters who service domestic industries are working for high added value export sectors such as fresh produce and wine. According to industry experts some 75 percent of labels usage in NZ is PS reels against 25 percent sheet – a higher proportion than Western Europe. Over half of those rolls (55 percent) are filmic.

Although there is fierce internal competition, the limited size of the domestic market has compelled New Zealand converters to find co-operative niches, encouraged by local trade organization SALMA and close personal ties between owners.

Many of these ties of loyalty were forged in the 'nursery' of the New Zealand label converting industry, QuikStik, in the mid-1960s, which produced the entrepreneurs who dominate the industry today. But a new generation is coming through, taking advantage of this strong base of knowledge and experience and looking for the markets which will drive growth over the next decade and beyond.

So we hope you enjoy reading this snapshot of an industry bursting with innovation and entrepreneurship – not just surviving, but thriving.



Adhesifs represents a global benchmark for label converters. Above: The spotlessly clean press floor housing three RCS330s, (top right) each job is presented on a dedicated trolley for the press crew; (bottom right) Rob Warren, Adhesifs joint founder and managing director

Gold standard

New Zealand label converter Adhesifs is a global benchmark for a Lean and strategically oriented business. **Andy Thomas** reports

Ask anybody at Gallus' headquarters in St Gallen, Switzerland, for a list of its top five global benchmark printers and New Zealand-based Adhesifs Print will certainly be there.

Over the last year and a half, the company has re-engineered its business model, taking a hard and unflinching look at working practices, customer targeting and printing technology to emerge as a re-energized regional player.

This rapid shift to a new manufacturing model was dictated by a combination of factors. The opportunity was created by a change in company ownership. Competitors had been installing modern equipment, eroding Adhesifs' competitive position at the same time as the company was facing increasing competition from Asia and consequent margin pressure from customers.

Joint founder and managing director Rob Warren acted decisively, starting with a company restructure which brought a new investor into the business. His goal was expansive: 'To restate our position as the market leader in quality, innovation and customer service.'

Warren set about changing the company culture to be customer-facing at all levels – internally as well as externally. 'Only customers can define quality,' comments Warren. 'We created 'customers' within the company and ensured the voice of the customer is considered at all times.'

The next stage was to focus on waste and efficiency, starting with a plan systematically to measure all production parameters. Warren stresses that it is essential to define ambitious targets and communicate them clearly. 'By reducing lead time and increasing productivity we aimed to reduce total cost by at least 20 percent. Throughout the process, communicating goals to, and involving the staff was a key priority. A sales and operations planning interface was set up and management information software introduced.'

Reducing waste meant looking at everything from the use of floor space to work in progress, inventory and waiting time, all backed by a culture of continuous improvement, and alliances with key suppliers.

'If you take materials, we previously focused on buying at the lowest cost and making the best of it,' says Warren. 'Now we have alliances with key suppliers. Avery Dennison and Oji were chosen as primary suppliers. We introduced a system to order stock electronically, bringing closer the day of perpetual inventory.'

Flint Ink was the chosen strategic partner to install an automated ink mixing and management system. 'Our automated ink matching system has saved us a lot of money,' enthuses Steve Cowie, director 'New inks are scanned into the system, and returns are weighed and scanned into stock. We found we were discarding 25 percent of our ink and today we are saving \$30-40K a month just by recycling these overs.'

Choosing the RCS

Gallus was chosen as Adhesifs' strategic press partner – building on a relationship that went back to 1991. The decision was taken to move from letterpress to UV flexo, but it was not a straightforward one, as Adhesifs co-founder and R & D manager John Westray, explains:

'At least 60 percent of our letterpress jobs could have been done flexo, but I still felt there were problems that had to be resolved. Clean and repeatable dots were not there, or the ability to clean and change over the printing unit without tools. I went to a lot of flexo companies around the world and repeatability was the biggest issue. I felt that Gallus had the solution with the RCS330 and digital plates, and I had a lot of involvement during the three year development of the press. Our first RCS was machine number 9.'

That first machine proved to be a real success. Two years later Adhesifs committed to buy two more. The project was lead by Steve Cowie and required the back to back installation of two RCS presses, the disposal of old letterpress machinery and the upgrade of the Australian plant.

The new presses are specified with nine color units, with modules for screen, hot and cold foil stamping, lamination and reverse printing. One machine is dedicated to runs of 5,000-60,000 labels, while the other two are averaging run lengths of just 5,000 meters.

Such a high throughput of jobs is achieved through a 'Pit-stop' workflow program which emphasizes reduced waste and downtime. 'This is the most user friendly press you can find,' enthuses John Westray. 'There is zero waste when the press is running and the operator does not have to constantly fight it.'

But Westray points out that the skill level required to make the most of the RCS is greater than for other presses. 'Operators have to be more intelligent and have to have confidence in the

Applicators

Adhesifs designs and has manufactured its own line of modular label applicators, the MLS200 and 400 series, with over 1,000 machines now installed. The company has also developed an integrated neck-tagging system, along with systems which allow promotional items such as booklets, coupons or competitions to be dispensed at high speed.

This expertise in applicators is extended to consulting for its clients to ensure that labels will run efficiently on target applicators on the packaging line.

For its in-house shrink sleeve operation, Adhesifs has installed a DCM seamer/inspector. For customers moving to shrink sleeve labels for the first time, Adhesifs works with the client to optimize design for efficient production and application.



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(left) an automated ink mixing system has dramatically reduced waste rates. (right) Adhesifs co-founder and R & D manager John Westray

machine to run it consistently at 150 m/minute every day, which is what we do. These printers are professional tradesmen, and the best you can get. It takes 18 months to train a printer to our one standard of excellence.'

The possibilities presented by a fully servo-controlled press have allowed Adhesifs to expand production from PS into shrink films, wraparound labels and inmould labels. 'With extensible materials such as shrink sleeves, you can get wrinkles and creases on mechanically driven presses, but the servos compensate and we can run light and soft tension so the rolls are not wound up too tight.'

Servos have also made the de-lam/re-lam units much easier to us. 'Previously it was hard to get the two webs to run at the same speed, but with the servos we can retard the face to the backing paper and adjust the speed and tension on the top web,' explains Westray. 'We have been running the press for a couple of years and we are still tapping its possibilities.'

Reorganizing the workflow around the press has been as important as learning to optimize the machine itself. As a first step, additional printers were assigned to the RCS presses to act both as cover and as assistants to reduce downtime during press changeovers.

All press change components are delivered ready to go on a trolley, in line with Gallus' recommended 'pit stop' approach. 'You just drop in the cylinders on the RCS 330 and it's ready to run in 100 meters,' says John Westray. 'On the 6-color letterpress we had 600 meters of waste and on the RCS 120 meters. On the letterpress a 6-color job took 2-3 hours to set up and on the RCS 20 minutes.'

Adhesifs has also made a significant investment in dedicated cleaning resources for the RCS presses. The ink chambers are not washed up by the press crew. A separate crew takes the chambers back to a dedicated area where they are cleaned along with the twin doctor blades and plates. This team is essential to keeping the presses up and running. Adhesifs' focus on short run, JIT production means running 50-60 jobs a day, with up to nine plates and nine chambers to be cleaned on each press per job.

By the time the job components reach the press, there should be no further need for operator intervention, as John Westray explains: 'When you have all the variables under control away from the press and good management of the ink, then the operators know that what is on the trolley is correct. They are not expected to mix ink on the press, or check that the plates are mounted correctly and the chambers clean.'

Preventative maintenance programs have been introduced at weekly intervals, including remote diagnostic support from Gallus in Switzerland. While L&L was on-site a Gallus engineer was using his laptop from home to run trouble-shooting tests on one of the RCS presses.

Summing up his experience re-engineering Adhesifs, Rob Warren advises printers to form a 'strong and interactive' relationship with every key supplier and to cultivate the kind of customer who contributes to profit, not stress. 'Then turn your technology and production commitment into news and savings for those customers. Above all, you need to embrace change — make it a friend and not a foe.'

History

Adhesifs was founded by former Quik Stick alumni Rob Warren, John Westray and Mark Jamieson in 1981. Two years later, New Zealand signed a free trade agreement with Australia and 'overnight' 30 percent of Adhesifs' business moved offshore as local manufacturers relocated to the bigger Australian market. Adhesifs followed and set up a second plant in Sydney.

In terms of technology, the company started out as a letterpress house, first with Ko-Packs, then with Gallus letterpress machines as customers started to ask for embossing, silk-screen and higher quality work. Adhesifs' 8-color R200 was the first combined rotary foil/silk screen letterpress in New Zealand and its third machine was a powerful 10-color press with dual unwinds and lamination station dedicated to coupon production.

'We also had Gallus R250s, which were more powerful machines than we had ever seen before,' recalls John Westray. 'This opened up the market for us, meaning we could compete with offshore competition in the HBA market and take on the big guys.'

(Inter) lock and go

One of the reasons the RCS330s can be run at such consistently high speeds, is that Adhesifs takes complex die cutting off the press. The company's 'Interloc' system uses an off-line laser die cutter running at 200 meters/min to cut out complex, nested shapes before matrix stripping, greatly reducing material wastage across the web.

To make this system work, Adhesifs' prepress department has to be closely involved with the client. After working out the imposition scheme, a die line is sent back to the designers to incorporate into the finished artwork file.

'We built the laser out of necessity as a way of utilizing stock in a better way,' explains John Westray. 'It is an example of how our R&D efforts pay off. With what we can do with Interlock and the RCS presses, we now find we have a huge market advantage because we can develop new ideas and take them to customers rather than waiting for new ideas to be brought to us.'

'Interloc' has been registered by Adhesifs as a trade mark.



(L-r) Dale and Bill Bamford have developed Impressions International as a niche, 'Smart' player to end users and trade customers

Making an Impression

Label converters can make a good business from smart and intelligent labels if they are prepared to be creative and proactive, as the case of Impressions International demonstrates.

Andy Thomas reports

Founded in the same year as *L&L*, 1978, Impressions International is a business built on the back of smart and intelligent label solutions, creating niche products in a market saturated in prime labeling capacity.

Innovation can be seen not only in the solutions dreamed up by owner Bill Bamford and son Dale, but in the range of international alliances on the cutting edge of smart label technology struck by Bill and Dale on their global travels.

Some of Impressions' best selling labels have come from the creative use of smart inks and coatings. Heat-and-reveal and cool-and-reveal technology, for example, have been used in many different ways. 'These technologies allow a prize to be revealed once the product is applied to either a hot or cold surface, opening up endless possibilities for a competition campaign - and it can be applied to most label stocks,' says Bill. The idea has also been applied to promotional sleeves for coffee cups.

Variations on this idea include prize promotions revealed

when a garment is washed. 'In this case we originated the concept and produced a physical sample to anticipate any problems which might arise on different washing programs and with different amounts of detergent.'

A label produced for a Pizza company shows a color change if the pizza has been delivered at the correct temperature. Labels have also been programmed to change color when exposed to sunlight giving an indication of the current UV index and the need to apply appropriate levels of sunscreen.

Complex label constructions are another specialty. As well as 'standard' booklet labels, examples include peel and reveal recipe labels; multiple reseal labels; scratch-and-win - applied to both sheet and web - and shelf wobblers with integral coupons. 'The ability to obtain information on your customers through a return portion incorporated within a coupon is invaluable to a business,' says Bill Bamford. 'You can learn why, where and how they have purchased your product as they benefit from redeeming a prize, discount or

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Auckland City at night taken from Westhaven Marina

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Impressions has also developed a reputation as a security printer. Its bespoke stamp program, for example, incorporates machine-readable inks. Other interesting applications bring together security technologies with variable information printing. Impressions produces one range of highly complex labels, produced in short runs of multiple variants on lead times of no more than 24 hours from order receipt. The labels are printed to incorporate foil with a security background and a hidden message – changed every two months – printed with invisible inks.

Proactive marketing

Impressions has built its business on proactive innovation. 'We are not order takers and we do not wait for customers to come to us,' says Dale Bamford. 'We come up with the concept and present this to prospective clients'

Bill and Dale have no intention of competing in the commodity labels market or any market they regard as saturated. Wine labeling provides an interesting case study of how this approach works in practice. 'We do not chase wine labels, because that simply drives down the price - except where we can add something different,' remarks Bill.

'Smart' wine label jobs have included the ability to register a color change or make an image appear when the serving

temperature is correct to ± 1 degree, as well as dry peel 'piggyback' labels which can be removed and kept by the consumer as a record of which wine they enjoyed. Wine bottle neck tags with an inside scratch-off code are another interesting example of an innovative promotion.

Impressions has also forged a position as a trusted supplier of bespoke solutions to the trade, as Dale Bamford explains: 'Our niche approach to label solutions, and the contacts forged by Bill over many years in the industry in

Australasia, mean we do a substantial amount of trade work. Key to the success and growth of this trade work is an ethical approach that ensures we do not compromise our customers and their end customer.'

"Bill and Dale have no intention of competing in the commodity labels market or any market they regard as saturated. Wine labeling provides an interesting case study of how this approach works in practice"

Hardware list

Impressions makes maximum use of an array of roll fed and sheet fed press technologies. At the center of the sheet fed plant is a Heidelberg Speedmaster with coater, specially modified to print UV inks on synthetic film. This is supported by a range of Heidelberg die cutting foiling and finishing equipment. A range of screen presses produce a variety of specialist products - including polycarbonate labels used in many specialist markets. The company runs three Kopacks, one of which is fitted out as a specialist booklet/coupon converting machine. Two Newfoil foil stamp/embossing presses and a range of variable information printing, inspection and finishing equipment complete the set-up.



Jenkins gets smart

The Jenkins Group is positioning itself for future growth by adopting Smart and environment-friendly label solutions and offering turnkey packaging solutions. **Andy Thomas** reports

This year the Jenkins Group celebrates 125 years in business, a proud history of constant reinvention to meet the challenge of new technology and market developments. Jenkins was a pioneer of pressure-sensitive label converting in New Zealand in the early 1960s and has since then founded an Australian subsidiary, J-Tech Systems, in the early 1990s, and moved decisively into the arena of smart, intelligent and environment friendly labeling solutions.

Jenkins' current strength stems from its power base in fresh produce labeling. In 1983 the company became an agent for applicator specialist Sinclair International. The companies jointly developed systems to apply labels to fruit and fresh produce and established a network of support engineers in the major produce packing regions of New Zealand and Australia. Jenkins also holds the Australasian agency for Sorma of Italy, a supplier of horticultural packing machinery, and its engineers install, maintain and service this equipment.

The next milestone was 2004, when Jenkins started a project with research company HortResearch to develop and commercialize labels which change color as fruit ripens.

'Some fruits do not change color when they ripen, and different varieties have different ripening periods,' says Murray Simonsen, sales manager at Jenkins Group. 'We developed RipeSense labels, which can show the exact ripeness of specific fruits by reacting to the aromas released by fruit as it ripens.' RipeSense for pears is already on the

"We developed RipeSense labels, which can show the exact ripeness of specific fruits by reacting to the aromas released by fruit as it ripens"

market, with sensors for avocado, kiwifruit, mango and stonefruit in development.

Outside of the fresh produce sector, Jenkins has pioneered a wide range of smart and intelligent label solutions. These include thermoSense hot/cold sensing labels, which use thermochromic inks in customized colors and can also be applied to shrink sleeve labels. The range was extended to sterileSense for the medical industry and cookSense for the food preparation sector. Time-temperature devices are also under development.

Jenkins has cemented its commitment to R&D by appointing a full-time innovation manager, Wayne Craig, to drive new product development through the business.

'We created an innovation role because you need to build a position which can't be challenged,' says managing director

*(L-r) Jenkins Group team: managing director Tony Sayle, Gary Jackson
director of operations, Murray Simonsen, sales manager*

Jenkins Group celebrates 125 years

In 1883 Jane Elizabeth Jenkins, the founder of Jenkins Group, left with her family from England. The voyage to New Zealand took 102 days. During the passage, the Jenkins' became friends with Mrs Sarah Parkinson, who, with her four sons, was also emigrating to join her husband.

On arrival in Auckland and eager to establish a business, Jane started making paper bags in a spare room of a small house in Haslett Street. J.E. Jenkins was established. Rapid growth ensued and the business moved to another central Auckland property where an old cylinder printing press was installed in a shed. Now the business was able to print its own paper bags and offer printed stationery and envelopes.

Original customers included banks requiring extra strong bags for transporting currency. Jenkins supplied these, glued with special paste boiled up by Jane herself each morning. Growth, prosperity, and good fortune followed the company with further moves to larger premises and the acquisition of the business in 1935 by J.B. Parkinson, son of Mrs Sarah Parkinson from the voyage to New Zealand. Ownership remains in the same family today.

The company went on to diversify into paper packaging products and general printing. In the early 1960's Jenkins was one of the first manufacturers of self-adhesive labels in New Zealand. Jenkins has also been at the international forefront of fresh produce labeling as agents for Sinclair International since 1983. In July 1990 Jenkins moved the head office to its present site in Mt Wellington, Auckland. Shortly after this a subsidiary, J-Tech Systems Pty Ltd, was established in NSW, Australia.

Tony Sayle. 'You need to ask "where do you want to be in five years?" There are more RCS presses here than in Australia, so overcapacity is a problem. We need to create a point of differentiation or we are just cutting each others' throats.'

Another point of differentiation for Jenkins is the environment. With growing demands from retailers and brand managers for printers to be proactive in offering 'environment friendly' labeling solutions, Jenkins has sourced a compostable cellulose film which it calls enviroSense. The first application of enviroSense was for Phoenix Organics' Organic mineral water labels.

EnviroSense is manufactured from wood pulp sourced from managed plantations and is certified to both EU (EN12432:2000) and American (ASTM D6400-99) composting requirements.

Murray Simonsen says enviroSense is suitable for high speed automated application, has good gloss and transparency properties, a naturally high gas barrier, and is proven to biodegrade in aqueous environments and ambient temperatures. It can function as a replacement for PVC and PET in shrink sleeve as well as in self-adhesive applications. It is available both in white and in clear grades for clear-on-clear applications with a PET liner.

Jenkins has also prepared itself for growing environmental pressure on PVC shrink sleeve labels by putting into place supplier partnerships for alternative materials including PET.

Packaging solutions

Jenkins Group has been able to take advantage of new growth sectors by diversifying production into shrink sleeves, IML and wrap-around labels, and beyond that into flexible packaging.



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The company's flexible packaging portfolio includes the 'ready to eat' Ecoflex range – an in-line, catch-weight self-adhesive sleeve and label system. Other products include Microsteam valves, which can be integrated into packaging for microwave steam cooking. Jenkins also offers a contract decoration service to sleeve empty or filled containers.

Jenkins works hard to develop partnerships with its customers, offering to provide turnkey solutions up to supply chain management. This will include inventory management to both Australia and New Zealand with on-line checking of order status and stock levels.

An example of just such a partnership is the company's relationship with Natural Waters of Viti Ltd. This is an 11-year history of joint innovation which has included development of a wash-off

adhesive exceeding international PET recycling standards; a single-ply back label; reduction of a 14-color graphic to print in 9-colors; and a reverse print front label. Logistics initiatives have included a contingency supply strategy and providing purpose-built pallets for maximum container utilization,

Jenkins also works hard to involve itself with designers – preferably from the concept stage – to realize their visions in a printable form. 'We look at reducing customers' Total Applied Label Cost – for example looking at label placement, or positioning of the label on the backing liner for faster application or better utilization of stock,' explains Murray Simonsen.


Jenkins has also worked hard to increase its own internal efficiency, appointing Gary Jackson director of operations with a wide-ranging brief. Jackson is making good use of the company's Prism MIS: 'Prism has actually created more capacity, made us more efficient, and decreased waste and down time. Take maintenance: you actually gain more time if you spend time on maintenance, with proper maintenance schedules, creating more capacity and more slots.'



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Admark model stresses value add

Admark MD Laurie Pilling has built his business on offering total decoration and branding solutions to corporate customers and forcing everybody to think 'outside the box'. **Andy Thomas** reports

The key quality of the successful entrepreneur is the ability to spot a trend, invest early and stay ahead of the curve. Laurie Pilling, MD of Admark, provides an excellent case study.

Admark was founded in 1971 as a screen printing business. In 1991, Laurie Pilling bought in as a partner, and five years later was the owner. His wife Sheena is a director, and daughter Lisa sales & marketing director.

Employing 60 staff, the company has grown rapidly and today has offices throughout New Zealand and in Sydney, Australia.

Laurie Pilling built his success on being an early adopter of digital printing technology in the traditionally screen-printed graphics sector. 'When I first joined the industry, I was stunned that the screen process had not essentially changed in 2,000 years. It was still stencil and ink. Then 3M showed me its new digital technology, which was totally revolutionary and gave me a huge competitive advantage at that time.'

Pilling became 3M's first Asia-Pacific user of the wide format digital press, and set about revolutionizing the graphics sector in New Zealand.

The 3M system is still in use, printing large format graphics not just for fleet vehicles, but for entire buildings, for airplanes – it produced four of the Lord of the Rings wraps on the Air New Zealand fleet.

Laurie Pilling then turned his attention to the labels market, where he perceived that UV flexo was the technology of the future. The main label converting system in his print room is a Nilpeter FA-4 UV flexo press, specified with a Teknek web cleaner, foiling and screen heads. The typical job profile is short run with multiple variants.

Today the company produces a wide range of labels including pressure-sensitive, IML, wrap-around, tickets and tags, and claims to be the only label printer in New Zealand to offer thermal cutting of complex vinyl designs.

One of the toughest challenges is converting in-mold labels on

"I was stunned that the screen process had not essentially changed in 2,000 years. It was still stencil and ink. Then 3M showed me its new digital technology, which was totally revolutionary"

“Laurie Pilling says his main strength was coming from outside the print industry, with no preconceptions as to how things ‘should’ be done”

the Nilpeter. ‘Static is the big challenge to overcome, and the levels can depend upon humidity levels in the plant – so it can be a major problem at 3am on a stormy day,’ notes flexo team leader Tim Radcliffe. ‘The press is fitted with chill rolls and holds register well on film and can print a wide range of substrates from film to board.’

Other presses include a 7-color Gallus EM280 with hot foil and both flatbed and rotary die cutting and a KoPack. The latter is used mainly for short run work, and is slated for replacement with a digital press.

Business model

Laurie Pilling says his main strength was coming from outside the print industry, with no preconceptions as to how things ‘should’ be done.

‘I’m not a printer and I do not think like a printer,’ says Pilling, who spent 20 years in the regular army, including service in Malaysia and Vietnam and a stint at staff college. This illustrious military career earned him an MBE from Queen Elizabeth. ‘Being an entrepreneur is what

drives me. Running a business is running a business whatever the industry. The principles remain the same: you employ the right, clever people to handle the technology.’

Today the company numbers among its clients the local operations of global brands like Chevron, Burger King and BP, as well as local exporters of high quality food products – particularly wine, cheese and honey producers. International benchmarking was important, and today the company became ISO 9001:2000 registered in 2006.

For Pilling success has come through the establishment of partnerships with his customers. ‘We decide whom we want as clients, and these will generally be corporates with a requirement for multiple types of labels and total management of their corporate image. We do not think of ourselves as printers. We are solution providers, and our aim is to add value to our clients’ business wherever possible.

Although work does come from print brokers, agencies and designers, the key relationship is always with the client.



Laurie Pilling MBE, owner of Admark, with an impressive haul of awards

‘Once we understand what they are trying to achieve, then we can add value from the initial design steps through printing, finishing and packaging and supply chain management. We analyze artwork at pre-press and if we can do something to improve quality, we will.’

Building these partnerships involves selling to customers the Total Applied Cost of the label. ‘The real cost is not in the label. The real cost is if the production line stops or if something goes wrong. We ensure we know enough about the life cycle of the label to ensure this doesn’t happen and that the correct stock and adhesive is used for the conditions to which the label will be exposed.’

Management information systems – in Admark’s case supplied by Prism – are as much CRM tools as production and accounting tools. ‘The MIS is a particularly good communication tool within the plant and gives instant answers to the estimator and the customer relations managers as to when the job can be printed and delivered,’ says Pilling.



Roll team leader Tim Radcliffe next to Admark's Nilpeter FA4



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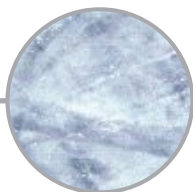
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Panprint joins print giant

A new generation of ambitious private equity companies looks set to change the face of the New Zealand label industry.

Andy Thomas reports on the Blue Star Group's acquisition of Panprint

The label market globally is characterized by a high level of fragmentation, with the vast majority of converters small-to-medium sized and privately owned. Recently, however, we have seen the rise of much bigger converting conglomerates in Europe and North America, which have been quick to snap up successful label printers to add to their portfolios in key end use sectors.

That trend looks now to have arrived in New Zealand. A key emerging player is Champ Private Equity, which acquired the Blue Star Print Group at the end of 2006 as a vehicle for an aggressive trans-Tasman acquisition strategy. Just one example of the speed and depth of this revolution is that Champ and one other New Zealand-based PE fund now own virtually one half of Australia's B1 sheetfed printing capacity.

Blue Star has now expanded its reach into the labels sector with the purchase of Panprint, one of Auckland's longest

established printing companies with a growing portfolio of Blue Chip label customers.

Blue Star already runs a dedicated label division consisting of Rapid Labels, a converter with operations in both Australia and New Zealand which itself was formed from a merger with Allmark Industries in 1999. The company runs letterpress, flexo and screen technology and plays predominantly in the wine and prime labels sector as well as being New Zealand's leading Zebra thermal printer reseller.

Blue Star New Zealand CEO Glen Climo says Panprint, specializing in sheet and roll-fed offset, is a good fit. 'Panprint consists of a good management team that will compliment us well. Blue Star will continue to seek out acquisitions that strengthen our customer relationships and broaden our service capabilities.'

Blue Star's strategy, in common with other savvy, label-

focused conglomerates, is to leave successful management structures intact, and Panprint's majority shareholder, John Thorrat, remains as general manager along with his management team of sales manager Jeff Marsh and John Lowther, commercial manager.

John Thorrat says it is an exciting opportunity for 56-strong Panprint, the company that he and now-retired business partner Danny Blackam acquired in a management buyout nine years ago. 'The acquisition by Blue Star means that as a medium sized printing business we are able to realize our full potential and I consider it a privilege to be part of the Blue Star Group. It has given us a bit of critical mass and it is certainly Blue Star's objective to grow the business in both sectors.'

Panprint was established as an offset printer 51 years ago, and over the past eight years has increased its self adhesive label printing capacity to 25 percent of overall turnover.

The company continues to invest heavily in its sheetfed business, however. Its latest Heidelberg press is a state-of-the-art, 10-color Speedmaster 74, a perfecting press with CIP 3 ink key pre-setting, auto-densitometry and removable ink cartridges.

'Having the ink in cartridges means there is no waste and it is fast and easy to change colors,' says Thorrat. Finishing machines include an off-line UV coater and hot stamping press.

Thorrat is full of praise for the Heidelberg team which installed the press: 'The Speedmaster was up and running quickly, producing two million sheets in its first month of operation.'

Primary Speedmaster applications include wine labels, and neck body/back labels for customers who have moved to PS for their primary front labels.

It was the migration of key customers to pressure-sensitive

"The acquisition by Blue Star means that as a medium sized printing business we are able to realize our full potential"

that persuaded Thorrat and Blackam to start up Pan Print's roll label operation back in 2000. 'Most of our major customers are moving to roll PSA, particularly in the wine business.'

As an existing Heidelberg house and with his existing offset expertise, Thorrat chose to go the route of Gallus TCS250 intermittent offset presses. The first machine was equipped with two flexo coaters and the ability to print on foil. This was soon joined by a second TCS250 and two years ago a high-build Rotascreen screen system was retrofitted. 'We are getting 60,000 running meters off of one screen,' comments Thorrat.

The TCS250s have seven print units plus embossing and foiling, and are fitted with double-sided Teknek web cleaners. Thorrat is considering investment in automatic butt splicers as run lengths increase. Rewind and inspection duties are handled by Rotoflex machines.

'It was certainly a steep learning curve moving from sheetfed to semi-rotary offset printing,' says John Thorrat. A key advantage is common pre-press. Offset plates for both Heidelberg and Gallus presses are produced on a FujiFilm violet light CTP system.

Panprint has just installed its first flexo press – a second hand EM280 supplied through the group. It is an 8- color machine with Hi-build foiling and embossing. ■



*John Thorrat, general manager Panprint
with his 10-color Speedmaster perfecter*

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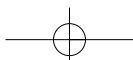
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Innovation With Passion





Leading Label

Innovative use of specialized letterpress machines and a concentration on value added work in the dairy and wine industries has allowed Leading Label to prosper in a crowded market.

Andy Thomas reports

LLeading Labels, based in Christchurch in New Zealand's spectacular South Island, was founded two decades ago by partners Roy Bickers and Eric Ratcliffe. With Eric having sold his share and retirement approaching, Roy started casting around for someone to manage the business.

His advertisement in a local newspaper was answered by Mike Lugg, who had just moved from the UK with his wife and family after serving as an officer in the British Army. 'I really fell into the label industry,' says Lugg, who has served as general manager at Leading Label for the last ten years.

With a staff of 22, Leading Label has had to innovate to hold its own against larger competitors on the North Island, and this has led to a focus on innovative letterpress work matched with high levels of customer service. The company runs a Sanki CI drum 7-color letterpress with flexo varnishing unit, foiling, platen embossing and flat bed die cutting unit. The two platen stations and flexo unit were specially developed for the company.

Other machines include two 6-color intermittent letterpress Hikaris and a Rapid RD2 blank label press supplied by Bruce Mansell in Sydney.

Leading Label supplies primarily to the New Zealand export sector, which is driven by high quality dairy and wine production. 'China is a big dairy export market and New Zealand suppliers have become more important since the Australian drought,' notes Mike Lugg. 'We have seen a lot of sheep farmers moving into dairy production and this sector has provided labels and packaging printers with good growth.'

A second major market is wine. 'We try to be as local as we can,' says Lugg. 'Wine label quantities can vary enormously, from boutique wines up to three million labels a year for a South Island Pinot Noir.'

Although most NZ wine labels are produced offset or UV flexo, Leading Label has developed a proprietary process to achieve a textured paper look using a matte varnish and a pattern-grained embossing roller, followed by foiling and a flexo varnish over the embossed foil. This allows an 'antique' label to be created out of an ordinary white label paper in a single pass and allows Leading Label to play in markets where offset was previously unchallenged.

Leading Label is skilled in setting up its presses quickly for shorter runs. 'When we started out there were 6-week lead times, which is now down to 7-10 days,' comments Roy Bickers. 'Some people like to have a big pile of jobs on their desks and production wants to have a full planning board. But if the planning board is empty, you have to fill it! This gives us a unique set of challenges. If you take wine, for example, the vineyard cannot determine the alcohol volume while the wine is still fermenting. It is only when the fermentation process stops that you can decide what route you will go down. So we will set the job up while we are waiting for this information, then typeset and produce the job as soon as we receive the final information. Sometimes it is just the tasting notes and year that needs to be changed, and we can do that for the customer ourselves.' ■

(Left) Modified Shiki press; (Right); Roy Bickers, joint founder Leading Label and general manager Mike Lugg



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Paragon opts for inspection from Nikka

UK converter Paragon Print and Packaging trialed four inspection systems before choosing equipment from Japanese company Nikka. **James Quirk** reports

Paragon Print and Packaging, the UK's largest self-adhesive label manufacturer, does not often talk to the media about its operations and equipment. But the company has broken its silence to explain the reasons behind its choosing to implement inspection systems from Nikka across its seven UK facilities.

Paragon – unrelated to UK-based Paragon Inks and US converter Paragon Label – has expanded at an exceptional speed since its foundation in 1994, with turnover reaching £117.7 million (USD \$233.5m) last year. A strategy of acquisition and focus on high productivity – the company has a fleet of over 60 UV flexo presses – has allowed Paragon to cement a leading position in the supply of food labels to the UK's biggest supermarket chains.

Acquisitions of Label Select, Bezier Labels, EPL, Norfolk Labels, Burall Labels and Creative Labels have allowed Paragon to expand its product offering to include flexible films, food sleeves and cartons as well as digital print.

The decision to invest in inspection equipment was taken two years ago, and the company began to research the systems available in the market. Heavy due diligence was carried out, and four systems – Nikka, AVT, Surfscan and AB Graphic's Flytec – were trialed, side by side, for three months towards the end of last year.

'All the key personnel from across the Paragon sites analyzed the pros and cons of each system,' says operations manager Ian Bates. 'Technology and service were the most important factors that we looked at – price wasn't one of the original considerations. Ultimately, everyone was behind the Nikka system.'



L-r: Les Bradley, LPP, and Ian Bates, Paragon Print and Packaging

Nikka was founded in 1958 as a chemical producer for the print industry. Realizing the potential benefits of making the printer's job easier, the company began to invest in making processes automated, safer and more predictable. Products such as automatic blanket washers and web guides were produced before Nikka moved into inspection in the 1980s.

The company's wide web inspection systems are manufactured in Japan and around 85 percent of the hundred-odd installations are in Nikka's local market or surrounding countries. Narrow web inspection systems are handled from the company's German office – Nikka Research Deutschland, based in the southern state of Baden-Wuerttemberg. Two hundred of these systems are installed around the world – it is

Inspection just the first step

'Many people believe that an inspection system will solve all their problems,' says Ivan Bonev of Nikka Research Deutschland, 'but it is not so. The company must feed back the information from the system into their production. It is after all not the inspection system that guarantees quality, but the production process. We provide a measurement instrument.'

Nikka launched its first label inspection system at drupa in 1995. By this time inspection was common in Japan, but European converters initially struggled to see the benefits. 'The Japanese consumer is very quality conscious,' says Bonev, 'whereas the European is perhaps more focused on content. In 1995 it was difficult to get printers to understand the benefits, because inspection does not necessarily give a company a tangible return on investment. But now, 13 years later, inspection systems are everywhere. Labels have very high value per square meter, because of all the add-on processes they contain such as stamping and foiling. Therefore the cost is high, so if there is a mistake, you need to know about it.'



The Nikka system installed on an Ashe slitter rewinder

of course easier to transport this smaller equipment.

Nikka and Paragon have now signed a deal that will see the Japanese company supply 25 ALIS Automatic Label Inspection Systems over the next five years. Each of Paragon's seven plants will also be equipped with one ODRI (Offline Digital Reference Inspection) system, which uses a DIN A2 or A3 scanner to read one print repeat of the product and automatically compares it with the PDF used to make the plates. The system automatically marks suspicious spots and will alert the operator of pre-press mistakes or damaged plates, thus reducing the risk of flawed production. During the print run, the operator can check one repeat at the end of each roll, ensuring that any plate damage will be detected not later than one roll after it occurs.

The ODRI systems feed this data to the ALIS systems installed on Paragon's slitter rewinders. At the company's 44,000 square feet Boston facility visited by *Labels & Labeling*, the ALIS system that had been trialed was integrated into a slitter rewinder from Ashe Converting Equipment. Three of these systems have been installed thus far.

The ALIS systems use area scan technology and its parameters can be changed depending on the specifics of the job. Ease of use is a key selling point – with no computer knowledge necessary, operators can usually feel comfortable with the system within a couple of hours.

The ALIS systems can also be installed on presses, where they use line scan technology, but Paragon has opted for rewinders because, as Bates says, 'they are the last point of checking before the product is sent out to the customer. We want to have complete confidence that what the customer receives is 100 percent accurate.'

'We chose the Nikka system because of the quality of the product, its ease of use and quick set up times, which were an advantage over the other systems tested,' continues Bates. 'The system also had to be able to inspect at 200 meters per minute.'

'Testing the camera systems, we not only wanted to see their performance but also the service offered. We are in a very

Paragon launches liner recycling service

Paragon Print and Packaging has developed a liner recycling service which is available to customers, non-customers and label manufacturers across the country.

Companies that use self-adhesive labels are left with a siliconized liner after the label is applied. Paragon estimates that this accounts for 30-40 percent of the total weight of a self-adhesive label product, and for 30,000 tonnes of landfill in the UK each year.

Paragon already has a dedicated recycling facility at its Enterprise Way, Spalding site, which recycles 60 percent of the group's waste from across its manufacturing facilities.

Dennis Patterson, Paragon's group operations director, commented: 'Our recycling initiative is an integral part of our responsible packaging strategy to reduce the environmental impact of packaging in the retail supply chain. We are committed to assisting WRAP (The Waste and Resources Action Program) objectives for packaging in the retail industry.'

demanding market, so that aspect is crucial. We want to be serviced the same way we service our customers. We were told that day or night there would be people we could talk to for instant support.

'Another factor was the Nikka MD Ivan Bonev's enthusiasm and vision for the product in terms of what could be developed and achieved in the future. We didn't want something that would only enhance us now – it also had to have the scope and ability to develop further over a period of time. Nikka has committed to providing us with their technology updates in the future. This is important as we like to keep continuity with our core suppliers.

'We are excited about this deal and the benefits it will have to the company. This is news that Paragon wants to share with our customers, because it will be to their benefit too. We are looking at this as a long term project.'

Ivan Bonev, MD of Nikka Research Deutschland believes that Paragon has 'far-reaching plans for implementing quality control'. 'It has been a very interesting project,' he says. 'We had already been working with Paragon on their color management and quality control, which are crucial to them given their multiple sites. It is of course perfectly possible that two labels produced at different sites but for the same product could end up next to each other on the shelf at the supermarket. We are learning a great deal from working with Paragon: there is time pressure when you work with a company of its size. No time can be lost in setting up.

'We could also see how important it is to have excellent service and support. The president of Nikka, Taro Saito, likes to say that after 50 years of being in business, all customers are repeat customers that must not be lost.'

This service and support is provided by LPP, Nikka's UK agent, which has played a key role in the deal. Owner Les Bradley has been in the label industry for 28 years: he founded arpeco UK and then started Label Pack Equipment which later became MPS UK. He has also worked on the other side of the industry, working for nine years for and becoming sales and marketing director of converter SE Labels, now part of Skanem. LPP also represents Aquaflex and Rotoflex, among others, and has built up a comprehensive range of products in the two years since its foundation. ■

Fire at Spalding facility

Paragon's Benner Road, Spalding facility was damaged by a fire in April. All personnel were evacuated safely, and operations have been relocated to other production facilities with compatible presses.

Staff have been deployed to other factories to ensure that total machine capacity is not affected, while data systems are undamaged. The company's artwork facility has also been relocated.



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Miyakoshi's factory in Akita, one of five the company has spread throughout Japan

From forms to labels

Japanese press manufacturer Miyakoshi is using its offset forms and digital printing background to attack the label market.

James Quirk reports

In recent years, three major trends have impacted label printing equipment. The continued growth of the label industry has led to the entry into this market of companies which traditionally produced wider machines; interest in offset printing has revived; and digital has established itself as a mainstream process.

Take any of these trends in isolation, and you will find a plethora of companies which prove the rule. It is rarer, however, to find a business involved in all three. Yet Japanese company Miyakoshi is using its background in business forms to produce variable offset presses for the label market, while working on inkjet machines for the same sector.

Founded in 1946, Miyakoshi saw its traditional market decline during the slowing of the Japanese economy in the early 1990s. While financial prosperity has returned, the IT revolution put paid to any significant recovery in the business forms sector.

Miyakoshi responded by moving into digital, setting up a Japanese distributor deal with Eastman Kodak Company and then Scitex Digital Printing. Its own digital inkjet system, the MPS9500, was launched in 1999, and formed the start of an important division of the company. More growth came from security business forms applications – for example receipts and warrants with hidden seals and heat sensitive inks – while direct mail began to incorporate new materials and processes.

In 2002, Miyakoshi launched a variable format press – the VAR – which could accommodate flexo and screen units

“We are confident using water-based offset technology because of our background”

alongside the traditional offset. Compatible with various media, such as paper, film and adhesive labels, and able to incorporate die cutting and embossing, the VAR presses bridged the gap between forms and flexible packaging.

This background in offset and digital has left Miyakoshi well-placed to attack the label market. The company now produces a water-based, semi-rotary offset label press – the MLP – and has plans to leverage its digital expertise into producing a label-dedicated inkjet unit. A VAR 18 film press for shrink sleeve labels, aimed at the US and European markets, will be shown at Tokyo Pack later this year.

‘We are currently developing our business with three pillars as the core,’ says company president Iwao Miyakoshi. ‘One is our conventional business forms printing machines, traditionally our main business; next is the label press which applies our business form printing machine technology; and then there are our inkjet digital printers.’

Over fifty of Miyakoshi’s MLP presses – which come in 10, 13



L-r: Units from Miyakoshi's MLP press: unwinder, offset unit, die cut unit, matrix rewinder and rewinder

and 16 inch versions – have been sold into its local market since the press was launched in 2002. Label machines now represent around 10 percent of the company's sales, and Tatsuei Yamanobe, manager of the international sales division, believes this will double in the coming year.

'The business form market was in decline,' he says. 'So the company wanted to move into the label sector. We are confident using water-based technology because of our background.'

The servo-driven MLP series integrates three Miyakoshi technologies from its larger format web offset printing presses. The Sectional Drive system allows each printing unit to be returned to the plate changing

"The next stage is to develop an inkjet printer for label production, which will begin after drupa 2008"

position automatically. Job preparation can be carried out independently on each printing unit including when the press is running. Techno-E is an automatic control system which handles initial setting, zero positioning, pitch pre-setting and pull roll ratio.

These systems are integrated by Miyakoshi's Workflow Processor. This press 'brain' controls all make-ready functions including wash-up of ink rollers and blanket, ink-up, plate change, and automatic start. It also stores repeat settings and can optionally handle production control data and a remote maintenance function.

The press typically comes equipped with unwind/rewind, laminating, die-cutting, slitting and rewinding units, while flexo, screen, hot foiling and embossing are optional add-ons.

To demonstrate the versatility of the press, Miyakoshi showed a customized version at IGAS (International Graphic Arts Show) in 2007. The MSP on display contained, in this order, four offset, one flexo, die cutting, and then two letterpress units. The label was separated from the laminate before the letterpress units printed on its reverse side.

'Visitors were interested and surprised to see this configuration at IGAS,' reports Tatsuei Yamanobe. 'It is not the standard, though that depends on the customer's request, but it demonstrates what can be achieved.'

Miyakoshi employs 600 people and has five factories spread throughout Japan. Headquartered in Chiba, a suburb of Tokyo, 30 percent of the company's USD 110 million turnover was from overseas business. An office in Dayton, Ohio, provides sales and support to the US market, and

Miyakoshi is represented in the UK by Liverpool-based Alton Graphics. The company also has a sales and support network in China, Korea and Sweden.

With increasing European interest in offset machines, Miyakoshi believes the MLP will be a success there. 'We are having discussions with some European converters at the moment,' says Tatsuei Yamanobe. 'We expect more European sales this year.' Among the machines already sold in the region are three presses printing wine labels in Italy.

Other developments include a new, compact, low-cost vertical letterpress for the Japanese market, while a waterless offset machine should be ready later in the year. The next stage, says Tatsuei Yamanobe, is to develop an inkjet printer for label production. 'Development will start after drupa 2008.' ■

Local converter opts for four MLPs

Miyakoshi's best local customer for its MLP machine is Forwatec, a large converter based in the city of Niigata. Forwatec, founded in 1974, changed its name from Chuetsu Seal Printing at the beginning of last year. Formerly a letterpress house, the company looked to Miyakoshi when it moved into offset printing, and has now installed four 13 inch MLPs – two 4-color, one 5-color and one 7-color – which it uses to produce labels for food and electronics applications.

Forwatec president Yasuyuki Tanaka calls the MLP 'a machine that improves productivity and reduces set-up time and paper waste.' He first saw the machine at an IGAS show, and visited Miyakoshi's Kunimi factory in Akita to explore it further. 'We decided to purchase the press instantly,' he reports, 'because we saw products that were thought to be difficult being printed easily. Because this is an offset press, plate quality is higher due to CTP. Post-processing such as varnish coating and lamination can be performed in-line, making it very adaptable and easy to use. Materials wastage is reduced by about 30 percent compared to conventional machines.'



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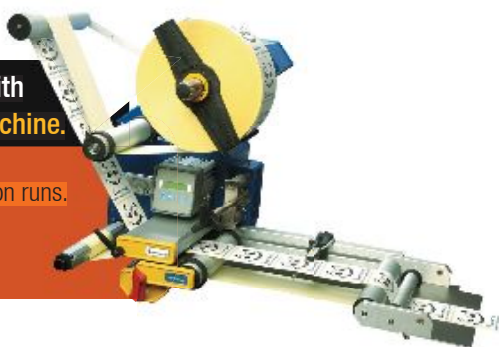


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UK MIS pioneer reaps rewards

Hamilton Adhesive Labels was the first label converter in the UK to install the LabelTraxx management information system (MIS), and the company has quickly seen the benefits. **Andy Thomas** reports

Chris Marsh has a long and distinguished service record in the UK label industry. His working life began at BPC Hannibal when big investments were being made in Gallus R160's. 'The labels side of the business was seen as the future of the company rather than flat sheet Litho,' recalls Marsh, owner and MD of Hamilton Adhesive Labels. Marsh's next step was Douglas Labels and lastly Labelsco, where he was a sales manager. His next step was to set up Hamilton Adhesive Labels in September 1992.

In June 2007 the company moved into a purpose-built factory equipped with three Nilpeter FA3300s, rewinders and a mixture of plain die cutting machines for blank labels, representing an investment of £2M over the last year. Hamilton converts prime (up to 7 colors) and blank labels – both on its own behalf and as a trade printer – and distributes printers and ribbons. This represents a complex job mix.

Before installing Tailored Solutions' LabexTraxx MIS – the first UK label converter to do so – the company ran a DOS-based MIS, which they realized needed upgrading. 'Too many packages are print management software bastardized for the labels industry,' asserts Chris Marsh. 'The beauty of LabelTraxx is that it is developed by people in the labels industry. We needed a package that ringfenced everything from prospects to management. The DOS system went up to the delivery note and then onto Sage for delivery note, invoicing and accounting, and there was no link between the two. Finished goods were held on an Excel Spread Sheet. There was no traceability. Now we have full traceability.'

A significant part of Hamilton's business – between 60-70 percent – is through the trade, so a significant requirement for the LabelTraxx MIS was to automatically raise paperwork for the final end user and not the distributor client. 'LabelTraxx allows us to set up a customer as a distributor,' notes Chris Marsh. 'It removes our name from the delivery note and puts the sender's name as our customer's.'

Indeed, one of the principal benefits of LabelTraxx has been as a Customer Relations Management (CRM) tool. With the e-traxx web portal module, Hamilton's customers can log onto a

secure server and view stocked product inventory, place orders, see order status, see shipment status and request quotes. LabelTraxx has price banding built in, allowing discounts to be automatically generated as order size increases. Customers for whom Hamilton holds stock can also call it off on-line.

Chris Marsh encourages his customer-facing staff to understand how they can use the data on the system. 'For example, just knowing when a job will be dispatched makes them look good. Management Information Systems are not just for management!'

Shop floor data collection

In the last six months, Hamilton has started working with the LabelTraxx Shop Floor data capture module. This enables management to compare estimate vs actual, creating a feedback loop for the standards set in the system. 'Once you start to build data you can make decisions about customers and types of jobs that make you the most or least money,' says Chris Marsh.

'We can view by customer and by department added value and average gross profit per hour. We have already identified some jobs that we should not be doing for that price. "Commercially acceptable" is our motto. In a market place where we need to stay aware of our costs to survive, customers cannot be allowed to dictate how we produce – and sometimes you just have to walk away.'

Repeat jobs made easier

Each job passing through the Hamilton plant from order confirmation to dispatch is identified by LabelTraxx with a unique code. This groups information on plates and dies (and their location), the number and sequence of colors, ink mix and anilox. 'So when you re-run the job the plate and sample can be easily found and all the information related to the job can be recalled,' says Chris Marsh. 'That alone is a massive step forward – to easily find repeat jobs and ensure they are printed consistently.'

Marsh says there are 'too many companies out there just chasing business and who have no idea of the real cost. We can feed back our cost information back to our estimating system to improve the accuracy of quotation.'

The system uses price information originated by the stock control module to calculate the actual cost of inks and materials used on the job, as identified by the operator. This information – along with information on cores and boxes used – feeds back to the inventory management system.

The shop floor collection module has also improved Hamilton's internal efficiency. 'We can see where an operator is spending too much time making ready, identify the problem and see whether more training is necessary. We can check this over a period of weeks to ensure we are seeing a good cross-section of work. This has helped create healthy competition among press crews and was an easy sell to the shop floor.'

Traceability

Traceability is a key benefit delivered by the LabelTraxx MIS, and recently helped Hamilton achieve BRC (British Retail Consortium) accreditation. 'Without LabelTraxx we could not have gone for BRC so quickly,' confirms Chris Marsh. 'BRC requires you to set up systems for quality control, hygiene, identification and traceability. In LabelTraxx all rolls of paper and film start in the system with roll ID – supplied either by the manufacturer or by ourselves – and that stays with the job through the plant.'

Raflatac has a direct link into the LabelTraxx MIS. Phil Timms, general manager explains the benefits: 'we raise a paper order and that goes straight into the Raflatac planning

system and to their goods dispatch operation, generating a 20 digit EPSMA barcode. When the roll arrives here that number is received electronically into our stock system, so we automatically know everything about the roll.'

Fasson is not currently on the EPSMA system, so Hamilton has to enter this data manually onto the LabelTraxx system. 'When Fasson comes in line it will save us a lot of time,' says Phil Timms.

'With this level of traceability, if a customer has a problem with a roll of labels, we can check if that batch has been used for another job and ask that customer to quarantine the rolls until they've been checked and we can take corrective action. This is a capability we did not have before. Around 70 percent of our jobs are below 4,000 meters run length, and to have full traceability for each one is fabulous.'

The Stock Products module not only handles finished goods inventory but also items that are resold such as printers and ribbons. ■

Investment modeling

One of the most interesting – and overlooked – applications for an MIS is to model different production scenarios, including the purchase of new equipment.

'We are using LabelTraxx to identify capacity bottlenecks. For example, where do you need your 7-color press with turnbar,' says Chris Marsh.

'We have used LabelTraxx to help identify which press to buy next and also on smaller projects – for example to identify whether it is more cost effective to employ a separate packer or have the operators pack as they run.'

'We now have four turret rewinders and our new machine will have a turret rewind and two turn bars,' continues Marsh. 'We now take the longest roll possible and pair it with a turret rewriter and the operator produces the labels and packs them – from roll to palletized product on one machine. We find this is the most productive way to operate. We spent a long time fighting with press manufactures to increase maximum roll diameters to cater for 4,000 meter unwinds.'

Concludes Marsh: 'Labeltraxx handles all aspects of our business from prospects through to full management accounts. In the short period of time LabelTraxx has been installed I believe it has helped us become one of the most efficient self-adhesive label companies in Europe.'

Label Traxx Version 5.2 launched

New features in Tailored Solutions' recently released version 5.2 Label Traxx software include:

- Full support for HP Indigo label presses – users can now quickly calculate digital press parameters and graphically view the process crossover point between flexo and digital
- Press capacity planning – A new report enables managers to quickly review the current scheduled load on each press, including hours, days and costs assigned to each press backlog
- Flatbed and rotary presses – Label Traxx 5.2 now accommodates rotary press stations and flatbed die cutters, in addition to the popular narrow web machines used by most label converters
- 'Find similar' search capability – Users can now search project schedules to quickly identify jobs with similar setups, thus minimizing makereadies
- VAT enhancement – Label Traxx users in countries employing value added taxes have several new tools in version 5.2 which simplify compliance



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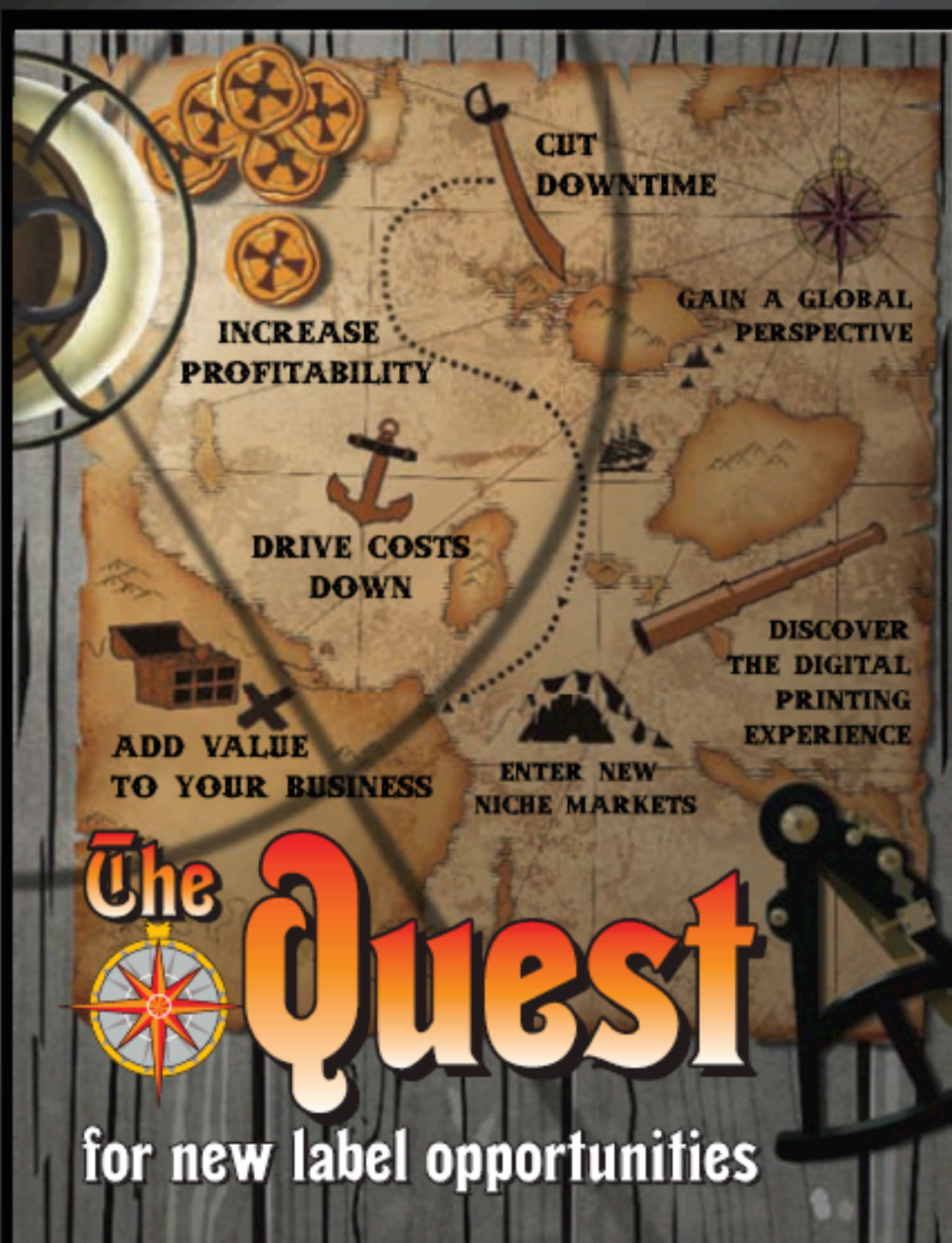
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Erhardt + Leimer's factory in Augsburg, Germany

Bespoke inspection

German company Erhardt + Leimer may have only entered the narrow web inspection field in 2000, but a rich engineering background, technical expertise and a bespoke product offering have enabled it to establish itself in a sector recently dominated by a few key players. **James Quirk** reports

Inspection has been a major growth area in the narrow web sector in recent years. The need for 100 percent accurate labeling has grown exponentially as quality demands have increased – whether driven by legislation, as in the case of pharmaceutical labeling, or by brand owners demanding standards.

For German company Erhardt + Leimer inspection represents a recent shift in focus, though perhaps a natural evolution, from its background in web guiding equipment.

E+L has also altered its approach: now concentrating on selling directly to label converters as well as supplying OEMs.

But how to compete in a market which has seen a recent flurry of new players and technologies, not to mention one which, in its comparatively short existence in the narrow web label sector, has

been dominated by a few established names?

As the need for inspection has increased, so have the technological demands of the systems. Early players in this field produced systems which fitted a variety of standard applications; Erhardt + Leimer focuses on specialized areas, such as pharmaceutical, cosmetic and banknote inspection.

'We are specializing in specific sectors as well as hitting mass markets,' says Donald Lewis, international business development manager, print inspection systems, 'so we have become specialists in many areas: anything that has added value in web printed products, such as foiling and embossing, for example, because our TubeLight technology allows us to see and inspect things that other systems can't. We have to counteract our



“We have to counteract our competitors who rely on selling large numbers of systems – and we do this in terms of technology”

competitors who rely on selling large numbers of basic standard systems – and we do this in terms of our higher technology and expertise in application.’

Launched at Labelexpo Europe in Brussels last year, TubeLight uses indirect light only, as opposed to the direct-light or line light most often used in inspection systems, which always include an inherent share of direct illumination. This diffuse light is aimed at lighting complex materials such as reflective or embossed metal foils which can show unevenly reflecting surfaces. A typical application for TubeLight is inspecting holograms and holographic materials.

Further technological advances were launched at drupa this year. The company’s new web monitoring and web inspection camera, Elscan OMS4, integrates two digital cameras, developed by Erhardt + Leimer, with different fields of view enabling the simultaneous capture of the entire web at the same time as any small detail, and display them simultaneously. The cameras allow for speeds of over 200 meters a minute. Each has five active mega pixels and are available for web widths of 1,000mm and beyond.

Erhardt + Leimer: company history

Founded in 1919 by Manfred Erhardt, the company began by distributing and repairing industrial clocks and signaling systems. The arrival at the company of Albert Leimer in 1943 and the rising demand by the textile industry for web guiding equipment shifted the company’s focus, and by 1979 E + L was the principle manufacturer of automatic equipment for textile finishing in the world.

The 1980s saw the company’s workforce exceed 500 and Erhardt + Leimer was ranked among the 60 most successful corporations of limited liability in Germany. In 1995, the company introduced its DCS digital control technology, which became standard for all E + L’s control systems.

In 2000, the company began to focus on inspection technology and camera engineering. By 2006, the annual turnover at Erhardt + Leimer’s Augsburg headquarters was around 60 million euros, achieved with a staff of 420. The Group of Companies has a worldwide turnover of 120 million euros and a workforce of more than 12,000 people.

Another development was new software functions for E + L’s print inspection system Nyscan which allow, for the first time, the dimensional monitoring of print and spaces. The target values for the set points or dimensions are simply entered via a graphic interface, and any deviation from these set points is flagged as a defect. A patented calibration system from Erhardt + Leimer compensates for the inaccuracies due to distortions by the camera lens and is a significant advance in installation and set up.

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The new web monitoring and inspection system from Erhardt + Leimer

'We only use three-chip color cameras [single-chip cameras are traditionally more common] which allow a higher frequency,' says Lewis. 'Much more information has to be handled, so the software and algorithms have to be significantly advanced enough to handle this: something that basic, one-size-fits-all systems cannot provide.'

The use of three-chip cameras comes from Nyquist, the Germany-based inspection company founded by Dr Stephan Krebs which Erhardt + Leimer purchased two years ago following a meeting at Labelexpo Europe 2005. Dr Krebs now heads up E + L's print inspection business unit. 'It was the perfect match,' says Dirk Schroder, sales manager, print inspection business unit. 'We saw it as a huge opportunity and it was one of the quickest mergers in the history of the company.'

Nyscan was the first 100% print inspection system to be launched by E + L following the acquisition of Nyquist. It features an algorithm called Pixel Registration which the Nyscan Web Inspector:2 uses to control web distortion at high speeds. Its high resolution allows the inspection of RFID labels, pharmaceutical labels and currency.

An inkjet unit prints a barcode onto the back of the web as a point of reference to where faults are. That section of the web can be secured, with access only granted with a password, allowing greater security. A full report, detailing the specifications and faults of a particular job, can be printed as a PDF. Systems also include a validation function, so converters can be sure that the system is working. 'It verifies that the unit is seeing something,' says Lewis. 'The converter might ask: "Am I running the perfect web or is it not working?" It is essentially a small defect which the camera picks up. It is very simple to validate, you just have to push a button.'

The core belief behind Erhardt + Leimer's inspection technology is that there is not a standard system which can fit all applications. 'Web inspection is a technical solution, not a commodity,' explains Donald Lewis. 'It differs with every application. We can compete with some of our competitors in terms of volume but we don't want Nyscan to become a one-size-fits-all system – there is not really such a thing. We prefer the tailored approach as every label printer is inherently different and there is no "standard" level of inspection to cover all eventualities.'

As well as its bespoke technology, Erhardt + Leimer further



L-r: Donald Lewis and Dirk Schroder

differentiates itself through independence from OEMs. Inspection system suppliers often have a relationship with specific press or rewinder manufacturers that sees their technology integrated into the machines. For Lewis, however, this can be restrictive: 'We had certain relationships while we were establishing ourselves,' he says, 'but we now have complete independence from press manufacturers. If you can maintain a dispassionate relationship with a series of companies, it will benefit you in the long term because customers won't have you tagged as being partnered with someone specific. It means that we can be completely open with companies across the board and provide an independent solution to our end customers irrespective of the equipment they purchase or operate.'

Erhardt + Leimer's print inspection business unit also benefits from its parent company's international presence and background of engineering expertise. The company's core expertise in web handling and guiding for the textile industry has allowed it to diversify over the years into a variety of different areas: including paper and film, rubber and tire, corrugated materials and inspection.

The company now has a presence in 13 countries around the world, throughout Europe, Asia and the Americas, and manufacturing takes place in eight of these. 'Our full product range is sold in all our subsidiaries, so entry into a new market, such as inspection, benefits from existing infrastructure and support around the world,' says Lewis. 'This is a massive strength of ours as supporting our products and customers has always been at the core of Erhardt and Leimer's philosophy.'

This engineering background is taken seriously: E + L prides itself on in-house lean manufacturing; the company even produces its own bubble wrap. For its inspection systems, all aspects of manufacturing take place in house, which the company believes essential to provide the technology to customers at a realistic cost.

As well as in-house manufacturing, Erhardt + Leimer pays great attention to in-house efficiency. The company uses SAP to organize the manufacturing process and handle the 20,000 orders, of all shapes and sizes, which it receives each year. A further initiative saw the reflooring, at great expense, of the company's electronics department so as to prevent damage to circuits through static.

Erhardt + Leimer has been based in Augsburg since 1950. Its long presence in the region and engineering reputation also help it attract the best students from the local area: up to ninety apprentices are working at the company at any one time, while up to 20 will be kept long term. ■



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Amar Chhajed (left) and cousin and business partner Jitesh, factory operations manager, with Mark Andy LP3000

Webtech celebrates

Webtech, a pioneer among Indian label converters, this year celebrates its tenth anniversary from a position of strength.

Andy Thomas reports

Webtech's history is the history of the Indian pressure-sensitive industry: 'The first four years of the company's life were tough as we built our customer base and the entire business from scratch,' recalls managing director Amar Chhajed. 'There was hardly any business in those days.'

Witnessing rapid growth over the past few years, today the company has a turnover of approximately \$10M in self adhesive labels alone. Webtech's operations in western India were recently moved into a brand new factory built on the outskirts of Mumbai in a dedicated Industrial Zone. With modern infrastructure and systems in place, this represented a huge step up from the old plant.

Webtech also operates a manufacturing facility in the North of India, strategically located in a tax-free zone. Plans are already on for a new plant in the South of India. This would make Webtech the only Indian organisation having manufacturing facilities across the country.

Webtech employs 180 people across its two sites. In 2007 a corporate office was established in Mumbai city which houses

"Webtech has developed an expertise in tamper evident systems for pharma labels which could certainly be applied to new markets"

all the strategically important activities like sales and marketing, production planning and finance.

Among a well diversified portfolio, pharmaceutical and healthcare labels represent a major portion of Webtech's business. Both manufacturing sites are set up to meet the most stringent requirements of its multinational pharmaceutical customers. India has the world's largest number of USFDA approved pharma manufacturing sites outside of the US and hence the sector demands the highest



Bespoke printing and finishing work is done by hand: (l) manual screen printing and (r) manual rewinding and inspection



quality in labels for its needs.

In its aggressive drive to be a major player on the world stage, Webtech has consistently invested in state-of-the-art equipment and infrastructure which have allowed it to meet the challenges of rapid growth. Around 50 percent of the labels produced by the company go onto products that are exported out of India.

Amar Chhajed points out that many Indian companies have built, or own, pharmaceutical manufacturing plant in the US, but all their business decisions are still taken in India. 'They find more value in sourcing their labels in India rather than buying in the US. This gives them a lot of control over their international operations.'

The next stage in Webtech's development, is to diversify into new markets. Amar Chhajed is currently focussing on developing new business segments and applications for labels.

'We have grown at roughly 50 percent a year over the last few years, but as we get bigger it gets tougher to maintain this kind of growth,' says Chhajed. 'To continue on this exponential growth path, year after year is our biggest challenge and we are confident of achieving it.'

Automotive lubricants is another growth sector for the company. The global oil giant TotalFinaElf was one of Webtech's first customers. 'They were screen printing onto the oil cans in those days when we suggested to move to roll form self adhesive labels,' says Amar Chhajed. 'Once one brand moved other companies followed, and soon all the lube companies had moved to using self adhesive labels.'

But growth in the oil label business has remained stagnant over the last 3-4 years and Chhajed is now pushing the big players to move from paper to filmic labels and add more value into the labels. 'Most international lube companies use filmic labels worldwide but the same companies happen to use paper labels in India. But with more sophisticated cars being now sold in India, servicing is more important, and so is the branding of the oil.'

Webtech is investing a lot of time and money developing solutions which will help their customers to meet the challenges presented by global market scenarios. For example, labels with Braille printing and also high security anti-

"We were the first in India to get an AVT 100 percent inspection system and last year we installed the first MIS system from Shuttleworth"

counterfeit solutions have been developed and offered for select pharma customers

Technology

'We always wanted to be a technology leader,' asserts Amar Chhajed. Webtech was the first company in India to implement technology initiatives including AVT's 100% defect detection systems and the Shuttleworth MIS platform for its entire business. The most recent development is the installation of a state-of-the-art fully automated ink management system from GSE of the Netherlands.

'We chose our partners well and work closely with them for our equipment and services to keep ourselves ahead of the game,' says Chhajed.

• Inspection and finishing

Webtech has six AVT inspection systems on its rewinders and presses. Recently a multiple-head variable printing system has been installed on a Rotoflex slitter-rewinder for Pharma applications.

The next stage will be to install 100% Inspection systems on all the label presses, linking that directly to the rewinder to allow out-of-spec labels to be rewound, without manual intervention, directly onto the splicing table.

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(left) AVT inspection system mounted on a Prati Saturn rewinder. (right) each press has a dedicated console for the Shuttleworth MIS

• Management Information Systems

The Shuttleworth MIS system has made a 'big difference' to Webtech's business, according to Amar Chhajed. 'It has impacted all our work from job estimating to stock control and dispatch. It not only helps eliminate mistakes, but it keeps knowledge inside the company rather than inside someone's head. For example, if someone does not come into the office one day, their work is still on the system. This makes us more efficient.'

There is an MIS terminal in each press room, so individual operators can enter live data on press running and makeready times. A similar terminal controls the AVT 100% inspection department. A feature which Webtech asked Shuttleworth to include is notification to all internal departments when a customer order is confirmed.

'The Shuttleworth system thus acts as a co-ordinator for the whole business,' says Chhajed. 'Department heads know what materials are required for each job, and an order to make plates is automatically generated.'

• Press technology

Webtech started out in a very small way with a simple Mark Andy 830 press and has remained a flexo house. 'The flexo print quality has been getting better and better every passing day,' says Chhajed. 'This is mainly because of the rapid development in pre-press and ink technology along with improvements in the presses themselves.'

Webtech's label converting fleet consists of nine Mark Andy presses, which include 830, 2200 and LP3000 series machines. The most recent acquisition has been a Gidue Combat press, which was installed in May, and the company has also installed a Gallus EM280. At least two more presses are planned before the end of this year to take the total number of presses to 14. 'By far this is the largest installed base of presses in the Indian label industry,' says Amar Chhajed.

"In five years I want to have a global setup and I want front end operations in Europe and the US, with the first in Europe"

International Partnerships

Amar Chhajed very much sees Webtech's future as a global player: 'In five years we want to have a global setup and have front end operations in Europe and the US, beginning with the first in Europe.' This could be as early as 2009-10.

Webtech is already looking for international converter partners, but stresses that any deal must work both ways: 'We are looking for value-added partners and for access to the technologies that they have developed through their own R&D. It's a great opportunity for global converters to have a foot hold in the Indian market and at the same time presenting an opportunity to us do business globally.'

Chhajed points out that in Europe, labour costs typically represent around 30 percent of the cost of producing a label, while in India that figure is just 3-4 percent. Nowhere is this more evident than in Webtech's specialist print department, where labels are screen printed by hand, with adhesive and silicone manually applied. Then there is a whole department committed to value-added manual finishing. 'Here we can remove tricky matrix waste, and finish labels by hand for speciality applications,' says Amar Chhajed.

Looking forward, Amar Chhajed expects Webtech to play a significant role in developing the label market in India 'and in itself creating an organisation of high repute in the International label industry.' ■



Chandan Khanna, owner of Ajanta Packaging (r) and Manish Kapoor, product manager for Nilpeter agent Proteck Machinery

Nilpeter scores in India

Nilpeter's first Indian installation is an FB3300 at Ajanta Packaging. **Andy Thomas** reports on this leading Indian converter's ambitious plans

Ajanta Packaging has installed a Nilpeter FB3300 Servo press as part of a major program of investment in its label business – currently growing at up to 25 percent a year.

The installation of this FB3300 marks Nilpeter's entry as a serious player in the Indian label market. The company has now sold a total of six FB presses, of which three are servo machines.

This FB3300 will be installed at Ajanta's plant at Daman, Mumbai. The company has a second labels operation in Baddi, which is primarily intermittent offset, but where a second-hand, 9-color MPS EP press has recently been installed. The company also prints with intermittent offset presses.

The Nilpeter FB3300 is a 13 in, 8-color UV flexo press, incorporating cold foil, hot foil and delam/relam. It has servo driven plate cylinders and is specified to run up to 200 meters/minute. Although there are no chill rolls, the slots are there if Ajanta needs to convert the press to run unsupported film. The die stations are fitted with Kocher & Beck's Gapmaster die pressure setting system.

The press will be equipped with an AVT inspection system, as will the Prati rewinder at the Daman plant. The MPS press installed at the Delhi plant has a BST inspection system.

The Nilpeter FB3300 and MPS presses represent Ajanta's first move into flexography. 'We are achieving results with flexo that are close to offset,' says owner Chandan Khanna.

The company started out producing sheet labels on its Mitsubishi sheetfed offset presses, cutting on guillotines. 'We wanted to move to roll labels six years ago and we went with

intermittent offset. But the quality of water-based flexo plus the high rotary tooling costs were big concerns.' However, the need for speed compared to its four waterless offset machines forced Ajanta to look at flexo. At that time, UV Flexo had evolved and servo was in, and after test trials on the Nilpeter FB Servo flexo press, Chandan decided to go for his first flexo machine.

In terms of workflow, short run roll label work of less than 100,000 with hot foil stamping will go semi-rotary, but longer

Flexo needs help

Manish Kapoor product manager for Nilpeter at agent Proteck Machinery Pvt, argues forcefully that the flexo supply chain is facing 'big problems' in India. 'In areas like inks the global manufacturers are here, but their support is not. The ink and plate suppliers need to train 'B' and 'C' category printers if flexo is to grow. The international die suppliers are just one-man shows here in India. I have service teams, but that is not the case for inks, plates and dies.'

Kapoor also says that some international suppliers are selling different products in India to the ones they sell internationally. 'For example, UV inks which do not cure fast enough for the high-speed presses now being installed. UV inks are a big market already, so why are these guys just not serious at the moment? They all need to invest in India with technical support and it will definitely grow the market.'



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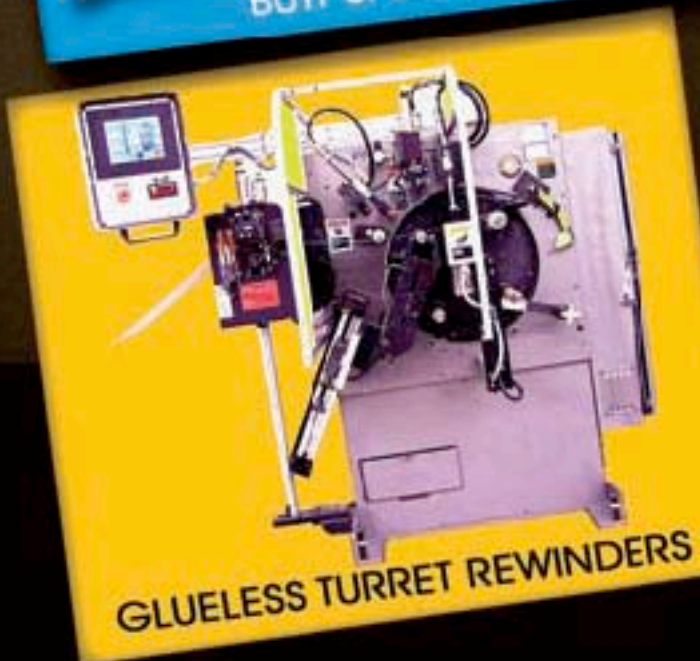
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Chandan Khanna with his Nilpeter FB3300

runs and repeat jobs will move to flexo, according to Chandan Khanna.

For the future, Ajanta is planning a major expansion in its flexo capacity. 'We did consider an offset MO, but the FB3300 is good enough for us at this stage. If the plates are right, the quality is right,' says Chandan Khanna. 'We want to move to buy another 2-4 presses very quickly, and it will be a question of who offers me the best support.'

Khanna is building a high-powered team to implement this program, led by a manager with experience of setting up the Betts factory in China.

Other plans include integrating the MIS systems at the two label plants, so customers are quoted consistent prices.

Like other leading Indian label converters, Ajanta has ambitious goals. 'Our aim is to make our name locally and then globally,' says Khanna, who says he will look for global partnerships as one possible route. But like some other Indian converters who attended the FINAT-EU printer exchange program last year, Khanna says he was disappointed. 'We didn't get a positive vibe. If like us you are investing in the best equipment, we need to have the best partner, and that requires more preparation on both sides.' ■

China vs India

Chandan Khanna has interesting views on the looming commercial contest between India and China. 'It is a battle of language versus infrastructure. In 20 years China's use of English will have reached the level of India. The question is whether India can bring its infrastructure up to Chinese standards in the next ten years – then we will win. If not, then India cannot catch up. In China the government can simply get people out of the way when it wants to build infrastructure. In India you have to fight against everything. We are in a way paying the high price for Democracy, as in some ways it restricts infrastructure growth, even general growth.'

Khanna believes high quality label and packaging will be demanded in the coming Indian retail boom, which is being led by local giants like Reliance, Bivani, Birlas and Tata.

News in brief



Phoenix Challenge Foundation holds first annual college competition

The Overall Excellence winner of the First Annual International Phoenix Challenge College Competition was Dunwoody College of Technology, which consisted of the student team of Brian Taubert, Aaron Fraher, Paul Visscher, Steven Miller, and Brendan Larson. A year of research culminated in presentations in front of a panel of industry judges for the participating schools of the PC College Competition on April 26, 2008.

The inaugural PC College Competition kicked off at the FFTA 2007 Forum in Montréal, Quebec and lasted all year. Dunwoody College of Technology was presented the trophy at the Awards Banquet at the FFTA Forum in Dallas, Texas.

Dunwoody College of Technology flexography instructor Shawn Oetjen said, 'These students gave it their all, determined to do their best at the competition. This year's award showed that their resolve, skills and hard work have all been worth it. I am really proud of them.'

In addition, Appalachian State University achieved the Excellence in Research and Concept award. The Excellence in Graphics award went to Cal Poly and the Excellence in Execution award went to University of Central Missouri.

Bettylyn Krafft, chairman of the Phoenix Challenge Foundation, said, 'My sincerest congratulations to all the students and to their persistent instructors for their amazing work this year. All the schools' presentations were insightful, well-researched and professionally presented. I know that the future of our industry is going to be in great hands. It looks like we will have at least 60 students next year.'

4impression launches 1-2-1 print training

Print and packaging training specialist 4impression has made a new addition to its portfolio. 1-2-1 training are intensive personalized short courses aimed at increasing the understanding of individuals on print and packaging related topics. Courses are educational, informal and interactive giving ample opportunity for open discussion on areas of specific interest.



The team at Weldon Celloplast with, seated center, managing director Harveer Singh Sahni

Weldon moves India onto world stage

Indian laminate manufacturer Weldon Celloplast is looking for export markets to drive its next phase of growth, while bringing Western narrow web suppliers into India. **Andy Thomas** reports

Harveer Singh Sahni was one of the founders of the Indian pressure sensitive labels industry and remains at the heart of its social networks – as well as providing a link to the wider, global world of labels.

Sahni started Weldon Celloplast back in 1978, the year *L&L* was founded by Mike Fairley. He was one of the first Indian manufacturers of tapes and release papers, and in 1996-7 'backwards integrated' into manufacturing labelstocks. Among other firsts, Weldon claims to have been the first Indian manufacturer to employ platinum silicone systems and the first to go solventless. The company also installed the first Nordson coater in India in 2003.

Employing around 100 staff, ISO and UL-certified Weldon Celloplast has its head office in New Delhi and manufacturing plant at Faridabad, Haryana, with a sheeting and slitting facility in Mumbai.

The company produces a wide range of products including business papers and stationary, pressure-sensitive tapes and blank labels, as well as release liners, self-adhesive laminates and specialist security and promotional labels.

Security labels are a growing part of the company's business. A

particularly successful line has been Fasco Tamproof tamper-evident void labels. These can be customized with a user-defined message, which cannot be seen until someone tries to tear the label off – at which point the message appears and remains stuck to the pack. The film-based labelstock can be top printed by different printing processes and die-cut. It uses an aggressive adhesive and the labels can be automatically dispensed onto the pack. Weldon claims to be the first Indian company to have produced this complete laminate – including the face material.

Other specialist products include linerless labels for application directly on the packaging line and dry peel labels.

Export led growth

Weldon is today experiencing growth rates of 10-15 percent – but increasingly driven by exports.

'We are leaving the domestic market,' announces Harveer Sahni. 'Today the split is 40/60 export to domestic sales. In the next year it will be 60/40.'

Sahni says the problem in India is that the price is 'driving downwards' all the time. 'At the top you have the likes of Avery Dennison and Weldon. In the middle you have stock lots, which

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(Above and right) Harveer Sahni with daughter-in-law Kavneet beside Nordson hot melt coater

represents materials dumped from outside India and side runs. If I buy that I can compete, but the quality decreases. Side runs of top class material have been available in the last few years from Avery Dennison. But with Avery now announcing they will buy their own side runs, this source of “A” grade materials has dried up. We now have to produce prime materials and the Indian market will not support that price level.’

Weldon’s first export target outside India was the Middle East, and that region today accounts for some 5 percent of the company’s business, primarily in the Emirates, but as far afield as Iran and Lebanon. Many of the leading regional converters in the UAE are owned by Indian nationals, which has allowed Sahni to deploy his formidable networking skills. Even where companies are Arab-owned, they will often be managed by Indians.

Now Sahni has ambitious plans to develop sales to Europe, and then to North America. ‘The Middle East can be scary and unstable, and that it is one reason we shifted our focus to Europe.’

Weldon Celloplast was the first Indian materials manufacturer to exhibit at Labelexpo in Brussels, in both 2005 and 2007, and Sahni reports a good response. ‘We are now supplying Italy, Turkey, Germany and France. We have had particular success with security labels. One French customer prints security seals for ballot boxes in Cameroon. The Europeans pay well, but they also demand quality.’

As well as looking to export to Europe, Harveer Sahni has established stronger ties with the European industry by joining FINAT, which has recruited him to its membership committee.

Another promising export market for Weldon is East Africa, particularly Kenya and Tanzania, where there are historical trading ties with India and many of the leading label converters are Indian-owned.



Agency division

Looking to add extra strings to his company’s bow, Weldon has set up a separate marketing division to offer international consumables and accessories to Indian narrow web label printers.

The agencies business is led by Harveer Sahni’s son Pawandeep, who is Weldon’s operations director. The list currently includes Spanish-based flexible die specialist Lartec, magnetic cylinders from Bunting Magnetics, and the exclusive agency in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh and Sri Lanka for Tailored Solutions’ Label Traxx management information systems (MIS).

We should also mention another business run by Harveer Sahni – he is an excellent chef and has recently opened a restaurant close to his home in Delhi (which comes with a personal recommendation from this writer).

Production

Weldon Celloplast’s production facility consists of four coating lines running over three shifts. Weldon’s latest acquisition is a Nordson NI 5000-series hot melt coater, which runs at speeds up to 100 m/min. It incorporates two unwind stations and a rewind station preceded by a chill roll to dissipate heat.

These coaters give Weldon the flexibility to use hot melt, acrylic, solvent and emulsion adhesive systems, as well for top coating film and paper. For release liners the company has the capability to coat a variety of chemistries from solvent-based tin catalyst systems to solventless platinum catalyst silicones. The machines can coat double-side release liners with differential release levels with optional in-line printing on the reverse.

Total production from the plant is 30 million sq meters a year, but with the lines running at around 60 percent capacity there is plenty of scope to increase volume.

‘Volume is not the problem. The problem is achieving margin, and that is why we are moving more to filmic products,’ states Harveer Sahni.

Weldon Celloplast uses a range of Western materials suppliers for its laminate production, including Novamelt and Stora. In terms of local suppliers, the company has long used Jeson for adhesives, but Harveer Sahni says Indian companies have to work harder on their consistency and supply chain management if he is to use their products. ■





Bob Peretic, press operator, Alpine Packaging

Women-owned shops invest in the future

In what is still an overwhelmingly male-dominated industry, it is interesting to feature women who are successfully running label converting businesses. **Danielle Jerschefske** reports

Alpine Packaging: a press for prime labels

At Alpine Packaging, a 50-employee flexo shop 20 minutes east of Pittsburgh in N. Versailles, Pennsylvania, USA, the press purchasing bug bit in 2004, when a growing backlog on its 10" presses illustrated the need for a wider press that could provide more efficiency and flexibility.

Alpine operates a fleet of 25, 7"-13" flexo presses in a location that was formerly a nightclub. This printer has found its groove producing pressure-sensitive labels for a diverse range of customers – from dairy (milk, juice, and iced tea), bottled water, and other food labels, to 'scratch and sniff' labels on air fresheners, inventory and drum labeling, and respirators and gas mask labeling for the mining and military fields. The firm's secondary focus is polyethylene bags, which are printed for customers in the food and industrial arenas, and also sold as tubing.

Alpine Packaging is owned, managed and run by sisters Jan Lehigh, president; and Jill Grunst, secretary/treasurer, with brother Bob Johnson playing an operational role. Lehigh and Grunst are the primary owners, where they leverage their

'women-owned' status to acquire business in markets that mandate work with minority companies, such as the automotive industry and school districts. This strategy has netted Alpine 75 percent of one of the top auto tire manufacturer's label printing business. That successful business has also led to big contracts with other leading tire makers, as well.

A stable of Mark Andy presses are a key component in Alpine's strong reputation for providing a quality product in short order. Lehigh calls Alpine 'a true just-in-time shop', and explains, 'We can have customers call us in the morning – even with a new setup – and get the job out the door the same day, including platemaking.'

When it came time to add capacity and bolster performance with a new press, the reliability of Alpine's existing equipment presented a strong argument for adding more of its current technology. The company also explored new equipment designs from its supplier, Mark Andy.

'My goal is to grow more and more into prime labels,' says Lehigh. 'I feel that the LP3000 can put us in that market.' The clincher for Lehigh was seeing the LP3000 demonstrated at



L-r Jan Lehigh, Bob Peretic, Jill Grunst, Alpine Packaging

Labelexpo with an RFID module. 'Although I'm not going there right now, it told me I will be there with the industry,' she notes.

Alpine's 13" LP3000, featuring six ink stations, UV capability, a laminating station, and a turnbar for reverse printing, joined its press ranks recently.

Instead of 'forcing better color' on print jobs, 'on the LP3000, colors just pop on their own,' enthuses Lehigh. Bob Peretic, Alpine's LP3000 press operator, cites a recent 4-color process prime label job printed on high-gloss polypropylene that ran cleaner, held tighter registration, and came out brighter on the press.

Peretic says changeovers clock in at around 15 minutes or less thanks to slide-out print drawers with constant turning anilox rolls, easy-to-adjust print stations, and quick-mount bearing plate cylinders.

Alpine's LP3000 is primarily reserved for larger, more complex jobs that may run as high as three million pieces. Commonly run stocks include gloss and laminate, but the press has also demonstrated deft handling of unsupported polyethylene, Lehigh reports. 'We have been able to reproduce labels and have them look exactly the same every time we print them, which is very important to the customer,' she says.

Graphic Communications: capitalizing on combination printing

In late 2005, as Alpine stood poised to reap the longer-term benefits of its investment, the journey to a similar press purchase was just beginning for Graphic Communications, a printer based on the opposite side of Pennsylvania in Warminster, a Philadelphia suburb.

At this 18-employee flexo converter, run by siblings Loretta Dymant, president, and Bob Lawler, VP, the need for a new press sprung from the company's key operating philosophy: continuous improvement. 'We're always trying to raise the bar, to produce better quality,' says Dymant.

To date, the company has gleaned solid performance from a line-up of six Mark Andy presses; this fleet was the basis for successfully serving a wide-ranging customer base, with areas of concentration in the prime label and medical market, as well as

industrial labels and packaging materials.

In addition to providing press technology Graphic Communications could count on, Mark Andy has 'always been there for us,' says Lawler. He relates a memorable scenario when a customer request came in for a 10-color job, and the highest number of colors they could print at the time was eight. Mark Andy delivered two additional print stations to them the next day, enabling them to do the job.

'Mark Andy runs their business the same way we run ours – if a customer has a problem, we take care of it,' Lawler observes. Case in point: he and Dymant adhere to a 'no voicemail' operating philosophy – a backbone of Graphic Communications' high customer orientation. Another company mantra is to help customers as much as possible, even through an inventory program that ensures materials are on hand in advance to complete a specific job. And, like Alpine, Graphic Communications' special brand of service also stems from its 'woman-owned' status. 'I get along with anybody, and it can help you if you have the sister thing going,' says Dymant.

Dymant and Lawler considered adding another press identical to those already in their fleet, but their consideration turned to the LP3000 when they saw it could achieve their goal of implementing combination printing capability with interchangeable units.

Since then, the 10", 10-color LP3000 took up residence at Graphic Communications' operation. It features a rotary screen unit, cold foil stamping units, an interchangeable UV station, turnbar, and lamination/delamination capability that is movable between stations. Lawler underscores the minimal learning curve involved in ramping up production, comparing operating the press to driving a new car.

One of the biggest benefits he emphasizes is the LP3000's efficient drying capability – which enables jobs to be run at consistently high speeds through both the printing and drying processes.

Graphic Communications' new combination printing capability has transformed its approach to specific print jobs. A hair coloring product label that had previously ballooned to an 8-color flexo print job 'just to make the white opaque' was transitioned to the LP3000, and flexo/rotary screen printed using just four colors, relates Dymant. And with the LP3000's 10 print stations, 'we don't have to wonder, can we do a job with a certain amount of colors?' she says.

Though the company continues to explore how the LP3000's features best serve its needs, it currently reserves more high-end, prime label work for the press, such as a six-color semi-gloss label recently printed at 200 line screen.

With her sights set on doubling sales in the next five years, Dymant sees the LP3000 playing a significant role in her company's growth. 'We would like the LP3000 to be the basis for getting new accounts, including more rotary screen work,' she notes. Dymant also believes this press investment sends a strong stability signal to customers: 'We're a young company, we're not going anywhere.' ■

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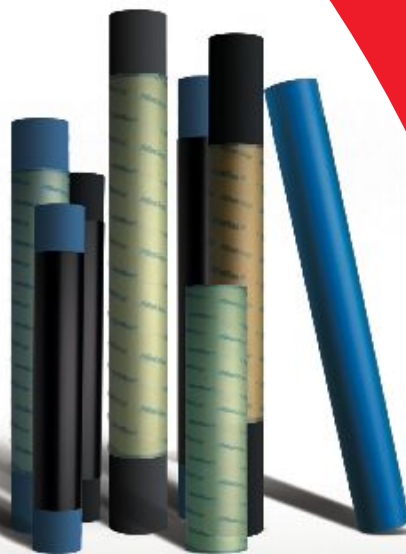
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Weber makes its mark with MIS

Getting the best out of an MIS requires commitment and honest feedback from supplier and converter. **Andy Thomas** reports on the experience of Weber Marking Systems in the UK

Weber Marking Systems UK is a high quality provider of labels, labeling and coding products based in Macmerry, near Edinburgh in Scotland. The company and its manufacturing and sales office in Southern Ireland form part of Weber Marking System, a US-based international labeling and coding leader providing label products and solutions to over 50,000 companies' world wide.

In January 2007, the UK business took the decision to migrate from its incumbent Compass management information system, which it had been using successfully for some fifteen years, to a Shuttleworth Labels Management Information System.

One of the key deciding factors in the company's decision to adopt the Shuttleworth system was the inclusion of its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) module. 'It was a big selling point for us,' explains Weber UK systems manager Margaret Swan. 'We didn't have a central point for information with Compass which meant that, for example, customers with multiple branches were treated as separate accounts and a lot

of data was being duplicated. What Shuttleworth's CRM did for us was to streamline the entire customer relationship process and provide us with an umbrella view of our customer records as a whole. It's changing the way that we do business and in the way that we view our customers. Our customer services team is now able to call up any customer records such as invoice histories, order acknowledgements, open or closed orders, samples sent and stock items held and even our response times to dealing with queries. It's effortless.'

At the forefront of the Shuttleworth Labels MIS in use at Weber UK is the company's Productive Scheduling module which Margaret Swan describes as the 'powerhouse' that controls everything that runs through the factory. 'All jobs going into production are handled by our production manager who uses Productive to arrange the workflow machinery schedule for the production operators to pick up. It took us a little while to get used to but now that we are accustomed to it we wouldn't be without it,' she says.

Handling workflow throughout production is Shuttleworth's



(Above left) Margaret Swan, Weber UK systems manager and right, operating a Shuttleworth MIS terminal

Dataflow, an integrated Windows browser-based shop floor data collection module. Dataflow is able to gather and present real-time accurate factory data using a multitude of digital data devices such as touch screens, PDA's, PC's and Mac's which can all be used to securely interrogate the job, identify the status of associated transactions and view related images – all within a smooth running digital production workflow.

'We're now collecting data against the job using the Dataflow module and our teams are finding it very easy to use because we're running the software on PC's,' says Margaret Swan. 'Therefore the Dataflow interface is presented to them in a very familiar and user friendly format. From here the production teams can quickly look up the jobs that have been allocated to their presses or finishing machinery, open up a production schedule to view the attached job docket and set parameters such as make ready times or complete or part complete a job. They can even log on and off for a coffee break by clicking on the coffee cup icon, so all data collection and information presented to them is based upon point and click icons. Any changes in production, costing or scheduling are fed back to the Productive scheduling system in real time, so it is very easy to keep on top of everything that passes through the factory.'

E-commerce is regarded as central to future developments at Weber UK, with Shuttleworth's Globetrader e-commerce module set to be positioned at the heart of the system, as Margaret Swan notes: 'We think that e-commerce through Globetrader will provide a great deal of positive benefits to many of our major

customers who will be able to log onto our server and call off the labels that they need. We know that our customers

"It's changing the way that we do business and in the way that we view our customers"

are quite happy to handle call off's themselves and we're commencing a project to start recording label images that will sit alongside the stock references to enable customers to easily identify the label they are looking for and make call off's even easier. Some of our customers have very large label portfolios and we think that the Globetrader system can be linked to their central image bank via a unique stock code identifier which will provide good added value to these customers.'

With the positive benefits of the Shuttleworth MIS beginning to fall into place, migrating from a long established MIS to a totally modern system was not without its difficulties as Margaret Swan points out.

'We initially ran the two systems side by side for three months, and in retrospect I think that we should have continued to do so for a little longer because we could have used the time to learn more about what the Shuttleworth MIS could do for our business. We made one or two mistakes at first which could have been avoided if we had taken more time to consider how we wanted the new MIS to work for us,' she says.

In conclusion Ms Swan says that she believes that a lot of companies make the mistake of investing in an MIS and then sitting back in the belief that the system is going to sort out all of their problems for them: 'What we found was that what you think you want when you first start out with your MIS is not necessarily what you actually want once you begin to understand how to maximize it to your benefit. We went through a massive learning curve right from the start of this project which has really paid off because we're now in the process of reviewing all of our standards against our equipment and against our estimating. We're beginning to see how we can measure and recoup our production costs against open jobs, and we are working to get the maximum benefit from the system to enable us to move forwards and bring us inline with modern business efficiencies, and this, for any company, is where the hard work and effort will eventually be rewarded.' ■



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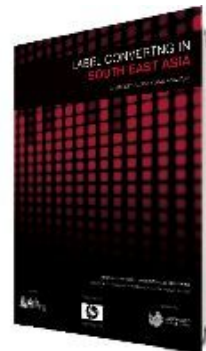
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Mexico City hosts third Label Summit Latin America

Label Summit Latin America – the annual event which alternates between Mexico City and São Paulo – returned recently to the Mexican capital for a third time. **James Quirk** reports

Label Summit Latin America welcomed 653 attendees from Mexico and the surrounding region, and followed the customary format of Label Summits run by the Labelexpo Global Series around the world. A conference was accompanied by a table-top exhibition which featured nearly 60 companies from throughout the Americas, Europe and even China.

An increase in the number of panel sessions – open and interactive discussions chaired, for the most part, by *Labels & Labeling* editor Andy Thomas – improved the quality of the conference from previous events. In a post-event press release,

Labelexpo MD Roger Pellow announced a change to the format of the conference when the event returns to Brazil next year: 'The format will change to comprise a series of keynotes on vital subjects of interest to the industry, followed by break-out sessions that will give visitors the opportunity to gain more knowledge on specialized subjects. This new format will increase the value to the visiting delegates.'

The global nature of the label industry means that issues facing converters are similar around the world. Latin America is no different: rising prices, the difficulty of sourcing trained



“The global nature of the label industry means that issues facing converters are similar around the world: Latin America is no different”

operators, increasing concern surrounding environmental sustainability and the need to compete in the international arena were topics often brought up from the floor during the numerous panel discussions.

No surprise, then, that these issues also formed the backbone of a conference program which blended local and international participants. The first day began with market overviews, first from *L&L* editor Andy Thomas, who presented a summary of findings from the recent surveys undertaken by *Labels & Labeling* around each Summit.

Thomas cited globalization, consolidation and digitalization as the three major global trends in the label industry, while also naming environmental sustainability as a crucial issue. In Latin America, said Thomas, flexo is the dominant print technology, with UV flexo increasing while letterpress declines.

John Wurzburger, vice president and general manager of Fasson Roll North America, then gave a keynote speech offering delegates an overview of the current state of the Latin American label industry, outlining the food and beverage markets as areas of great potential growth in Mexico due to increasing exportation as well as a strengthening local consumer base. His company was finding an increased demand for film in the region, he said, as well as for shrink sleeve labels – indications of rising quality demands in the local market.

The first of the day's panel sessions included Marty Vavra, label product manager of Wal-Mart, Luis Maria Garcia, president of Multilabel and Edgar Vargas, general manager of Diagraph Mexico, discussing the theme of making label printing leaner, greener and more profitable. The panel raised issues such as environmental compliance of label companies to the demands set by brand owners, and Marty Vavra discussed Wal-Mart's packaging score-card: 'We wanted to find and rate the most environmentally friendly suppliers on the market. It is a report

Latin America focus in next issue of *L&L*

With Nilpeter and Gidue now manufacturing in Brazil, and MPS and Mark Andy both increasing their presence in the region, issue 4 (Aug-Sept) of *Labels & Labeling*, which marks the launch of the redesigned magazine, will feature an in-depth report on the strategies of the world's leading label press manufacturers in the fast-evolving markets of Latin America.

on what your company has done to reduce waste and carbon emissions. It gives us all direction and allows us to share our knowledge.'

Vavra spoke eloquently and candidly about Wal-Mart's environmental initiatives and relationships with its label converter customers, and an in-depth interview with him will appear in Issue 4 of *Labels & Labeling*.

Later panel sessions focused on different printing processes, with individual discussions dedicated to UV flexo and digital.

The second day of the conference, chaired by this writer, partnered Marty Vavra with Unilever's Claudia Baltazar for a discussion on end-user requirements. FINAT president and general manager of Kolibri Etiketten Jan Frederick Vink gave a case-study about setting up a global partnership with Peruvian converter Kuresa. Technology presentations focused on inks, adding value to paper labelstocks and screen printing, foiling and embossing, before a final panel session was devoted to brand protection.

Josep M. Soler, managing director corporate strategy of Rotatek, delivered a speech about the different printing systems in the label industry. He provided an evaluation of the current manufacturing and printing methods, highlighted the advantages of different printing processes and gave his estimates of the future advancement of printing technologies. A summary of his findings will appear in the next issue of *Labels & Labeling*.

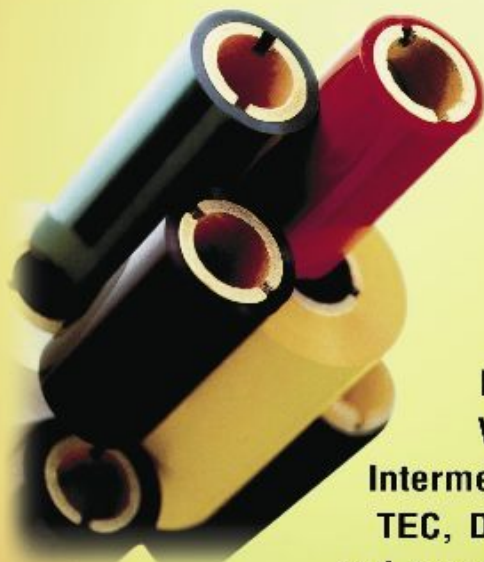
Alejandro Gómez, design and media executive of Avery Dennison México, said: 'For every industry today, it is important to have a forum where people can examine and share new developments and trends. Finding the ideal audience and sharing the experience becomes increasingly a necessary activity for us, and in the past two years Avery Dennison has found that Label Summit Latin America is such a forum.'

Label Summit Latin America 2009 will take place in São Paulo, Brazil, and returns to Mexico City in 2010. ■

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RFID gathers

Labels & Labeling rounds up recent developments in the RFID industry – including a spate of new products and some interesting applications

Mühlbauer, Intune and Delo start RFID research project

RFID production specialist Mühlbauer has joined forces with Delo Industrial Adhesives and Intune Circuits – a Finnish manufacturer of RFID antennas – to research turnkey solutions for the manufacturing of RFID label inlays.

The compatibility of different antennas, adhesives and production machines was extensively tested at Delo's laboratories and at Mühlbauer over several months.

The key objective was to research adhesive compatibility between the antenna lamination and the semiconductor chips. Mechanical properties were tested in several laboratory tests and different climate tests were carried out to simulate the lifetime of a bonded connection between antenna and chip.

Also tested was fast cure in the thermode station, where the chip is pressed onto the antenna to ensure electrical contact.

The tests demonstrated that heat-curing epoxies like Delo-Monopox MK055 and Delo-Monopox AC265 are best suited for bonding onto Intune's standard aluminum UHF antennas. Both products were processed on Mühlbauer's production system.

The three partners are promoting the systems as an optimized 'plug-and-play' solution for the efficient production of RFID inlays.

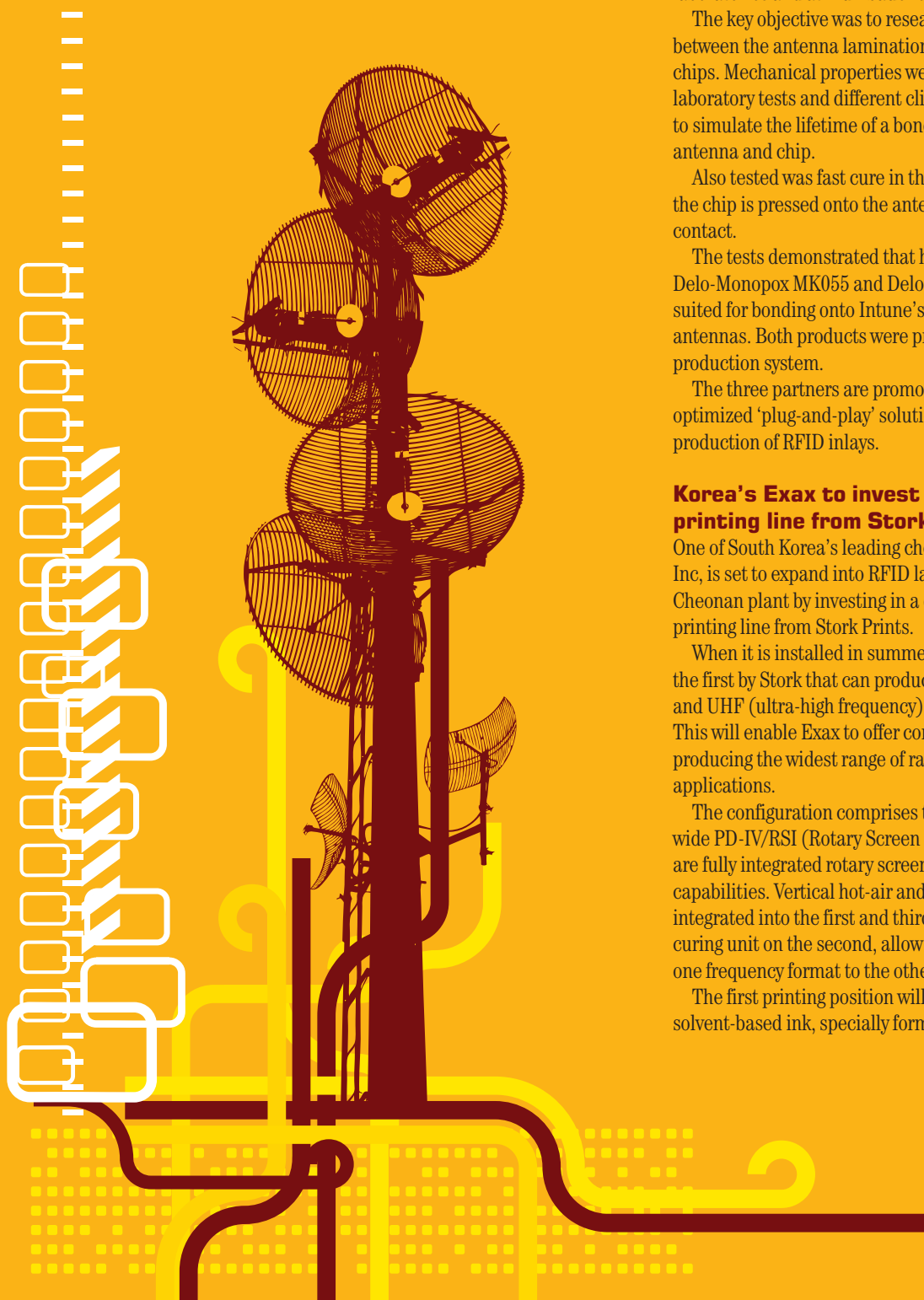
Korea's Exax to invest in HF-UHF RFID printing line from Stork

One of South Korea's leading chemical manufacturers, Exax Inc, is set to expand into RFID label production at its Cheonan plant by investing in a dedicated rotary screen printing line from Stork Prints.

When it is installed in summer 2008, the new line will be the first by Stork that can produce both HF (high-frequency) and UHF (ultra-high frequency) antennas in a single pass. This will enable Exax to offer competitive solutions for producing the widest range of radio-frequency label applications.

The configuration comprises three of Stork's 600 mm-wide PD-IV/RSI (Rotary Screen Integration) units, which are fully integrated rotary screen printing stacks with drying capabilities. Vertical hot-air and infra-red drying systems integrated into the first and third print positions, and a UV-curing unit on the second, allow easy job-changeovers from one frequency format to the other.

The first printing position will apply the conductive silver solvent-based ink, specially formulated by Exax – either as a



momentum

thick layer of HF coil, or a thinner UHF-di-pole antenna. The second and third positions are exclusively for laying down the two extra components of the HF antenna: the dielectric insulator with a UV-curable ink, followed by the conductive jumper.

Ger Roza, account manager at Stork Prints, commented: 'Rotary screen printing was preferred by Exax because it is uniquely capable of achieving high definition and laying down heavy ink layers needed in HF antenna circuits. With our expertise in silver ink processing, we were able offer an effective antenna production concept that combined precision printing technology with effective drying and curing. The challenge was to devise a concept that afforded the conductive ink a lengthy dwell time, at a relatively fast production speed. This was achieved by devising an accumulator drying system, whereby the web passes up and down the dryer several times.'

UPM Raflatac ranked as one of top passive RFID label vendors

UPM Raflatac has been ranked at the top in the latest Vendor Matrices released by ABI Research. The Vendor Matrix is an analytical tool developed by ABI Research to provide a clear understanding of vendors' positions in specific markets.

UPM Raflatac scored highest in the RFID Passive HF Inlay Vendor Matrix. In the UHF matrix rankings UPM Raflatac occupied second position, right after Alien Technology.

Vendors are assessed by ABI Research on the parameters of innovation and implementation across several criteria, unique to each vendor matrix. 'The top-ranking vendors are truly leading global players, scoring highly in each criterion for innovation and implementation,' said research director Michael Liard, ABI Research.

- UPM Raflatac has manufactured and supplied 100 million RFID inlays to mass transit ticketing applications globally. The landmark figure was reached in early 2008 with a delivery lot to Moscow Metro in Russia.

Alien Technology announces alliance 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. 'As part of our expanded relationship with Alien Technology, SATO now offers our supply chain customers access to Alien's industry-leading portfolio of Squiggle tags, powered by the Alien H2 chip, in addition to the new readers and in alliance with Alien Technology, SATO

America's ISD group provides integration services to Alien Technology customers.'

Sirit's Infinity RFID reader receives China certification

Sirit, a provider of RFID technology, has announced that its Infinity 510 UHF reader (IN510) has been certified to operate under China's latest radio regulations.

Sirit has received its compliance certificate from the State Radio Regulation Committee (SRRC) in China which confirms the IN510 meets the qualifications of compliance under the operational bandwidth, interoperability and performance standards established in March 2007. The SRRC is part of the Ministry of Information Industry which ensures that all RFID products sold in China meet specific standards for radio frequency devices.

The IN510 is operationally compatible in many countries throughout Asia, including Korea, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Malaysia, Japan, Singapore, and Thailand. Sirit's distribution partners in China include Sense Technology Co., Ltd headquartered in Shenzhen, Systron Systems, headquartered in Beijing and ID Tech, headquartered in Hong Kong.

New products

eProvenance unveils Intelligent Bottle for fine wine

eProvenance, a new company applying advanced technology to assure the total quality of fine wines from château to consumer, has unveiled its Intelligent Bottle and wine temperature tracking system along with its website, www.eprovenance.com. Founded in January 2007 by Eric Vogt to assure the provenance of every bottle of fine wine, the company is currently implementing programs with nine leading Bordeaux Châteaux, including several first growths.

Until now, the most critical component of certifiable value to the consumer, provenance (typically defined as authenticity, traceability and knowledge of storage temperatures), has been anecdotal at best, and unverifiable. The eProvenance solution creates a secure, global system to assure the provenance of fine wine from the château to the consumer and on to the auction house. eProvenance has launched its system in Bordeaux for fine wine and the system is designed to serve any wine region in the world. Currently, the eProvenance system and services are available to wine producers and the professional distribution channel.

The eProvenance system includes three physical components:

1. A semi-active RFID tag placed inside the case to monitor and record temperatures and improve shipping and receiving operations throughout the distribution chain.
2. A passive RFID tag with a unique code attached to the base of the bottle to automate tracking and inventory management, and discourage pilferage.

3. A proprietary, tamper-proof neck seal with a covert code applied at the base of the capsule to authenticate the wine inside the bottle and thwart counterfeiters.

All three components are linked together with their unique identification numbers in a high-speed, encrypted online database. The combined data create an ePedigree for each bottle of fine wine, which consists of authentication data from the château, shipment data and temperature records.

During the past six months, over twelve hundred 'Intelligent Cases', equipped with temperature-tracking RFID tags from eProvenance, have been sent out from Bordeaux to a variety of locations in the US, UK, and Japan. The intent of this program is to benchmark the current temperature conditions in the fine wine distribution channel.

The Franco-American team is headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts, with offices in the US and in Bordeaux and Paris, France. The company has raised more than \$1 million in start-up capital from its founders and advisors. eProvenance has exclusive rights for its technology as applied to the global wine industry, and has four US patents pending for eProvenance technology certifying provenance and authenticity of alcoholic beverages using RFID and other technologies through all stages of the distribution channel.

Avery Dennison launches four inlays

Avery Dennison RFID has introduced four new inlays to its RFID product portfolio with the AD-224, AD-631, AD-824 and AD-840. The new UHF inlays are EPC Class 1 Gen 2 and ISO-180006-C-compliant and are manufactured using the company's proprietary high speed strap attach technology.

The AD-224, AD-824 and AD-840 include extended memory options by utilizing the Ucode G2X chip set from NXP Semiconductors, a leading vendor of RFID ICs. 'We are pleased that Avery Dennison has incorporated our NXP G2X IC in its product line for best-in-class UHF RFID inlays. Our newest Ucode G2X devices offer superior UHF performance, increased sensitivity, extended memory space and unique custom commands, including a read protect security feature,' said Steve Owen, vice president, sales and marketing, Identification, NXP Semiconductors.

- Avery Dennison RFID has added an online training module to help

users understand and familiarize themselves with RFID systems. Available at rfid.averydennison.com, RFID 101 combines a live narrator with animations, photos and video to walk viewers through technology basics, applications & markets, system components, RFID label converting, and tag testing and quality. Each main topic is a separate module, allowing the viewer to watch the presentation from start to finish or to customize the presentation by watching select modules based on their own experience or schedule.

Mu-Gahat launches custom UHF RFID inlay design

Mu-Gahat has launched its custom RFID inlay design service, low-volume production minimums, and stock inlay line.

Since RFID tags often detune when attached to objects, the ability to test actual, individual tag variations is imperative to ensure that a theoretical design performs optimally in its real-world environment. Mu-Gahat inlays can be custom tuned to meet specific application and frequency requirements.

Mu-Gahat's in-house staff of RFID antenna design engineers works with customers to optimize RFID tag performance for a specific application. Then using the company's proprietary software design process, Mu-Gahat can produce from one to five simultaneous RFID inlay variations (antenna + chip on flexible plastic substrate) for product application and field testing. This enables faster time to



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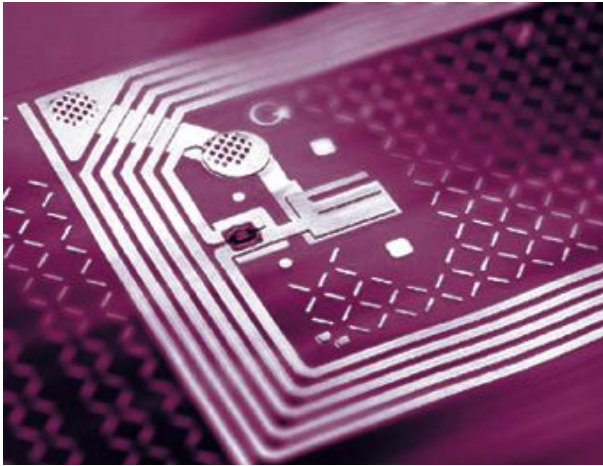
- a new ARMOR subsidiary in South America: ARMOR Brasil. Strategically located in Manaus, Amazonas, it will support the needs of clients in Brazil, Mercosur and other South American countries.

- a new stock on the US West Coast: an extensive inventory of popular market products ready for same day shipping.

These new facilities illustrate ARMOR's strategy to act as a global leader, with dedicated local service.



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optimal design than the traditional sequential, iterative one-at-a-time design process.

Mu-Gahat's patent pending laser ablation antenna process, together with its high speed Muhlbauer production equipment, further streamlines turnaround times, lowers costs and quantities more than typical inlay suppliers.

For both prototyping and just-in-time production, Mu-Gahat's US-based production lines enable customers to do smaller economical runs of as little as 150 units to two million units. Smaller runs mean that customers no longer need to order larger than needed quantities or stockpile extraneous inlays, while customers with specialized requirements can get the inlays they need without premiums. Mu-Gahat can also provide finished converted label solutions via its authorized converting partners.

PowerID introduces Gen 2 battery-assisted, passive RFID labels

PowerID, supplier of battery-assisted, passive (BAP) RFID technology, has announced the general availability of its

BAP label product line utilizing the EPCglobal Class 1, Generation 2 air protocol. PowerID's Gen 2 products combine the high performance and reliability of a BAP label with support for standards-based Gen 2 RFID readers.

The new labels address the needs of organizations that utilize an EPC Gen 2 RFID infrastructure, but find that the performance of passive RFID does not meet all of their tracking needs. Utilizing PowerID's thin and flexible power source, PowerID's Gen 2 labels are said to be affordable and provide high performance in challenging environments. The labels operate in the ultra high frequency (UHF) range (850-960 MHz).

PowerID's BAP labels were designed to track challenging materials – such as liquids, metal, and paper – that can negatively affect the reliability of traditional RFID technology. The key to BAP's performance lies with PowerID's flexible battery technology, which enables readability in difficult environments while boosting the read range of the labels.

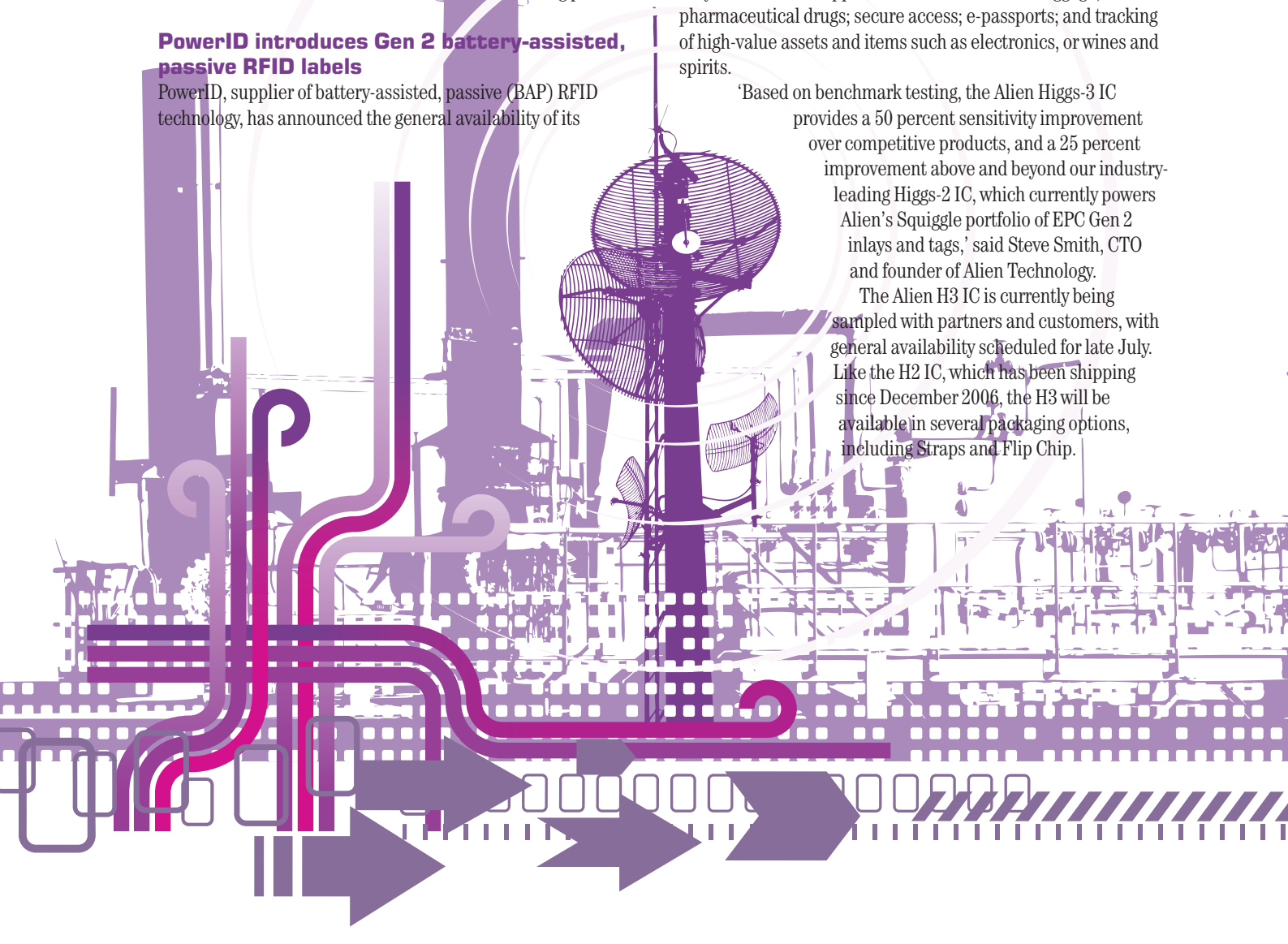
BAP provides performance that is comparable to active RFID technology, but at a lower price point and with better performance than those of passive RFID tags.

Alien introduces integrated circuit with extended memory

Alien Technology, a supplier of UHF products and services, has introduced its new H3 (Higgs) Integrated Circuit (IC). With 512 bits of user memory and advanced security features, the H3 complements Alien's existing H2 product. The new IC is targeted at converters and end customers requiring unique tag identification and extended memory capabilities required to fully address RFID applications such as airline baggage; pharmaceutical drugs; secure access; e-passports; and tracking of high-value assets and items such as electronics, or wines and spirits.

'Based on benchmark testing, the Alien Higgs-3 IC provides a 50 percent sensitivity improvement over competitive products, and a 25 percent improvement above and beyond our industry-leading Higgs-2 IC, which currently powers Alien's Squiggle portfolio of EPC Gen 2 inlays and tags,' said Steve Smith, CTO and founder of Alien Technology.

The Alien H3 IC is currently being sampled with partners and customers, with general availability scheduled for late July. Like the H2 IC, which has been shipping since December 2006, the H3 will be available in several packaging options, including Straps and Flip Chip.





Reading Raflatac tags at the store

Applications

Metro Group's RFID roll-out deploys equipment from Sirit and Reva

Sirit, a provider of RFID technology, and Reva Systems, RFID network infrastructure provider, have announced that Metro Group is deploying Sirit's Infinity 510 UHF RFID reader and Reva's TAP 331 appliance as part of the recently announced expanded rollout at Metro Group's Real brand hypermarket stores. The 200 Real locations will be equipped with Checkpoint portals powered by Sirit readers at the loading doors to track incoming goods. Reva's RFID network infrastructure will be installed at each location to provide device management and data processing.

Sirit's IN510 readers will be used to track pallets and cases as they arrive at the stores to improve supply chain efficiency. Reva's TAP 331 appliances will be used to manage the distributed network of RFID installations, to produce accurate data from each site and to provide rapid operator feedback during logistics operations. This 200-location rollout builds on last October's successful implementation during which Sirit readers were deployed at 100 Real hypermarkets and Reva's TAP 331 appliances were installed at all RFID-enabled facilities.

'Metro Group's decision to expand their RFID program to another 200 stores is a clear validation that today's technology meets enterprise requirements and that the operational benefits are real,' commented Frank Mild, vice president of EMEA for Reva Systems. 'Reva's RFID

network infrastructure provides the manageability, data accuracy and ease of deployment that Metro needs to move forward with RFID at this number of sites.

The combination of Sirit's high performance readers and Reva's scalable RFID platform creates value at these locations immediately which is extremely important to the Real management team.'

DePuy Orthopaedics implements RFID with UPM Raflatac and Odin

DePuy Orthopaedics, a division of Johnson & Johnson and a supplier of orthopaedic implants, has incorporated RFID technology into its day-to-day operations, leveraging UPM Raflatac Gen2 RFID tags and a complete solution developed by Odin technologies.

The goal of the end-to-end solution was to improve efficiency in DePuy Orthopaedics' supply chain logistics by automating the manual inventory inspection process for the company's Express Care sets containing titanium and cobalt chrome joint replacements. The company places UPM Raflatac's UHF Gen2 DogBone RFID tags on individually boxed orthopaedic implants, as well as the completed Express Care sets.

RFID has streamlined DePuy Orthopaedics' inventory processes as well as delivered increased efficiency and accuracy by reducing the Express Care set processing time from between 10 and 30 minutes to less than one minute. Instead of scanning each item individually, employees are now able to replenish and reship the company's daily output of 675 Express Care sets faster than ever before. The Odin solution, which is based on sound physics and infrastructure automation, relies on the UPM Raflatac UHF DogBone tag to deliver 100 percent accuracy.

RFID technology has provided DePuy Orthopaedics with reliability and scalability under challenging conditions. Tags must be read accurately in the presence of metal which can cause RF interference, parts are not necessarily placed uniformly in boxes, and the majority of the company's incoming orders require same-day processing and shipment. The end-to-end solution offers 24 x 7 monitoring and remote diagnostics, deploying configuration and firmware changes electronically from a secure data center using Odin's proprietary EasyMonitor solution.

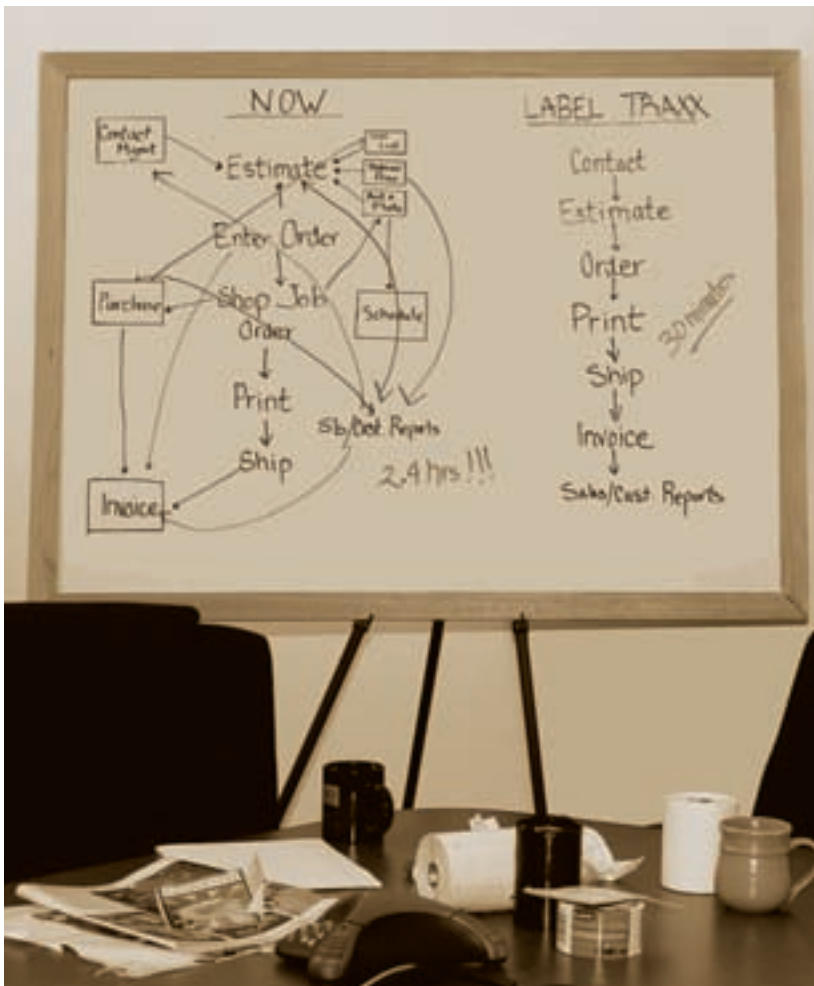
UPM Raflatac delivers UHF tags to retail store in Kuwait

UPM Raflatac is supplying UHF EPC Gen2 tags to Future Communications Company (FCC) based in the State of Kuwait. FCC is the main distributor of Nokia phones and accessories in Kuwait and runs more than 30 retail stores. The company is implementing RFID technology at item-level in its retail showroom in Kuwait City to improve customer service and maximize the efficiency of inventory management.

UPM Raflatac's DogBone tags are attached to mobile phone packages, while accessories are tagged with UPM Raflatac's ShortDipole and Belt products. In addition to global functionality, these UHF tags provide security features (EAS) for anti-theft purposes. FCC has introduced intelligent shelves with RFID reader antennas that monitor the stock and provide automatic notification if stock levels fall below specified volumes. This results in fewer out-of-stock situations and increased sales, as RFID tagged items are easily located in the store or backroom.

FCC's customers benefit from the RFID technology with enhanced customer service and reduced checkout times: the entire contents of a shopping basket can be scanned in one go at the point of sale. RFID also opens new opportunities for special promotions and cross-sales, as FCC has RFID enabled loyalty cards in use.

'With RFID technology we're able to increase both our sales and customer satisfaction. We expect savings of over 25 percent in operational costs and an equal increase in revenue. FCC selected RFID tags from UPM Raflatac as they provide reliable performance from the backroom to the point of sale, and they are available in a number of sizes. In future we also plan to utilize RFID in our supply chain management to reap the benefits throughout the chain, from manufacturing onwards,' said Talal Al-Awadhi, RFID specialist at Future RFID Company.



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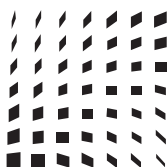
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Installations

Spear completes \$8 million expansion at UK facility

In response to increased demand for pressure sensitive labels from the global beverage industry, Spear has made significant investments in both technology and personnel at its UK site in Cwmbran, Wales.

The primary investment, a Cerutti 960/2 press, brings wide web gravure print capability to the UK site. With print speeds in excess 200 meters per minute and a press width of one meter, the Cerutti has increased Spear's European capacity to approximately 25 billion labels.

The press incorporates a fault detection system supplied by AVT, which provides 100% inspection and real-time defect identification.

To support this investment the label finishing capacity has also been expanded with the addition of three Ashe slitters, incorporating Surfscan's quality control systems, and two GMC die-cutters. The die-cutters, which are based upon Spear's proprietary press of the same name, are designed and manufactured at Spears New Hampshire, USA facility.

The acquisitions, and Spears continued growth in Europe, has also led to an expansion of the workforce. An additional 40 employees have been recruited within the last six months with a further 25 jobs to be created through 2008.

UK converter invests in five Surfscan inspection systems

UK label manufacturer Systems Labelling has invested in five CHECKpress web inspection systems from Surfscan Technologies on four Mark Andy 8-color 4150 presses and one Comco press. The systems, which were configured utilizing 200 hours of programming time by Surfscan's development team to meet the label company's precise requirements, will be fully operational before the end of May 2008.

One hundred percent validated inspection is more than a technical requirement at the Deeside, Wales-based company, it has a positive sales and marketing benefit, as sales director Tony Exford explains: 'Quality lies at the heart of everything we do here. When I explain to our customers and potential customers the sophistication of the Surfscan system they are rightly impressed. By offering 100 percent validated inspection it takes the issue of poor quality out of the equation and underpins our own quality claims. It is, in fact, a very important element in our sales pitch. And you can't argue with that.'

Systems Labelling once owed 70 percent of its turnover to the milk label production business but decided to diversify and invested in a Dixon coater, a management information system and platesetters from Kodak. Now, milk labels account for 35 percent of its current £10m turnover while the company now produces around two billion labels a year covering in-

mold, no label look, 36-40 micron wrap, board printing and compostable.

The bespoke MIS has been refined so that it streamlines the entire business, from order intake and customer contact to the programming of work patterns and priorities on the presses – even to scheduling dispatch.

Part of the reason for the selection of the CHECKpress system was its ability to dovetail with the MIS, even producing roll maps on the presses and then conducting final checks on a series of Arpeco and Scantech rewinders via an Ethernet connection.

One of the many spin-off benefits of the CHECKpress, according to Systems Labelling, is waste reduction. The CHECKpress has been programmed to measure the density of ink using its grayscale value and this enables advance warning of ink run out to be given which in turn saves operator time.

Omet clinches first X-Flex sale in Iceland

Omet has sold its X-Flex, launched at Labelexpo Europe in Brussels, to leading Icelandic label converter PMT.

The order for an X-Flex line, due for delivery in June 2008, was secured after convincing print trails undertaken at Omet's demo center in Lecco, Italy. Substrates from film to light cartonboard were run through the X-Flex using very low screen values.

PMT's managing director Oddur Sigurdsson said: 'We tested a number of presses and there was no doubt that the X-Flex performed the best. Iceland is a remote market with a wide variety of special requirements, so we needed the best flexibility available to make the investment worthwhile. After our visit to Omet, we were convinced that the X-Flex is the right press for PMT.'

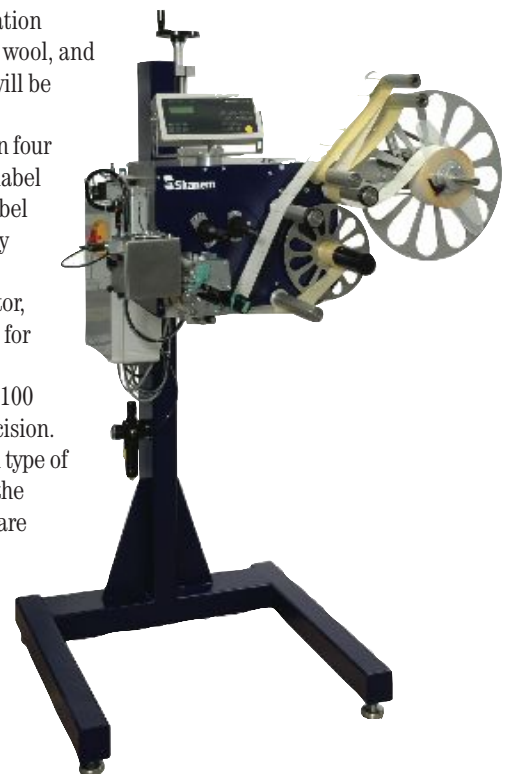
When fully commissioned in the summer, PMT's new X-Flex will offer 6-color UV capability, with movable cold-foil, delam-relam, and turner bars on an overhead rail system, shock air system for windows patching, and a 2-ply self-adhesive coupon label.

Saint-Gobain Isover chooses Skanem applicators

Saint-Gobain Isover in Sweden has recently decided to install three Skanem LaBora label application machines for one of its latest projects. Isover is the only supplier in Sweden to offer a complete range of insulation products with glass wool, stone wool, and cellular plastics. The systems will be installed this Spring.

Skanem LaBora is available in four versions depending on how the label is applied to the product. The label applicator with printer is built by the system division of Skanem Skurup and is a flexible applicator, which works with high precision for automatic in-line labeling.

The machine can apply up to 100 labels per minute with high precision. The customer can choose which type of printer it wants to incorporate: the standard printers incorporated are Intermec and Zebra printers, but Sato and Datamax can also be used in this machine.



Screen goes digital

Label converters can now integrate screen plates into a fully digital workflow. **Andy Thomas** reports on the latest solutions from Gallus and Stork

Combination printing is the best way for converters to add value to a label in a single press pass, and there is a wide range of possible combinations of flexo, offset, letterpress and screen available.

A major source of complexity in combination printing is handling pre-press for the different processes involved – particularly for printers who want to move to a fully digital workflow. Up to now, digital imaging systems and plates are available for offset, flexo and letterpress systems, but the addition of screen has still required the use of analogue films.

This situation is set to change with the launch by Stork, and now by Gallus, of digital imaging systems for screen plates.

Gallus demonstrated a digital workflow for Screeny screen printing plates at its recent Open House in St Gallen, Switzerland. The Screeny Digital screen printing plates are coated with an ablation layer (LAMS layer), which is laminated onto the photopolymer. The ablation layer is imaged digitally by a point laser. The screen is then exposed, washed out and assembled in the conventional manner.

The ablation layer has been adapted to make it compatible with LAMS ablation systems for digital flexo and letterpress plates, and Gallus demonstrated imaging the screen plate on a standard Esko CDI imaging unit.

'The aim is to integrate Screeny digital into the existing digital flexographic workflow and thus avoid the high investment in additional equipment,' says Dario Urbinati-Schmidhauser, Gallus Screeny product manager. 'Screeny Digital makes it possible to adopt CTP for rotary screen printing without the extra costs and process uncertainties

"The aim is to integrate Screeny digital into the existing digital flexographic workflow and thus avoid the high investment in additional equipment"

involved in changing over and removes the need for an analogue film.'

A digital version of all the relevant Screeny types, including the new Screeny S-Line (see L&L 4, 2007 p.79), will be available from mid-2008.

Stork Prints launched a digital imaging solution for its Rotaplate system – the rotaLEX 6610 Direct Laser Exposer – at Labelexpo Europe last year. The rotaLEX is compatible with all available RotaPlate specifications, from fine text screens up to tactile screens. Converters can use the standard RotaPlate material and do not have to use digital screen plates with a mask layer.

Bert Grootjen, program manager, Stork Prints, comments: 'The new rotaLEX technology provides a major breakthrough in enhanced output quality and consistency. The fact that no film is needed reduces overall process costs. The chance of human error is greatly reduced – for example, because of inaccurate film positioning. Also, material and plotter costs, handling and storage, dust or scratches on the film, are all eliminated, too.'

Josef Schützenberger, product manager rotaLEX, noted that the development of the rotaLEX system is based on 25 years' experience at Stork Prints Austria with Direct Laser Technology for the textile industry. 'These proven and patented laser technologies in screen pre-press and other applications are combined in this compact CTP table top, specially developed for RotaPlate.'

Workflow features include on-the-fly rastering and Windows-based multitasking software. Repeat orders can be carried out with ease and jobs can be stored and recalled from the computer. ■



Ablating the Screeny plate on Esko CDI imager

IN RE: PRESSURE SENSITIVE LABELSTOCK
ANTITRUST LITIGATIONMDL Docket No. 1556
(No. 3:03-MDL-1556)**SUMMARY NOTICE OF PENDENCY OF CLASS ACTION, PROPOSED SETTLEMENT, AND HEARING ON SETTLEMENT**

TO: ALL PERSONS AND ENTITIES WHO PURCHASED PAPER-BASED OR FILM-BASED SELF-ADHESIVE LABELSTOCK IN THE UNITED STATES DIRECTLY FROM AVERY DENNISON CORPORATION, BEMIS COMPANY, INC., MORGAN ADHESIVES COMPANY, INC. ("MACTac"), RAFLATAC, INC., OR UPM-KYMMENE CORPORATION ("DEFENDANTS") AT ANY TIME FROM JANUARY 1, 1996 AND JULY 25, 2003.

YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED, pursuant to an Order of the United States District Court for the Middle District of Pennsylvania (the "Court"), that a class has been certified in this lawsuit against Defendants Avery Dennison Corporation ("Avery Dennison"), Bemis Company, Inc. ("Bemis"), Morgan Adhesives Company, Inc. ("MACTac"), Raflatrac, Inc. ("Raflatrac"), and UPM-Kymmene Corporation ("UPM"). A proposed settlement has been reached with Raflatrac and UPM on behalf of the Class in the amount of \$8.25 million, plus cooperation from Raflatrac and UPM.

If you purchased paper-based or film-based self-adhesive labelstock in the United States directly from any of the Defendants, or any present or former parent, subsidiary, or affiliate thereof, at any time during the period from January 1, 1996 to July 25, 2003, and you are not a governmental entity, Defendant, co-conspirator, other producer of self-adhesive labelstock, or the present and former parent, predecessor, subsidiary, or affiliate of the foregoing, you may be a member of the Class and you may be entitled to participate in the settlement. The products at issue in this lawsuit do not include Avery Dennison's FasClear and PRIMAX film products or foil or "piggyback" self-adhesive labelstock.

A printed Class Action Notice ("Notice") was mailed to Class Members on May 2, 2008. If you did not receive the Notice in the mail, you may obtain one by writing to the Claims Administrator at In re: Pressure Sensitive Labelstock Antitrust Litigation, c/o RSM McGladrey, Inc., Claims Administrator, P.O. Box 1367, Blue Bell, PA 19422. The Notice explains the litigation and settlement in some detail. It also explains your legal rights, the claims that will be released under the settlement if you remain a member of the Class, and what you need to do to either participate in the benefits of the settlement or to exclude yourself from the Class.

The Court will hold a hearing on July 22, 2008 at 1:00 p.m. in Courtroom 2 at the William J. Nealon Federal Building and U.S. Courthouse, 235 N. Washington Avenue, Scranton, PA, 18501, to consider whether the proposed settlement of the litigation should be approved as fair, reasonable and adequate. The hearing may be continued without further notice to the Settlement Class.

If you have questions concerning this litigation, you may write to the Claims Administrator at In re: Pressure Sensitive Labelstock Antitrust Litigation, c/o RSM McGladrey, Inc., Claims Administrator, P.O. Box 1367, Blue Bell, PA 19422, or call the Claims Administrator at 1-800-222-2760.

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Flat screen niche

Narrow web flat screen printing continues to find a healthy niche in the labels industry at Smag Graphique. **Andy Thomas** reports

While rotary screen printing gets most of the glamour, the more traditional flat screen technology is not just alive and well, but also making some remarkable technical advances.

In continuous flat bed screen printing, a 'stop-and-go' motion means that the web stops while the ink is pressed through the open areas of a mesh mounted on a rectangular frame. The web then moves on by the length of the frame, and stops again while the process is repeated.

In terms of simplicity and effectiveness the flat bed screen process is hard to beat. Its limitation is of course its speed. Twelve meters/minute was until recently the top speed consistent with high quality.

Smag set itself the task of increasing this by 50 percent, which meant totally rethinking the whole press design. Increasing the maximum frame length was a first step. Then the company set about redesigning all the finishing operations, including die-cutting, curing/drying and hot-foiling.

'We have now moved to continuous-action finishing which improves line speed and print quality,' says Pascal Mercier, technical director and co-owner of Smag Graphique, France. 'Rotary screen printing has its place in long-run application, but modern flat-bed screen printing of the kind now developed by Smag will continue to be the best option for label printing in the cosmetics sector, particularly in view of the very wide range of screen inks now available.' All pharmaceuticals sold within the EU must now carry inscriptions in Braille. Although screen printing is not the only option, it is

Smag flat screen printing unit



generally more economical than embossing. 'Recent experiments using flexo for Braille have not so far proved conclusive,' says Mercier.

The great advantage of screen over other technologies is of course its ability to print a smooth laydown of ink in the required thickness. 'You can screen-print opaque white over another color – no other print process can do this nearly as successfully as screen,' Mercier points out. Where labels need to be weatherproof and chemical-proof the screen process comes into its own – and it doesn't stop at labels: your mobile phone probably has some screen-printed parts, as does the dashboard of your car.

'Squeezable household containers for shampoos, for example, need the water resistance and flexibility that only screen printing can give,' says Mercier.

Printed electronics too is opening up a whole new market for screen, which can lay down precisely patterned antennas of conductive ink.

Some of Smag's machines are even being used to print designs onto children's shoes. And when the French Post Office started offering individualized postage stamps, it was a flat-bed screen press that printed them.

Narrow web digital printing has also opened up new possibilities for screen printing and finishing equipment specially designed to operate in line with a digital press. Smag has worked closely with market leader HP Indigo to develop modular screen printing and finishing lines. Scratch cards and security applications are just some of the applications for which digital and screen printing can work together hand in glove.

'There will always be printing jobs for which screen is the best or even the only option,' says Mercier. 'With the move to ever shorter run lengths the market for flat-bed screen presses is assured for the foreseeable future. Flexo ink technology in particular has made remarkable progress over recent years but their opacity levels are still lower than those of screen inks.' ■

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Digital workflow

While the big digital label news around drupa was the launch of technologies by Xeikon, HP Indigo and Heidelberg – see our drupa special report – much else is happening in the world of digital printing and workflow. **Andy Thomas** rounds up the latest news

Inkjet vendors roll out systems

Developers of in-line inkjet modules are now starting to roll them out on 'real world' conventional press and rewinder systems. A PTS JetFlex inkjet integrated with a Mark Andy 2200 flexo press was shown at a recent FTS Open House. Demos included variable data printing of lottery tickets, complete with varnish over-coat and scratch-off coating application.

Atlantic Zeiser, meanwhile, used drupa to demonstrate its Omega 36 HD LED UV-cured inkjet print head on a Prati Saturn TE280 slitter inspection-rewinder. This allowed the Saturn to overprint not only variable data such as barcodes and product codes at a resolution of 720 dpi, but also special inks. The lower cooling requirements of the LED lamps enable overprinting on both paper and plastic substrates without damage to the label.

Mimaki – previously known for its wide web inkjet systems – marked its entrance into the digital label printing sector with the launch of a single-pass, 4-color, UV curable inkjet printer with a print width of 30 cm. The printer, named IPH-300-L, achieves a standard resolution of 600 x 600 dpi but can be operated at 600 x 1200 dpi. It is available with optional 4-size variable dot capabilities and equipped with a high-speed RIP.

Konica Minolta, meanwhile, demonstrated at drupa its 4-color inkjet module using the company's new KM512 piezo printheads, compatible with solvent, UV and oil-based inks.

Inkjet head specialist Xaar provided the imaging power – via its 1001-series inkjet heads – for several 4-color inkjet modules at the show. FFEI/Nipletter Caslon was showing a module for integration into a conventional narrow web press, Beijing Founder Company and JF Machines both demonstrated 4-color rigs, while EFI Jettrion showcased the 4000 system previewed at Labelexpo Europe in Brussels.

Also at the Brussels show, Epson demonstrated an inkjet rig based around an intermittent feed system, which was slow but of very high quality. Epson made it clear at the time that they were serious about the labels market, and now we hear that the company has signed an agreement with Japanese corporation Noritsu Koki Co., Ltd to co-operate in the development of inkjet

“Epson is serious about the label market, and now we hear that the company has signed an agreement with Japanese corporation Noritsu Koki Co to develop industrial inkjet systems”

systems for the industrial printing sector – including labeling. The two companies already have a track record of co-developing inkjet systems for the photo lab sector, so it will be interesting to see where this leads.

Digital standards advance

Recent weeks have seen the release of two important protocols which, when implemented in vendors' software, should greatly assist label converters setting up digital workflows from design to press.

First, the Ghent Workgroup (GWG) released its (free) 'Proof of Preflight' specification, enabling users to view a PDF file's preflight audit trail – including a digital signature – at any time during the design-to-print workflow.

Up to now this feature has only been available from within individual suppliers' workflow systems. The new GWG Proof of Preflight specification is designed to be interoperable across different vendor workflows.

Then the CIP4 organization released its specification for the exchange of print eCommerce information between customer systems, web-to-print eCommerce systems, and print estimating, scheduling and MIS systems.

The PrintTalk specification, developed in the 1990s under the auspices of NPES, covers a wide range of print buying



“PrintTalk's has cooperated closely with CIP4 to ensure that data gathered in the print buying process can be moved forward into production via JDF”

transactions such as requests for estimates, completed estimates and approvals. PrintTalk's has cooperated closely with CIP4 to ensure that data gathered in the print buying process can be moved forward into production via JDF.

CIP4 chair Margaret Motamed explained what this should mean: ‘One of the promises of automation is to eliminate redundant work, such as re-keying job specifications, and to make the entire process of designing, buying, producing and delivering print faster, more reliable, and more immediate to the ultimate consumer of the printed message. This version of PrintTalk, with its tight coordination with JDF, is an important integration milestone on the path to that objective.’

The narrow web industry still lags far behind the commercial print sector in implementing digital workflows. Take a look at what is happening at MAN Roland's Westmont, Illinois Graphic Center, for example, where Prism's WIN MIS system is creating job tickets for all jobs carried out at the center, then capturing actual material, labor and machine costs through its shop floor data capture module.

‘WIN not only provides job ticket information to our presses, but also to our Kodak Prinergy prepress workflow,’ explains Hal Stratton, MAN's director of new technologies. ‘Through PrintNet, all of our presses send real-time, JMF messages to WIN of actual job progress and machine performance. At the end of a customer demonstration we actually print out a WIN job cost detail report for the customer, for the actual job we just ran. Prism WIN ties our entire workflow together.’

Label Traxx MIS supports HP Indigo

Tailored Solutions' Label Traxx MIS now fully supports HP Indigo digital label presses and allows converters to model different breakeven points between conventional and digital printing.

Label Traxx Version 5.2 enables HP Indigo users automatically to apply parameters including speed, spoilage allowances, impression charges, and other variables to their estimates and costing. As a result, HP Indigo-produced labels can be estimated more accurately than previously possible, and job cost accounting more accurately documents the production process.

Particularly significant is a new Label Traxx crossover calculator, which simultaneously compares both digital and flexo

Digital News in Brief

Dalim enhances monitor proofs

Dalim is looking to help its labels and packaging-related users assess color-critical files on-screen by partnering with Integrated Color Solutions (ICS) to develop tighter integration between Dalim's workflow automation software and the ICS Remote Director monitor proofing system.

Skip the gap

Compose Systems has released a new version of its GapFinder application that intelligently analyzes jobs against the printing cylinder, and repositions job images to eliminate press cylinder gaps during the press run. Other products launched recently include the PressMax ink optimization tool which helps match proof to press.

HP Indigo good to Goe

HP has completed Pantone Goe licensing for its HP Indigo Ink Mixing System, allowing the company to offer both on-press simulation and an ink mixing solution for the latest Pantone color system.

HP has also developed a swatchbook for on-press Pantone Goe simulation, which will be included in the Digital Color Toolbox. The two-swatchbook bundle offers a convenient way to compare solid Pantone Goe colors with their simulations in HP Indigo four-color, on-press process.

costs. Label Traxx uses these calculations to graph costs of both processes, quickly establishing the crossover point and enabling users to determine whether a specific job should be printed digitally or conventionally.

Commented Tailored Solutions president Ken Meinhardt: ‘These latest enhancements to Label Traxx were developed in conjunction with HP to account for the differences between digital and flexographic label production. More and more label producers have installed HP Indigo presses or are considering doing so, and Label Traxx users also suggested many of the features embedded in this new software.’

Flexo workflow integrates remote file access

A new name in the world of narrow web flexo pre-press is Lucid Dream Software, whose TaskForce workflow bundles on-line job submission with soft proofing, ripping, trapping, imposition, hybrid screening and TIFF proofing and archiving.

TaskForce integrates the company's OnTimeProof browser-based job submission with form-based job ticketing and an online proofing solution. Running as a service from a computer within the print shop, unlimited clients can upload files remotely and securely. Jobs are automatically or semi-automatically routed into queues based on the job ticket information. Soft proofs made from the ripped/trapped data are automatically uploaded back to the web site and email notices – with job thumbnail – are sent to the clients.

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“The operator simply determines the ideal three-dimensional shape for the smallest dot, as well as for the largest”

The TaskForce workflow includes Lucid's I-Trap for automatic in-rip trapping, while its I-Tone hybrid screening plug-in allows control of minimum dot size, dot shape, line screen, calibration and resolution. This is a useful tool for flexo printers that have a hard time correcting highlight breaks, while helping others print at a higher line screen.

TaskForce includes an Acrobat imposition plug-in letting users impose the production-ready PDF file and then run back through to be screened and separated. These screened separations can be recombined in the workflow to create a PDF or DCS file for proofing or archiving, and when needed again, can be run through any RIP to recreate the separations.

Stork RIP tool enhances engraved dot formation

Stork Prints Austria has introduced a RIP software tool to help converters produce high quality half-tones by the direct laser engraving process.

Active 3D RIP allows the formation of tailor-made negative and positive dot-shapes, offering total flexibility when determining dot dimensions from 1 percent to 99 percent density, and allowing unlimited dot depth variables – from zero to maximum – and complete shoulder steepness control, with the possibility to vary angles from 0° to 90°.

The operator simply determines the ideal three-dimensional shape for the smallest dot, as well as for the largest dot. All dot-sizes and shapes are then automatically generated. Because of this, there is no need to compromise quality at any stage of the tonal range between the smallest and largest dots.

The Active 3D-RIP software tool will enable the flexo printer to reduce tonal loss by 50 percent compared with existing 3D dot shaping techniques used in the direct laser engraving process, according to the manufacturer. Furthermore, the software gives the operator the freedom to create virtually any shoulder steepness desired, so that dots, especially in highlight areas, have optimum support. This in turn gives the printing forme improved durability and consistency of printing quality over longer periods.

The direct laser engraving process, launched by Stork Prints in 2004, is an in-the-round method of imaging printing plates and sleeves for flexo, letterpress and dry-offset applications. It is also used for imaging RotaMesh and RotaPlate electroformed nickel screen cylinders. In relief applications, the process involves the burning away of the non-image areas by a CO2 laser, without the need for UV-light, or exposing, washing and drying.

Labelexpo Global Series to launch Digital Summit

Labelexpo Global Series will hold its first Global Digital Label Summit next March 23-24 in Barcelona, Spain.

Mike Fairley, Tarsus strategic consultant, said digital printing technology has made the jump from niche into a mainstream process to join with flexo, UV flexo, offset and letterpress. 'Digital has become an integral part of today's label and packaging production and is now accepted by leading brand owners and print buyers worldwide. This event is undoubtedly a showcase for the future of our industry.'

Roger Pellow, Labels Group managing director, also stressed that digital printing is now a reality for the label industry. 'Currently some 14 percent of all new narrow web press installations are digital, with this figure expected to rise to between 20 and 30 percent over the next five to 10 years. For the future of printing technologies, digital printing will play a key role. The Summit will be a must-attend event for any converter who wants to learn about the opportunities of digital printing and network with their peers, experts and end-users.'

New digital plates launched

Jet Europe has launched a new program of CTP-LAMS photopolymer flexo and letterpress plates. Jet says the plates deliver a more resilient dot structure for high-speed printing and cleaning, while reducing the risk of ink build-up.

Jet has also launched its first direct laser engraving (DLE) plates for letterpress and dry-offset print processes. The plates feature a nylon-free, polyvinyl-alcohol composition, which prevents the emanation of unpleasant odors during the engraving process.

The DLE range works with all commercial laser engraving systems and boasts a tonal range of 0.5 to 99 percent. In addition, the material is resistant to residue build-up after engraving or spraying, thus allowing users to make the most of the process's quality advantages. These include the ability to achieve dot reproducibility up to 150 lpi, uniform ink-transfer in solid areas, and clear cuts that bring out fine linework and clear small-text.

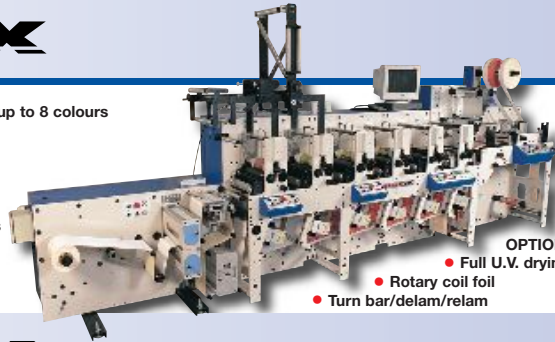
Asahi has meanwhile been testing its new DEF generation of water-washable digital plates at Germany printer Rako Etiketten. In the Rako pressroom plates are predominantly used with UV inks, though the plates are also suitable for use with solvent-based and water-based inks.

Rako has been testing 1.14 mm thick plates, and the range will eventually be up to 2.84mm. The maximum plate size is 900 x 1200 mm, which corresponds to the format of the CDI Spark imager.

Main and post-exposure are performed using an Asahi AFP 912 EDLF system, and Asahi has developed a new unit for washing out the new flexo plates. The washing agent is an ordinary soap solution. ■

PROFLEX

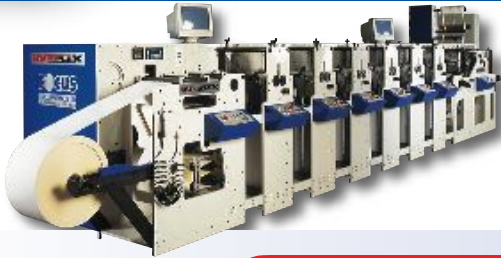
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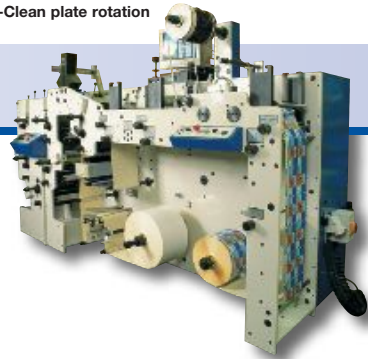
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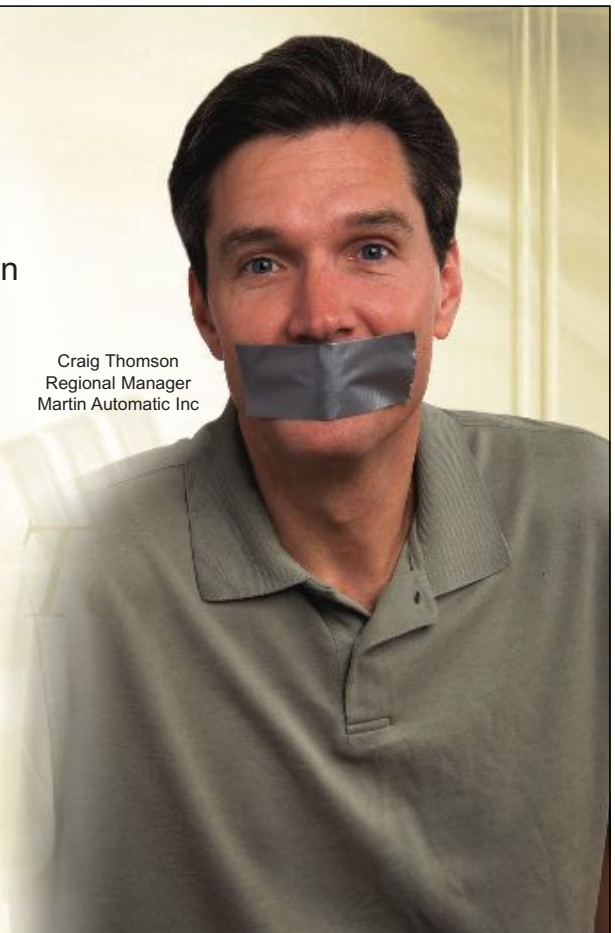
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Green, green — it's everywhere

It's been a year since the Green wave hit our industry and others around the world. What have you learned, asks **Danielle Jerschefske**

The annual Packaging Summit Expo and Conference, co-sponsored by the Institute of Packaging Professionals (IoPP), is an annual, valuable resource for information on sustainability in the packaging and label printing industries. This year's show hosted an impressive line-up of speakers from companies such as Wal-Mart, Unilever and Reckitt Benckiser.

Wal-Mart's senior director of supplier development, Paul Lewellen, gave his listeners insight into the current progress Wal-Mart has made in the green arena and also what it will demand in the future from its suppliers. The mega-store has already begun to look more closely at its supply chain management procedures to determine where, and how, it can reduce energy consumption in obtaining, delivering and distributing consumer products around the world. For example, it has begun to use Peterbilt hybrid trucks, aerodynamic trucks or those with auxiliary power units installed that can be turned off to reduce energy usage. Already this industry pacesetter has become 25 percent more energy efficient than it was in 2005. And, with the use of the flip-switch power units, the company has saved \$25 million in fuel costs to date. Will these energy saving innovations be expected from its suppliers? 'Yes,' said Lewellen. 'You can expect a roll-out this year for requirements in our logistics chains.'

Wal-Mart is focusing quite intently right now on where it sources from, how far away that source is, and what effect its supply chain has on cradle-to-cradle capabilities.

As far as the Wal-Mart scorecard is concerned, Lewellen explained that the company has a plan to bring the requirements to the world soon. But before it does, Wal-Mart wants to ensure that the process is running smoothly and efficiently in the US. Once it is, then the process will move to be introduced globally. Addressing the crowd, Lewellen said, 'We need the support and structure in the US to move forward internationally. Your support and innovation has driven Wal-Mart to be where it is now. Thank you and keep bringing us more ideas.' The roll-out schedule to follow the US, will move to Canada next, then the UK, with

Mexico and China to follow.

Unilever's packaging manager for environmental sustainability, Humberto Garcia, discussed the company's environmental stance. He emphasized the importance of packaging innovation and the need to reduce the detrimental impact packaging has on the environment. But, he also said, 'Our manufacturing impact on the environment is small compared to the impact of the products. We really like to look at our broader footprint, with a life cycle view to incorporate, for instance, water used in agriculture and during consumer use, as well as the carbon footprint of our product throughout the life cycle.'

In an effort to reduce the life cycle impact of some of its products, Unilever has introduced such detergent brands as All and Surf which were formulated to perform well at lower temperatures, thereby using less energy and releasing fewer harmful gases into the atmosphere.

When asked what drives sustainable practices at Unilever, Garcia said that while the company makes every attempt to satisfy its customers, it also strives consistently to focus on the whole picture. 'Public perception does not always match scientific reality,' Garcia said. 'With lightweight plastic packaging, it is better to incinerate the material and recover the energy rather than recycle the PET.' The energy needed to recycle the material is much higher than destroying it. Consumers don't know that.

Unilever believes that future innovation will focus on materials, processes and designs. 'That will give companies like Unilever more alternatives to reduce the environmental impact of packaging.'

It is very clear now that CPGs and retailers are concerned, not only about the sustainability of packaging (including labels), but also, if not more so, about the big picture. Over the past year we have been asking ourselves: what is green really all about? And what impact does it have on the success of my company? If it's not affecting me, so, what?



Smith & McLaurin error

In L&L issue 2 (April-May) there were errors in an article entitled 'Tests reveal carbon content'. The EP7000 adhesive from Smith & McLaurin is not full home compostable, but a greener alternative to standard adhesives. In the pie charts shown, the mean biobased content of the standard adhesive was wrongly put as 58 percent – the correct figure is 3 percent. We apologise for the errors.

If we have learned one thing about this Green awareness movement over the past year, it should be that it's ubiquitous, and here stay. The concept of the triple bottom line is also here to stay. The label industry must be aware of its customer's environmental stance, and be prepared for what impact it will have on them. Management at the end of the supply chain is looking at all the factors of the production cycle including environmental factors, and it is only a matter of time until this is a standard business practice for all CPGs. Sooner, rather than later, they will be looking at their vendors' 'green' position and at what they are doing to support the cradle-to-cradle concept. Energy consumption, CO2 emission, fossil fuel usage, water usage – the Big picture – is what is really important and is at the epicenter of the Green movement in both the label industry, and other businesses around the world.

PIA Lean and Green Seminar Tour

So, now that you know that the Green movement cannot be ignored or simply dismissed with a flippant 'it doesn't affect my company' attitude, where do you go to find pertinent information on how to embrace the cradle-to-cradle concept? The Printing Industries of America, a founding partner of the Sustainable Green Printing Partnership (SGP), has just started its Lean and Green National Seminar Tour. This detailed and informative conference provides operations managers with the tools and tips to aid their efforts in combining lean and 5S with sustainability, or cradle-to-cradle initiatives.

The old adage 'what gets measured, gets managed' is methodically applied to the printing process and visually reinforced through slide presentations with the hope that attendees will embrace the concepts and return to their respective companies fully prepared to initiate. The combined talents of the PIA's environmental consultant, Gary Jones, and its process improvement specialist, Ken Rizzo, will certainly prove to be valuable resources to label converters.

Flexible Packaging Association

The Flexible Packaging Association's annual 2008 Environmental Summit saw almost 70 representatives of some of the largest packaging companies in the US attending, including representatives from Altivity, Bemis, and Sonoco. Speakers presented a myriad of topics, but with a definite focus on energy reduction.

Bill Burke, development director for industrial energy solutions at Johnson Controls, surveyed his audience and found that 100 percent already produce sustainability reports, and that over 50 percent are

currently working towards a strategic energy reduction target. Almost 50 percent of the group likewise believes that there is a powerful force at work towards investments in energy reduction and the same percentage accepts that environmental responsibility is just as strong a motivator as costs.

Burke explained that too many companies look at energy investments as an instant monetary return opportunity, but it's not. 'Life cycle value is an important element of energy investments,' Burke explained.

'Energy reduction is not an environmental thing,' said another speaker, John Bernardo of Sustainable Innovations. 'This is a business operations thing. In Europe citizens and customers already expect it. It's growing in Australia and it is certainly moving across the pond.'

Obviously the movement is here to stay and it has certainly matured over the past year. Get educated where you can, when you can and make the appropriate changes to your processes before it's too late. Resources are out there. There is always room for improvement and with that comes opportunity. Keep an eye out in Issue 4 of *L&L* for an analysis of the FTA Forum and the PINC annual meeting as additional sources of education on this topic. ■

Gather on the Green at Labelexpo Americas

New to North America's largest dedicated label trade show, Labelexpo Americas, will be Gather on the Green, an area on the expo floor dedicated to the promotion of green products and sustainable technology. 12 companies have already signed up to showcase what they are doing to make our earth a better place to live. GEW will promote its energy reducing UV curing system, cab Technology will show its Energy Star rated thermal printers, Alphasonics will expo its flocculation pigment remover and Avery Dennison will display its Fasson eco-sensitive wine products and service programs. Martin Automatic will present information on its waste reduction system, Channeled Resources will introduce its Pure label and promote its release liner recycling initiative, and Green Bay packaging will showcase its recycled content substrates with recycle compatible adhesives. General Metal Engraving, Unilux, Plastic Suppliers, Technicote and Armor USA will also showcase products in the area. UPM Raflatac will be the official sponsor.





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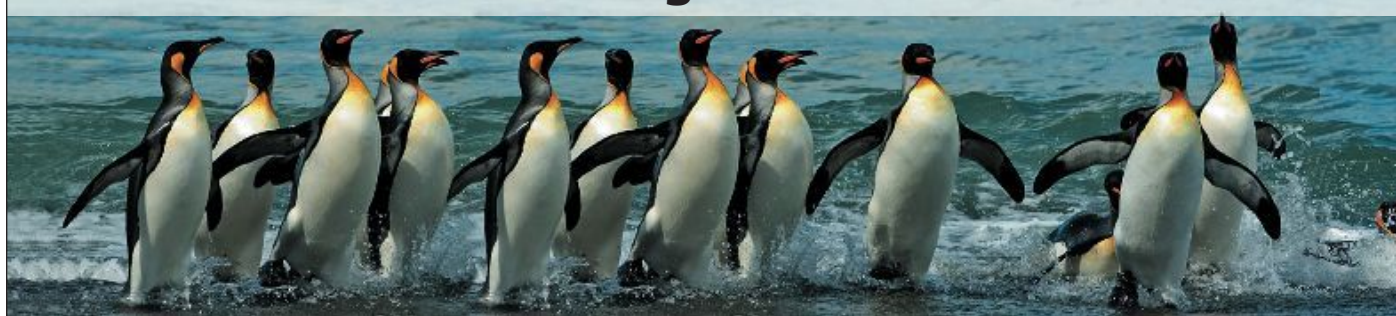
  
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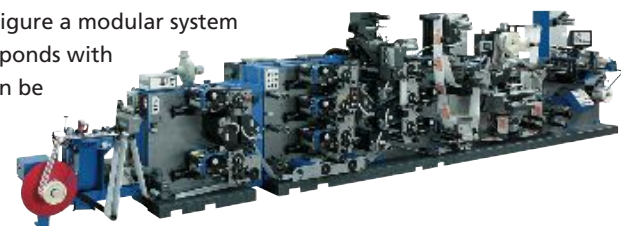
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drupa 2008 review

L&L reviews new technologies of interest to converters of labels and mid-web flexible packaging at drupa 2008. **Andy Thomas** and **James Quirk** report

The world's largest print show welcomed over 400,000 visitors and 1,800 exhibitors spread across an exhibition area of more than 170,000 square meters.

Digital printing

Heidelberg has entered the inkjet race with a technology to provide multi-color digital print capability for conventional label presses.

The Linoprint digital printing system was developed primarily for integration directly onto the packaging line – for blister or carton production for example, or to overprint variable data such as news, sports results or puzzles onto labels.

The Linoprint system comprises two elements: a printing unit – consisting of the print head, cleaning unit and dryer – integrated into a production line, and control software adapted to individual customer requirements. Linospot, the version for single-color printing, is nearing readiness for the blister film printing segment, and will soon be rolled out to imprint labels

and folding boxes. Linospot prints at 720 dpi with a printing speed of up to 60 meters (200ft)/minute. The printing width is up to 288mm (11.33in), but this can be expanded by installing multiple printing modules in parallel. Similarly, the resolution can be changed by connecting multiple printing modules in sequence. Specially optimized screen technology allows gray tones to be generated, while special colors are also feasible. The Linoprint developers are now working on an enhancement of Linocolor to a multi-color printing unit.

The resolution will be at least 600 dpi, the printing width 50 to 150mm (5.9ins). At up to 2.5 meters (8.2ft) per second – 150 meters (492ft)/minute, the printing speed will be significantly higher than that of the current Linospot. Linospot and Linocolor can process a wide variety of ink types suitable for a broad range of print substrates. The Linoflow control unit is used to prepare printing data, generate production-specific variable data and process the print content. Linoflow is either integrated into the existing production control system or installed on a

supplementary PC.

Linoprint is working with a range of partners to customize the system for each application. Consumables will be marketed under the Saphira brand.

The Linoprint team is autonomous as far as business decisions are concerned, enabling it to act fast and flexibly.

Amidst a mass of other inkjet-related launches there was much of interest for the narrow web industry (see also the digital Feature in this issue of *L&L*).

The Stork Prints Group has unveiled its first drop on demand inkjet system for narrow web applications at drupa 2008.

The company demonstrated its new DSI (Digital System Integration) module, powered by contactless Piezo technology, on its stand. Sander Hendrix, product manager – graphics, explained: 'Our new concept offers the label converter the fully flexible means of adopting inkjet technology, and a highly competitive route into the market for short production runs, without the need for investing in a dedicated press.'

The result of subsidiary company Stork Digital Imaging's 20-year inkjet expertise, and the Prints Group narrow web industry experience, the new DSI module offers ease of integration and full platform independence. Not only can the unit be installed at any position in the printing sequence, but it is also compatible with the latest printing systems from the world's main press manufacturers.

As a result, the inclusion of the DSI module offers the freedom to switch between dedicated digital and hybrid-process printing production runs without needing to change presses or reels. 'With its very short changeover times, low consumable costs and productive printing speeds of up to 35 meters per minute, the module is ideal for short run, variable printing and unique marking solutions in wine, beverage, cosmetics and pharmaceutical labeling,' added Hendrix.

The DSI module is compatible with a wide variety of conventional labelstocks, including digital pretreated brands such as Xeikon and HP, as well as PP, PE and PET uncoated formats. Furthermore, the Prints Group has developed a dedicated range of narrow web UV inkjet inks for the new module, which are said to offer excellent adhesion, color space density and dot-sharpness.

Atlantic Zeiser introduced its Omega 36 HD and Omega 210 high resolution inkjet printing systems, and an LED UV curing solution.

The Omega 36 HD printer can be installed on web or sheet-fed applications and has a resolution of 720 dpi. The Omega 210 increases print width to 210 mm and adds dedicated black and spot color inks. Both systems print on a wide variety of substrates.

Smarcure is Atlantic Zeiser's second generation LED UV curing system. LED has a lower energy consumption than mercury-based lamp systems, a claimed ten times longer



R-L: Lo Chin-Shiung, president of Labelmen Machinery, and Roger Cederholm, president of Martin Automatic, sign a licensing agreement at drupa

Martin Automatic enters licensing deal with Labelmen

Martin Automatic has entered into a licensing agreement with Taiwanese press manufacturer Labelmen Machinery. Under the agreement, Labelmen will build Martin's STS automatic splicers and STR turret rewinders for sale on equipment manufactured by Labelmen.

Labelmen will launch a Labelmen MN series press, which will have Martin's automatic roll changing equipment fully integrated into the press. Lo Chin-Shiung, president of Labelmen, commented: 'It will be a press that has the highest flexibility and efficiency among all of our existing product line. Labelmen is very happy to cooperate with the world leader in non-stop unwind, rewind and tension control.'

'This is the first time that Martin Automatic has chosen to partner with another company for the manufacturing of our products,' said Roger Cederholm, president of Martin Automatic. 'Labelmen is a substantial company with an excellent reputation. Our experience with them gives us every confidence that we have found a partner who will build our products to the same standard of excellence that we have worked to maintain over Martin's 40-year history.'

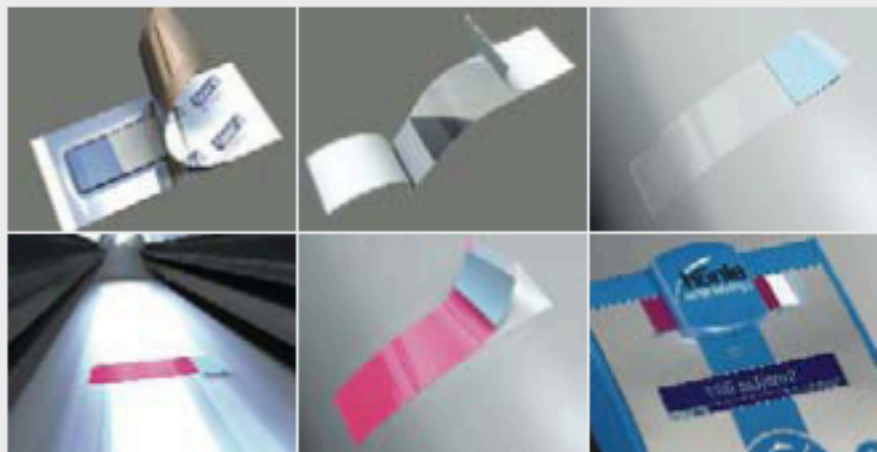
lifetime, no ozone generation and lower cooling requirements. Its compact size allows for easy integration and it comes equipped with an instant on/off functionality that eliminates energy consumption during machine stops. Atlantic Zeiser's ink program is optimized for inkjet/LED curing systems, with systems for non-absorbent substrates, security, spot and process color inks.

Atlantic Zeiser has already made its systems available as OEM units for integration, and was showing a unit on a Prati inspection rewinder.

Impika Solutions also launched an inkjet system aimed at the labels and flexible packaging markets. The iPress 600 inkjet module prints with 4-6 colors at a resolution of 600 dpi



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Heidelberg's technology could provide multi-color digital print capability for conventional label presses

on a printing width of 474mm. Print speed is up to 75m/min. The iPress 600 has a wide range of finishing modules including varnishing, die cutting, slitting and rewinding, and is driven by Impika's iPress Flow software. The iPress 600 uses Panasonic's Drop-On-Demand piezo electric printheads and uses water-based dye or pigment-based inks. Also on the stand was the iEngine 900 DOD piezo electric inkjet, which integrates Xaar's printheads for printing with UV inks with a visual resolution of 900 dpi.

Mimaki Engineering, a manufacturer of wide format inkjet printers, has entered the label market with its new IPH-300L single pass digital inkjet press.

This newly developed press achieves print speeds of up to 12.5 m/min or 3000 sheets/h when printing A4 in 600 x 600 dpi resolution.

It features a print width of up to 30cm and employs Mimaki's UV technology. It uses Mimaki's UV curable inks in four colors (CMYK) and piezo electronic inkjet heads. These inks are VOC- and ozone free which caters to an environmentally friendly work place for printers. The IPH-300L automatically performs periodical head cleaning to ensure all print heads are in immaculate condition for optimum print quality.

As the machine uses single pass technology, the heads are stationary and the substrate is moved underneath the print heads so less vibration is generated. This ensures a smooth and highly accurate media transport to counteract banding and other undesired effects. In addition single pass printing results in dramatically increased speeds.

The press can be run in different print modes such as copy print and variable print. While it also features an already high standard resolution of 600 x 600 dpi, it can produce even higher quality with the superfine high resolution of 600 x 1200 dpi.

The IPH-300L label print control system consists of a high performance controller incorporating Mimaki's RIP and color



Atlantic Zeiser introduced its Omega 36 HD and Omega 210 high resolution inkjet printing systems

management system. This system equalizes color differences between the calibrated print heads automatically. High volumes of variable data can be processed quickly and efficiently with the variable data editing system.

Its modular design consists of a number of print units for single pass printing enables custom produced machines whose print width can vary. Also it is possible to supply the print unit without transport mechanism for integration into existing production environments.

Nilpeter showed the Caslon 4-color inkjet module first seen at Labelexpo Europe. Caslon uses Xaar's Sideshooter 1001 DOD piezo heads for printing UV-curable CMYK ink sets, and incorporates FFEI's inter-color UV curing technology.

JF Machines, based in the UK, was present on the Xaar stand with its narrow web UV inkjet label printing machine, the PicoColour.

The machine comes in two print widths – 70mm or 140mm – and can run up to 24 meters per minute. Its print platform accepts up to ten Xaar 1001 printheads, and can handle a wide variety of label and foil materials.

Another solution using Xaar's inkjet heads was EFI Jetrion's 4000 4-color label inkjet printer, now shown fully integrated with EFI's workflow solutions. Xaar itself demonstrated its new ixPressia color label software.

Agfa demonstrated its established Dotrix single pass inkjet press, while Domino introduced the latest version of its Bitjet + binary high speed printer with a new print head, which can be rotated to an angle to produce increased print resolutions of up to 180dpi. The company also showed the first in its new L-line series printers, the L400 thermal inkjet. A new player in this sector is German company Durst Phototechnik Digital Technology gmbH, which showed its Durst Rho SP 60 inkjet-printer with a productivity of over 1000 square meters per hour.

Although not strictly labels or flexible packaging dedicated systems, interesting technology launches from Kodak and Screen could impact the industrial print sector in the future.

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Screen announced that it has designed new single-pass inkjet assembly technology. The 600dpi UV head is being demonstrated at drupa, running at 55m per hour. The advanced head is designed to improve quality by shortening the time taken between the application of the UV ink droplets.

Kodak showed its 'offset class quality' Stream concept press, which uses heat fluctuations at the surface of the ink to form 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. Screen showed its Truepress Jet520 continuous feed, single-pass system which uses Epson's latest multi-tone Piezo DOD (Drop-On-Demand) inkjet print heads and water-based pigment inks.

HP Indigo launched the latest in its series of digital label and packaging presses, the ws6000. A running prototype was displayed at the show, with the finished machine expected to be commercially available in early 2009.

HP also announced the sale of 23 of its ws4500 machines by the end of the second week of the show.

The new HP Indigo ws6000 digital press is aimed at longer-run, higher-volume work, and is claimed to offer twice the productivity of its predecessors. It addresses jobs up to approximately 4,000 linear meters (13,000 linear feet), and is said to offer total cost of ownership advantages for converters producing more than 300,000 linear meters per month. It complements the ws4500 press targeted at customers with monthly volumes of 150,000-300,000 linear meters.

The ws6000 prints at 30 meters (100 feet) per minute in four colors, and can print up to seven colors on a broad range of materials, including thin flexible packaging substrates from 12 microns (0.5 points) and folding carton media up to 450 microns (18 points), as well as label and shrink sleeve media.

The press' repeat length of 980mm (38.58 inches) permits greater productivity and drives even lower costs per label.

Xeikon unveiled its new digital color label press, the 3300. The machine offers 1200 dpi at 4 bits per spot. With a top speed of

19.2 m/min (63.0 ft/min) it is claimed to be the fastest digital 5-color label press on the market, particularly suited for short to medium print runs and just-in-time jobs.

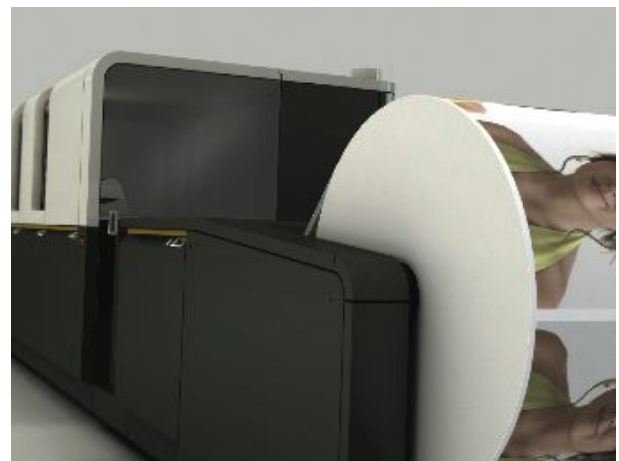
The Xeikon 3300 is standard-equipped with 5 color stations, i.e. 4 for the standard process colors while the fifth allows the use of spot colors as well as opaque white and special security toner. The Xeikon 3300 runs on Xeikon FA toner which combines the benefits of chemically produced toner with the performance of traditionally produced toner and is FDA-approved for use in certain food contact applications. It can print on scalable widths and a wide range of substrates from all sorts of self-adhesive films including co-extruded film, to unsupported film, paper, transparent and opaque foils, and paperboard with weights ranging from 40 to 350 gsm (27 lb text to 122 lb cover). The dry toner electrophotography imaging process enables the use of conventional substrates without coating or pre-treatment.

With a duty cycle of 700,000 meters per month (2,300,000 ft/month), the Xeikon 3300 is designed to operate 24 hours a day if needed. It features full rotary printing technology, which enables printing at rated engine speed regardless the size of the labels, allowing the maintaining of maximum productivity. The positioning of the labels can be adjusted to meet finishing equipment requirements and labels with variable formats and sizes can be printed in the same run, increasing productivity while reducing waste and costs.

The Xeikon 3300 comes with the latest generation of Xeikon's X-800 digital front-end, which enables the implementation of fully automated workflows in any production environment, integrating with any MIS, while its modular set-up allows separating pre-press functionality from press operation. The X-800 offers ICC color management, facilitating integration in a conventional (offset) print environment, and allows post-RIP color adjustment, minimizing downtime while offering extra flexibility. The post-RIP imposition function enables last minute changes while the preview functionality ensures errors are identified before they are printed. The X-800 processes all



Xeikon 3300 digital label press



Kodak showed its 'offset class quality' Stream concept press

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In-line Turret rewinder range

For all narrow web reel form finishing/converting applications, the Opal Series, manufactured in the U.K. by Ashe Converting Equipment, has many benefits to enhance throughput and increase profit margins for all label producers.

Web widths of 330, 410, 510 and 610 mm as standard, enable the range to be versatile in all applications with a variety of options available to suit individual requirements. With many installations now worldwide, the Opal series is in a league of its own with its unique tension control systems to suit the most demanding requirements of running varying substrates.

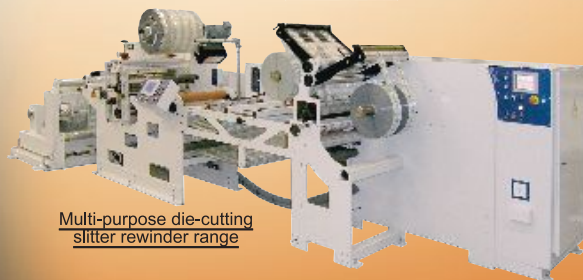
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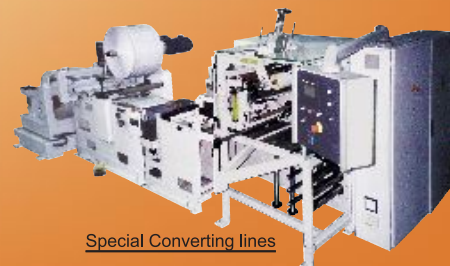
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Cassette change on Gidue's Xpannd press

common input files and significantly lowers the threshold for including metadata such as sequential numbers or barcodes.

Plates and plate making

DuPont Packaging Graphics and EskoArtwork continued their long working partnership by launching a system to image and process cylinders in the round. The Cyrel Digital Imager (CDI) Advance Cantilever was developed to image large format sleeves – and optionally conventional sheet plates. DuPont presented for the first time its Cyrel Fast round solution for processing the Cyrel Fast round sleeves.

EskoArtwork also launched a fully automated imaging-to-finishing system based around a CDI Spark 4260 Auto, demonstrated in a configuration of fully-automated plate loading, imaging, and unloading in combination with an integrated Inline UV Main Exposure and Back Exposure unit and Cyrel Fast thermal processor.

The Flint Group Flexographic Products division demonstrated its nyloflex infinity technology for manufacturing endless printing forms, as well as the ready-to-image photopolymer sleeves nyloflex ITR Thin and nyloflex ITR Classic. nyloflex ITR sleeves are seamless printing forms incorporating a LAMS layer ready for digital imaging. A new nyloflex plate developed for UV printing also received its debut.

Stork Prints Group subsidiary AKL Flexo Technik introduced 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'. Total indicator reading (TIR) is within 20µm, even under extreme humidity and high temperatures on the press, says Stork.

Stork also launched a software tool to improve imaging of highlight and halftone dots in direct engraving applications. Active 3D RIP generates variable dot depths from zero to maximum, and shoulder angle settings ranging from 0° to 90°, allowing dots in highlight areas to be given optimum support. In



Muller Martini's Alprinta 74 V

operation, the ideal three-dimensional shape for the smallest and largest dots is specified, and all dot-sizes and shapes in between are automatically generated.

Kodak announced expanded capabilities for its Flexcel NX digital flexographic platemaking system which can now produce plates up to a maximum size of 800 x 1067mm.

Jet Europe showed its new generation Ohkaflex and Jet CTP-LAM photopolymer plates for flexo and letterpress. The semi-transparent laser-ablation mask layer now consists of less carbon, so less pollution of the washing equipment. Furthermore it offers excellent handling properties, remaining crack-free when flexed, according to the company. Jet also showed a new range of direct engraveable letterpress and dry offset plates. Tests show excellent linework and high-definition halftone from 0.5 percent tonal value.

Fujifilm launched the Brillia HD PRO-V chemistry-free violet photopolymer plate claimed to exhibit the same quality and productivity as its existing violet plate, Brillia LP-NV.

In terms of plate processing, Degraf launched its Concept 201HTD, Concept 305DW and Concept 305EDLF solutions to process digital flexo plates. The units are equipped with a double washout area, which allows the separation of the 'dirty' solvent - used to remove the black layer of the digital plate - from the solvent used to process the plate. The compact Concept 201HTD is specifically designed for typical label plate sizes up to 66 x 81cm. The turnkey equipment integrates the patented HTD dryer, claimed by Degraf to cut conventional drying times by up to 75 percent.

Jet Europe's Jetline 700 CTP processor is the latest addition to its range, featuring additional spraybars and filters for in-line mask removal during plate washing. The Interflex wash-out program for solvent-based photopolymer plates was expanded with the launch of the IF 9/13, handings plate sizes up to 900 x 1220mm.

The company also showed its Jetclean 600 plate cleaner, with can handle multiple plates with maximum plate size of 600mm x 850mm.

JM Heaford introduced a new front loading gravure proof press (model SCOF) designed specifically with off-line job approval in

“The new technology affects the transfer of the ink in a superior way to any traditional roll, due to a special roll surface”

mind. Also new was a mounting system for gearless sleeve systems and a narrow web plate mounting machine.

The Apex Group of Companies, supplier of anilox and metering rolls, introduced its Genetic Transfer Technology, a development for manufacturing the company's UniCorr, UniFlex and UniCoat metering rolls.

The new technology affects the transfer of the ink in a superior way to any traditional roll, due to a special roll surface. The company says that neither the surface material (formerly purely ceramic), nor the metering structure (formerly determined in lines per cm) can be compared with any current anilox technology: one roll will cover the print options of a number of different traditional anilox screens and a smoother, denser lay of inks on solid areas is a consequence, because of less air. Cleaning characteristics are also said to have improved.

Apex also launched a new company dedicated to the label sector, Apex UnFli, along with an anilox roll named UniFli (Uni-Fast Light Innovative). This lightweight anilox roll has a body construction of anodized aluminum, which is said to be a durable and accurate as steel.

The company has also invested in the latest technology for identification of anilox rolls by means of an RFID carrier. On customers' demand, anilox rolls will be fitted with a microchip on which all relevant data will be stored. Thanks to the considerable memory of the carrier, these can vary from basic information such as screen/volume specifications and date of production, to special data such as date of installation, cleaning cycles and lifetime.

Fujifilm demonstrated enhancements to its online proofing and approvals engines and a new module to assist in image processing. Fujifilm's Taskero Universe is a suite of diagnostic tools designed to help printers confirm color across multiple output devices and locations.

Finishing

Sheet label finishing specialist Polar featured an 'Ideas for label production' section which showcased the L1 LabelSystem DC-11 for punching labels; HD11 LabelSystem SC-21 for cutting labels; for smaller and medium sized print runs the L2 Counter-Pressure Die-Cutter DCC-M; the L3 LabelSystem L-R-92-B for cutting and banding of labels; and the L4 SoloPunch DC-M.

Ashe Converting Equipment launched the Opal EC label inspection slitter-rewinder, a compact, ergonomically designed machine configured with low capital outlay as the primary driver. With an 800mm diameter unwind, 480mm 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. The Opal range is now available with the latest 'glue-less' turret rewind technology.

Jurment introduced its Master2 slitter, which runs at a web width of 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.

AB Graphic International showed an Omega SR330 inspection slitter rewinder with fleyeVision 100% inspection system being used to decode HP's new Colourtile security system.

Schober demonstrated its RSM 520 rotary die cutting machine for converting in-mould labels. The machine converts pre-printed OPP IML rolls, PE coated paper and composite materials. Delivery options include Autostack, magazine stack and star wheel delivery for processing IML 50µ foil. A vacuum-conveyor transports die cut product to the de-nesting unit, for precision product stacking even when the products are staggered. A static neutralizer and gap control system (GCS) are integrated in the die cutting module. The machine is available in standard working widths of 260, 410, 520 and 670mm.

Soma showed its Pluto II slitter rewinder. Features include automated slit edge removal, 'knife positioning assistant',

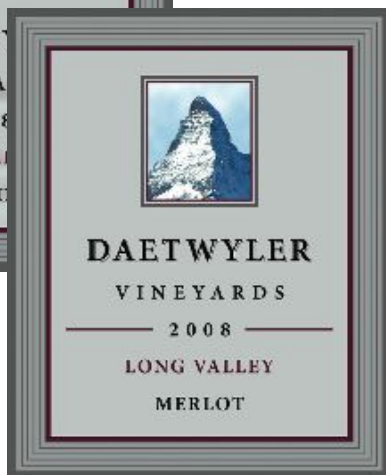
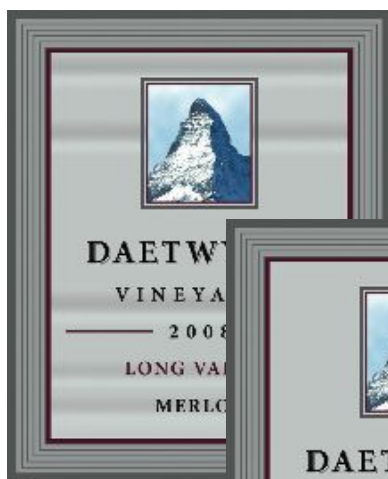
Alliance promotes flexography

Some of the leading supplier companies to the flexo industry joined forces at drupa under the banner 'Flexo4All', to help persuade converters and end users that flexo as a process can match offset and gravure quality in package and label printing applications. Flexo4All evolved from the 'Flexo the Alternative' agreement between independent businesses initiated by DuPont Packaging Graphics over 20 years ago.

'Flexo is no longer just an alternative to other printing processes and Flexo4All was chosen to suggest that this printing technology is ideal for almost all substrates, all segments, all applications, all budgets and more,' commented Pier Luigi Sassanelli, marketing manager DuPont Packaging Graphics EMEA and strong promoter of Flexo4All.

Flexo4All partners include Bobst, Comexi, Degraf, DuPont, Eckart, EskoArtwork, Fischer & Krecke, Gallus, Gidue, SunChemical/Hartmann Druckfarben, Lohmann Tapes, Omet, Praxair Surface Technologies, Rotatek, Siegwirk, Soma, Tesa, Uteco Converting and Windmüller & Hölscher.

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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.

Kohli showed a new Zeus 188 slitter rewinder, which runs at a speed of 450m/min with a web width of 1300mm.

Presses

Although Labelexpo remains the main showcase for narrow web press technology, there were some interesting machines on show at drupa.

Gidue showed a 603mm-wide Athena UV flexo sleeve press, demonstrating UV printing on food packaging and shrink sleeves. Gidue showcased the 'UV flexo for Food Packaging' project between Gidue, IST Metz, Air Liquide, Softal and Sun Chemical. The Athena press incorporated an 'Aldyne' in-line plasma treatment unit from Air Liquide and Softal, and a UV Time inert atmosphere curing unit from IST Metz incorporating air-cooled MBS lamp modules with gas sealing technology from Air Liquide and Gidue. The press was running Solarflex LM Inert low migration inks from Sun Chemical, and a varnish which incorporates components approved for food contact by the FDA.

'This solution offers new opportunities for narrow web printers to enter new markets and gives to flexible packaging converters a real alternative to solvent-based printing, while eliminating previous constraints in UV printing, such as poor ink adhesion on packaging films, low print productivity, and high nitrogen consumption in inert atmosphere curing units,' stated Federico d'Annunzio, president of Gidue. 'Today, we can offer a complete UV flexo print solution for food packaging. This ultimate solution offers no VOC, odor-free and tasteless operation, while promoting the best good manufacturing practices.'

Gidue also showed its 'Hi-Offset' technology via a 370mm-wide Xpannd hybrid offset press incorporating the company's Flower flexo head, silkscreen, hot and cold stamping, embossing, and die-cutting. The press showcased new temperature, dampening and inking controls aimed at reducing start-up waste.

ETI Converting Equipment launched an offset-flexo hybrid press, the Exagon-OM, which allows switching from offset to flexo on the same station in less than two minutes. ETI says the press is faster to set up and more compact than traditional

tower/cassette systems. The Exagon-OM features compatible Alu-sleeves for flexo and offset units. Rotogravure, silk-screen, hot and cold foil units are also available.

Drent Goebel joined forces with Energy Sciences Inc. (ESI) and IST Metz UV to demonstrate a range of new curing technologies on a 6-color, 33in wide VSOP (Variable Sleeve Offset) press. Muller Martini demonstrated its infinitely variable size Alprinta-V web offset press showing how fast a job change can be completed on a hybrid machine combining offset and flexo printing. ESI showcased its EZCure EB unit, which was specially developed for the VSOP, while IST Metz installed its BLK-5 lamp with an inert curing system. Air Liquide supplied nitrogen for both systems. The purpose of the demonstrations was to show flexible packaging and label converters what can be achieved without the use of solvents. The press was shown printing on film for wrap-around labels, shrink-sleeve labels, flexible packaging and board for folding cartons.

Muller Martini demonstrated a 'new generation' Alprinta V in a 4-color configuration with a flexo printing unit. The print units are now easier to access for cleaning and insert changing, and a sliding protective cover is now fitted to each Alprinta printing unit.

On the control system it is now possible to make printing length adjustments and separate printing width adjustments on each printing unit. This means that in the set-up process for printing on flexible substrates, 'real' printing lengths and widths can easily be adjusted on the control system touchscreen.

The performance of the new AR 4000 digital register controller has also improved considerably. The print marks are located more quickly, the detection range is larger and the response speed of the system can be increased with the use of several cameras. The IDM 4000 in-line ink control system, presented for the first time at drupa, measures and regulates the ink flow during production, reducing set-up waste and make-ready time.

The flexo printing unit incorporates servo-drive technology to deliver the same infinitely variable size feature as the offset printing units. Whilst sizes on offset printing units are changed by replacing the carbon fiber cylinders, on the flexo printing unit it is merely necessary to put a different size sleeve on the air shaft. All the positioning needed during a size change is motorized and is set automatically when the job is changed.

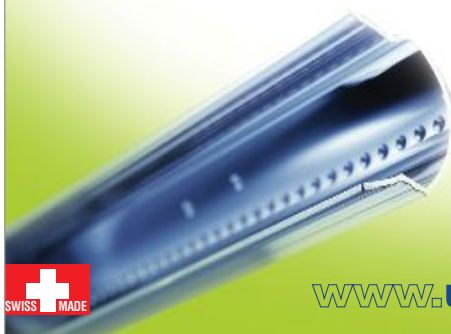
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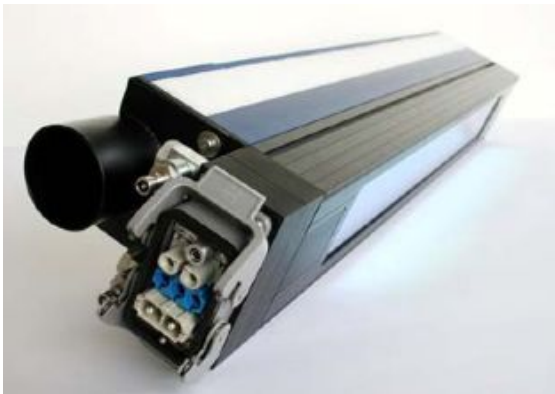


one world – one drupa

The world's largest exhibition for the printing and media industry was an overwhelming success for **uviterno ag**.



uviterno ag in Berneck (Switzerland) presented their latest UV-radiation heads SRK-A4 and SRK-B4, their brand-new electronic ballast PHASER 8 digital as well as the touch-panel **uvitouch** in hall 11 booth C34 on 50 m² exhibition area. The new generation of UV-radiation heads arouses a great deal of interest from the international public.



The company's innovative product development program - summed up by the slogan 'reduced to the max'- impressed fair visitors. Sales and marketing manager Stefan Richartz said the company's investments have paid off. Now **uviterno** is pushing ahead with new product developments and a bigger workforce. Critical to their employment for both research and development and sales positions was an in-depth knowledge of leading edge UV technology.



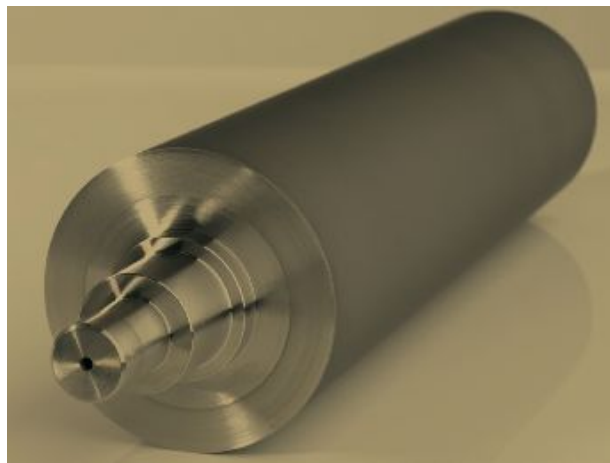
uviterno

The company explained product-orientated topics like: energy saving system technology; digitalised controlling systems; compact and high-efficient UV-assemblies. With these features **uviterno** gained prospective customers in the UV-sheet offset and in the UV-mid-web sector with printing width up to 700 mm.



Furthermore, the enterprise refreshed their internet presence. The new designed website can be found at www.uviterno.com with comprehensive information about the company, product range, mission and philosophy.

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Apex Group launched its Genetic Transfer surface technology

Edelmann Graphics introduced two-cylinder offset printing inserts for label and packaging production on its narrow web rotary press. The machine is suited for any product printable from a reel, such as paper, board, foil and aluminum. Web widths available are 43cm, 52cm and up to 72/76cm and cylinder circumferences of 280mm to 1220mm.

Technical specification of the machine drive allows the use of up to eight print towers for the Evo Print model range and up to 16 print towers for the Color Print-SL machines. A new design of the equipment makes it possible to achieve a print speed of up to 400 m/min depending on the machine specification.

The modular design of Edelmann's machines allow for combinations of different printing processes, with flexo, rotary screen and gravure printing all possible. Using the two-cylinder offset printing inserts along with the traditional three-cylinder inserts opens new possibilities of economic efficiency. The two-cylinder inserts are format variable from 13" to 25" in the Evo Print model range and from 24" to 40" in the Color Print model range. Being developed specially for the label and packaging industry, the two-cylinder printing inserts make it possible to change the format without breaking the web and thus to reduce the format change time to less than a minute per print tower. Along with the significant saving of the make-ready time as well as material, the investment expenses per printing format are drastically reduced. This is especially noticeable when a machine has to be equipped with several printing formats.

Edale showcased its Lambda 'plug and play' printing and converting press producing RFID tickets in a single pass. The company was also previewing its new servo-driven Gamma flexo press.

LMC Duo, European importer for Sanjo, launched the 'Baby' ES 150 semi-rotary letterpress. 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 2-5 colors with optional stamping, flexo and flexible die and/or laminating units.

On the press ancillary side, Martin Automatic presented its

MDR (magnetic driven roller) system for handling light webs at lower tension levels and higher operating speeds. MDR technology can be applied to web transport systems and to Martin's line of unwinds. At the Labelmen booth in hall 10 the compact STS automatic butt splicing unwind was running in conjunction with the STR automatic turret rewind.

Stork Prints unveiled an improved version of its RSI (Rotary Screen Integration) module. The RSI-2 is now fully integrated into the press main control panel, allowing simultaneous, centralized monitoring of all rotary screen positions alongside other printing and converting operations.

Sheetfed

The interesting trend in sheetfed presses was the development of in-line processing, up to now only available on web presses.

A prototype in-line screen printing cylinder for offset presses was demonstrated by inventor Heinz-Jürgen Elbers and IP Bewertungs AG (IPB). The SBR-Technology system works by transferring an exact dose of ink to the front of a print blade inside the cylinder. A doctor blade spins inside the cylinder and pushes the ink through the screen, with the sheet picked up from a rotary counter-pressure cylinder. The screen units has identical components to the print cylinder, including locating point, rolling scale, grip edge and register systems.

The prototype can print 4,400 impressions an hour, but Elbers says up to double this speed is possible with different cylinder designs. The metallic woven screen print plate is durable for up to 150,000 impressions for each plate. Vibrations or impacts that occur through the motion of the doctor blade are conducted through the machine frame without affecting the movement of the printing cylinder or adding additional vibrations, says Elbers. The prototype was presented on a Heidelberger Tiegell, Type HDS BB.

Komori demonstrated a new press bursting with in-line converting features aimed directly at label converters. The 6-color Lithrone SX629 incorporated in-line cold foiling, UV coating, in-line embossing – and can be supplied with an in-line die-cutting unit, developed with Komori's specialist packaging print company, Komori Chambon.

The press has a sheet size of 610 x 750mm.

The in-line cold foiling facility widens the design options for metallic foiling, including the ability to print foil images containing screens. The foil area is imaged on a standard offset plate through any normal CTP system, and so enables on-demand single pass foiling even on short run lengths. Combined with UV drying and in-line UV varnishing, it facilitates the extra added value of high gloss finishes, which maximize the use of cold foil applications.

The in-line embossing unit can be used on short run lengths and on repeat runs, since the die can be re-used. Registration is claimed 'close-to-perfect', as the embossing is completed as a continuation of the printing pass. Die mounting and removal is very fast, through a patented Komori magnetic system. For very short run length embossing it is also possible to use photopolymer plates.

The provision of UV drying provides the added value of gloss

NEW! Gallus Service Partner!



The two Swiss companies Gallus Ferdinand Rüesch AG in St. Gallen, and GRE Engineering AG in Steinebrunn, have recently formed a collaborative partnership. As from the 1st April 2008, GRE Engineering AG is managing the supply and acquisition of spare parts for Gallus letterpress printing machines. This will be introduced in phases. The first phase involves setting up the supply for Switzerland, Germany and France. From beginning of the 1st June, also Spain and Portugal have joined this partnership. NEW: From the 1th of July we will welcome our partners from the Benelux countries!

In the medium term, this will be extended to function on a world-wide level.

As far as our customers are concerned, this new set-up will not affect the current established operational procedures. Ordering of spare parts and service requests are carried out, as before, via the respective sales partner – in the German market, for example, via the Gallus-Group Vertriebs GmbH in Langgöns-Niederkleen. The groundwork for the new partnership has been thoroughly prepared by both participants. Modern computer technology guarantees the effortless transfer of data between the Gallus organisations and GRE.

The Swiss market presents an exception to the rule. There, all future orders will be handled directly by GRE Engineering AG, who will also act as direct contact for servicing issues.

The expertise, which GRE Engineering AG brings to the table concerning the upgrading of Gallus letterpress printing machines, will be extended even further in the future to incorporate efficient servicing for customers. This will ensure a competent support system, which can deal with issues related to relocation and upgrades of older Gallus machines. As Roger Wey, CEO of GRE Engineering AG, further explains, the company has, for this reason, consolidated its service personnel. Since 1st May 2008, Giuseppe Gallelli has joined the service team working alongside Martin Ehringer.



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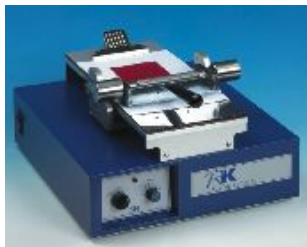
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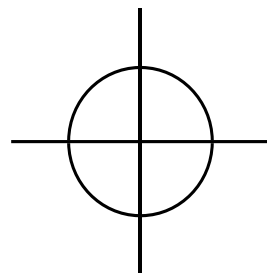
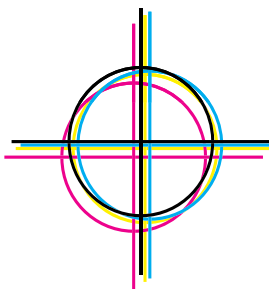
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finish, and also enables a wide variety of plastic and metallic materials to be varnished and embossed in-line.

Komori's Chambon division has developed a new sleeve web offset press which can be combined with gravure and inline converting modules, though this was not shown.

KBA is another sheetfed specialist targeting label printers, this time with its Rapida 75, which supersedes the Rapida 74 and Performa 74 models.

The 15,000sph Rapida 75 has been developed with a slightly larger sheet size of 520x750mm and can be specified with 2-8 units plus coater and perfecter. The label and packaging version comes in a special 605 x 750mm size.

Of great interest was a workflow system which allowed KBA's DensiTronic density measurement system to use a PDF file as a density reference. KBA announced a partnership with MIS specialist Hiflex to create KBA Complete, a consultancy specializing in process analysis and workflow optimization.

Folding cartons remains a stronghold of sheetfed presses, but both Gallus – through its BHS division, now renamed as Gallus Stanz- und Druckmaschinen GmbH – and Omet were demonstrating in-line flexo solutions.

Gallus launched its ICS 670 carton press, shown operating at speeds up to 350 m/min (1,140 fpm), or 220m/min (720 fpm) with in-line die cutting. The press has a dedicated inline/off-line flat-bed die-cutter, which sheets the printed web before creasing, embossing and die-cutting. After stripping, the die-cut carton blanks are separated (de-nested) and then delivered on a shingle conveyor or optional stacking unit. The press is configured as a platform machine with slide-in - slide-out modules. Minimum and maximum repeats are 330 and 820 mm respectively (13" and 32"), while the repeat length is infinitely variable thanks to the servo drive. New is a combined hot foiling/embossing tool, which was shown producing finely detailed decorative elements.

Omet's 530mm wide VaryFlex-F1 was specified with six UV-flexo printing units and sliding cold foil unit on an overhead rail system. The press was fitted with Omet's Fly Cut synchronized sheeting unit, which allows different sized sheets – from 6" up to 33" – to be cut without changing machine set up.

On the ancillary side, Meech launched its ShearClean system, a combined cleaning head and vacuum extraction system. The cleaning head incorporates non-contact cleaning rollers and ionising bars for control of static charges. Connection to a Meech Compact Extraction system allows easy collection and removal of contaminants. Meech says the system is designed to disrupt the web boundary layer allowing the smallest particles to be removed.

Inspection systems

AVT introduced the PrintVision/Orion automatic inspection solution for folding carton single package applications,



IGT's F1 flexo tester was shown fitted with a driven anilox roller

comprising a Line-CCD based automatic inspection solution, feeder, conveyor and ejector station. The system can inspect for die-cut, creasing and print problems and eject defective blanks while collecting good products. A new version of the PrintVision/Helios showed enhanced capabilities for labels and narrow web inspection. In addition, GMI introduced the Microcolor III narrow web remote digital ink fountain control solution targeted at narrow web applications.


Erhardt + Leimer presented new software functions for its Nyscan print inspection system, which for the first time can monitor spaces. The target values for the spaces are 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 user-specified diagonal to the web. A patented calibration system from Erhardt + Leimer compensates inaccuracies due to distortions by the camera lens. A new camera head was shown by Erhardt + Leimer allowing illumination system of strongly reflective surfaces. The system integrates two cameras with fixed focus and different focal lengths. They capture the entire web and at the same time show an enlargement of the register mark, with instantaneous switching. A new multi-camera system for 100% print inspection was also shown by E&L, capable of inspection speeds of over 200m/min at resolutions up to 18,000 active pixels on web widths of 1000mm +.

Tectonic International launched its Luna system, a joint project with Bar Graphic Machinery. The Elite 400i 100% inspection slitter-rewinder is integrated with a 4000 Label HE-G 100% inspection system from German specialist Vision Experts.

The 400mm wide Elite 400i has a 2,000 linear meter unwind and is capable of speeds up to 300 meters/min with pneumatic brake and ultrasonic roll compensation. The machine is a fully reversible rewinder with electronically controlled rewind with interchangeable mandrels.

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Vision Experts' 4000 Label HE-G inspection system uses a gray-scale line-scan camera for high resolution print inspection of pharma or security codes.

Inks, curing and adhesives

MetalFX Technology, now a Ciba subsidiary, introduced the flexographic version of its offset metallic printing technology, which allows millions of metallic colors to be printed by adding one base silver ink to a CMYK mix. The system offers label and packaging printers a lower cost alternative to foil stamping and metallic substrates, and is supported by swatch books for designers and pre-press operatives.

DuPont Packaging Graphics and Sun Chemical, meanwhile, joined forces in a project which brought together Sun's WetFlex wet-on-wet flexographic printing process - with its UniQure electron-beam cured inks - and DuPont Cyrel Fast solventless plate processing technology. The joint work was focused on optimizing Cyrel plates for the WetFlex process. UniQure inks are based on both water-based and energy curable chemistry.

Sun Chemical also showed its SmartColour color management system and a 'world first' range of UV curing inks - called Suncure Advantage - that comprise around 30 percent 'sustainable' materials.

Flint Group introduced its Inline ink/varnish system, which allows a varnish to be applied directly inline to a conventional sheetfed offset printing ink without using a primer. The Inline system consists of a printing ink which penetrates quickly, is highly pigmented and has a wax-free formulation, and a corresponding UV or water-based varnish.

Zeller+Gmelin showed an array of new inks: The Uvalux series was expanded to include U1 sheetfed offset ink, U5 letterpress and offset inks optimized for printing on film label substrates, and U7 laminateable UV offset ink developed for the printing on non-absorbent substrates. New in the Uvaflex series is the Uvaflex FW water-based flexo ink range, for a diverse rate of print applications including labels and packaging, thermal paper, carton and film. Esalux is a new generation electron beam (EB) curable offset printing ink developed for printing on flexible packaging substrates and designed to give the lowest possible taint, odor and migration properties.

Z&G's Interact range of special effect printing inks introduced by subsidiary Intercolor was also displayed. The range includes pearlescent inks, bright metallic effects and fluorescent inks through to functional systems with tactile and texture lacquers, as well as a range of fragrance coatings and inks which react to light or temperature.

GSE showed the latest version of its Colorsat Compact automated ink dispenser. 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 any number of base ink containers between 12 and 32 components. The company also demonstrated the latest version of its proprietary IMS (Ink Management Software), which powers the ink dispensing systems.

Moving to UV curing systems, Uviterno launched two UV radiation heads. The SRK-A4, is an air-cooled radiation head, and SRK-B4, a combined air-/water-cooled radiation head, both designed to meet the requirements of 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. The transmission efficiency of the UV dose is also improved thanks to this special coating technology.

Dr Hönle demonstrated its pureUV curing system, which uses patented reflector geometry in tandem with a dedicated power supply to double intensity over the

company's previous systems, as well as cutting substrate temperature in half. A barrier prevents direct radiation onto the substrate, further lowering temperature loading.

The company also showed its Uvaprint 100. Weighing in at around 3 kg, and extremely compact, with integrated fan, it is ideal for smaller footprint presses.

The company was demonstrating the tesa UV Strip / UV Scan system, a UV measuring system developed jointly with tesa which allows the UV dosage to be reliably checked on the actual substrate during production. The dosage level is displayed on the control unit.

Demonstrating the latest developments in foiling was Univacco. The company introduced two new products, cold foil CF5.0 for high speed offset press and seamless holographic foils. Cold Foil CF5.0 is designed to work with conventional glue, and allows sheets to be run at speeds of more than 10,000 sheets/hour. Seamless holographic foils will help printers increase process efficiency and decrease the waste of semi-finished printing.

Inspection and testing

RK Print Coat introduced the FlexiProof UV bench top unit designed for flexo quality control and product trialing applications. The FlexiProof UV 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.

IGT's F1 flexo tester was shown fitted with a driven anilox roller, making it possible to ink the anilox rollers separately from the inking of the printing forme. The velocity of the anilox rollers is adjustable, allowing the anilox cells to be more easily filled depending on the ink type. The F1-UV device is now also fitted with the driven anilox roller.

Also shown on the IGT stand was the GST 2 camera system for evaluating Heliotests or mottle tests immediately after printing, with results appearing on screen after a couple of seconds. The test results and scan data can be saved and used as the basis for further analysis.

MIS

Shuttleworth demonstrated it's the latest developments to its Customer Relationship Management (CRM) package, its new Data Flow browser-based shop floor production data collection module, and for packaging applications its product management facility, which provides one point of reference for a product, enabling complete version control, prototyping, easy quoting, contract and brand management and the management of service level agreements. It also provides the opportunity to integrate into digital asset management libraries.

theurer.com presented its C3 MIS system for labeling and packaging, covering estimating, order processing, CRM, production planning, job costing and logistics. The system can check the technical suitability of specific machines for a job, as well as the cheapest way of producing a job per quantity. On the graphical scheduling board module, Job-Sequence Optimization helps reduce make-ready times by making use of criteria such as material and web width, color system, special colors and printing cylinders. Also on show was a W-Lan mobile device for shop floor data collection and inventory management, which will capture real-time production data and status information, as well as roll stock capture via EPSMA-Codes.

Coating and laminating

BMB Kroenert was promoting the services provided by its Technikum R&D center, which houses a multi-function system with a working width of 1300mm and speeds up to 1610m/min. ■

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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!**

1. The Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute was founded as a result of which American President's "New Deal" programs?
 - a. John F. Kennedy
 - b. Dwight D. Eisenhower
 - c. Herbert Hoover
 - d. Franklin D. Roosevelt
2. TLMI was first founded 75 years ago as the Tag Manufacturers Institute. It what year did the association expand to include pressure sensitive label manufacturers?
 - a. 1962
 - b. 1969
 - c. 1978
 - d. 1982
3. The Institute was again expanded in 1966 when it realized that member companies would benefit by the addition of their suppliers to the organization. The inaugural membership included how many supplier firms?
 - a. 8
 - b. 10
 - c. 11
 - d. 15
4. Our Labels Group hosts its industry summits in thriving, emerging markets around the world. This years' Label Summit Latin America was held in Mexico City? According to the World Bank, Mexico has one of the strongest economies on the planet. Where does it rank (out of 209)?
 - a. 9
 - b. 10
 - c. 19
 - d. 30
5. In 1975 the TLMI grew to include international members as part of its membership and are established in its bylaws. The first Mexican firm to join was Industrias Tek. Which Canadian label manufacturer was first to join?
 - a. All Stick Label
 - b. TAPP Technologies
 - c. Labelcraft
5. The TLMI strives to:
 - a. promote the interest of the self-adhesive label industry
 - b. enhance the prosperity of its members and the narrow web tag, label, and packaging industries
 - c. foster its membership of label converters and suppliers
 - d. analyze industry movement for the progression of its members
7. This year marks the Golden Anniversary of the Flexographic Trade Association. Since 1962 the organization has inducted members to its Hall of Fame each year. In 2007, Jean Jackson was inducted as the second woman in its history. Who was the first?
 - a. Katherine Harper
 - b. Suzanne Zacccone
 - c. Arleen Neustein
 - d. Judy Abelman
8. Labelexpo Americas first began in 1989. The first show was hosted at the Donald E Stephens Convention Center in what city?
 - a. Chicago
 - b. Dallas
 - c. Charlotte
 - d. Orlando
9. Which technology is identified by North American printers as the number one opportunity for product line diversification and growth in the market place?
 - a. RFID
 - b. Counterfeit deterrence
 - c. Security printing
 - d. Digital printing
10. There is an estimated number of how many label converters in North America?
 - a. 1500
 - b. 2500
 - c. 3000
 - d. 3500

Answers: 1) d 2) c 3) b 4) a 5) b 6) c 7) c 8) d 9) b 10) d

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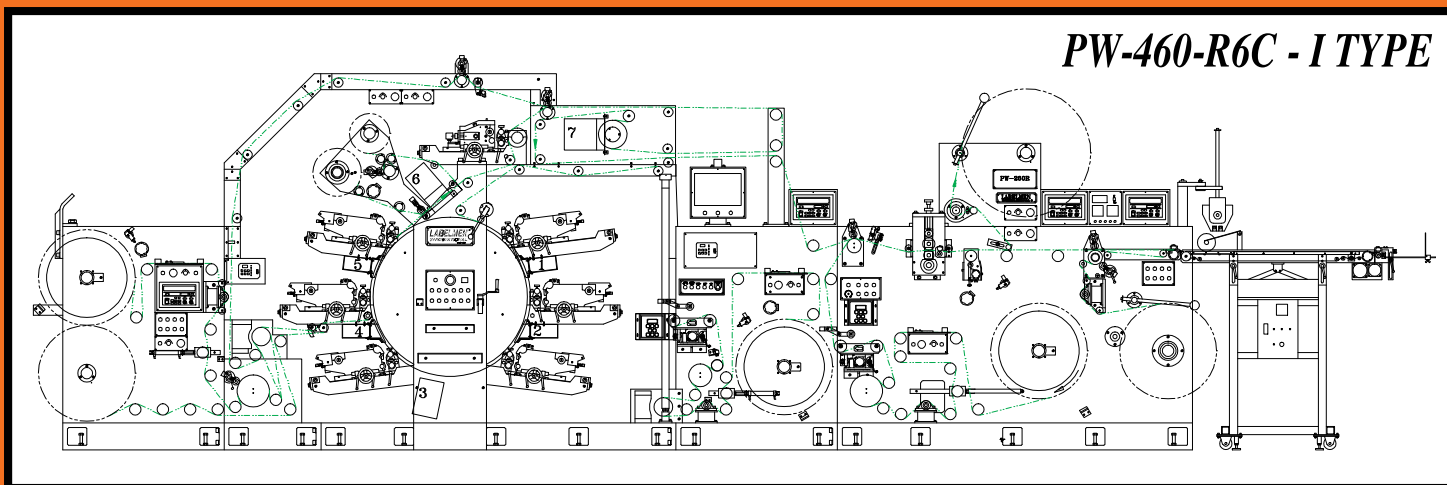
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