

# **LABEL TECHNOLOGY TO THE RESCUE**

A stylized illustration of a man in a suit being held by a large robot in a space setting. The robot is yellow and red, with a large orange head. The man is wearing a grey suit and a blue tie. The background is dark with stars, a planet, and a rocket.

**LABELS &  
LABELING**

THE WIDER WORLD  
OF NARROW WEB  
NOVEMBER 2008

# **L&L**

## **LABELEXPO AMERICAS**

A round-up of the products  
and trends uncovered  
at this year's show

## **TOTAL APPLIED COST**

Working out the true costs of  
different label technologies

## **YORK LABEL**

Meet the US converter's  
'Dream Team'

**THE WIDER WORLD OF NARROW WEB**

VOL.30 ISSUE#5 NOVEMBER 2008  
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Intermittent Feed



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Offset, screen, hot foil...



## HIGH PRODUCTIVITY

Largest print area



## HIGH TECHNOLOGY

Servo drive





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## ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY SPURS CONVERTER INVESTMENT

With the entry cost of new technology rising and financing more difficult to come by in the current global credit crunch, it is easy to conclude that label converters would cut back on their capital investment programs.

But we did not see evidence for this at the recent Labelexpo Americas show in Chicago. All the major press manufacturers had good shows, with Aquaflex, for example, reporting its best Labelexpo ever. And the story was the same for the vendors of digital printing and pre-press equipment.

The fact is, today's equipment represents a step-change in capability compared to the last generation of presses. The introduction of servo drives – now drilling down to presses like Mark Andy's 2200 as well as the bigger machines – allows rapid changeover between jobs through pre-setting and tighter running register control on unsupported films. The introduction of sleeves and fast change inking systems radically cuts the time spent making ready, while a new generation of inspection systems linked to the PDF proof will allow converters to more accurately monitor the quality of jobs being run down the press and significantly reduce waste.

In a market where run lengths are coming down, where job complexity is increasing and materials/consumables becoming more expensive, the new generation of presses offer converters real opportunities to be more competitive – and to diversify from core PS markets into unsupported film products to meet the requirements of end users for 'one-stop packaging shops'.

Similarly with the new generation of digital workflow and color-managed remote proofing systems, which allow converters to offer their customers a whole range of new services which will cut the time it takes to get new products onto the global market.

We expect to see these trends continued at the upcoming India Label Show in December and next year at Labelexpo in Brussels and in Shanghai.

### ANDY THOMAS

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L&amp;L

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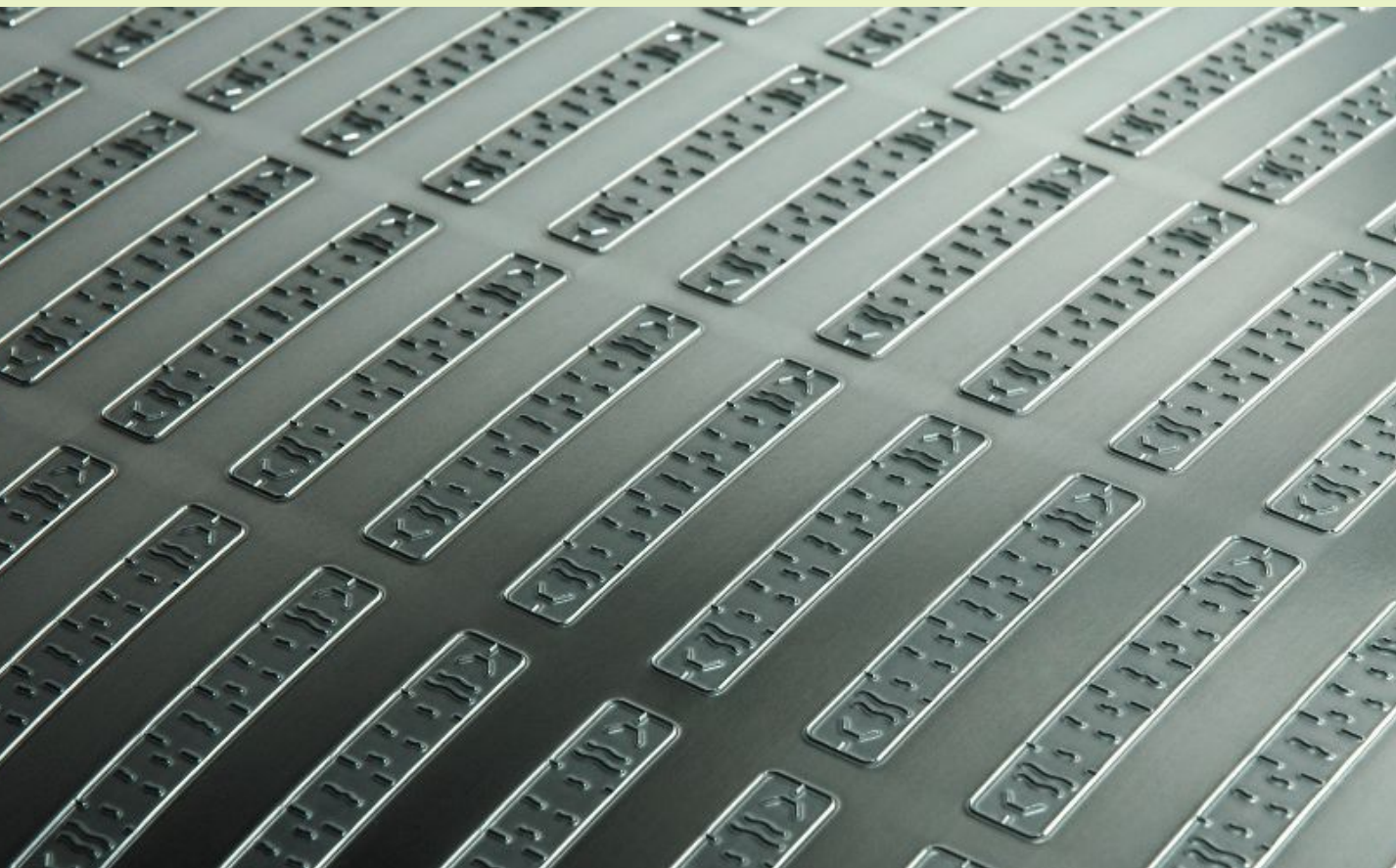
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# INBOX

## How can converters make money through RFID?

The Sept/Oct edition of L&L's Big Issue provoked some interesting debate on our blog. Here are some extracts, and don't forget to give your reaction to the new Big Issue on pages 28-30 – Should environmental responsibility be viewed as an opportunity or a threat by label converters? Join the debate at [www.labelsandlabeling.com/blog](http://www.labelsandlabeling.com/blog)

My background in RFID comes from nine years working with converters. I have also been involved in developing solutions for customer applications.

Converters need to understand the technology. An RFID label is not the same as a regular pressure sensitive label they are making today. They also need to know how to sell this technology and all that is required to make it work. Make sure you are prepared and have a plan that can be implemented with your people or bring in people to help make it happen. Set your goals, setup your network and focus on what needs to be done.

Converters sometimes sell on price, at other times they sell on solution. With an RFID label product it is going to be the solution sell. Define your opportunities: are you selling to existing RFID users or new opportunities that require more than an RFID label?

If the converter is selling into the retail arena, they will have to be very creative on how they are going to make money. Only two things can help in this area. The first is getting the best possible price on the inlay. The second is how efficient they can be in their manufacturing process.

The converter needs to be patient, have the right equipment and be able to promote their capabilities. If you are just starting out, you will have to learn fast and position your company so that the market can see what you bring and how you can deliver.

Understand the technology, train yourself, look for what make you different and be patient. The last point is what hurts. Too many companies are hurting financially waiting for RFID to take off.

**Joe H**

I absolutely agree with the points Joe makes. I would add that the few examples I have seen of converters making money with RFID, is where they also offer other value-added services, particularly IT consulting, advice on installation of read-write hardware, antenna design etc. This can only be achieved by making alliances with companies which already offer these services and approaching the end user as a team. The other advantage of this approach is that the label converter gets paid for their expertise as part of the group, as well as for individual RFID labels.

**Andy Thomas, Labels & Labeling**

I have serious reservations about the long term effect of RFID on the labeling market. I still don't see RFID labeling becoming as mainstream as barcodes as it's always going to be more expensive, not as reliable and offers few benefits over barcoding (these principally being scanning without line of sight, real time scanning and amount of data stored).

I have seen projections from PIRA and other organizations for many years forecasting huge growth in RFID volumes, but I still don't see the market drivers for this. RFID has some excellent applications in say libraries, medical and legal note tracking, and some pallet level tracking applications. However, it is a niche technology, and despite the huge amounts of money being ploughed into it, it still remains to be seen if the consumer will trust it, or rebel against it. Serious volume will only come from widespread item level tagging, and that needs consumer acceptance.

I would draw similarities between RFID and GM foods. The science makes sense, but here is a lot of uncertainty on acceptance by legislators and users.

If you have a niche B2B application, RFID can be a huge value added service for your key accounts. If not, I'd look elsewhere for greater margins from smart labeling technologies.

**Dr Adrian Steele, Mercian Labels, UK**

RFID is a market niche field where know-how, knowledge, confidentiality etc. is common; hence some successful players in this field keep quiet about it. RFID is not for the faint-hearted and therefore only for those with the right background and then, success and profitability is possible.

As the volume for RFID jobs is still low, such dedicated RFID converting machine are underutilized, hence our approach to offer a machine concept with additional features which enables to convert other market niche applications on the same machine, meaning reduced investment risk and increased productivity and ROI. In summary, RFID seen in a wider sense can be profitable and I am glad to go into greater details on a one-to-one basis. Long live market niche applications.

**Bernhard Grob, Edale, UK**



### FORUM THREAD

#### FORUM QUESTION

**Inkjet – the new pretender?**

#### POSTS:

Inkjet is ready to revolutionize the label-printing space? Get serious, people – inkjet for labels is still an untried expensive Beta-test for most of us.

I agree with [a previous] comment above – for a few hundred dollars a month on a lease, a shop can bring in a couple of Gerber Edge units with a nice plotter and dominate in short-run high-margin applications with a proven money making technology.

And if you want to make the screen printer next door totally freak out, bring in a Matan Spring for \$100k, ROI in a few months, and you're home in time for corn flakes.

**Kevin Dooley**

In my opinion, the big opportunity for inkjet printing is in integrating the inkjet print technology in-line with an existing flexo or offset web press or cut-sheet press. This combination forms what we call a hybrid analog-digital press, and allows for keeping the cost-to-print low for the fixed data and for imprinting the variable data at the lowest possible cost.

Because about 90 percent of all variable data printing is black, there is not much demand for full process color for VDP (variable data printing) applications. Therefore, companies that need VDP capability can very economically add an inkjet system to their existing presses or finishing equipment, which also further leverages their existing equipment assets.

**Mukesh Patel,**  
Condot Systems, India

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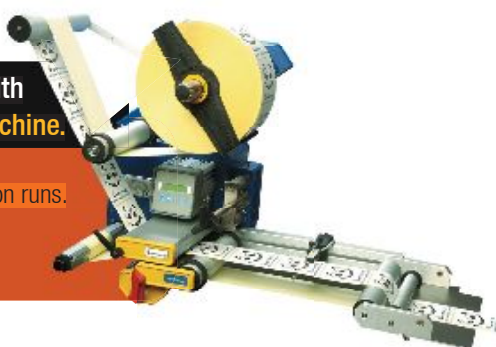


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# LABELS DIARY

OCTOBER | NOVEMBER

YOUR ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO UP AND COMING LABELS  
RELATED EVENTS WORLDWIDE

**22-24 October**

**IMLCON 08 North America  
– International In-mold  
Labeling and Decorating  
Conference**

Phoenix, AZ, USA  
IMLCON is dedicated to in-mold  
labeling and decorating markets.



**6-7 November**

**AWA Self-adhesive  
Technology Seminar,**  
Amsterdam, Netherlands

The seminar focuses on trends  
and developments in both technical  
specialties and applications in the  
general, label and tape markets.



**12-14 November**

**IMI 16th Annual European  
Inkjet Printing Conference**

Lisbon, Portugal  
An assessment of technology  
and market development  
trends that will determine inkjet  
printing's role in the marketplace.



**15-17 November**

**Print World 2008,**  
Toronto, Canada

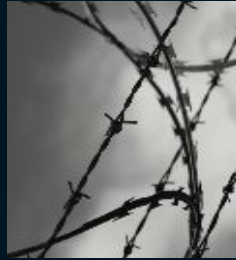
The World of Shorter-Run  
Printing in North America is  
welcoming nearly 10,000  
attendees and well over 275  
exhibitors to the 2006 show.



**17-19 November**

**IMI 5th Annual Security  
Printing Conference**

Baltimore, Maryland, USA  
This conference will address the  
challenges and opportunities in  
dealing with security issues and  
enabling brand protection.



**38-31 October**

**Luxe Pack,**  
Monaco  
Luxe Pack brings together  
manufacturers and specialists in  
luxury product packaging. Sectors  
represented include cosmetics,  
wines & spirits, jewelry and fine  
foods.



**9-13 November**

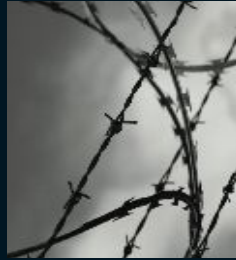
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exploring the latest containers  
and materials innovations.



**19-22 October**

**TLMI Annual Meeting**  
Palm Beach, Florida, USA

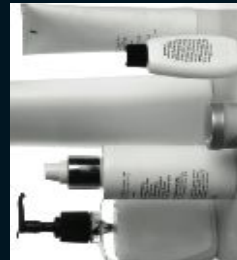
TLMI will celebrate its 75th  
anniversary with an Annual  
Meeting themed 'Celebrating  
our legacy and meeting the  
challenges of our future'.



**19-21 November**

**7th AFTA Conference and  
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Asian packagers and suppliers  
to improve knowledge, standard  
and quality of the print process.



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by emailing [event@labelsandlabeling.com](mailto:event@labelsandlabeling.com).

# NEWS



## GERHARDT AND JET TECHNOLOGIES ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP

**JET** to develop business in flexible dies and magnetic cylinders

Gerhardt, manufacturer of cutting tools and associated products, announced at Labelexpo Americas a new partnership with Australia's leading supplier of machinery and consumables to the narrow web market, Jet Technologies.

With sales offices and warehouses based in Sydney, Melbourne and Adelaide and an extensive sales network, Jet Technologies will provide service and support to existing customers whilst developing the business primarily for flexible dies and magnetic cylinders.

Mark Simpson, Gerhardt customer service manager, will continue to support customers for Jet Technologies and assist in providing training for Jet personnel. Ian Sarney, who was previously employed as Gerhardt's sales manager in Asia Pacific, recently moved to Jet and will play an integral role in ensuring all customers benefit from the strategy.

'From Gerhardt's perspective an alliance with Jet provides us with an extensive sales network supported by the wide ranging knowledge base. This will ensure our level of service to the Australian, New Zealand and South East Asian market is second to none,' said Klaus Damberg, Group CEO of Gerhardt.



## NILPETER TO MANUFACTURE IN INDIA

**JOINT VENTURE** will follow Brazilian model

Nilpeter is to manufacture flexo presses in India in a joint venture project with its current sales and service partner, Proteck Machinery. The joint venture, named Nilpeter India, will manufacture flexo servo presses with a similar specification to the Nilpeter FB-line machine, with auxiliaries such as rotary screen and cold- and hotfoil stamping. Nilpeter hopes to have the first Indian-built press on its stand at Tarsus' India Label Show in New Delhi this December.

Proteck is a manufacturing and distribution company headquartered in Chennai. As well as offering sales and technical support services for Nilpeter in India, the company acts as agent and parts manufacturer for a number of other press and equipment manufacturers, including Mitsubishi.

Peter Eriksen, executive assistant at Nilpeter, said: 'We believe the potential of the Indian market is huge. Nilpeter is at full capacity in both our US and Danish manufacturing sites and the Indian market will require a high number of label presses

in the near future. This calls for producing in a new location with the required capacity, and why not locally, when this, in addition, brings us closer to our customers - which we consider very important.'

The Indian-built presses are targeted for sale to local label converters, but in the longer term Nilpeter will consider exporting to other Asian markets. The Indian manufacturing operation will build on the lessons learned from Nilpeter's Brazilian manufacturing joint venture. 'In many ways we will duplicate that operation,' says Eriksen.

There will be an extensive exchange of technical staff between Proteck in Chennai and Nilpeter's North American manufacturing plant. In the future, Eriksen says that Nilpeter is likely to carry out more IT and software-related research and development in India.

The joint venture manufacturing announcement follows a number of FB-line installations in the Indian market, one of which is at Ajanta Packaging's Daman plant.

## ATLAS DIE AND XYNATECH TO MERGE DIE BUSINESSES

The narrow web flexible and specialty die business of Xynatech will be merged into Atlas Die, creating one of the largest producers of narrow web flexible dies and specialty cutting dies in the Americas.

Jim Redd, president of Xynatech, stated, 'I am pleased for our customers that an agreement could be reached with Atlas Die. Competing against them

through the years, I know our customers will be well taken care of given Atlas Die's product depth and technical knowledge.'

Kenneth Smott, president and CEO of Atlas Die, added, 'We have always had great respect for Xynatech in the marketplace. We feel privileged to welcome their customers and will be working closely with Xynatech to ensure a seamless transition.'



## AVERY NAMES VP AND GENERAL MANAGER, ROLL MATERIALS EUROPE

**ANGELO** Depietri is promoted from South American role



Angelo Depietri has been named vice president and general manager, Roll Materials Europe. Depietri will be based in Leiden, the Netherlands.

In his new role, Depietri will provide overall leadership for Avery Dennison's European roll materials businesses and will be responsible for strategic development and continued growth in Europe, including the

company's rapidly growing presence in Eastern Europe.

Depietri joined Avery Dennison in 2000 and was named vice president and general manager of the Eastern Europe and International South Region of Roll Materials Europe, with responsibility for Eastern Europe, the southern Mediterranean countries, and the French-speaking countries in North Africa. He was named vice president and general manager of Materials and Office Products South America in 2005.

## RITRAMA EXPANDS GLOBAL PRESENCE

Ritrama is increasing its presence in the world's fastest growing label markets with the announcement of major investments in Chile and China.

The Chilean plant will be located in the city of Curauma, Valparaíso region. Valparaíso is located in central Chile, 120 km (74 miles) to the northwest of the capital Santiago. The port of Valparaíso is also an important hub for shipping of container freight and exports of goods. The new Ritrama S.A. Facility, comprising an area of about 25,000 sq meters, will manufacture the Ritrama self-adhesive roll label range of paper and filmic products to serve South, Central and North America.

In China, Ritrama is investing in a new coating and slitting plant of about 25,000 sq meters in Hefei, the

capital of Anhui Province, 400 km from Shanghai. With a population of around 4.5 million, Hefei is a thriving city from both economic and technological points of view. The area of 500 km around Hefei accounts for nearly half of the GDP of China and more than 40 percent of the consumer market.

The Chinese plant will be principally a filmic plant able to produce most of the products and adhesives manufactured in Europe, for end use applications including battery, beverage and body care for global branded products. Both plants will be equipped with state-of-the-art manufacturing, testing and R&D facilities, and products will be developed in accordance with Ritrama's Italian engineering specifications, operating in compliance with the company's corporate quality system.

## THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

### ROTATEK APPOINTS AGENTS IN UK AND ITALY

Spanish press manufacturer Rotatek has appointed two exclusive agents for Italy and UK & Ireland. So.Ma.Ca s.r.l., a former Gallus representative in Italy for 35 years, has signed a contract with Rotatek to distribute its combined offset printing presses for the label and packaging industry in the Italian market. Meanwhile, the Spanish company has established an agency agreement with UK-based PGM Graphic Solutions.

### MIMAKI OPENS NEW EUROPEAN PREMISES

Mimaki Europe has opened its new premises to resellers all over Europe with the launch of the CJV30 Series integrated printer/cutter and the UJV-160 UV LED curable inkjet printer. Since the start of Mimaki Europe in 2004 in Amsterdam, the company has grown to employ 40 professionals.

The new premises in the Amsterdam business area is four times larger and contains over 4,000 square meters of showroom, warehouse and office facilities. Together the showroom and training facilities add up to 1,000 square meters.

### DEGRAVA APPOINTS AUSTRALIAN DISTRIBUTOR

In a deal that expands its global reach, Degrava Systems has signed a distribution partnership with Australia's Label Power. Label Power executives say that the deal to distribute Degrava Systems' DP 8500 digital press used to print digital labels and tags will fill a critical need in Australia's print production industry. 'The introduction of Degrava and the DP 8500 into Australia means that finally an industrial digital color label printing solution is available at an attractive price,' said James Malone, managing director of Label Power.

### KODAK APPOINTS JV IMAGING SOLUTIONS AS DISTRIBUTOR FOR FLEXCEL SYSTEMS

JV Imaging Solutions, a distributor of flexographic equipment, has signed on with Kodak's Graphic Communications Group as an authorized reseller in the US and Canada of the integrated Kodak Flexcel NX digital flexographic system. The company will supply the east coast of the continent from its offices in Marietta, Georgia, and Northborough, Massachusetts.

### GIDUE'S XPANND OFFSET UNIT OBTAINS GERMAN SID CERTIFICATION

Gidue's Xpannd offset print unit has met the requirements in terms of dot gain, color fading, slur and doubling, ghosting and streaking defined by the BVDM guidelines, the German Association for Printing. The inspection of Xpannd took place in late April 2008 inside Gidue's Graphic Arts Center.

## NEWS IN BRIEF

### LAKE IMAGE SYSTEMS MOVES INTO ASIA

Lake Image Systems has opened a sales and service operation in Singapore. Operational since August, Lake Image Systems Asia provides marketing, sales, service and support for the company's range of print and document integrity solutions to the Asian markets. 'LIS Asia is an integral part of our continued global growth plans and demonstrates our commitment to the Asian markets,' said Martin Keats, managing director.

### MAXCESS TO OPEN CHINESE SUBSIDIARY

Maxcess International has opened a Chinese subsidiary – Maxcess China – in

Zhuhai City, Guangdong Province. The web-handling expert already has a number of factories around the world, including in the US, Germany and Japan.

### STYERS CELEBRATES 25 YEARS

Styers Equipment Company, started in 1983, was one of the first companies to establish a national US market for the purchase and sale of used narrow web flexo presses. It celebrates its 25th anniversary this year. Paul Styers, founder and president, had 19 years experience as a printer and owner of a plant in the narrow web flexo industry manufacturing tags and labels before establishing the used equipment business.

## RADIUS PARTNERS WITH QLIKTECH

**TECHNOLOGY** partnership between MIS provider and business analyst

Radius Solutions, the MIS software provider, has entered into a technology partnership with business intelligence vendor QlikTech. Radius will offer advanced performance analysis capabilities based on QlikTech's systems.

Radius' Pecos Vision is an ERP/MIS system designed to meet the requirements of the packaging and printing industries. It offers business management capabilities from estimating, through production and cash receipt. QlikView connects data from multiple sources and presents detailed reports on profitability, production, sales and financial analysis. The standard offering is expected to be generally available in late 2008 for all packaging customers. Additional applications will be developed and announced in 2009.

'Companies can no longer wait until the end of the month for the data they need to monitor their progress against their key performance indicators, that's where QlikView comes in,' said David Taylor, president and CEO of Radius Solutions.



## SATO PARTICIPATES IN RFID PILOT

**GOODS** successfully tracked from China to USA

SATO Corporation, a provider of barcode printing, labeling, and EPC/RFID solutions, has participated in the successful completion of the second phase of GS1 EPCglobal's Transportation and Logistics Services (TLS) Industry Action Group RFID Pilot Program.

EPCglobal, a subsidiary of the global not-for-profit standards organization GS1, through its Pilot Program, has demonstrated real-time cargo visibility as goods flowed between trading partners and logistics providers from mainland

China to mainland USA.

The program included two shipments of three containers, with each container consisting of 40 pallets. The project involved the shipment of parts such as tires as well as finished goods such as laptop computers from source factories in China to distribution centers in the US, flowing through the ports of Shanghai and Los Angeles. SATO Corporation, the sole printer manufacturer to participate in the Pilot Program, was partnered with major logistics, shipping, hardware and software providers.

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## GASCOGNE LAMINATES AND SMITH & MCLAURIN BEGIN PARTNERSHIP

**DISTRIBUTION** deal for UK and Ireland

Gascogne Laminates and Smith & McLaurin have begun a distribution partnership in the United Kingdom and Ireland.

Colin Gault, managing director of Smith & McLaurin (SMCL), said: 'To meet the increasing market demand for recycling, reusing and sustainability, SMCL introduced a range of environmentally friendly solutions in 2005. In addition to our full range of commodity products and this highly popular eco-range, this partnership with Gascogne Laminates will now enable us to offer a wider range of synthetic face materials (clear-on-clear, silver films, HP Indigo coated films), adhesives (opaque, microsphere, direct food contact) and other specialty products.'

## MACDERMID ANNOUNCES DEAL WITH JV IMAGING SOLUTIONS

JV Imaging Solutions is distributing MacDermid's photopolymer plate products and equipment in the United States. MacDermid offers a range of photopolymer technologies including both liquid and sheet photopolymers. MacDermid's full range of products encompasses both analog and digital plate imaging technologies as well as solvent and thermal plate development processes.

'JV Imaging provides our customers with an experienced, dedicated and well regarded field organization that is 100 percent focused on flexography, which makes it a perfect choice for a partner,' said Scot Benson, vice president of sales and marketing at MacDermid.

## KOLLMAN SEEKS CONVERTER PORTFOLIO

Kollman Label and Packaging Group has completed the purchase of an undisclosed interest in Dixie Printing and Packaging of Baltimore, Maryland. Dixie is a printer of folding cartons for food and personal care companies such as Procter and Gamble, McCormick, GOJO and others in the eastern United States. The plant employs over 100 people and utilizes the latest pre-press and press technologies to produce UV and conventional 7-color coated cartons. The plant is fully integrated, from sheeting paper rolls, electronically manufacturing of plates and dies, printing, die cutting, and folding and gluing.

A. Newth Morris III, founding family member, will continue to operate as president and CEO of Dixie. Newth has been an integral part of the growth and success of Dixie over the last thirty five years and will continue to help develop the business within the group.

Kollman Label and Packaging Group is a newly formed corporation, headed by Kevin Kollman. The group is engaged in bringing together unique, medium sized companies in the labeling and packaging industry. The companies will form a group which will jointly market their products to food, beverage, pharmaceutical and personal care companies in North America. In addition to the recent purchase, the company is now engaged in the purchase of label printing plants: several companies are scheduled to be acquired by the first quarter of 2009.



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## HOT OFF THE PRESS



## ACQUISITIONS POWER DR HÖNLE

UV SYSTEMS supplier expands thanks to recent investment

Dr Hönle now claims to be the world's second largest supplier of industrial UV systems for the print industry with the acquisition of PrintConcept and Eltosch along with adhesive specialist Panacol. PrintConcept was taken over in December 2007 and Eltosch in May of this year.

Heiko Runge (pictured center), member of the board at Dr Hönle, told journalists: 'The acquisition of PrintConcept and Eltosch has created a powerful competence group that can offer its customers everything in the UV segment from one source.'

Dr Hönle has traditionally been active across all print segments, including UV sheetfed and rotary offset, flexography and now inkjet. PrintConcept is a strong player in rotary offset and flexo, while Eltosch has a base in sheetfed

offset. Runge said that each company will continue to focus on its own area, with basic R&D co-ordinated at Dr Hönle.

Manfred Coordes (pictured left), sales director at Eltosch, commented: 'The complete Hönle product range is now available to us. If we need an electronic power supply for one of our Eltosch dryers, for example, I can immediately use a Hönle unit – this represents a first-class but at the same time low-cost solution for us and for our customers.'

The newly expanded group also gives label printers sales and service points worldwide, said Jürgen Welle, MD PrintConcept (pictured right): 'Through the takeover by Hönle, we have won almost overnight a really dense and reliable service and sales network in Germany and around the world.'



## EDALE TO MOVE TO LARGER PLANT

2009 move to 25,000 square foot plant with further expansion capacity

UK-based press manufacturer Edale will move next year to a new custom-built headquarters in Whitely, between Southampton and Portsmouth. The company is currently based in Romsey, Hampshire, 20 miles from its future location.

'It is important that our image and brand positioning be reflected in our offices and factory, which we feel is not achieved in our current premises. The level of skills we have at Edale in our highly-experienced workforce, design team and R&D department, mean that the machines and services we offer are of a very high standard,' explained managing director James Boughton, pictured left.

Planning permission for the 50,000 square foot (4,650 square meter) facility at Whiteley has already been granted. Edale will initially occupy 25,000 square feet with expansion possibilities of an extra 7,000 square feet.

## \*EDALE APPOINTS INDIAN AGENT

Edale is looking to claim its share of the booming economy of the Indian sub-continent by appointing Kolkata-based Printers Supply as its agent for the region.

## SMYTH COMPANIES NAMES NEW PRESIDENT

Smyth Companies, a North American label printing company with headquarters in Minnesota, has promoted Jim Lundquist to president.

Lundquist has been with Smyth since 2005, and successfully steered the company through the consolidation of its sheet-fed printing operations into two production facilities. Most recently, Lundquist was instrumental in the sale of Smyth's Snap! package division to Tapemark, as well as formulating plans for future growth.

## UPM RESTRUCTURES BUSINESS

NEW STRUCTURE divides company into three divisions



UPM announced during Labelexpo Americas its plan to adopt a new business structure consisting of three groups where the company was previously

divided into five. The new divisions are Energy and Pulp, Paper, and Engineered Materials. UPM Raflatrac, the manufacturer of self-adhesive labelstock and RFID tags and inlays, will be part of Engineered Materials.

'Changes in the business environment have continued and intensified. UPM responds to these challenges with a new business structure which improves our capability to leverage the company's competitive advantages. Our target is to create a structure and leadership model which sets the basis for strong, market driven

operations in all of the three business groups,' said Jussi Pesonen, president and CEO of UPM.

Engineered Materials Business Group consists of self-adhesive labelstock, plywood, wood plastic composite and RFID business areas. Jussi Vanhanen, pictured, has been appointed president of the Engineered Materials Business Group. Vanhanen, 36, holds a LL.M. and MBA and is currently senior vice president, Europe, in UPM's Label Division.

## \* UPM RAFLATAC TO OPEN DISTRIBUTION CENTER IN BRAZIL

UPM Raflatrac will open a slitting and distribution terminal in Jaguariúna, Brasil, approximately 135 km north of Sao Paulo. The terminal will allow the company to extend its product offering in the region and will be operational by the end of 2008.



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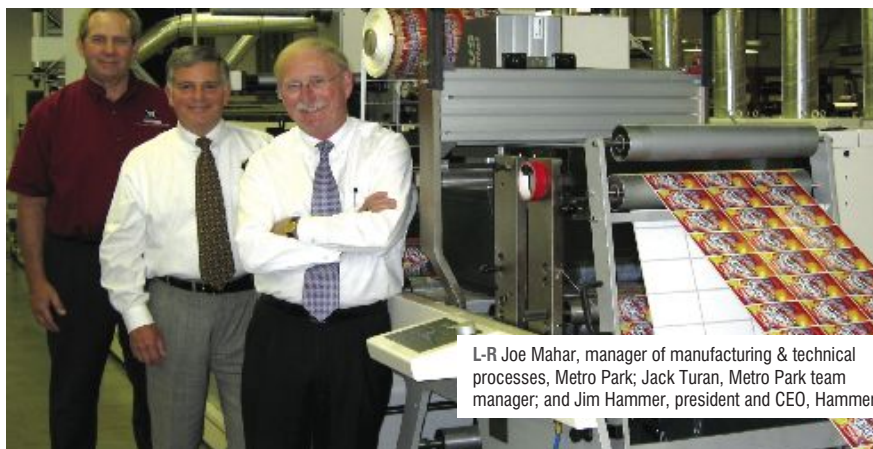
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L-R Joe Mahar, manager of manufacturing & technical processes, Metro Park; Jack Turan, Metro Park team manager; and Jim Hammer, president and CEO, Hammer

## HAMMER MAKES INC. 5000 LIST

US converter is amongst fastest growing private companies in country

Inc. magazine has ranked Hammer Packaging on its second annual 2008 list of the 5000 fastest growing private companies in the country, with a three-year growth rate of 46 percent.

'The Inc. 5000 gives an unrivalled portrait of young, under-reported companies across all industries doing fascinating things with cutting-edge business models, as well as older companies that are still showing impressive growth,' said Inc. 5000 project manager Jim Melloan.

'It's an honor to be recognized as one of the top 5000 companies in America for 2008. Our success is due largely to investing in leading-edge technology and

hiring the right people,' said James E. Hammer, president and CEO of Hammer Packaging. 'We will continue to pursue a "lead, don't follow" business strategy to achieve profitable growth year upon year.'

A supplement to the Inc. 500 list, Inc. 5000 was created last year to recognize small and mid-sized companies. Inc. magazine ranks companies based on revenue growth from 2004 through 2007. To qualify, companies must be US-based and privately held, independent – not subsidiaries or divisions of other companies. Revenues in 2004 must have been at least \$200,000, and revenue in 2007 must have been at least \$2 million.



L-R: Martien Hendriks, technical sales director; Dercilio Oliveira, sales director Apex Latin America; Marian Waterschoot, managing director Apex Europe

## APEX GROUP STARTS ACTIVITIES IN LATIN AMERICA

Apex Group, a supplier of anilox and metering rolls, has appointed Dercilio Oliveira as sales area manager for Apex Latin America. The move allows individual service to be given in Latin America, tailored to the needs of the local market and in Spanish and Portuguese.

Dercilio Oliveira has both a technical and commercial background. Initially a mechanical engineer in Brazil, in 1990 he moved to the USA to work in import and export businesses to and from Latin America. Oliveira started working in the flexographic industry a year ago, and was appointed by Apex just before the drupa event in Germany.

## ECONOMIC DOWNTURN AFFECTS GLOBAL BRANDS

BRAND Finance report highlights impact of 'credit crunch' on brand equity

Brand Finance plc, an independent brand valuation consultancy, has revealed the impact of recession on the top 100 global and US brands.

The study is calculated by Brand Finance based on the widely used and technically superior 'Royalty from Relief' methodology, which assumes that a company does not own its brand name, and then calculates how much it would have to pay to license it from a third party.

The report finds that between January and September the enterprise value of the 100 most valuable globally branded businesses decreased by 13.3 percent, a drop of US\$1.6 trillion; meanwhile their brand value, during the same period, decreased by 4.2 percent, a drop of US\$67 billion.

As the price of oil continues to rise so does the value of leading petrochemical brands. Four of the top five brands that record an increased in brand value belong to leading brands in the oil and gas sector. These include; ExxonMobil (19.4 percent), BP (18.3 percent), Chevron (17.9 percent) and Shell (12.8 percent).

The only other sector to record a significant increase in overall brand value is healthcare, suggesting that despite a decrease in spending, consumers are prioritizing health and

well-being. Johnson & Johnson outperforms its competitors by jumping an impressive 16 places to 84 in the table, illustrating the trend across the sector.

Wal-Mart has overtaken Coca-Cola to become the most valuable global brand in the BrandFinance500. The value of the brand has increased 9 percent since December, to US\$42,567m, driving a 23.5 percent increase in Wal-Mart's enterprise value over same period. Wal-Mart has turned the recession to its advantage by leveraging its reputation for low prices.

'In the current climate, it is essential to understand the absolute value of brands and what drives their value,' said David Haigh, CEO of Brand Finance plc. 'There is clear evidence that basic, value for money brands like Wal-Mart, AT&T, Exxon and McDonalds are performing very strongly, particularly when they invest consistently in advertising and marketing. By contrast unnecessary or discretionary brands like Starbucks, Nike, Coca Cola and L'Oreal are declining in value as consumers watch their finances more carefully.'

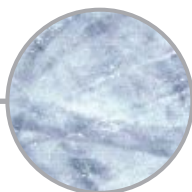
'There is also evidence at the global level that developing world brands are growing rapidly. Samsung, Tata, Bank of China and Lukoil are all good examples of this phenomenon.'



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## INDIA LABEL SHOW

**IN** December, the first India Label Show to take place under the Tarsus Labelexpo Global Series banner will be held in New Delhi

The India Label Show is the country's largest event for the label, product decoration and converting industry. The show will take place from 3-6 December at Pragati Maidan in New Delhi, *writes Andy Thomas*.

The India Label Show was launched in 2002 and became a part of the Labelexpo Global Series last year. The 2008 edition will be the first one to be organized by the Labelexpo team.

The show features a large amount of working machinery from both Indian and international manufacturers, and will include the first showing of a Nilpeter FB3300 press built by the company's new Indian manufacturing operation. Avery Dennison is exhibiting at the show for the first time, and Raflatrac will be promoting the benefits of its new distribution system in India. Prati is another first time exhibitor following its successful foray into the US label market at Labelexpo Americas in September. Agfa will have a major presence at the show, both with its own flexo and letterpress CTP systems, but also plates, sleeves, inkjet systems and anilox rolls from its partner companies. Amongst first time Indian exhibitors is United Inks and Varnishes, the first Indian inks company to participate at the show. There will be a range of state-of-the-art smart label and

**LABELS & LABELING**

RFID solutions.

The exhibition also features an Executive Summit held throughout three days of the show, looking at key topics in this rapidly developing market: The changing world of converting (delivered by Mike Fairley); Do print buyers and converters speak the same language?; Protecting your brand; Taking the mystique out of digital printing; Facing the Challenge – a panel session consisting of Indian and International converters; Opportunities for the future – with a case study from a major global brand owner.

Another highlight will be the Label Awards, supported by the LMAI and sponsored by Avery Dennison (overall sponsor) and category sponsors Nilpeter, Label Planet, Stork Prints, Rotatex, Gallus, Gidue, Omet and Gerhardt. For the first time, the winners of the Indian awards will go forward for judging in the Global Label Awards. The prestigious invitation-only event will attract over 500 printers, suppliers and brand owners on the evening of Wednesday December 3.

There will also be a FINAT pavilion at the show, as well as a delegation from FINAT's Young Managers club, in a project organized jointly with Tarsus.

**For more information, go to:**  
**[www.indialabelshow.com](http://www.indialabelshow.com)**

## ARPECO APPOINTS ITC GROUP AS CHINA DISTRIBUTOR

Arpeco has appointed the ITC Group as exclusive distributor of its products in China, Hong Kong and Macao. The ITC Group will provide spare parts and technical support from its Guangzhou facility and representatives, located throughout the country, are already trained to assist with new inspection and finishing machine requirements.

'With head offices located in Guangzhou and satellite offices throughout the rest of the country, the ITC Group is well suited to handle the needs of the ever growing label and package printing industry in China,' said Arpeco sales and marketing manager Brian Ivens.

## PGM APPOINTS INDIAN AGENT

UK-based PGM Graphics Solutions has appointed Weldon Celloplast, based in New Delhi, as its exclusive agent for the company's pre-owned Gallus and Arsoma narrow web presses and related ancillary equipment.

The geographical area covered by the agreement is India, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Nepal and UAE.

PGM Graphics Solutions, which last year established a close cooperation with business partner ATIQS in Germany, is now able to offer refurbished presses from ATIQS, as well as re-build and re-configured pre-owned Gallus and Arsoma machines for special applications.

## JET OPENS MELBOURNE WAREHOUSE

Jet Technologies has opened a warehouse in Melbourne. After first establishing a sales office in the Australian city earlier this year, Jet Technologies has opened the facility to complement its business activities in Victoria. The local market can now expect products held in stock in Melbourne to be delivered within 2-3 hours.

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# NEW PRODUCTS



## 1 SHAFTLESS XP5000 PRESS MARK ANDY

Mark Andy has introduced a shaftless version of its XP5000 press. The upgraded XP5000 prints at speeds up to 750 ft/min run on a wide variety of substrates.

The company says the press incorporates advanced closed loop auto- registration and tension control systems which allow tight process control at high speeds. The new design also offers process flexibility, allowing the converter to independently pace each print station throughout the press, a critical process for multi-web construction and lamination applications.

The Mark Andy XP5000 provides the capacity to perform flexo, UV flexo, cold foil, hot foil, screen and inter-station die-cutting. Other key features of the press include the ability to run a variety of substrates from unsupported film to light board, the flexible Mark Andy 'QC' platform cassettes, remote diagnostics capability and an 'intelligent message center'.



## 2 BAGGAGE TAGS AND TIRE ADHESIVE RITRAMA

To track luggage, Ritrama has developed a new product line called Bags Tags, specifically designed for labels on luggage. It includes two different products: the eco-transfer version, called Bag Tag, and the top transfer version, called Bag Tag Top, two thermal papers laminated with a transparent polypropylene film, which have a high resistance to tear.

Both products have the acrylic permanent adhesive AP 904, specially developed for labeling on luggage applications. Bag Tag Top provides a high resistance to moisture, alcohol, oil, etc.

To identify tires, the 'Tyre Range' has been developed with the rubber based adhesive RP 2001. Not only does this give a high adhesion level, but it is also easily removable from the tire surface, without leaving a residue. The products that compose this line are RI-Tyre, a paper laminated with aluminum foil, the RI-754/60 TC Tyre, a top coated polypropylene film and Thermal Top, a top coated thermal paper.

## 3 LINOPROTECT ANTI-PIRACY SYSTEM LINOPRINT

Linoprint, the inkjet project arm of Heidelberg, is developing an anti-piracy system that can be flexibly integrated in packaging lines. Linoprotect technology is based on two modules – a pattern randomly generated from copper threads and a related data matrix code.

The ultra-thin copper or metal threads are combined to generate a random pattern which is applied to the packaging by means of a label. This pattern is read by the Linoprotect reading module. A cryptographic key that is unique to each customer converts it into an equally unique data matrix code. This code is printed onto the packaging next to the label with the pattern of copper threads using a digital Linoprint Drop on Demand inkjet system. A software package specially developed for this technology allows the end user to easily check the authenticity of the labeled products using a cell phone camera, PDA or scanner.

Like other Linoprint systems, Linoprotect can also be integrated into new or existing packaging lines.





#### 4 UV FLEXP SCRATCH-OFF INKS FLINT GROUP NARROW WEB

New silver 'scratch-off' inks that perform their key function and at the same time offer a high degree of on-press convenience in UV flexo printing have been introduced by Flint Group Narrow Web.

UV Flexo Scratch-off Inks can be used for all familiar promotional, game card, and entertainment applications, and can be easily removed with a rigid device such as a coin or fingernail. Two qualities are offered, delivering a choice of a pliable, or soft-scratch ink, or a semi-pliable, hard-scratch ink. They deliver the same pigmentation and opacity, but differing degrees of 'scratch-ability'.

Properly applied, they have a shelf life of at least six months, making them a strong proposition for long-term promotions. They can be overprinted with a message or pattern to further disguise a hidden message using Flint Group Narrow Web's Flexocure pantone black ink

with UV silicone additive.

UV Flexo Scratch-off Inks are single-component, press-ready inks which combine on-press stability with good curing speeds on most of today's flexo presses. The photoinitiator system was specially selected to allow for improved ink through-cure, and give the required end-use performance. Best results are achieved if the inks are used with Flint Group Narrow Web's dedicated UV flexo release coating, which protects the 'hidden message' and provides optimum release for the scratch-off layer.

The inks – which meet relevant international health and safety requirements – have been extensively tested on a variety of substrates, with optimal results on non-porous materials such as smooth coated tag papers and highly-calendered papers, PE, both topcoated and non-topcoated, and topcoated PP.

#### HANDHELD ANILOX MICROSCOPE HARPERSCIENTIFIC

HarperScientific, the printing and coating supplies division of global anilox supplier Harper Corporation of America, has introduced the Handheld TRM-C Series 400x Microscope.

'With this new, handheld, lighted microscope, our customers can keep a close eye on the condition of their anilox inventories, and find problems like wear, damage and plugging before they threaten print quality and shorten the lives of anilox rolls and sleeves,' said Jim Harper, vice president of HarperScientific.

Just 1.10 lbs and 7.5 inches tall, this tool, which is small enough for handheld field use, offers 400x optical magnification, a .0465mm field of view and a white LED lamp with a life of more than 100,000 hours.

It features a windowed positioning adapter that allows perfect positioning over the anilox, and the focus is easily adjusted by rotating the eyepiece.

# NEW PRODUCTS

5



## 5 RFID TAG INSERTER FOR SMALL-MEDIUM RUNS SCHOBER USA

Schober USA has unveiled its RFID-CP, a tag inserter aimed at medium and small label runs using pre-printed heavy labelstock. This new technology inserts UHF and HF inlays under die-cut blank or pre-printed labels and validates the finished product. Control and monitoring is accomplished through the new pendant station which houses an industrial PC.

Additional features, which the company says make this a 'cost-effective' RFID solution, include a new tag dispenser with web tension relief, strategically placed start/stop buttons, greater information gathering capabilities, and optional static discharge protection. The technology works with transponders in accordance with ISO specifications, in widths from 20mm to 80mm (with lengths of 20mm to 180mm). Pre-printed labels with widths from

101.6mm to 203.6mm can be applied at rates from 5,000 to 20,000 labels per hour. An on board RFID reader ensures the readability of each RFID tag after integration. An automatic control system keeps transponders and printed labels in register. The RFID-CP provides efficient and economical production of contactless readable tickets for public transportation cards, admission tickets, garments, swing tags, and more.

Standard features built into Schober RFID inserters include an automatic web guide system for base material, mechanical cross-register for transponders, auto-advance for missing transponders, servo-driven labeling head for opaque and transparent label reels, an electronic re-winder with tension control for assembled labels and the company's new operator pendant.

6



## 6 WATER RESISTANT ADHESIVE MANTER

Aimed at the wine market, the product can be repositioned after application

Spanish specialty paper and adhesive manufacturer Manter's latest offering to the wine market is a water resistant adhesive which gives the user the ability to readjust the positioning of the label for up to 30 minutes after application.

The company, part of the Fedrigoni Group, believes the new product completes its existing SH range of adhesives. Technical manager Pere Angelats calls the development Manter's 'greatest success' since the launch of its SH 3020 Plus adhesive over a decade ago.

The SH 6020 Plus adhesive, two years in development, avoids the formation of wrinkles, bubbles and other movement both when immersed in ice or water and when inside a refrigerator. 'It has been developed specifically for glass surfaces, at low temperatures and with condensation,' said Angelats.



**PERE ANGELATS**, technical director, and **GLÒRIA RODRÍGUEZ**, product development manager





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# BIG ISSUE

**Question:** Should environmental sustainability be viewed as an opportunity or a threat by label converters?



**CALVIN FROST**  
CEO, CHANNELED  
RESOURCES GROUP

As 'sustainable' becomes central to the buying strategies of CPGs, it has never been more important to learn how to set up a Green business operation. From raw materials sourcing to lean manufacturing and waste disposal, we have seen label converters around the world integrate more sustainable principles into their business practices. CPGs and retailers are now seriously concerned with the sustainability of packaging (including labels) as part of the 'big picture'.

'Sustainability equals future viability.' So said Dr Ulrich Lehner, former chairman of the management board of Henkel KGaA. If that statement doesn't support the view that environmental concerns should be viewed as an opportunity than little else will. Henkel is one of the largest manufacturers of adhesives, coating, and sealants in the world. The fact that its chairman recognized the importance of environmental excellence is not at all inconsistent with the products that Henkel makes.

This statement by Lehner goes back to the mid-eighties, twenty years ago. Already this large corporation recognized that sustainable development was an opportunity. To

build on it was the complex part, not in a small part because of the products they manufacture.

Several years ago I read in Business Week that the CEO for Unilever was more concerned about standards for sustainability than competing with P&G. Like Dr Lehner's statement, his focus on a 'greener' product presentation, and 'greener' manufacturing took precedence over competing with another global giant in retail.

I believe that good environmental practices in all parts of our supply chain offer opportunities for competitive superiority and, ultimately, cost advantages. If you look carefully at the metrics that are part of the requirements

of Label Initiative for the Environment (LIFE) participation, they affect every aspect of your business. You will have to follow clean practices in your shop as well as the front office. By adhering to these standards, you improve your bottom line. You become a better, more efficient business. Indeed, LIFE is an environmental standard that is applicable to every part of the supply chain. Raw materials, laminators, converters, are all evaluated with a common purpose: improved green practices.

Indeed, the real threat for a converter, it seems to me, is to ignore the opportunity to be a better environmental citizen.





**SCOTT PILLSBURY**  
PRESIDENT,  
ROSE CITY LABEL

Here's my answer – I am an optimist and a salesperson at heart, so I think it is a great opportunity.

Any time we can improve our businesses and show our

customers that we are proactively making things better, for our companies and theirs, they should see that as a positive reason to continue to work with you. Of course it can be a threat if you choose to ignore it – like so many things in our industry – we refuse to change at our own peril. The great thing about the 'Green Movement' is that it is good for

business, makes a good PR statement, AND is something everyone can get behind as a citizen of Planet Earth. There will be pains, and costs, but as more and more people request, and in fact demand, earth friendly printing, it will become the standard that we all provide.

The opportunity, as I see it, is to get on board early and pursue certifications like the forthcoming TLMI Life program, in addition to local programs like we have here in Portland, Oregon. Being a leader in this area, just like staying on the cutting edge of printing technology, is a story your customers want to hear. We all need a reason to get in front of customers and share our story – just asking, 'Hey do you need more labels?' isn't quite as compelling as showing them how you are taking action to make your business better.



**JASON GROSSMAN**  
PRESIDENT, PARAGON LABEL

Let's face it; most printers – or anyone with any social responsibility – want to take care of our planet. The concern – as with everything else – is the expense. Going green will cost the company money, but at the same time there are ways that it will save you money and give you a competitive advantage. Thus it can, and should, be made an opportunity. We are all going to have to face this issue some time, so why not be at the forefront? There are three areas that we concentrate on in our green efforts. First and foremost is our substrate waste (setup and matrix). We recycle all of our waste any pay a substantial fee to do so. The cost is definitely higher than standard landfill costs, but the benefit is two fold. We can tell our customers that we not only are being conscious with the environment, but also keeping their labels out of the landfill where it is fair game for anyone to pick up and walk away with. This is definitely an advantage. We also filter our water. This is, no way around it, an added expense with no true savings. It is a selling point though. We use low VOC water based inks, which is great for the air and also discharge ultra clean water which is good for our water. Two environmental hot points fixed with one solution. That's a selling advantage.

On the electrical end, we have implemented some steps that are definitely reducing our energy costs. Working with our local supplier we have been able to make some small investments that had a two year payback. That along with training our employees to be conscious about wasting energy has allowed us to save lots of energy (money) and also win awards for our efforts (great for our PR). Saving the environment and saving money, a double win. Keep in mind that some of the more progressive companies are putting an emphasis on suppliers that have sound environmental practices. This could give an environmentally sound printer a competitive advantage without just focusing on price. Yes, it costs you money to be a good steward of the environment, but you can also prop up your margins if you find the 'conscious' customer base willing to reward you for your efforts. You will also be able to lure a few customers to you by simply 'being green'. This is a selling point that your sales reps should use extensively along side price and quality.



**KEVIN RINEHART**  
MARKET SEGMENT LEADER – SUSTAINABILITY,  
FASSON ROLL NORTH AMERICA

Environmental concerns should be viewed as an opportunity by label converters. If there is a threat, it is in seeing the current focus on sustainability and environmental stewardship as a passing trend or something that does not pertain to the converter business. Sustainability and environmental stewardship are a business reality. The Wal-Mart packaging scorecard is an obvious example, and it's easy to connect the dots between the scorecard and label converters.

A challenging economy, rising raw material costs and slower growth rates provide an opportunity for an environmentally-conscious company to differentiate itself. In our industry, forward-thinking converters have begun to embrace the environment through efforts like ISO 14001 compliance or responsible forestry certification offered by the Forest Stewardship Council and Sustainable Forestry Initiative. These activities are recognized by end users and can make a difference when purchasing decisions are made.

Environmental benefits can also be derived from basic concepts like waste reduction and continuous improvement. Waste reduction efforts can minimize raw material usage or scrap in a production process. Increased productivity can reduce the amount of energy used in production, thus reducing a company's 'footprint'. The opportunity here, of course, is that these efforts can also drive an economic benefit to the bottom line of a business.

Environmental concerns can also drive innovation. Eco-friendly product offerings are growing and offer incremental margin opportunities in addition to important ecological benefits. A growing list of products and services driven to meet the challenges of environmental stewardship can help a converter respond to their environmentally conscious customers. The real leverage can be found when a company responds to environmental concerns from not just one of these perspectives but many. Improving productivity, reducing waste, providing eco-friendly products, recycling materials and providing solutions to the downstream customer will strengthen a business and demonstrate market leadership.



**TERIE SYME,**  
OPERATIONS MANAGER,  
PRESTIGE LABEL

The label and printing industries have seen some fads and many advancements over the decades. However, with the exception of the economy, I don't think there has been an issue that has taken hold of the global business market like the environmental crisis.

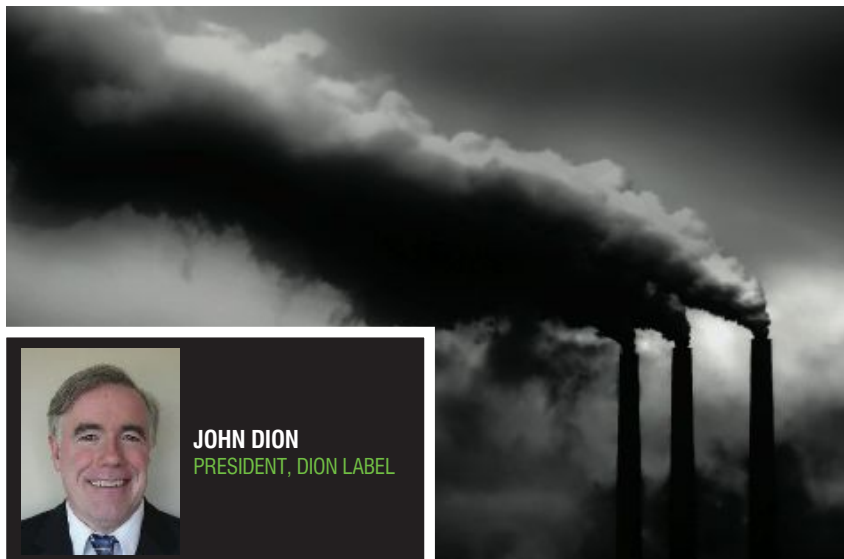
Being in the packaging industry, we have an added mark against us as being seen as part of the environmental problem. As printers and converters, we can either hide our heads in the sand, hoping it passes, or we can provide our teams with the resources and support to improve our internal standards and maybe even lead the industry. And then there's our customers...

Their marketing teams have the task of standing out on the shelf, now with the added hurdle of not seeming excessive. The package engineers need to take sustainability into account along with safety, functionality, form and cost. The purchasers may be concerned that moving towards more 'green' options will increase costs. The growing field of sustainable directors and managers are finding themselves in a unique position of not having a predecessor or road map before them.

All are looking to their vendors for more involvement. They are pulling them in as a resource for information as well as opinions... and this leads to real discussions. This can be seen in the industrial committees, task forces and discussion groups that are centered on sustainability. These groups show greater cross platform involvement that includes raw material vendors, printers, converters, CPGs, environmental experts, etc.

All are discussing how the print and packaging industry can not only operate, but thrive and hopefully help alleviate the crisis situation of our environment. John F. Kennedy once stated: 'The Chinese use two brush strokes to write the word "crisis". One brush stroke stands for danger; the other for opportunity. In a crisis, be aware of the danger – but recognize the opportunity.'

There is a real opportunity to assess and improve our own operational impact on the environment, to be a beneficial resource to our customers as well as to learn from them, and to provide leadership in making a difference. The 'threat' is doing nothing.



**JOHN DION**  
PRESIDENT, DION LABEL

By now everyone in our industry should have environmental issues as a key portion of their strategic planning. Whether you view the subject with trepidation, irritation or a sense of moral obligation, the subject will become ever more important to survival. We now have one convenient word to embody our efforts toward greater environmental responsibility – sustainability.

Although regulation has had some impact, recognize that the main push for change results from a groundswell of market demand as opposed to government regulation. It makes an implicit value-added proposition to those who are most successful in the arena of sustainability. If so, then the main threat lies in being left behind. How do we avoid this?

First, go leaner. Probably the single most significant factor in 'greening' your operation and also improving profitability is to reduce waste of every kind. What successful business owner isn't devoted to this in principle already? Every goal of profitability, marketability and sustainability is enhanced by this effort. The payback is enormous and obvious if you look objectively at your facility and operations.

Get cleaner. Pay closer attention to what goes into your waste stream. In the label business, harmful solvents are disappearing. We have better choices for adhesives, coatings, and inks in the pressroom and vendors are working diligently to supply us with more good choices that are also cost-effective. Employee health, safety and comfort are likely to benefit as well. The largest obstacle is dealing with pressure-sensitive waste, but there are growing options, such as conversion to fuel pellets. Since the cost of waste disposal is certain to rise significantly, especially for anything considered hazardous, payback for most improvements is assured.

Buy greener. If your customers don't already demand alternative substrates, at least investigate and get ready to use them. Offer some of these. Marketing evidence suggests that a rising number of large and small customers are asking for and are willing to pay more for 'greener' packaging, a trend that will continue. There's the big opportunity.

Be seen. After all your thoughtful deliberations and hard work, you'll deserve credit from your customers and your peers. Broadcast your success through your website, marketing literature and sales force. Consider becoming certified. It isn't mandatory, but may become a requirement for some customers eventually. Either way, you'll be easier to find for buyers that want a supplier with sustainable operations and solutions. Following the path will have made your company more profitable and competitive already. A better environment is the bonus.

## THE BIG ISSUE

This regular feature will host a panel of experts discussing an industry issue which we pose to them. The topic for the next Big Issue will be: What does the industry need to do to recruit and train enough skilled operators to maintain its profitability through the next decade? If you have a topic you'd like to be considered, or if you'd like to take part in the panel, please get in touch. The Big Issue debate will continue on [www.labelsandlabeling/blog](http://www.labelsandlabeling/blog).



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# 1 LABEL EXPOSURE

**1. HARLANDS** UK label converter Harlands Labels has printed a range of award-winning labels for health foods brand Munchy Seeds. The labels have been printed UV flexo in four colors, with additional spot colors used throughout the range. The designs have been created by Ziggurat Brands and feature innovative images of hands painted to resemble a variety of animals. The designs have won several awards including a Mobius Award for Packaging Design and a Design Week Commendation.

Crispin Clay, founder of Munchy Seeds, commented: 'In order to appeal in a supermarket environment, we needed to ensure that our brand was bold and stood out on shelf. Harlands were able to create a range of packaging which fit our specification exactly, and which has ensured a great level of success for our products.'



**2. RAKO ETIKETTEN** Germany-based label converter scooped the accolade of Packaging Category winner at this year's Fespa Digital Print Awards 2008, supported by HP. One of two German companies to enjoy success as category winners at the awards ceremony, Rako Etiketten was singled out for its work on the launch of the Schwarzkopf & Henkel got2b haircare products. A challenging brief to print onto a denim-look textile label substrate led Rako down the digital production route with its HP Indigo label press.

Although having previously achieved success with printing onto fleece fabric, Schwarzkopf & Henkel's request for a textile adhesive label presented a new challenge for the Rako team. In order to overcome registration problems and issues with the denim's absorbent surface, Rako used its HP Indigo ws4050 press to deliver the desired registration, consistency and color adhesion. 'We printed more than 30 different color variations in order to find an appropriate and suitable design,' explained Rako's Ralph Koopmann. 'By opting to use digital printing for the invariably costly adhesive laminate, we also enjoyed significant cost-efficiencies as a result of low waste-paper rates. Having been involved in the industrial production of adhesive denim labels for over a year, the excellent results achieved have deemed this project a complete success.'



**3. MCDOWELL** US label converter McDowell's 'Extreme' product range, printed for Cellucor, was achieved through similar HD UV technology and sensory tactile doming and foil stamping, and pressure sensitive material.

## HOW TO GET EXPOSED

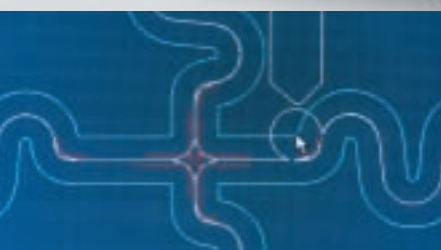
**Label Exposure** is a new, regular section in *Labels & Labeling*. Submissions do not have to be a part of an awards competition – we are interested in any label which you feel deserves exposure. If you want to contribute, please send us information about who printed the label, for whom it was printed, and the specifications of the job. It is essential to include a good quality, high resolution image with your submission. **Contact:** [jquirk@labelsandlabeling.com](mailto:jquirk@labelsandlabeling.com).





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Spanish converter Germark is an excellent example of a company reacting positively to the challenges presented by the label industry. Successful in its local market, the company is aware of the importance of international expansion. It has invested in digital equipment, manufacturers label applicators and has a division dedicated to smart technologies and coding.

Founded in 1958 by German Cid – Iban Cid's father – Germark employs 125 people and has a turnover of 16.8 million euros. It operates in the cosmetics, pharmaceutical and textile markets, and has six offices in Spain and 24 international distributors. Its printing capabilities include flexo, letterpress, screen and digital, and it runs three shifts, 24 hours per day. Germark produces six million square meters of labels per year in its 5,000 square meters of factories just outside Barcelona.

Iban Cid was a board member of FINAT from 1998-2005, and president from 2001-2003. He was president of ANFEC from 1999-2003 and remains secretary of the association which has 150 members, 90 of which are converters.

## Q&A

**JAMES QUIRK** talks to Iban Cid, managing director of Spanish converter Germark, and a past president of both FINAT, the self-adhesive label association, and ANFEC, the Spanish association of label converters



**L&L:** How do you see the label industry developing in the coming years?

**IC:** In the future, there will be two types of label converters: the Premier League printer which serves top brands internationally; and the small printer which serves his local market. The medium-sized printer will disappear. Consolidation is happening in Northern Europe, but it has not yet fully arrived in Southern Europe. But it will, and when it does we must be prepared.

**L&L:** What do you regard as the main threats facing the label industry?

**IC:** One of the main issues facing the label sector is how to reuse the liner. More than 50 percent of what converters produce is waste – the matrix and the siliconized liner. We saw this topic discussed at the FINAT congress in Paris, where L'Oreal packaging manager Alain Bethune told how the company is actively seeking liners with less environmental impact. It is one of the key drivers of our industry for the future.

**L&L:** Given the pressure that label converters are under to reduce energy usage and recycle waste, do you believe that industry suppliers should take more responsibility?

**IC:** The material suppliers are already taking responsibility, but when it comes to press manufacturers, then yes. The machines need to consume less energy. In Germany, a lot of pressure comes from the government, for example. Companies pay taxes depending on energy usage, so industry is encouraged to use less. I would like to see this happen in other countries too.

**L&L:** What other challenges can you identify?

**IC:** We must lower prices, and this is becoming more important every day. We must not only recoup recent rises, but actually lower them overall. We need to find technologies that help to save costs, and implement initiatives like Lean manufacturing. Energy prices are rising; the world's resources are not limitless.

**L&L:** What has Germark done in this area?

**IC:** We recently re-layed our shop floor, so that materials have to travel as short a distance as possible. Slitting and rewinding used to take place in a separate area, so we moved it closer to the presses, which saves time. We also implemented an air conditioning

GERMARK'S factory  
outside Barcelona



system which uses vaporized water to cool the air in the factory. It doesn't use electricity. It can reduce the temperature by around 8 degrees C, which makes a big difference to working conditions for our employees.

**L&L:** What other initiatives have you launched to help motivate your employees?

**IC:** We have implemented a system called '50 ideas, 50 solutions, 50 improvements' which rewards ideas that come from our employees. Every month, the top three ideas are rewarded with prizes: a laptop, a PDA, a helicopter flight around Barcelona, for example. We have a judging panel that is made up of employees from different departments, but no management.

We also offer free English lessons to our employees every week. This is an advantage for us too, of course, because we operate in a global industry.

**L&L:** What challenges do you face when training employees?

**IC:** The industry needs to support the existing graphic arts schools. I used to be involved with a graphic arts school in Barcelona, which trained both workers and companies about new technologies. But this wasn't focused on narrow web – just offset, silkscreen, pre-press etc. There needs to be dedicated narrow web flexo training.

In the US, the situation is much better than in Europe – there are many dedicated colleges. Support needs to

come from suppliers putting equipment into the schools. At the moment, when we employ someone, he must spend one year next to the machine, without touching it, and then a further three months being watched by a supervisor.

**L&L:** What has been your proudest achievement in your career?

**IC:** Becoming president of FINAT – at the young age of 36 – was definitely my proudest achievement. It was a fantastic opportunity to develop both professionally and personally. It gave great advantages to the company too, because the networking opportunities gave me access to leading industry figures and new technologies.

**L&L:** Germark has diversified by offering label applicators and coding, for example. What advantages has this brought the company?

**IC:** Our customers want one expert for all their identification solutions. We give them this service and there are happy to be in good hands. To have three divisions that cover all identification needs is one of our main strengths in the market.

**L&L:** This year is Germark's 50th anniversary: how is the company celebrating this landmark?

**IC:** We're going to celebrate by having a party with our employees, customers and suppliers by the end of the year. We are waiting for the availability of Catalonia's president to settle the date.



# TOTAL APPLIED COST

**THERE IS A BIG DIFFERENCE** between the price of a label and the total cost of a labeling technology from origination to application. Robert Shimmin, of industry consultant Shimmin Associates, suggests a new way for end users to look at their decoration options

Taking a holistic view of the costs associated with different product decoration technologies can significantly influence the selection of a labeling method. Providing end-users with a greater understanding of the concept of 'total applied cost' will help them to make more informed decisions and help suppliers present a case that does not rely simply on price per thousand comparisons.

'I am sorry, but I am afraid that you have lost out on price.' How often have you heard this comment and have failed to secure business because a buyer simply makes a price per thousand comparison between your label quote and that of a competitor.

There are many instances where making a straight comparison of label prices is valid, but end users need to look at the whole picture in order to make a full and realistic assessment of the costs of product decoration.

From a supplier's perspective encouraging end users to widen their view can also open up new opportunities to present a more compelling case for their products.

The total cost of a label is not merely the cost of the material and its conversion... there are a much wider range of factors at play. Customers trying to make comparisons between a wet-glue and a self-adhesive label or a shrink sleeve and an in-mold label, for example, would be naïve to make a decision based on simple price per thousand comparisons.

In-mold and direct decoration, for example, often requires that the user stores large quantities of pre-labeled containers on-site in order to cope with the flows of demand across a number of variants. Storage, inventory and obsolescence are all part of the labeling cost and have to be considered at the very

start when decisions are being taken as to how a product will be produced, presented and marketed. Likewise the cost of

application equipment, manning levels and labeling efficiencies are likely to be key components of the cost equation.

The concept of total applied cost encompasses all costs attributed to the labeling process from start to finish. Evaluating different decoration methods using this wider definition of costing can dramatically influence the selection process.

## BASIC COSTING

Material content is an important factor in the price per '000 and can comprise up to 70 percent + of the price of the labels, dependent on the form of decoration used. Generally those labeling systems that rely heavily on paper based substrates such as wet-glue labeling will compare favourably to laminate structures such as self-adhesive systems that include the cost of the liner and the adhesive. Direct printed containers also tend to have high price per thousand, but offer significant benefits on the filling line because no further labeling operation is required. Printing and conversion costs such as repro, tooling, embellishments, finishing and packing materials are also factored into the price per thousand.

Research recently commissioned through the Education Division of FINAT headed by Paul Jarvis, chief executive, 4impression Training, offers a revealing insight into comparative total cost models.

The research compared price per thousand prices for the most common labeling methods using similar specifications.

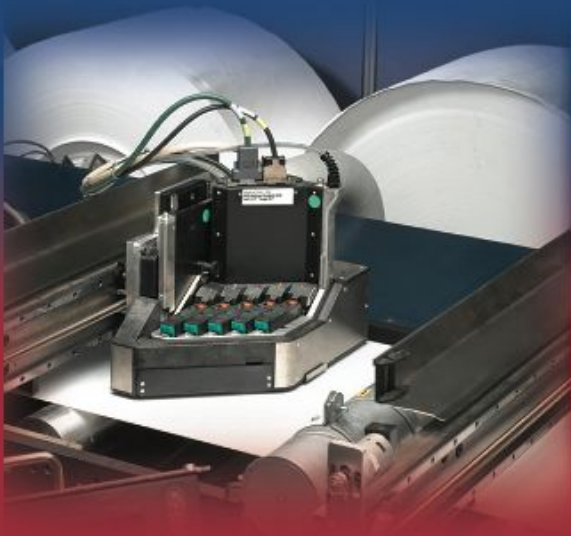
Graph 1 compares the basic price per thousand (material/print/conversion) for a similar filmic based specification across a range of decoration systems. In this case wet-glue labeling was





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excluded because it could not meet the material specification.

‘As one might expect, using a basic costing model, direct decoration in particular and self-adhesive to a lesser extent, compared unfavourably against other methods. It is certainly in the interest of direct decorators and self-adhesive label suppliers to present a ‘total cost’ model. Leaving a user to make judgements on price per thousand will inevitably put these methods at a disadvantage versus other systems,’ explains Paul.

Graph 2 compares the basic price per thousand (material/print/conversion) for a basic paper label (achievable by wet-glue and self-adhesive methods only).

As one might expect when making a comparison on price per thousand basis, the wet-glue label format clearly demonstrates a significant price advantage over self-adhesive.

### TOTAL APPLIED COSTING

A costing model that takes a total applied cost approach offers a new perspective on the cost of decorating a pack. Total applied costing includes a host of factors such as the cost and efficiency of label application, investment in capital equipment and machinery change parts, logistics and inventory control.

Details of those factors that can be included in a total cost model are provided in the table bottom right.

### APPLICATION EQUIPMENT

Application equipment is a major cost factor contributing to the cost of labeling a pack.

Investment costs for wet glue and self-adhesive application equipment tend to be comparable. Sleeving involves both an application system and additional shrink tunnels and although cost effective may require more than one applicator per line to achieve equivalent application speeds. Consideration must be also be given to the high cap ex required for in-mold labeling equipment (by the molder).

When a number of different labels are being applied on the same line then the picture is more complex. Down-time incurred when changing between variants will be reflected in increased labour costs and loss of productivity. Self-adhesive is generally considered to be the most versatile and flexible system when it comes to multi-variant labeling because reels can be easily changed, down times are less and they often involve fewer people on the line.

Rapid changing with in-mold and direct print decoration can be carried out on the filling line but require considerable logistic and inventory control (resulting from the storage and use of pre-decorated containers)

The Graph 3 on pg.40 shows a subjective assessment of application flexibility between different labeling methods

### CUSTOMER CASE STUDY

A revealing case study into the cost of labeling also stemmed from the work conducted by 4impression on behalf of FINAT.

‘When we extended our examination to encompass a wider definition of costing the picture completely changed,’ comments Paul Jarvis.

‘We were able to draw on actual case studies in order to understand how different companies make the choice between decorative systems and the elements that they include in their cost assessments.’

The analysis looked at the actual calculations and the decision making process adopted by an end user in the high quality beverages sector.

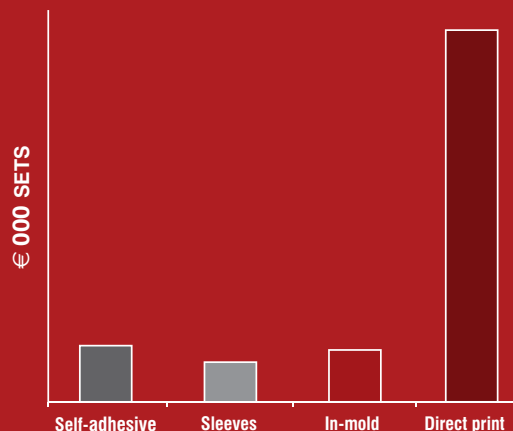
The decision to select either wet glue or self adhesive labeling for their containers was based on an assessment of applicator costs, change parts for each label variant, adhesive costs, operative costs and changeover costs. A breakdown of comparative costs for this user are highlighted in Graph 4 on p.42.

Although the cost of the applicator for both systems was similar, the analysis clearly showed that changeover and downtime costs relating to switching between variants was the biggest single contributor to total applied cost and these weighed heavily against the wet glue format.

In addition, the cost of change parts for label applicators were also a major factor, with the cost of change parts for the wet glue system costing

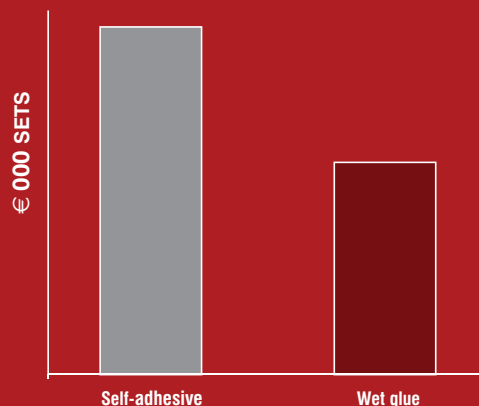
### GRAPH 1 - PRICE PER '000 LABELS

Basic spec (filmic) printed 5 colors



### GRAPH 2 - PRICE PER '000 LABELS

Basic spec (paper) printed 5 colors



### TABLE - TOTAL APPLIED COST ELEMENTS

#### PRICE PER '000 LABELS

1. Material costs
2. Printing & conversion costs
3. Manufacturing window/lead time

#### APPLIED COST ELEMENTS

4. Application equipment investment
5. Operational cost of application lines
6. Application flexibility
7. Application speed
8. Application downtime
9. Logistics & inventory control



## Time is Money: Gallus RCS 330 and the brand new Gallus RCS 430

Maximum efficiency, total flexibility, and top quality: Gallus RCS 330 and the new Gallus RCS 430 combine all three with our ongoing determination to satisfy market trends. Smaller print runs and more frequent repeat orders demand shorter set up times, greater automation and minimum waste. Competition pressure demands extremely high productivity, while the call for ever more individualisation in printing and finishing processes can be satisfied only by flexible, modular systems. The Gallus RCS 330 and the new Gallus RCS 430 meet all these requirements in a single system. They represent a quantum leap in labelprinting technology.

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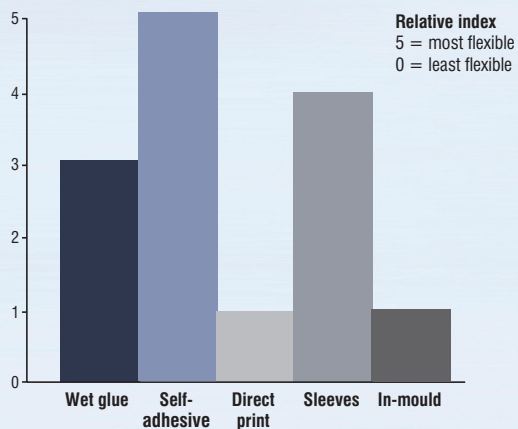
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**GRAPH 3 - APPLICATION FLEXIBILITY FOR THE MAIN DECORATION METHODS**



almost twice that of the self adhesive format. The additional adhesive cost for wet glue was also taken into account.

On a total applied cost basis self-adhesive was a clear winner in this case.

Jarvis concludes, 'It is clear that the practicalities of applying the label were a major contributor to costs. A wet glue operation often involves longer start-up times in the bottling hall and more change parts for different sizes and shapes of labels, whilst a self-adhesive line has a pretty much instant start-up and can involve fewer people on the line. This



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phenomenon was clearly illustrated in this example.'

In this particular case study the user had to accommodate a large number of variant changes. In situations where fewer variants are used the relative costings would change and perhaps a different method of labeling preferred.

## NON-COST FACTORS

### DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS

It must be remembered that there are a number of non-cost based factors that can often eliminate certain decoration methods from any effective cost comparison. The marketing or design brief may, for example, dictate that the label contains gold hot foiling which may eliminate shrink sleeving from the equation. On the other hand a requirement to achieve decoration with 360 degree graphics and with total encapsulation of a pack would strongly favour shrink sleeving and effectively eliminate all other decoration methods.

The higher the graphic content and the wider the range of surface finishes and embellishments required, the more likely it is that self-adhesive or wet-glue labeling will be selected as the optimum decoration method.

### PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

Other practical considerations such as product resistance, chemical/water resistance, pack durability, and even pack safety often pull rank over cost issues. If a decorative system cannot meet the required specification then it cannot be considered. A shrink sleeve on a glass bottle for instance may offer practical solutions to fragment retention, lightweighting and the surface protection of the print (clear sleeves are often reverse printed) and may therefore be the only solution on offer to

solve this problem.

Alternatively a self adhesive label may be the only option if the pack has to be sterilised or autoclaved.

Pre-labelled containers such as a direct decorated or in-mould container may be the best way of optimising speeds on the filling line.

Only when two or more decoration systems are able to meet the specification can comparative costing take place.

### LEAD-TIMES

The 'manufacturing window' is an important consideration when choosing the method of decoration because it will impinge on a suppliers's ability to meet lead times. When deadlines are critical, for example in the case of a product launch, marketing and logistical considerations often override cost considerations.

The 'manufacturing window' is extended particularly when the label specification includes some form of embellishment e.g. hot foil-stamping, embossing, lamination.

Sheet-fed, wet glue label manufacturing requires a separate machine pass for each embellishment process extending the manufacturing window considerably. By comparison roll-fed processes can produce the printing and embellishing in 'one pass' considerably reducing lead times.

### THE ENVIRONMENTAL COST OF LABELING

It is anticipated that cost evaluations of label systems

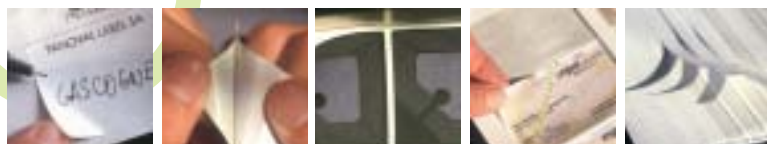
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will increasingly have an environmental dimension attached to them.

End users taking a holistic view will want to find ways to reduce the financial burden of packaging waste. They will inevitably favour labeling formats that facilitate the recovery and recycling of packaging waste.

Any converter that can present a total cost model that takes account of environmental impact will be at a competitive advantage to their counterparts.

Labeling systems that are best able to facilitate total pack recyclability, cut down on application and process waste and help reduce excess packaging will become the solutions selected by end-users. Issues that could come into play are the difficulties and costs involved in removing labels or sleeves in order to re-use or recycle packs and the costs attached to the disposal of backing liners on self-adhesive systems.

The ability of the label system to reduce excess packaging in the supply chain could also be significant. For example a self-adhesive label-leaflet may offer a way for users to eliminate secondary packaging such as cartons. The graphics and information currently carried on an outer carton could now be incorporated within a label leaflet.

Clearly there is a need to consider the total impact of labeling in the packaging supply chain and the role that the label plays in waste reduction and its influence on the ability of the final pack or product to be recycled.

#### LOOK AT THE WHOLE PICTURE

Often there is more than one way to decorate a product and each solution must be carefully evaluated before a rational decision can be made.

Rather than looking at any one or more criteria in isolation a more appropriate approach is one that evaluates the total cost of labeling a pack to the required quality, performance and application speed, within a specified time frame.

Some customers will continue to look at the price of the label

and not the cost of the label, but it is clear that users are coming under pressure to consider a much wider range of cost factors when selecting the most appropriate method of decorating their product. The environmental cost of labeling is a case in point.

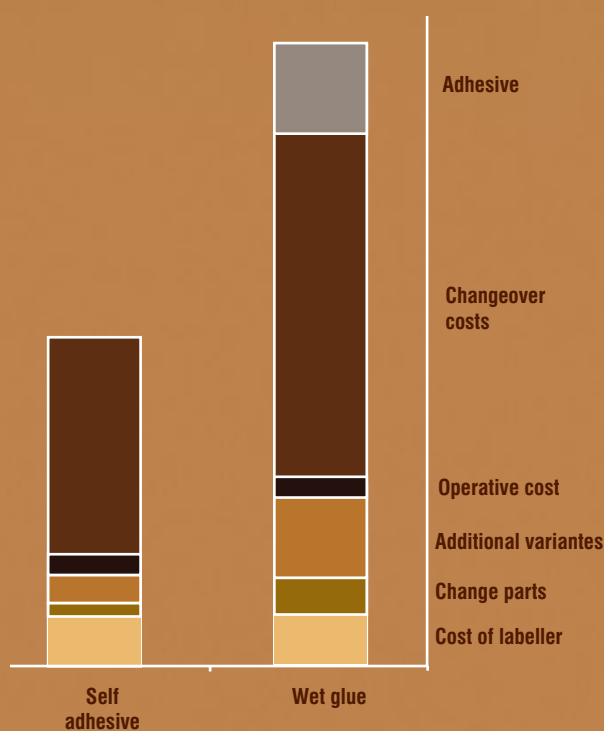
For those who are not currently taking a wider view it is only a matter of time before they have to bend to market drivers.

In the meantime it is often in the interest of converters and suppliers to present a lifecycle view of the labeling process so that all costs are reviewed and fair and informed comparisons between labeling systems can be made.

I 'Factors involved in the costing of decorative labeling systems' prepared for the Educational Division of FINAT the Worldwide Labeling Association by 4impression Training – members can obtain more information by visiting [www.finat.com](http://www.finat.com)

#### GRAPH 4 - A TOTAL APPLIED COST CASE STUDY

Comparative costing model - self-adhesive versus wet glue labeling



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# **LABELEXPO AMERICAS 2008**

## **PROVES INDUSTRY'S RESILIENCE**

Labelexpo Americas, which took place in Chicago on September 9-11, demonstrated an excellent quality of attendees, with numbers exceeding 12,000 from 68 countries. By the end of the show over 80 percent of the exhibition space had already been rebooked for Labelexpo Americas 2010.

New technology was in abundance from the 420 exhibitors from around the

world – particularly in the areas of digital and environmentally friendly products. HP Indigo and Xeikon brought their new digital label presses to the show, while the likes of EFI Jettron and Xennia showed new inkjet machines. Nilpeter introduced a new line of presses; Mark Andy showed a unit from its new Comco C1 ProGlide.

Environmental sustainability, unsurprisingly, was a key element of the show. Major material suppliers such as Avery Dennison, UPM Raflatac, Mactac and Channeled Resources all displayed eco-friendly initiatives on their stands.

Amongst the most popular areas of the show were newly introduced features: the Digital Printing Experience and Gather on the

# LABEL TECHNOLOGY TO THE RESCUE

**Despite unstable economic conditions, Labelexpo Americas proved the label industry is still a resilient and innovative sector.** Andy Thomas, Mike Fairley, Barry Hunt, James Quirk and Danielle Jerschefske report

**"Labelexpo Americas attracted high quality visitors who were willing to invest in new technologies to keep their businesses developing"**

Green. The Digital Printing Experience pavilion gathered leading suppliers and showcased a series of informative seminars (see report overleaf) about the benefits and challenges of digital printing, pre-press and finishing.

The conference sessions, organized by TLMI, that ran for the duration of the show provided visitors with a good opportunity to hear latest industry developments from high caliber speakers. Highlights of the program included panel sessions that focused on crucial issues for the label community: the current economic climate, the industry's future growth, digital printing



**JOHN HICKEY**, chairman, TLMI board of directors, and Roger Pellow, MD of Tarsus' Labels Group

technologies, sustainable technology, end-user requirements, advancements in flexo presses and many others.

The conferences started with a keynote presentation by Dean Scarborough, president and CEO of Avery Dennison, who, as always, delivered an engaging and informative speech, discussing the challenges and opportunities in the North American market.

Roger Pellow, Labelexpo managing director, said: 'We are very pleased



**DEAN SCARBOROUGH**, chairman and CEO of Avery Dennison

with the event results. The American economy is going through an uneasy period, and many industries are suffering as a result. Despite this, Labelexpo Americas attracted high quality visitors who were willing to invest in new technologies to keep their businesses developing. I was very pleased to see many sales orders put through at the show, which once again demonstrated that this is the number one event for the American label industry.'



# DIGITAL PRINTING WHAT AN EXPERIENCE

**As a moderator for two of the Digital Experience panel sessions, Mike Fairley reflects on the impact that these sessions had on show visitors**

One of the most exciting of the new innovations at Labelexpo Americas was undoubtedly the whole dedicated Digital Experience exhibition, lounge and panel session area. Providing a focus for exhibitors and visitors alike, the Digital Experience will have done much to change label converter perceptions about digital printing technology, markets and profitability.

Indeed, after one of the expert panel sessions a converter was heard to say: 'I'm convinced. It's a no-brainer investment decision. We must go digital.' So what were some of the key factors from the Digital Experience that were leading converters to such rapid conclusions?

Listening to the dozen or so label converters over the various panel sessions describing their experiences with investing, operating, selling and managing digital printing technology, visitors could not have failed to be impressed by

their knowledge, enthusiasm, success and profitability. All, for example, said that their profitability was higher for digital than for flexo. A powerful argument alone.

Those converters with both conventional flexo printing and digital facilities also found that having digital printing capabilities had opened new doors to new customers and business, creating more work for both their flexo and digital machines. Frequently this involved gaining access to accounts that would previously have been closed to them as a flexo printer only. Then there was the ability with digital to offer an additional short-run or quick response service to existing flexo customers, frequently enabling some of the less profitable flexo work to move to more profitable digital printing.

Although installation, operation and training in the early days of digital label printing back in the late 1990s was often time



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consuming and a quite lengthy process, few label converters today see the purchase of a new digital press as a difficult challenge. Most indicated that installation, start-up and training went smoothly and that quality production was rapidly achieved – even with operators totally new to the digital printing process.

Apart from existing label printers adding digital capabilities, it was interesting to hear one panelist describe his unique digital label printing operation. Coming from an IT background he had established a totally internet-based operation. No sales personnel, and orders solely taken through a web site that simplifies the order process with standard materials, specifications and pricing. Shipping of finished orders anywhere in the world was done within three days. Payment was made by credit or debit card at the time of order – so no problems with slow payers or bad debts either. Again, an extremely profitable label printing operation.

All of the panelists were printing with one or multiple

digital machines that had been installed during the past one to five plus years. All said they would continue to invest in digital presses in the future, although this almost certainly would be in the new generation of more sophisticated, faster and longer-run presses that were on show at Labelexpo. Certainly HP Indigo and Punch Graphix/Xeikon each had a successful show.

But interest in digital presses at the show was not just about the digital toner technologies. The range and variety of ink jet solution on display at Labelexpo was also impressive and there is little doubt that ink jet will also increasingly have an impact on the future of the label industry. Indeed, there were reports of ink jet equipment sales taking place at Labelexpo.

With around 200 new narrow-web digital presses already being installed in the label industry each year the challenge for converters after Labelexpo is no longer 'shall we invest in digital presses' but 'which technology', 'how soon', and perhaps 'how many'?

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# PRESS MANUFACTURERS FLY THE FLAG

**Labelexpo Americas presented an opportunity to assess progress with both conventional and digital web-fed printing technology. Barry Hunt, L&L technical editor, reports**

Faced with a strong opposing army, an ancient Chinese warlord is supposed to have ordered his officers to 'put out more flags' and march defiantly forward to the sound of battle. So it was with Labelexpo Americas. It helped that the show closed four days before meltdown on Wall Street after the hubristic 'masters of the universe' had been on the rampage. Nevertheless, many observers still feel the label industry remains relatively healthy with good growth prospects despite plummeting consumer confidence and the far-reaching consequences of the credit crisis. At least the press manufacturers were waving their flags. Mac Rosenbaum, VP sales for Aquaflex, went so far as affirming that his company had had its best Labelexpo show ever in terms of sales and leads: 'It was great to be able to show our technology to so many quality people in the industry and have a positive reception and feedback'. Nilpeter's sales director, Jakob Landberg, was similarly buoyant: 'Despite the current financial problems, we experienced a positive atmosphere and had an extremely successful show with orders firmed up for 26 machines across all lines.'

Many more flexo and offset presses of all sizes now include sleeve-plate systems, while servo-drives and centralized electronic controls are becoming commonplace. While not so pronounced as in Europe, there is also a wider acceptance among North American converters of rotary and semi-rotary UV-cured offset, especially for premium label and flexible packaging accounts. As with UV flexo, faster set-up times allow users to tackle shorter order sizes, while more economical prepress costs help mitigate the higher investment costs. The developments have raised productivity levels and helped the adaptability of converters to meet changing market conditions. Similar criteria can be seen in the digital printing world, which at last seems to be fulfilling its potential for strong growth in key label markets.

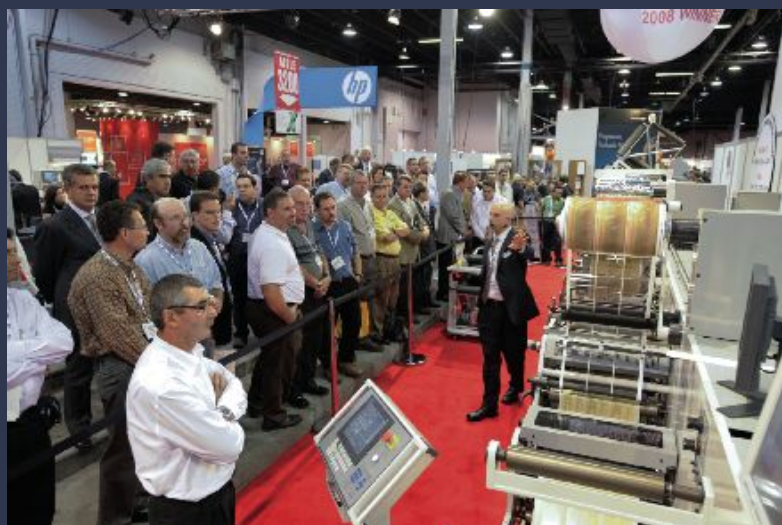
Reflecting this was the first appearance at a Labelexpo show of the dedicated 'Digital Printing Experience'. It included a broad range of digital technology and hosted a well-attended series of free technical and marketing seminars. While much of the focus was on high-end color printing using established systems, there was a significant showing of web-fed applications that include the latest CMYK and variable data inkjet printing technology. In fact, a market is opening up for all types of stand-alone printing

and finishing equipment designed for handling large volumes of short-run jobs, perhaps with laser cutting to close the digital loop. It is a true mix-and-match scenario that typifies narrow web's characteristic versatility.

## THE HEAVY METAL

As for the conventional presses, several models were receiving their North American debut after an introduction at last year's Brussels show. Among the brand-new models was the ELS-D from Aquaflex. In effect it extends the ELS platform press line by offering dual-axis, servo-driven print heads equipped with cantilevered sleeved plate cylinders for ease of access. Automatic registration, electronic job storage and remote diagnostics capability are also included. The first D series has a 16-inch web width, with 10 and 13-inch widths expected to follow. Similar technology was introduced by the company in 2004 with the FPC Servo Packaging press. This was the company's second demonstration model.

Mark Andy introduced the revamped XP5000 UV flexo platform press. It runs with independent servo drives giving shaftless configurations with fully interchangeable stations. Closed loop auto-registration and tension control systems allow tight process control at speeds up to 750 feet/minute. Operators can independently pace each print station throughout the press, which allows multi-web construction and lamination applications. The group's UVT division introduced its compact PowerSmart units giving electronic control over the UV lamp units. Mark Andy also



OMET featured the new X-Flex 340/430, which won the 2008 FTA Award for Innovation

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demonstrated the new shaftless version of the 2200. Optional features include fully automatic register control for higher print quality, and remote diagnostics allowing direct access to technical support.

Although due to appear, Comco's new C1 ProGlide was absent. It is available in five widths up to 26 inches. Features include interdeck chill rolls to assist the printing and transport of temperature-sensitive materials, whether using hot air or UV curing. The press incorporates Comco's patented I-Drive technology, which increases its flexibility for specialized products, as introduced on the wider-web C2 ProGlide.

Chesnut Engineering introduced the Model 400 servo-driven flexo/gravure combination press with a web width of 16.5 inches. A ten-color mode could comprise six UV flexo colors and four solvent or water-based gravure units, or any combination of both. One application is to apply adhesive using the gravure unit and laminate inline to deliver finished, die cut labels. The Model 400 also supports rotary screen and cold-foil options.

Nilpeter introduced the new FG-Line flexo combination press. Positioned mid-way between the FA-Line and FB-Line, it will be made in the USA and at the company's headquarters in Denmark. It features sleeve-plate technology, with each print unit fitted with dual servo drives, and has a maximum web width of 13.75 inches. Also shown was an FB-3300 with redesigned UV flexo print units to obtain faster adjustments and rapid anilox roll changes. It has a web width of 16.5 inches. Water-cooled chill rollers integrated with the UV lamps allow users to convert

packaging films at up to 750 feet/minute. Options include screen process and hot-foil modules. Nilpeter opted to give the Caslon inkjet unit (covered separately) its North American debut and leave its successful MO-4 offset platform press at home. But it did promote the introduction of new blanket sleeves and plate/sleeves on the optional flexo units.

Gallus demonstrated three press lines, each aimed at distinct sectors. The RCS 330 and 430 are highly automated, fully servo-driven platform presses that support up to six printing processes. Features include sleeve/plate technology, a flexo-based 'flying imprint' and full job storage/retrieval facilities. Standard interfaces on both models allow the development of pre-press options, inline automation and integrated post-press equipment. The TCS 250 is a semi-rotary offset press intended for short runs with a high quality, inline combination printing capability. Rotary die cutting is now offered as an option. Gallus describes the EM 280 as an ideal entry-level press for PSAs and monofoil processing in businesses where application flexibility is essential. It has a new web transport and prints with UV or water based flexo and rotary screen. Gallus also introduced Screeny Digital for producing rotary screen printing plates without the need for films. The new Gallus Digital Workflow package is the first step to production process automation.

Omet featured the new X-Flex 340/430, which won the 2008 FTA Award for Innovation. The press features short web paths and each of the flexo print units has an integrated impression cylinder and chill rolls. The automatic Vision-1 System offers



**ETIRAMA AND MPS** celebrate the agreement signed at Labelexpo 2008. L-r: Eric Hoendervangers, co-owner, MPS; Rodis Ferrari, sales manager, Etirama; Marion Geraldo Schröter, co-owner, Etirama; and Bert van den Brink, co-owner MPS



**CARLOS ANDRÉS PIOVESAN** (middle) signs the agreement with MPS Latin America president Jaime Dagnino (left) and MPS international sales director Erik Blomjous (right)

## DUTCH PRESS MANUFACTURER MPS ALLIES WITH ETIRAMA FOR BRAZILIAN PRODUCTION

Dutch press manufacturer MPS announced during Labelexpo a strategic alliance with Etirama, a Brazilian flexo press manufacturer based near Sao Paulo, writes James Quirk. It expects to introduce the Etiprint press in the first quarter of 2009. MPS says it will incorporate European-made technologies, including servo drives and UV curing.

Etirama produces flexographic and flatbed machines and accessories, and is the biggest narrow web flexographic machine producer in the Southern Hemisphere. 'We are very excited because the partnership will bring a high quality machine to Brazil. It combines Etirama's knowledge and support with MPS' technology,' said Etirama's sales manager Rodis Ferrari.

The new line of machines will be produced at Etirama's 3,000 square meter facility. MPS Latin America will continue to service and support the company's machines in the rest of the region.

A further development for MPS in Latin America saw the company sell an EF multi-substrate flexo press to Ecuadorian printer Supraplast. The converter will act as a showroom to potential MPS customers in the region when the machine is installed at the end of the year.

General manager Carlos Andrés Piovesan says the 7-color machine will be dedicated to shrink sleeves and will boost the company's exports to Peru, Colombia and Chile. 'The new press will increase our capacity and productivity,' he said, 'as well as improving the printing quality we can offer our customers.'

Jaime Dagnino, president of MPS Latin America, said: 'We're delighted that Supraplast has chosen MPS as a technology partner and has accepted to become our showroom to the market. The company's name is very strong, which will benefit us immensely. This deal will play a pivotal role in our growth in the region.'



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**GALLUS** demonstrated three press lines, each aimed at distinct sectors

pre-register and automatic control during production. It also demonstrated a Varyflex F1 UV flexo presses, which now allows operators to change jobs 'on the fly' without any form of pre-register, and without slowing the press from its maximum speed.

MPS introduced the servo-driven 22 and 26-inch wide EF-packaging series to the North American market, along with the new EF-sleeve, which runs with both sleeves or plate cylinders. Its other big news was a move into rotary offset

with the EO (Effective Offset) 330 and 410 models (13 and 16 inches wide respectively). As hybrid offset presses based on the EF (Effective Flexo) platform, they include flexo, screen and gravure units.

Offset's growing influence in the label and packaging sectors was far more evident at this year's show. Exhibitors included Drent Goebel, which promoted the variable-repeat VSOP Mk II offset sleeve press. It now has over 60 global installations. (With MPS, the company

also jointly developed the EO's offset units.) Another established web offset supplier with similar commercial roots is Muller Martini. It displayed an offset and a flexo static unit from the latest version of the Alprinta-V variable sleeve press, available in widths of 20.5 (52V) and 28 inches (74V). Both versions can also include UV flexo printing/laminating towers and gravure inserts. An offline sheeter is available for wet-glue and cut-and-stack paper and film labels.

Rotatek was promoting its highly-automated Universal sleeve/plate press, which has a 20.5-inch web width and integrates UV flexo units for varnishes and spot colors. Like similar hybrid offset presses, it offers the options of using UV, UV inert and EB offset. These solvent-free curing methods have been adapted to meet specific European and US food packaging regulations with regards to the migration of chemicals. In fact, Drent Goebel says owners of its 33-inch wide VSOP 850 can show food packaging customers a 'declaration of compliance' in respect of printing laminated OPP films with energy-cured systems.

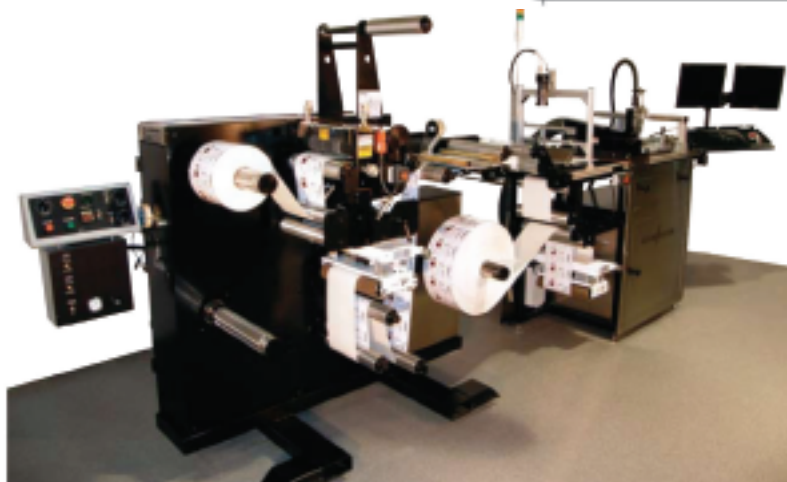
Another take on this subject came from the Italian press maker Gidue.



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It is involved in a joint project with IST Metz, Air Liquide, Softal and Sun Chemical. Named 'UV flexo for food packaging', the aim is to promote a greater acceptance of UV flexo among brand owners. They are offering a fully certified turnkey program that conforms to a FDA-approved Food Contact Notification (FCN 722) for specific UV or EB ink formulations. Gidue said the mid-web Athena UV flexo line can now integrate Aldyne inline plasma coating for eliminating some constraints in UV printing, including poor adhesion on packaging films. The company also gave information about the Xpannd offset/flexo hybrid press on its booth, while Stork Prints Group separately showed an Athena unit featuring flexo sleeve/plates from its AKL subsidiary.

Codimag launched the Viva 420 Aniflo into the North American market. The semi-rotary combination press features a keyless anilox offset technology with temperature-controlled water circulation. Aniflo has just four equally-sized cylinders, giving a simple and easily adjustable method of maintaining constant ink densities. The press offers offset quality without the concerns

relating to ink/water balance, while eliminating the risk of ghosting. Another French company, Smag, featured its Digital Galaxie II. It processes digitally-printed or conventionally-printed webs to a maximum width of 350mm with a choice of workflow direction. Modules for customized configurations include web buffer, unwinder, rotary or semi-rotary UV flexo unit, Smag's own flat-bed screen technology, and a choice of semi-rotary or flatbed hot foil embossing and die cutting. Delivery choice includes slit/rewinder, semi-automatic turret rewinder and inline sheeter.

With the accent on customized 'plug and play' components, Kammann offered a new approach to modular flexibility. Options on its new servo-driven K61-OS include waterless offset, flat screen printing, cold foil stamping, semi-rotary or flat-bed die cutting and hot foil stamping to a maximum web width of 340mm. The press is aimed at markets based on high added value products, such as film labels for electronics, bio-medical and certain industrial products, rather than decorative primary labels.

Spartanics-Systec showed the redesigned roll-to-roll Finecut flatbed

screen printing line. It features time-saving fully electronic controls with a fast job set-up and is custom-configured to handle a variety of decorative or industrial label/package applications up to 80 x 165 inches (203.2cm x 419.1cm). A synchronized vacuum release on the printing table speeds throughput of large format jobs. Automatic controls allow adjustments of the servo-driven squeegee assembly. It is said to deliver excellent quality for small-sized images with only a 1mm gap between first and second prints. The company also featured a new contact drying system that can dry solvent and water-based inks in under a minute, rather than the usual two hours or so.

#### HIGH-END DIGITAL COLOR PRESSES

The Digital Printing Experience mentioned above featured real-time demonstrations of actual jobs handled by Innovative Labeling Solutions using an HP Indigo ws4500 press. Another was demonstrated on HP's booth. A major feature was a seven-color ws6000 receiving its North American debut. Ready for shipping in early 2009, the press offers digital printers a longer-run alternative to the ws4500.

## Success Begins with the Finish

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THE roll-fed 7-color Epson digital label press



SUN Chemical's SolarJet uses Xaar's 760 printheads

By pushing run lengths up to some 13,000 linear feet (4,000 linear meters), it also raises the print run threshold when compared with conventional printing. The ws6000 prints at up to 100 feet/minute (30 m/minute) with four colors, or double this rate for two colors. The front-end is driven by the new HP SmartStream Director and HP SmartStream Label and Packaging system powered by EskoArtwork. HP has developed an improved white ink for printing on metallic label and packaging materials.

Xeikon pitches the new 3000 model as an entry-level press, or for converters who do not need the higher speed and productivity of the recently-introduced Xeikon 3300. The new press has a top speed of 31.5 feet/minute with a monthly duty cycle of 1.5 million feet. It is upgradable to the Xeikon 3300, which also offers true 1,200 dpi at four bits per spot. With a top speed of 63 feet/minute and a monthly duty cycle of 2.3 million feet, the 3300 is particularly suited for short-to-medium label runs and just-in-time jobs. Both CMYK presses offer a selection of standard or custom spot colors, as well as security toners for anti-counterfeiting applications. Both models use the latest X-800 digital front-end for fully automated workflows in any production environment.

#### THE RISE OF INKJET PRINTING

Inline or offline inkjet modules with monochrome drop-on-demand or continuous flow inkjet heads offer converters many options for variable data printing. New markets are opening up for the latest binary and grayscale-capable inkjet heads for print UV-cured CMYK colors across the web at reasonable speeds. The market leader, Cambridge, UK-based Xaar, exhibited

its Xaar 1001 heads, which appeared on products from at least five exhibitors. The heads generate variable-sized drops for grayscale capability allowing users to select drop size or resolution depending upon the application, image quality and substrate. Xaar's supporting Hybrid Side-Shooter platform is claimed to combine high standards of reliability and productivity with consistently fine detail, small text and smooth tones.

The company shared its booth with ixPressia, whose specialist PrintEngine software for industrial inkjet printers includes the new Color Label package. It drove the new 106-mm wide PicoColour label press from JF Machines. Another PrintEngine software adopter was Delta Industrial Services, a web converting specialist. It combined a CMYK inkjet module with Xaar 1001 heads, a GEW UV curing unit and Delta's latest Mod-Tech Edge laser cutter. The platform can also support flexo and screen printing units. DIS also showed the Mod-Tech Island Placement module for cutting and placing registered or non-registered 'islands' of material from one web onto another, including RFID tags.

Nilpeter introduced the Caslon color inkjet printer to the North American market. It also uses Xaar 1001 printheads printing across a web width of 16.5 inches. The stand-alone platform comprised of a FA-4 unit for UV flexo varnishing unit, another for applying opaque white backgrounds, and a rotary die cutting unit. The electronic systems controller from FFEI allows users to print variable data printing on the fly, or print single copies of full-color labels on practically any material with highest print quality at a resolution of 720 x 360 dpi. Caslon offers eight grayscale levels and a speed of 82 feet/minute (25.3 meters/

min), with a 360 x 360 dpi resolution.

First shown in beta mode two years ago, the EFI Jetrion 4000 industrial inkjet printer is now beginning to ship. UV-curable ink set allows CMYK printing on any uncoated substrate; a white opaque is due to follow. Users can now reregister and print pre-die cut labels, including blanks. The top speed is around 100 feet/minute (30.5 m/minute) imaging at more than 1,000 dpi with multi-level grayscale technology. From Q4 it will also offer variable data for text and barcodes, including 1D and 2D types, so emulating the established Jetrion 3000 series of monochrome printers. Unlike toner-based systems, Jetrion says the 4000 can now print onto lower-cost uncoated stock. New software includes EFI Xflow, a PDF-based workflow, and Print Manager for on-the-fly job management, all driven by a Fiery XF RIP. A Jetrion 4000 was also demonstrated on Pitman's booth, following the company's appointment as a North American distributor.

Also being shipped to customers is Sun Chemical's SolarJet. It uses Xaar's 760 printheads, giving six levels of grayscale to a native resolution of 360 x 360dpi at up to 82 feet/minute. Three print widths up to 160mm are offered. Unusually, the UV curing is handled by a series of staggered LED arrays that cure along the web direction. The LEDs are synchronized to handle halftone or solid densities to compensate for ink spread from the heads. Sun Chemical's own SolarDot inks were developed by its SunJet division to give more wet-out and a stable low viscosity, yet achieve 100 per cent curing at maximum speed.

The flatbed design of the roll-fed, seven color Epson Digital Label Press differentiates it from other inkjet printers.





**NILPETER** introduced the FG-Line flexo combination press



**MARK ANDY** introduced the revamped XP5000 UV flexo platform press



**CODIMAG** launched the Viva 420 Aniflo into the North American market

It applies each color successively, which restricts the speed to 16 feet/minute (5m/minute). Epson's MicroPiezo inkjet technology uses water-based pigmented inks that for printing CMYK, plus orange, green and matte black for spot colors and special effects. The image size is 36 x 12.5 inches (914mm x 319mm) on a 13-inch web width. The RIP tools and workflow are managed in either an EskoArtwork or Kodak Prinergy workflow. The show model ran with an inline/offline DC330 label converting line from Grafisk Maskinfabrik.

The DSI (Digital System Integration) module marked Stork Prints Group's entry into inkjet printing using inline or offline applications. Users can switch between dedicated digital and hybrid-process printing production runs without changing presses or reels. Developed by Stork Digital Imaging, the DSI complements the company's commanding presence with rotary screen systems and consumables. It is compatible with various conventional labelstocks, including digital pretreated brands such as Xeikon and HP, as well as uncoated films. Stork offers a dedicated range of UV-inkjet inks for the new module, claimed to offer excellent adhesion, color space density and dot-sharpness.

The new DLP3 system from All Printing Resources comprises an EFI Colorproof XF module, an Epson 4880 inkjet printer and Allen Datagraph Systems' Digital Finishing System to complement conventional label printing operations. APR says the DLP3 System can produce contract-quality digital contone or halftone dot proofs of each label job, which can be laminated and digital die cut without creating an actual die. Proofs are color managed using ICC profiles to match, say, a conventional flexo press. Approval of the digital proof means the printer can reproduce the label on the press to reduce make ready times, or produce the entire job on the DLP3 – depending on final quantity and run length – with several different die cut options. The system is also useful for product concepts and mock-ups, as well as off-loading short-run work from conventional presses.

MCS Inkjet Systems introduced its HP-based Array inkjet system. Its S-800 'near infra-red' inkjet drying system is claimed to be cheaper and more efficient to operate compared with UV curing. In fact, substrate stays cooler than material dried by comparable-wattage traditional IR systems. The replaceable nozzle printheads print at up to 600dpi resolutions. Optimum speeds are in the 250 to 375 feet/minute range for scalable print widths up to 16 inches.

Inkjet integrator Xennia and ALS Engineering showed the XenJet 8100 platform incorporating Xaar 1001 grayscale printheads. Customized reel-to-reel or reel-to-sheet platforms can include digital laser cutting and other modular finishing units. The system runs with the XenJet Vivide UV inks and prints at up to 24m/min on print widths up to 350mm (13.8

inches). The print engine includes Xennia's proprietary recirculating ink management system for single pass reliability with low maintenance.

Atlantic Zeiser's new Omega 36 HD drop-on-demand CMYK inkjet module allows seamless printing and encoding on various materials with a 720 dpi resolution. It was mounted on a Prati slitler/rewinder, but can run with most web-fed equipment. The Omega 36/36i variable data printer features an additional blue spot color. It also ran with AZ's latest Smartcure 36/36i LED UV curing system. Compared with lamp-based systems, it is claimed to offer significantly lower energy consumption, a ten-fold increase in life and no ozone generation. AZ also introduced Braillejet, a tactile font printed with UV-curable inks aimed at packagers and the pharmaceutical market.

#### ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT

Arpeco showed the new Premier-SD 20/20 slitler/rewinder with object-oriented inspection technology from EyeC. The joint development combines 100 percent inspection and re-inspection in full color with full finishing at speeds up to 650 feet/minute (200 m/minute). A key feature is the linking of Arpeco's patented shuttle retrieval system with one of EyeC's ProofRunner family of inspection systems. This ensures the inspection of every label on the web with the content verified against a signed-off proof before rewinding. In the case of defects, the shuttle system moves the relevant portion of the web backwards without reversing the rotation of the rewinder's rewind or unwind rolls. The defective portion of the web is moved precisely to a splice-table and identified on the system's monitor for corrective action. The web then advances to the inspection position for further re-inspection before continuing onward for counting, numbering, slitting, and rewinding.

Spartanics launched the Finecut High-Speed Laser Cutting Machine. Its top speed of 300 feet/minute (90 m/minute) makes it considerably faster than other so-called high-speed laser cutters the company claims. This is achieved with a single – and therefore less complex – laser head without compromising quality or cutting intricate shapes on a wide range of materials. The Finecut System software controls all system settings, including web tension, with a single integrated control. Another new development is the Finecut Sheet Fed version, which gives continuous sheet feeding to the laser beam. On-the-fly label cutting eliminates the need to stop and start between sheets.

Several affordable toner-based color printers, originally intended for implant printers, are now available for printing small label runs. An example is the DP 8500 digital press from Degra. It has a resolution of 600 x 600 dpi and prints at up to 300 impressions/minute in web widths up to 8.25 inches. It has an embedded web-based management server, while a Degra Color Pro RIP manages color.



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# CEOs DISCUSS INDUSTRY FUTURE

**At a dedicated Labelexpo Americas CEO luncheon, a series of presentations and debates took a hard look at the future of the US label converting industry. Andy Thomas reports**

The CEOs of over 150 North American label converters assembled for a special lunch at Labelexpo Americas to discuss the future direction of the industry. An impressive panel was assembled for a question and answer session: Mike Anderson, CEO Fort Dearborn; Frank Gerace, CEO Multi-Color; Rich Egan, managing partner York Label; Tom Brooker, CEO Nashua; Sandeep Lal, CEO Metro Label and Mike Fairley, director strategic development at the Tarsus Labels Group. The open and frank discussion was knowledgeably chaired by Bob Cronin, formerly CEO of Wallace Label and now CEO of The Open Approach, which specializes in merger and acquisition consultancy.

A key theme was the growing trend of private equity groups investing in the North American label converting sector, and how this affected strategy compared to privately held corporations. In general, the PE-invested companies have easier access to capital for investment and further acquisition, but their CEOs are under quarterly pressure to show an acceptable rate of return (typically 10 percent). The privately held groups can take longer term investment decisions but often have to compete harder for investment funds.

For both sets of companies, however, geographical and sector-based expansion, both organically and through acquisition, have become priorities for servicing globalized end users, dominating high value added

end use sectors, and tapping into high growth developing markets. The panel was divided on the responsibility – or ability – of label converters to ‘hold the line’ on prices, particularly given the inexorable increase in the cost of materials and other consumables and consolidation in the materials sector.

But there was agreement that the days of ‘house’ buying situations with equipment manufacturers were over. Frank Gerace said converters now buy presses to perform specific functions. As global brands cut their supplier base, label converters are being asked to provide a wider range of packaging products, which requires different press and finishing configurations.

A general feeling was that medium-sized label converters will face the most pressure over the next five years. Either you need to be big enough to service global brand or small enough to service local buyers and offer niche services. All agreed that finding new pressroom talent in North America has become a real challenge.

Looking at future buying trends, Mike Fairley said procurement outsourcing will increasingly affect converters, who are faced with immediate demands for price reductions, followed by enforced standardization of label sizes, colors etc, and are asked to contribute to deep rationalizations in the supply chain.

Panelists were asked to comment on what the next generation of label consumers might look like and how this will shape the industry. Drawing on a deep well of experience with their own teenagers, a picture emerged of a restless generation which wants things instantly and delivered with a high degree of personalization, but with deeply held convictions regarding the environment and ethical production.

In other presentations, Mike Fairley stressed the business opportunities still open for label converters, even in the current economic turmoil, and Bob Cronin explained that Private Equity institutions are interested in the label sector because of its consistently high growth rates compared to other graphic arts sectors – a trend set to continue, and to drive further consolidation among label converters.

The event was concluded with a short speech from Paul Willems, CMO of Xeikon, which had sponsored the event – and coincidentally had won a New Innovation award at the Global Label Awards ceremony the previous night.



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# WINNERS ANNOUNCED AT LABEL INDUSTRY GLOBAL AWARDS

## Neil McDonough of Flexcon, along with ExxonMobil, Xeikon and Metro Label, were the recipients of the Label Industry Global Awards 2008

On the evening of September 9 at Labelexpo Americas, hundreds of global suppliers, converters, trade associations and media gathered to celebrate and reward excellence in the label industry at the Label Industry Global Awards gala dinner. Votes were collated from across the world, and winners were announced in four categories.

Announced before the event, the R. Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award was won by Neil McDonough, president of Flexcon Company, a global polymeric coater and provider of pressure-sensitive films and adhesive products.

Neil McDonough has dedicated a quarter of a century to the label industry and has always been a force of inspiration to his colleagues and peers. Before becoming president of Flexcon in 1990 McDonough held a variety of positions in manufacturing, sales, and management, including director of marketing.

Among the innovations he fostered as president was the 'no-label' look for glass bottle labeling with Clearly Canadian in the 1990s – a concept that is now a staple of the labeling industry.

In recent years, McDonough has led the initiative to provide more choices to label converters and other customers through the development of Flexcon's Value-Better-Supreme (VBS) product offering, which features a wide selection of proven, readily available products for the most popular labeling applications. Flexcon specializes in film, adhesive, topcoat and liner combinations for customized applications.

McDonough's industry involvement also includes participation in numerous Labelexpo shows, conferences and seminars, in the TLMi (for which he chairs a committee) and in other organizations.



On being notified of the award, McDonough said: 'I am thrilled and humbled to learn that I have been selected by the judging panel of the Label Industry Global Awards as the recipient of the R Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award 2008. I am delighted to confirm my acceptance of this great honor.'

Chairman of the judging panel, Mike Fairley, commented: 'Choosing the winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award was a very difficult choice this year, particularly because the judges were evaluating the profiles of nominees against a range of criteria. However, although all were worthy candidates, it was felt that Neil McDonough best exemplified the innovative, industry focused and global approach that has characterized the growth of pressure-sensitive labels over many years. I would certainly like to congratulate him on this achievement.'

ExxonMobil Chemical was the recipient of the Continuous Innovation Award. The company began developing OPP film label stock materials more than 20 years ago and since then has been at the forefront of innovating films designed specifically for pressure-sensitive labels, for the 'no-label look', for roll-fed and Roll-on-Shrink-on (RoSo) labels, for patch film labels and for the offset printing of sheet-fed cut and stack labels – innovations that have had a major impact on the growth, applications and markets for labels worldwide.

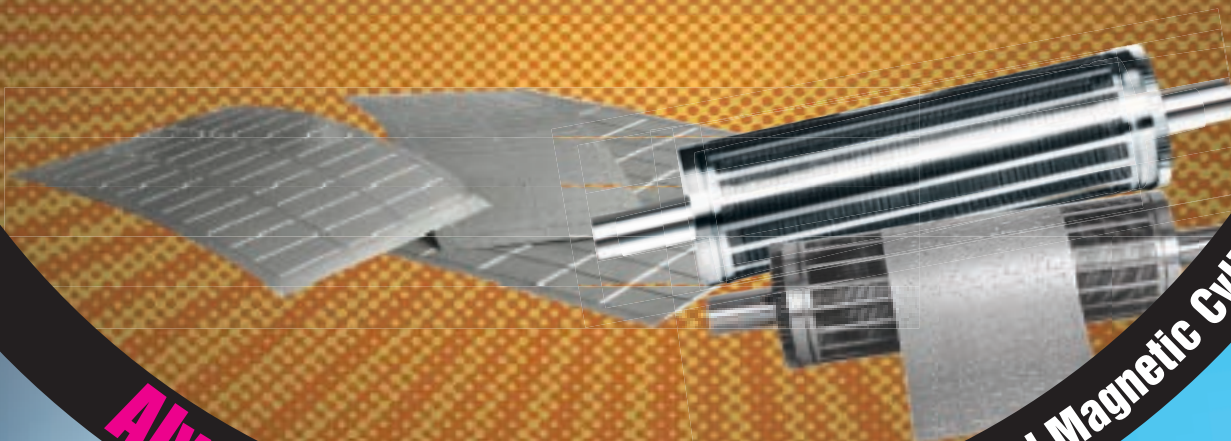
The judges commented: 'ExxonMobil puts a lot back into the industry through its own excellence and innovation in labeling Awards and through its University of OPP, while its safety performance is a leader in the industry. We also took

**"It was felt that Neil McDonough best exemplified the innovative, industry focused and global approach that has characterized the growth of pressure-sensitive labels over many years"**



CHAIRMAN of the judging panel, Mike Fairley

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NEIL MCDONOUGH, FLEXCON, receives the R. Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award from last year's winner Calvin Frost, Channeled Resources (left), and Don Nolan of awards sponsor Avery Dennison (right)

account of the company's commitment to training and environmental sustainability.' ExxonMobil saw off competition from 3M Corporation, CCL, Harper Corporation, Mactac, Mark Andy and Sun Chemical to scoop the award.

Xeikon won the award for New Innovation, beating BST Pro Mark, EFI Jetrion and Tailored Solutions. 'Since becoming part of Punch Graphix, Xeikon has worked hard to research, understand and innovate a new generation of digital technology that meets the requirements

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**MICHAEL RING** of Xeikon receives the Award for New Innovation from, left to right, Michael Bryant of RotoMetrics; Andrea Vimercati, vice president of FINAT; and John Hickey, president, TLMi

**KEVIN FRYDRYK** of ExxonMobil receives the Award for Continuous Innovation from, left to right, Jack Kenny, editor, Label & Narrow Web; Tony White, editor, NarroWebTech; and Andy Thomas, editor, L&L

**VIKRAM LAL** of Metro Label receives the Converter Award for Sustainability from, left to right, Roger Pellow, MD Labelexpo; Russell Joyce, Flint Group; and Mike Fairley

of a fast-changing label industry for higher quality, faster speeds, shorter runs and new applications using conventional label stocks – one of the true trendsetters in the digital printing area,' said the judges.

The Converter Award for Environmental Responsibility went to Metro Label, whose pioneering approach to sustainability was praised by the judging panel: 'Metro Label Group has incorporated ISO 14000 standards to create not only a first-class

manufacturing operation, but also to develop global leadership in establishing an environmental and sustainable future for pressure-sensitive labels.' Nominees for the award included Dion Label, Overnight Label and Pazazz.

In his congratulations to the winners, Mike Fairley, Label Industry Global Awards judging panel chairman, said: 'The Label Industry Global Awards are the ultimate accolade for industry individuals and companies for their outstanding contribution to the label

industry's growth and development. The quality of entries we have seen continues at the highest level and makes an ongoing challenge for the judges. Each winner has made a significant contribution to the industry advancement, and I would like to congratulate them all on their awards.'

The Label Industry Global Awards take place at Labelexpo Americas and Labelexpo Europe. The next awards will take place in Brussels in September 2009.

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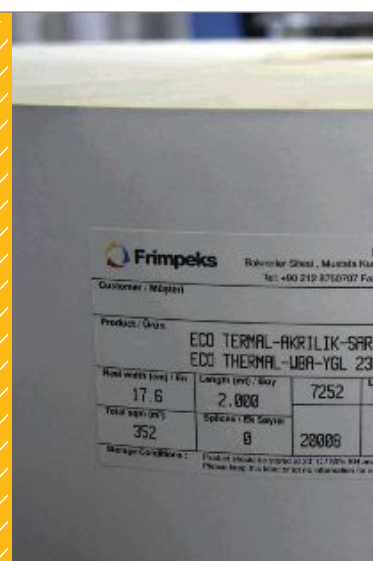
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# TECHNOLOGY FOCUS

## A round-up of the products and innovations on display at Labelexpo Americas 2008

### 3M

3M launched a range of new products, including its latest 12-series cushion mount tapes, where microchannels allow air to release, eliminating bubbles. This should create less bounce on faster presses and allow printing of cleaner fine-type reverses and richer halftones.

Also new is a bubble-free structured adhesive, where channels in the adhesive allow air bubbles trapped underneath decals to flow freely from between the adhesive and the substrate.

Blood bag tracking labels are another new development, for both secondary and Donor Identification Number applications. Both facestocks and adhesives are American Red Cross and FDA compliant and will tolerate temperatures in a range -60 deg C to 37 deg C handling and moisture.

### AB GRAPHIC

This UK-based converting equipment manufacturer had a significant presence at this year's show, on the HP Indigo booth, their own stand, and in the Digital Experience Hall. The Vectra Automatic Take Off Conveyor is capable of full integration with the FleyeVision inspection system and can automatically select and reject rolls with errors. Also new was the Omega Filmic slit/rewinder designed for the inspection, slitting and rewinding of unsupported films. The SabreXtreme laser label cutting system was shown in its latest variant, with the entry level Vectra LCTR1300-4 Turrent Rewinder demonstrating hot melt gluing and automatic roll ejection. Also demonstrated was ABG's modular digicon Series 2 converting machinery. Together with the Omega SR1300 Inspection Slitter Rewinder, ABG showcased the modular FleyeVision 100 percent print inspection system with up to 8192 pixel resolution.

### ALLEN DATAGRAPH

ADSI demonstrated its Digital Label Systems (DLS), based on an 8-color

Epson print engine. The system can be offered as a full converting solution with the Digital Finishing System (DFS) that allows for roll-to-roll converting. It runs up to 3,000 labels an hour and is capable of supporting up to four DLS units.

### AMAGIC

This cold foil supplier launched Invisaseam, a new seamless cold foil rainbow suitable for eye-catching product decoration.

### APEX GROUP

The Apex Group introduced its Genetic Transfer Technology, now used for manufacturing the company's UniCorr, UniFlex and UniCoat metering rolls

The new surfacing material and metering structure represent a departure from ceramic coatings and line/cm: one roll will cover the print options of a number of different traditional anilox screens and a smoother, denser lay of inks is a consequence, says the company. Cleaning characteristics are also said to have improved.

The company also launched its

UniFli lightweight anilox roll made from aluminum.

### APPLETON

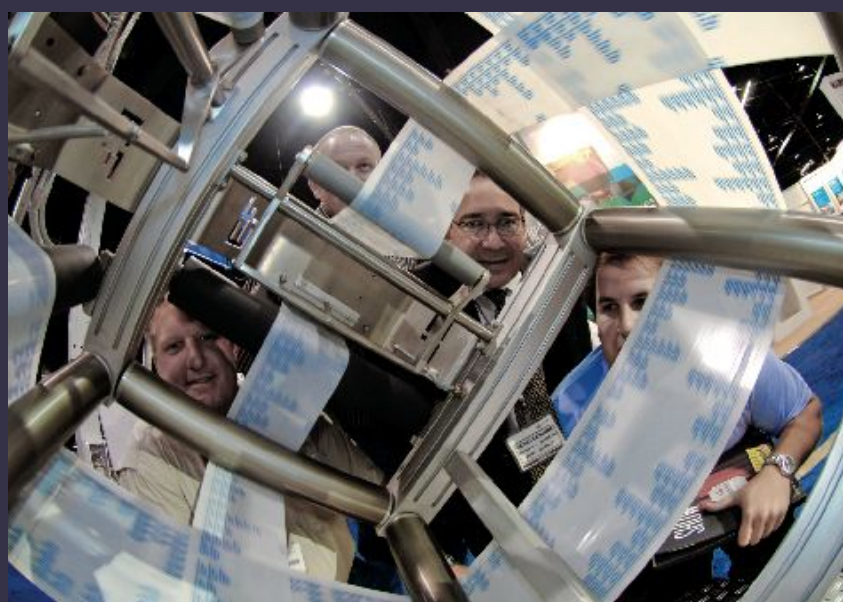
Resiste Rx, Appleton's new direct thermal line, is designed for prescription applications, the facestocks have been designed to resist distorting affects from common household materials such as bleach and light and heat. The product offers reliable barcode readability, sensitivity and durability for reuse.

### ARMOR

Armor introduced a new standard wax grade - AWR 6 - at the show, capable of printing on all industry-leading facestocks. The company took part in the Gather on the Green area of the show, and also promoted its range of thermal transfer ribbons.

### AVT

AVT launched the PrintVision/Helios II narrow web inspection system, which now incorporates a barcode integrity verification module supporting 2D variable barcode verification







and E-Pedigree support for pharma applications. Also new is the production guard feature that monitors on-line the total number of good labels printed, eliminating the need for overprints. An 8k camera option is now supported for more demanding applications and a booklet inspection add-on module has been added which can inspect the final booklet and label in one go.

Other interesting developments included the PrintVision/ Helios UV, which enables automatic inspection of invisible UV printing, a Braille inspection module, and the JobRef module, which compares the job on-press to the pre-press digital PDF file. This comparison enables press operators to ensure that the job is correct in terms of content, including text, language and graphics, as well as detecting problems in the printing plates.

Following AVT's acquisition of GMI, that company's remote ink control solution has now been ported to narrow web applications with the launch of Microcolor NW. The system is driven by a touch screen GUI, and uses patented GMI digital servo technology and leak-proof segmented ink blades

#### **AZTECH CONVERTING SYSTEMS**

Aztech demonstrated its DieMaster rotary die-cutting system, which features an optional flexo print station. The fully servo-powered post-print system also features automatic re-registration capability. The company is working with Sun Chemical to supply the DieMaster alongside the SolarJet inkjet press.

#### **ASHLAND PERFORMANCE MATERIALS**

A new technology from Ashland Performance Materials, a division of Ashland Inc., allows flexible packaging converters to decrease curing time and eliminate 'hot-room' curing. Ashland's

Purelam Fastcure solventless laminating adhesives are aliphatic polyurethane-based and are FDA compliant for a variety of end-use products.

Said Dave Hatgas, director of sales for Ashland's specialty polymers and adhesives, 'Purelam Fastcure's laminating adhesives bring converters real bottom-line value by delivering a final cure at ambient temperature in only two days.'

Purelam Fastcure laminating adhesives features zero aromatic amines and meet the regulatory requirements for use in medical, hot-fill, and cook-in-bag applications. Two Purelam Fastcure laminating adhesive formulations, 110/240 and 110/230, are available.

During a press conference at the show, the company revealed it has invested USD \$200 million since 2006 in its expanding presence in the label market. The purchase in July of this year of the pressure-sensitive adhesive business and the atmospheric emulsions business from Air Products and Chemicals was a transaction of USD \$92 million and included manufacturing facilities in Elkton, Maryland, and Piedmont, South

Carolina. The purchased operations, which are now merged into Ashland's SP&A business group, had sales of \$126 million in 2007.

#### **AVERY DENNISON**

Avery Dennison was pushing hard on its developments around reducing the environmental impact of pressure-sensitive label products. The Fasson Roll North America (FRNA) division of Avery Dennison has introduced 24 FSC and/or PCW accredited products in the last few months upon receiving FSC certification at various US coating and distribution facilities. The company is working to achieve certification at the rest of its locations worldwide.

To allow converters to reduce waste, Fasson has launched 30 products around the ReadyWidth program and allows for 600 possible product combinations through the FassonExact program. As part of the same effort, FOP (Fasson Optimal Performance) is a consultation program designed to help customers evaluate waste reduction within their own facilities.

Possibly the most exciting

#### **AVERY DENNISON JOINS PAKVANTAGE PROJECT**

Avery Dennison, EskoArtwork and ExxonMobil Chemical have joined together in a project to guarantee color accurate workflow on specified digital substrates.

Last year, EskoArtwork and ExxonMobil Chemical introduced PacVantage software, which guaranteed that jobs prepared using EskoArtwork software and PacVantage technology then printed on ExxonMobil Chemical's Digilyte polyolefin films would match proof to press with little or no adjustment.

Now, Avery Dennison has joined the partnership with self-adhesive rollstocks faced with ExxonMobil's Digilyte films, activating the color guarantee.

With PacVantage technology, digital proofs are printed on an HP Designjet Z3100 proofer in the pre-press department or at the customer's location. With a guaranteed color match between the proof and the HP Indigo printed label, approvals can be made up front and the productivity of the press can be optimized.

Because PacVantage technology can 'lock in' color before releasing the job to printing, it delivers many advantages to a converter. There is much less color matching time and consumables waste. Not only are media saved, but wearing on blankets is claimed to be reduced by as much as three times

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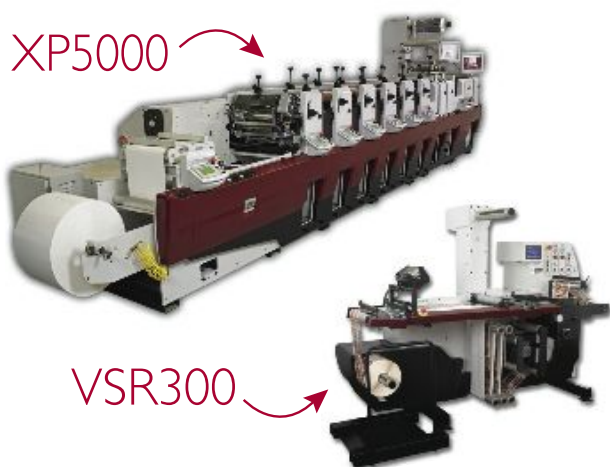


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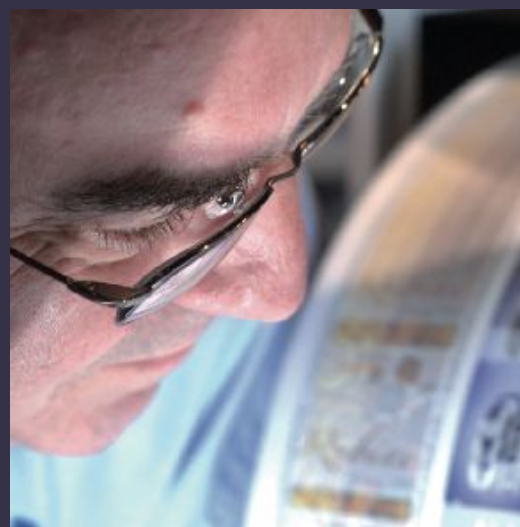
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**XEIKON'S** 3300 new digital presses



announcement from FRNA this year was its Liner Recycling Program, that will be offered in coordination with the Channeled Resources Group. Together the two companies will work to encourage end user participation in landfill reduction.

#### **BIELOMATIK**

bielomatik brought its RF-LoopTag to the US market followings its launch at Labelexpo Europe last year.

Whereas traditionally an RFID label involves the input of an antenna manufacturer, a semi-conductor supplier, an integrator and a converter, bielomatik says the RF-LoopTag development puts converters in direct contact with the inlay manufacturers.

Insertion precision is said to be much more forgiving: whereas being one micron out would usually render the chip useless, there is a give of millimeters, not microns. Various aspects of copper inlay production – etching, curing, electro-plating – are taken away through the use of an aluminum roll die-cut into the shape of an antenna.

'The RF-LoopTag program provides increased converter friendliness,' said Max Golter, VP sales, 'higher transponder yields due to the more forgiving chip placement on the antenna, and reduces the cost of RFID labels significantly.' Golter reported that since its launch last year, the RF-LoopTag has received 'enormous' interest.

#### **BOISE**

Boise Inc. Label & Release launched Boise Compel semi gloss label, a prime label facestock tailored for pressure sensitive marking and decorating applications. 'We are excited to extend our market-leading pressure sensitive offering to include the semi gloss prime label category,' said Daniel Brown, director of marketing and strategic planning for Boise's Label & Release

business. 'This introduction extends our leadership beyond release liners and niche facestock offerings. Boise's commitment of capability and capacity for Compel semi gloss label is critical to address the declining supply in the North American market.'

In addition, Boise re-launched its food label facestock product line under the Compel prime label brand as Boise Compel food label. Similarly, Boise re-launched its variable information label products under the Boise Inform brand, which will include Boise Inform office label and Boise inform data label.

#### **BREIT TECHNOLOGIES**

Breit Technologies demonstrated its in-line cast-and-cure holographic decoration machinery. This process allows converters to laminate a reflective coating onto any substrate. It was promoted as a low-cost option to replace holographic foil decoration. The laminating machinery is attached to the top of the press, where a micro-embossed film is laminated together with the desired substrate. Cured when wet, the film is rewound separately, allowing it to be reused up to twelve times, leaving the patterned coating on the rewound substrate.

#### **BST PROMARK**

BST ProMark introduced six new products at the show. The Super HandyScan 4000 video inspection system, which morphs inspection and print process management, delivers a touch screen GUI, Virtual Repeat technology and color monitoring 'at a price point never before available.'

The Shark 4000 100 percent inspection systems have been extended to 80in widths and 2,600 fpm, and integrated with workflow management systems.

In terms of web handling, compact digital guides were introduced, along with

the CLS 600 Pro guiding system using enhanced camera technology, and the AR4000 in-line register control with a 'tiny mark space requirement and intelligent image processing.'

An in-line spectrodensitometer and densitometer were also shown, allowing converters to monitor color at high press speeds. Finally, a web width measurement system, Pro-Sleeve, was shown with a new reporting module, for monitoring lay flat size during sleeve production.

#### **BUNTING MAGNETICS**

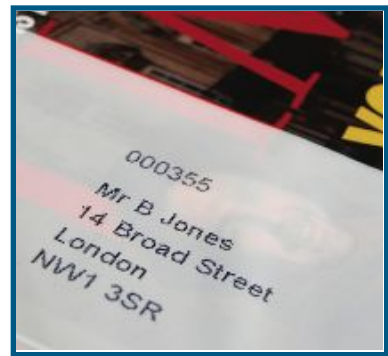
Bunting Magnetics Co announced the creation of a flexible die manufacturing division. It will be located in a custom-built facility in Newton, Kansas, and will focus solely on producing 100 percent chemically-hardened flexible dies. Bunting will use the latest computer-to-plate technology in order to eliminate the need for photographic film and so aid the sharpness and accuracy of plates at consistent levels. The company also introduced the HoLo, a magnetic embossing cylinder specifically designed for use with holographic film shims or plates. It operates at very high temperatures and is said to be suited for all narrow-to-wide web applications.

#### **CHANNELED RESOURCES GROUP**

CRG launched a new product designed in conjunction with Distant Village – the Pure Label. Facestock can be composed of renewable wild grasses, mulberry or banana leaves. When combined with a biodegradable sugar-based adhesive and the Maratech B-grade reclaimed, reprocessed release liner, CRG believes Pure Label is 'the only truly sustainable label material' available to the industry. There are currently test rolls in North America, Ireland and Australia and the company received much interest from various end users at the show. CRG



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also promoted its Liner Recycling Program launched in collaboration with Avery Dennison.

### DANTEX

Dantex, European distributor of letterpress and flexographic plates, has brought its products and services to the North American market through a new subsidiary: Dantex Corporation.

Dantex is the European master distributor for Toray Industries of Japan and produces its own range of specialist processing and electronic pre-press equipment.

At the show, the company demonstrated the new Rapidoflex line of analogue and digital plate making equipment, designed for use with EskoArtwork's Spark and Dantex's Aquaflex systems.

Rapidoflex plates can be processed using just water in about 15 minutes for an A2 size plate, (16" x 24"). This speed is achievable using the company's Aquaflex plate processor, the AQF 480R, which has been specially developed for this purpose.

The dry-to-dry time of 15 minutes is achieved using Dantex's patented Total Water Loss System, which eliminates the need for a tank or reservoir of hot water, which would have to be constantly heated. Instead the water is heated as the plate enters the wash out chamber, maintaining that heated water wash action for as long as the wash cycle requires. Once the plate exits the wash out chamber the hot water delivery stops. There is no suspended solid waste by-product.

For digital plates a pre-wash section is introduced to remove black mask and this residue is trapped inside a waste canister to stop carbon black material entering the waste water system.

### DELTA INDUSTRIAL

This web-converting machinery manufacturer introduced two new modules for its Delta Mod-Tech web converting system. The Delta Edge laser module utilizes a servo-controlled robotic arm for precision cutting, providing low maintenance and improved flexibility. The company's new Delta Spectrum finishing system allows for in-line converting and numerical coding, variable data printing and barcoding with Xaar 1001 printheads.

### DOW CORNING

Dow Corning launched new crosslinkers and release coatings in its Syl-Off Advantage Series product line which



require lower platinum levels at lower temperatures. The Advantage Series is an extensive line of low-platinum, solventless release coating products.

'The platinum market continues to be unstable,' said Norm Kanar of Dow Corning. 'By using Dow Corning's low-platinum Advantage Series our customers are less vulnerable to the swings in platinum prices.'

### ERHARDT + LEIMER

Erhardt + Leimer introduced its TubeLight illumination system, shown at Labelexpo Europe last year, to the US market. Providing totally diffused light for the company's Nyscan system, it makes it possible to inspect printed webs with foil decoration, embossing, and metalized substrates – especially suited to wine labels and other challenging features like holographic images.

Complimenting TubeLight was Nyscan's graphical user prompting. E+L's method for job configuration is claimed to boost operator productivity by requiring just a few mouse clicks. Changes in inspection sensitivity can be made any time during production via simple slide controls, and can be logged for later reference.

Erhardt + Leimer also launched a digital camera system – Elscan OMS 4. The system integrates two cameras enabling it to display the complete repeat and to keep an eye on the registration mark, for example. A digital zoom will allow up to a 50x magnification.

Elscan is available in a manual and a motorized version. It is upgradeable and includes features like image stabilization, print screen and display of the last 16 images. An optional color monitoring

feature can be added to any system configuration.

### ESKO ARTWORK

EskoArtwork announced a new Inline UV Main Exposure option for its smaller format CDI Spark 2530 and CDI Spark 4835 Cyrel Digital Imagers.

Inline UV Main Exposure technology allows digital flexo plates to receive the UV Main Exposure within the same device where they are imaged, rather than requiring a subsequent separate exposure step on an offline light frame. Combining these two process steps on the same device provides both economic and quality benefits.

Compared to offline UV exposure units, the CDI Inline UV Main Exposure light source is more stable, lasts longer and improves plate consistency, according to the company. The CDI Inline UV Main Exposure system requires less energy and produces less heat.

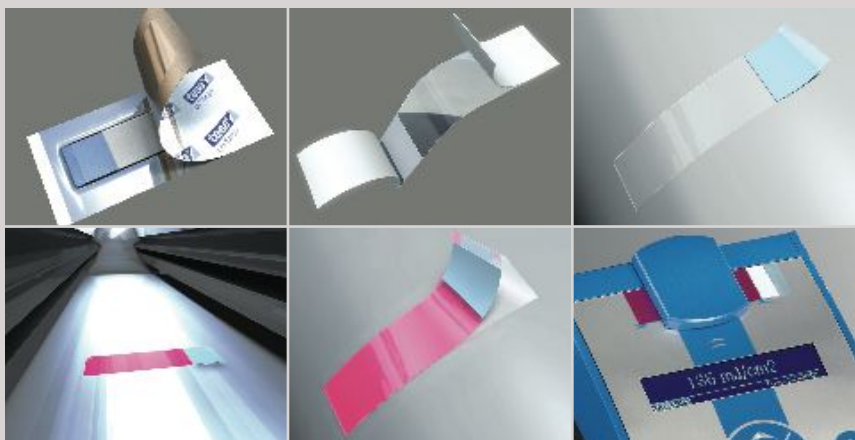
On the software side, Labelexpo Americas saw the first public showing of version 4 of the Esko Software Suite 7. Components include an updated BackStage server featuring a new 'Products' tool that delivers basic asset management functionality for one-up production files.

An updated version of ArtPro fully integrates the program into the EskoArtwork portfolio. ArtPro now reads and writes native Esko Normalized PDF files, while the ViewX QA tools for flexo plate and print preview have been synchronized between all editing platforms, including ArtPro. With the Visualizer Ink Book now supported in ArtPro, users are able to preview finishing





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and enable layers of label designs in Visualizer. BackStage now integrates ArtPro as a full-featured client with the ability to preview and launch automation tasks on ArtPro native files. Finally, ArtPro now provides access to the complete Esko Screening technology.

#### ETI CONVERTING

This Montreal-based coating and press machinery manufacturer promoted its Cohesio in-line silicone and adhesive coating machine and its Metronome flexographic label press with cassette changing capabilities. ETI had a successful show, selling four Cohesio machines and two Metronomes.

#### EVONIK

Another participant in the Gather on the Green pavilion, Evonik – formerly Degussa – promoted two of its UV curable silicone options, TegoRC Epoxy Silicones and the TegoRC Silicone Acrylates. These lines of UV silicones require less energy for curing than competitive products, says the company, are cold curing and solvent free. This cold curing capability is compatible with BOPP filmic release liners. Evonik says that reduction in liner thickness can decrease waste produced by the end user by as much as 55 percent, and can also provide cost recovery opportunities through reggranulation. Evonik also showcased improvements in its cationic polymer adhesive release technology.

#### FLEXCON

Supplier of pressure-sensitive films and materials, Flexcon featured its VBSC (Value Better Supreme Custom) product offerings and highlighted its pre-slit roll program for thermal transfer products. It also promoted its UL and thermal transfer lines for durable goods applications such as outdoor power and consumer electronics.

#### FLINT GROUP

Launched at the show was the nyloflex FAB digital flexo plate, specially developed for UV-flexo inks and small cylinders. nyloflex FAB uses a new polymer technology from other nyloflex plates. It has a durometer of approximately 62 Shore A and resolution exceeding 200 lpi screen count.

Flint also announced shorter lead times and superior consistency for its rotec Hybrid fiberglass base sleeve following investment in automated production systems and new materials.

Flint has also commissioned an 'environmental footprint' study comparing solvent with thermal platemaking. We will cover the results in the next edition of L&L.

On the inks side, Flint Group Narrow Web introduced what it claimed is the first-ever water-based flexo ink using renewable soy

resin technology. Meeting Soy Seal approval standards, Flint says these inks show good printability and color strength, and are stable on press.

A major announcement was silver 'scratch-off' UV inks, which can be used for all familiar promotional, game card, and entertainment applications. Two qualities are offered, delivering a choice of a pliable, or soft- scratch ink, or a semi-pliable, hard-scratch ink. They deliver the same pigmentation and opacity, but differing degrees of 'scratch-ability'. They have a shelf life of at least six months, making them a strong proposition for long-term promotions. They can be overprinted with a message or pattern to further disguise a hidden message using Flint's Flexocure black ink with a UV silicone additive.

The inks meet relevant international health and safety requirements and have been extensively tested on a variety of substrates, with optimal results on non-porous materials such as smooth coated tag papers and highly-calendered papers, PE, both topcoated and non-topcoated, and topcoated PP.

#### FRANKLIN

Franklin promoted its three US Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) certified Covinax pressure sensitive adhesives, which can be easily removed within the recycling process. Covinax 324-39 is a vinyl acrylic permanent product while Covinax 379-05 permanent acrylic adhesive is designed for PS applications on curved containers. Engineered for the food packaging industry, Covinax 418-02 is an acrylic emulsion polymer capable of adhesion in low to freezing temperatures.

#### GEW

A Gather on the Green participant, GEW introduced its IsoCure lamp head system, claimed to offer a reduction in air conditioning costs. IsoCure requires no cooling







fans, no de-ionized water source and no air exhaust duct, as the lamp is sealed in its own micro-climate. GEW also promoted its e-System range, comprised of the e-Brick power supply which significantly reduces CO2 emissions. GEW estimates that e-Systems have reduced CO2 emissions by 13,300 tons, equating to \$4,950,000 in energy cost savings worldwide.

#### GOMBAU

Spanish materials and adhesive manufacturer Gombau launched its Wine and Spirit Labelstock Collection at the show. Six recently added facestocks bring the collection to 42 labelstock products in total.

'The wine label business is an increasingly core area of the company,' said R&D and technical director Luca Georgi. 'It is part of our strategy to escape the commodity sector.' The launch at Labelexpo Europe in Brussels last year of a water-resistant adhesive – IE08 – was the catalyst for this increased focus on the wine sector.

The catalogue includes a new wash-off adhesive aimed at recyclable labels, and Gombau is experiencing high demand from the environmentally conscious Northern European markets of Germany and Scandinavia.

Gombau is divided into two divisions: specialty papers and non-adhesive laminate products. The latter makes up 15 percent of the company's turnover, but is experiencing rapid growth since the installation 18 months ago of a new laminator which allowed for increased capacity and new product development. This division now produces products for baggage labels and tickets for events, transport and lottery.

The company also revealed it is searching for a partner to distribute its products in the North American market. Several contacts were made and an announcement is expected in the coming months.

#### GREEN BAY PACKAGING

GBP promoted its full line of eco-friendly material options. It featured its two RCA adhesives that meet the TLMI resting protocol 760S, a general purpose permanent adhesive and the 548S repositionable permanent adhesive. The company also now offers an unbleached brown liner that is chlorine free, yet still has the ability to withstand traditional converting processes. GBP now has various certified paper options, recycled content facestocks and sustainable films, such as PLA, acetate (wood pulp) and cellophane (wood pulp) available.

#### GSE DISPENSING

GSE Dispensing profiled its Colorsat Match, a dispensing system aimed at the label printer, and introduced an upgrade to its IMS software, IMS 3.70.

#### LABELS & LABELING

### HP ANNOUNCES WINNERS IN DIGITAL LABEL AND PACKAGE PRINTING COMPETITION

HP announced the winners of the second HP Indigo Digital Label & Packaging Competition at an awards gala held during the Labelexpo Americas trade show. The competition recognizes customers from around the world for their commitment to excellence and innovation in digital printing.

HP launched the competition in 2007 to promote quality and ingenuity in the digital label and package printing market, and invited HP Indigo press users to submit jobs that represent the distinctiveness of their company, prove their progressive printing capabilities and showcase an impressive execution of a digital production challenge. All submitted entries were produced on HP Indigo presses and were showcased at Labelexpo 2008.

'This competition allows HP Indigo users to share the outstanding and effective applications they are able to produce for a wide range of industries with HP technology and recognizes the customers who have excelled in digital production,' said Alon Bar-Shany, vice president and general manager, Indigo division, HP. 'We are very pleased with the number of entries we have received and continue to be amazed by the creativity and success of our customers.'

Categories included wine, beverages, spirits, household, industrial, food, pharmaceutical and nutraceutical labels; shrink sleeves; flexible packaging; unique application; and innovation. The entries in these categories were judged by a panel of independent, industry-recognized experts, including Michael Ferrari, associate director, corporate research and development, The Procter & Gamble Co.

'After reviewing more than 140 contest entries from HP customers around the world, there is no doubt that digital label and package printing is a growing, viable industry,' said Ferrari. 'Judging these entries was very difficult, as each of the entrants did a superb job of showcasing the unique benefits of using digital printing technologies to provide innovative, effective solutions for their customers.'

New Zealand-based converter Hally Labels won the Best of Show Benny Landa award for its entry in the food category, a label printed for Miada Corporation. HP Indigo Digital Label and Package Printing Competition Best of Category winners include:

- **Wine** – S.A. Litho Labels (South Africa)
- **Beverages** – MPSPDigital (USA)
- **Spirits** – Fort Dearborn Company (USA)
- **Household** – Innovative Labeling Solutions (USA)
- **Industrial** – Dion Label Printing Inc. (USA)
- **Food** – Hally Labels Ltd. (New Zealand)
- **Nutraceutical** – Hally Labels Ltd. (New Zealand)
- **Shrink Sleeves** – Tadbik (Israel)
- **Flexible Packaging** – Innovative Labeling Solutions (USA)
- **Unique Application** – Impresora Silvaform, S.A. DE C.V. (Mexico)
- **Innovative Use of Substrate** – Etiquettes Protecta Labels (Canada)

In addition to the Best of Show and Best of Category awards, several companies also received certificates of special recognition, including:

- **Innovative Labeling Solutions (USA)**, for its execution of graphic elements
- **Etiquettes Protecta Labels (Canada)**, for its self promotion leveraging variable data printing (VDP) technology
- **Prestige Label (USA)**, for sustainable packaging
- **Artes Graficas Modernas S.A. (Argentina)**, for innovation
- **NOSCO (USA)**, for its entry in the pharmaceutical category
- **Gold Coast Graphics (USA)**, for market exploitation of VDP technology



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The Colorsat Match gives narrow-web flexo converters, consumers of relatively small volumes of ink, a productive, precise, 'hands-free' color-on-demand solution. With a dispensing range of between 1 and 5 kg, UV-curable and water-based inks can be prepared from up to 20 components, within four minutes.

#### HANITA COATINGS

Hanita Coatings unveiled a range of brand-id films 'watermarked' with a novel anti-counterfeit feature. These identity-enhancing films are manufactured using a proprietary process to imprint the coatings with a customized logo or message, providing additional security identification to the label. The watermarked logo can either be overt or discrete, on clear, white, matte and metalized 50 micron polyester film, and is printable by conventional and thermal transfer print processes. Hanita also showed solutions for RFID, including pure copper antennas and films optimized for printing by conductive inks.

#### IIMAK

Iimak launched its newest thermal transfer ribbon NetResin IQ for use in near edge printers and coders. Net Resin IQ, used primarily for date, price, lot, and barcoding, is a super premium resin ribbon that delivers durability and chemical resistance in the most extreme environments. It offers 'excellent' heat resistance, making it ideal for applications that require sterilization. With print speeds up to 12 ips, Net Resin IQ is compatible with most near edge printers and coders such as TEC, Markem SmartDate, and VideoJet DataFlex.

#### IGT TESTING SYSTEMS

IGT's F1 flexo tester was fitted with a driven anilox roller which makes it possible to ink the anilox roller separately from the inking of the printed forme. The velocity of the anilox rollers is adjustable, allowing the anilox cells to be more easily bled depending on the ink type.

Also 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.

#### INNOVIA FILMS

UK-based Innovia Films expanded its range of HP Indigo-printable label facestock films by launching two new grades, Rayoface CZDI, a clear high gloss film, and Rayoface WZDI, a high gloss non cavitated film. Innovia was recently named an HP Indigo Preferred Partner.

Rayoface CZDI and WZDI are aimed at applications on flexible containers such as squeezable shampoo bottles and shower products, lotions and cream tubes, as well as condiments and packaging containers.

Innovia also introduced a range of Propafilm BOPP in-mold label films. The new products are solid white films in 2.3 and 2.9mm, making them suited to labeling high gloss containers such as those used for paint. These films can be printed via either sheet-fed or roll-fed printing processes. The company says that in the coming months the range will be further expanded.

Also on display was Innovia's expanded range of sustainable and compostable label facestock films for pressure-sensitive labeling applications. The new white NatureFlex NVLW and the metalized NatureFlex NML are cellulose-based films made from renewable wood-pulp sourced from FSC-certified supplies. Both films have been fully approved for composting according to ASTM D6400 as well as the European equivalent standard, EN13432.

#### INX

Illinois-based ink manufacturer, INX International promoted its new 'eco-products' at the show. It showcased water-based, low-VOC and soy-compatible flexo and gravure inks as well as vegetable-based sheetfed inks. Also, INX promoted its low VOC UV/EB energy curable inks. In support

of its inks, the company demonstrated its INXmanager software developed to reduce waste and help recycle inks.

#### IST

IST promoted its MB5 reduced energy curing system, claimed to offer a 40 percent energy reduction, with power supply and URS reflector technology offering improved energy efficiency.

#### IWASAKI

Iwasaki was showing two machines at the show. The first was the new servo-controlled TR2 wet offset press, a development from the TR2 waterless offset machine. Features include pre-settable temperature regulation via a recirculating water system, a moveable touch panel controller which slides along the length of the press, controlling registration, impression, linear and lateral registration and skewing at each station. UV flexo unit, laminating and backside print unit, hot foil and motorized ink control are optional extras. Width is 330mm and speed up to 50 m/min.

Also on the stand was a Mini intermittent letterpress, available in web widths up to 180mm.

#### KARLVILLE

Shrink sleeve equipment manufacturer Karlville showcased its new Tornado oven, a shrink sleeve application machine designed especially for the pharmaceutical industry. The technology uses hot air technology to greatly reduce potential bacteria build-up. Karlville also launched Quadradix software, designed for shrink sleeve technology. The KSI-400 sleeve slitter/inspection machine with integrated Quadradix software was on display.

#### KOCHER + BECK

Kocher & Beck was promoting its flexible die and rotary tooling business in North America. The company has been manufacturing in the US since 2001, operating from a 35,000 sq ft manufacturing plant, in Lenexa, KS, and last January acquired American Die



Technology of Suwanee, GA making Kocher + Beck USA the second largest tooling manufacturer in North America.

The new Kocher + Beck USA will manufacture hard tooling at the Suwanee, GA location, with flexible dies manufactured in Lenexa. Both US locations also sell and service the Gap Master adjustable anvil units

### KODAK

Kodak showed a new hybrid option for its Trendsetter NX Imager, allowing converters to image offset plates in addition to flexographic plates on the Flexcel NX System. The new hybrid option uses Squarespot Imaging Technology to greatly expand the device's functionality.

At the show, the Trendsetter NX was running both FLEXCEL NX plates and Kodak's Thermal Gold digital plates.

Press manufacturers demonstrating the Flexcel NX solution live at the show were Omet and MPS Systems, running the plates on its Effective Flexo (EF) Hybrid press.

Kodak also announced an alliance with Epson America to make the Kodak Prinergy Powerpack workflow system available for Epson's new 7-color digital label press. This allows automating file processing, color management, imposition, and submission of JDF based information to the press. The combined system was shown for the first time at the show.

### LABEL VISION SYSTEMS

The LVS 7500 inspection system introduced by Label Vision Systems is designed for use on thermal printers. It offers 100 percent inspection and verification of barcodes to ISO standards, even for multiple barcodes and 2D barcodes. It can inspect any combination of codes in any orientation. The interface is user-friendly and produces full CSV format reports. Color variance and sequential numbering can also be inspected.

### LAKE IMAGE SYSTEMS

Lake Image Systems partnered with Domino Amjet to demonstrate its latest technology for label data verification. The Lake Image Systems IntegraScan camera-based verification system was running live on a narrow web flexo press to continuously check barcode legibility and human readability at press speeds.

The IntegraScan camera imaged the label being at speeds as high as 90,000 labels per hour, with 100 percent data integrity inspection. Inputs are provided to machine controls which mark faulty label images, stop the press, and/or alert the operator based on a user-definable number of errors.

### LEIBINGER INKJET SYSTEMS

Leibinger's US subsidiary introduced the reel-fed Labelcode platform, available in widths from 10 to 18 inches, for personalizing and verifying blank or pre-printed labels. Its drop-on-demand Dotjet series of sealed nozzle printheads allow electronic stitching and print with either solvent or UV-curable inks, printing monochrome, spot or CMYK colors. The printing and finishing platform can include rewind/unwind units, die-cutting unit, splicer unit, high-resolution inkjet heads and camera inspection. It is also possible to add a second rewind and punching unit. A read/print function allows operators to match pre-printed data with the master database.

### MACTAC

Mactac launched an astonishing number of new products at the show – including HP-Indigo certified labelstocks, a direct thermal labelstock range, a prime films line, a series of durable films,

### LABELS & LABELING



### HARLEY DRAW

**Labelexpo Americas is all about new technology and better ways of doing things** – but it is also home to Rosemont's very own nail-biting Reality show: the draw for the Harley, writes *Andy Thomas*.

The contestants get their entry forms stamped at the stands of the ten sponsors: Maxcess, Tidland, Fife, Magpower, IST, Sonic Solutions, DMS, Gerhardt and Harper. Then ten names are drawn and each is given a key – but only one works the headlight! Each contestant in turn comes up to the bike, puts in the key...

This year's winner, Kevin Kennedy of Reliable Label in Illinois, was a popular choice as he sunk to his knees in astonished triumph, but intense commiserations to holders of the blank keys: David Broadwater jr – Reynolds Packaging; Judi Larkin – Worldwide Ticket Craft; Michael Yerecic – Yerecic Label; Debbie Bumstead – Precision Label; Jim Doege – Repacorp; Terry Smiley – HS Crocker; Bonnie Cready – Coastline; and Che Barbour – Printech Label Corp.

Kevin is already the proud owner of a Harley and this machine will sit proudly alongside. Ironically, Kevin was not planning on taking part until his boss, also a Harley rider, suggested it, just as they were leaving the show. 'I still can't believe it...I never won anything in my life!' said the proud winner.

**Kevin – congratulations from the L&L team and our thanks again to the sponsors.**

environmentally sustainable products, a line of adhesives and an adhesive integration system.

Products in the new Durable film line feature Mactac's chemical, heat and solvent-resistant MP690 acrylic emulsion adhesive and a 50# SCK liner. Products are available in a variety of topcoated facestocks, including white, clear and metalized polyester, vinyl and polypropylene.

Mactac's Indie range of HP Indigo-certified labelstocks are available with the company's Precise Program, allowing converters to purchase only what they need. Available with a variety of facestocks that include semi-gloss, high-gloss, matte, wine label, films and eco-aware products, the new Indie product line is ideal for a variety of small-run applications, including prototyping, pharmaceuticals, gourmet foods, boutique wines, water bottles and health and beauty products.

Mactac's new InFusion hybrid adhesive system blends adhesive and silicone chemistry to create a proprietary formula with aggressive adhesion as well as improved die-cutting and matrix stripping.

The new direct thermal labelstock is named DT Extreme, and is a top coated direct thermal paper for prescription labeling applications and applications that require environmental protection. The facestock's advanced thermal chemistry

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offers added protection from extreme environmental elements, reducing the need for converters to apply a press-applied UV overcoat to protect images.

DT Extreme features Mactac's 640 all-temperature acrylic adhesive, which performs in both cold and damp environments as well as elevated temperature applications. The adhesive also converts well on today's faster and wider presses and is compatible with both high speed and low voltage direct thermal printers.

Primarily for roll to roll applications, the thermal paper pairs with a semi-bleached liner, excellent for die cutting and stripping, with a release system designed specifically for label dispensing.

Reacting to the trend towards environmental sustainability, Mactac launched its Bloom 'eco-aware' line of eight facestocks and two EarthFirst films made with Ingeo.

Mactac's Bloom product line includes products with facestocks that range from 30 percent to 100 percent post-consumer waste (PCW) and are available in a variety of finishes.

Also introduced was the company's Torq line of specialty high-tack adhesives suitable for flexo and variable information printing with both paper and film facestocks. Torq products feature all three adhesive technologies – high-tack rubber-based, acrylic permanent and solvent-based – and are formulated to adhere to most complex surfaces. End applications include a number of challenging substrates.

Finally, Mactac announced during the show its recently formulized Application Development Team, assembled to work collaboratively with customers as a 'personalized' R&D department.

#### MARTIN AUTOMATIC

Martin Automatic promoted the waste-reducing benefits of its equipment at the Gather on the Green Pavilion, highlighting a possible 1 percent scrap reduction when using its automated

unwind and rewind solutions. At its booth, Martin Automatic introduced the MLS Mid-press Laminate Splicer, designed to sit on top of the press and automatically splice laminate rolls while holding tight registration. An MLS is currently installed in North America on a Gallus press.

#### MASTERPIECE GRAPHICS

MGX introduced its new 'eco-aware' digital materials line Envision, a series of roll and sheet HP Indigo products that give end users the ability to choose their desired level of sustainability. Category breakdowns include corn-based PLA film and 100 percent PCW paper. Coupled with a range of adhesives including biodegradable, 'benign', or standard, Envision features 15 unique products.

#### MATHO

German company Matho, present with its own booth for the first time at Labelexpo Americas, reported a successful event. Mattias Thor, sales and marketing manager, told L&L that the Cuttobag CB-100 waste handling system on display was bought by a US converter.

#### PITMAN

Pitman highlighted its pre-press-to-press digital workflow featuring a 'Green' approach to flexo platemaking and printing. It showcased the EskoArtwork packaging workflow with the Esko Desktop Suite7, to final output with the Esko 2530 CDI. Also promoted was the 6-color HP 4100 inkjet printer for color managed digital proofs and the Heaford narrow web video plate mounting equipment. Running live, Pitman demonstrated the Jetrion 4000, a 4-color UV inkjet digital press, and the DuPont Fast thermal plate system, finishing DFQ flexo plates produced at 200LPI.

#### POLAR

This was the first time Polar had exhibited at Labelexpo Americas, which has always been seen as a show mainly for pressure-sensitive applications.

The company said it was 'jubilant' at its success, with Polar's marketing director, Rolf Brand, commenting that he was surprised at the number of exhibition visitors showing interest in wet glue labels. 'Almost everyone who came to the Polar stand had already done their homework and came to us with specific questions. We actually sold four machines in Chicago, including a stand-alone die cutter and a bander. I am especially pleased that we managed to acquire a lot of new 'hot prospects' in the die-cut label sector.'

On show was the Polar 92 XT high-speed cutter, BS-23 single-head bander and a DC-M die-cutter.

#### PRATI

As well as its established line of Jupiter, Saturn and Venus slitting/rewinding machines, all with label inspection options, Prati introduced the new Vega and Vega Plus series of rotary die-cutters. The former is for producing blank data labels used with thermal transfer printers. Vega Plus is a modular version allowing configurations of multiple die cutting units, with a provision for upgrades, plus one or two flexo units for printing or varnishing. It can also be integrated with an inspection control device when producing either blank labels, or when die-cutting pre-printed labels. Vega machines use a glueless turret rewinder, which removes the risk of damage by glue residues to thermal printer heads during overprinting. Prati also supplies the Neptune matrix stripper for removing waste from complicated label shapes after die cutting. It can be used in line with semi-rotary printing machines, or as a stand-alone machine for cutting and rewinding operations.

#### PRIMARC

Primarc, a subsidiary of Nordson, showed the prototype of a smartUV lamp – an interesting technological development which uses RFID to assist in the monitoring of UV lamps.

An RF sensor will identify the lamp and



track the number of hours it has been running, helping the operator to ensure the correct lamp is being used on the right press.

'It is a concept,' said the company. 'The basic technology has worked out and filings have been made for patents. We are now telling other OEMs to gauge interest.' Hour tracking is traditionally carried out by the lamp head, but can be difficult to accurately follow when the lamp is moved to a different press.

#### PRIMERA

Primera introduced its small LK1200 digital laser printer. The LK1200 reaches up to 25 ft/min, printing at 2400 dpi. Primera says it hits a price point under \$15,000. Full production of the machine will begin in January 2009. Its LX200 was promoted as another short-run printing option for hospitals using direct thermal. This small laser printer is monochrome and reaches up to 1200 dpi. To add more value to short run jobs, Primera demonstrated its small foiling machine, the FX450.

#### RADIUS SOLUTIONS

This business information management software supplier promoted the benefits of its Pecas Vision ERP/MIS system designed specifically for the printing and packaging industries. Radius has now partnered with QlikTech to integrate its visual data analysis capabilities, allowing for on-demand reporting for management data like profitability, sales and financial analysis.

#### RICOH

Ricoh promoted its 140LES direct thermal synthetic material targeted at the health care industry. Suitable for harsh hospital environments, this new product offers high heat resistance. Also promoted was the improved N140LA label stock with high image resolution and reliable barcode readability at high

speeds. Another notable product is the B110CU resin ribbon with resistance to the aggressive chemical xylene.

#### RITRAMA

Ritrama introduced Clearflex, which the company says is 'a new concept in clear labeling,' combining the squeezability of PE films with the clarity of PP films. Clearflex is a 2 mil gloss squeezable clear polypropylene suitable for flexible containers in the Health & Beauty sector.

The company was also promoting its specialist products for tire and baggage labeling.

#### ROTOMETRICS

RotoMetrics promoted its new Multi-Score Flexible Dies for folding cartons. This product combines a patented creasing technology with a flexible die, offering new opportunities to converters who were previously unable to run folding carton jobs.

#### SCANTECH

Scantech introduced VisionTrack, for 100 percent inspection and converting, PharmaTrack, for 100 percent inspection of pressure-sensitive labels, and Printrack LR for thin-film, shrink film and PS converting applications.

#### SCHOBER

Schober unveiled its RFID-CP tag-inserter aimed at medium and small label runs using pre-printed labelstock. This technology inserts UHF and HF inlays under die-cut blank or pre-printed labels and validates the finished product. The technology works with transponders in accordance with ISO specifications, in widths from 20mm to 80mm (with lengths of 20mm to 180 mm). Pre-printed labels with widths from 101.6mm to 203.6mm can be applied at rates from 5,000 to 20,000 labels per hour. An on-board RFID reader ensures the readability of each RFID tag

after integration. An automatic control system keeps transponders and printed labels in register. The RFID-CP provides efficient and economical production of contact-less readable tickets for public transportation cards, admission tickets, garments, swing tags, and more.

#### SIRA

A highlight of the show was the launch of SIRA Technologies' Irreversible Transinformative Thermochromatic ink. Designed for barcode printing, the ink is designed to trigger the scanner to reject the barcode, initializing archival data collection. The ink remains stable at print room, transport and storage temperatures. 'We had several hundred extremely high quality leads,' said Cathy Goldsmith, president, 'both converters and end users. It has been a very successful show for us.' A full report on the technology can be found in Feb/Mar issue of L&L magazine.

#### SOHN

Sohn demonstrated its new AR Series rotary die cutter that die cuts and laminates in registration at the improved speed of 100 ft/min. With the influx of digital printers at the show requiring converting post-printing, Sohn reported high quality interest at the show.

#### SUN CHEMICAL

Sun Chemical launched two new inks at Labelexpo Americas. AquaPro is a water-based ink technology system said by Sun to offer superior print densities, stable press performance on paper and film substrates, enhanced thermal resistance, and easy clean up, in a single ink system.

Platinum White, meanwhile, is a white flexo ink claimed to enable rotary screen-like opacities to be achieved with a single flexo pass at flexo web speeds. Says Sun, 'It is a user-friendly product that delivers increased line speeds, faster



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#### Specification

Maximum printing dimension	310x254mm	Web Width	100~330mm
Maximum Repeat length	260mm	Machine speed	30~250rpm(50m/min)

※The above mentioned various numbers and figures in this advertisement are based on the technical capabilities of the machine. Various sizes and actual paper feeding motor speeds will be affected by factors such as printing design, repeat length, material types etc.

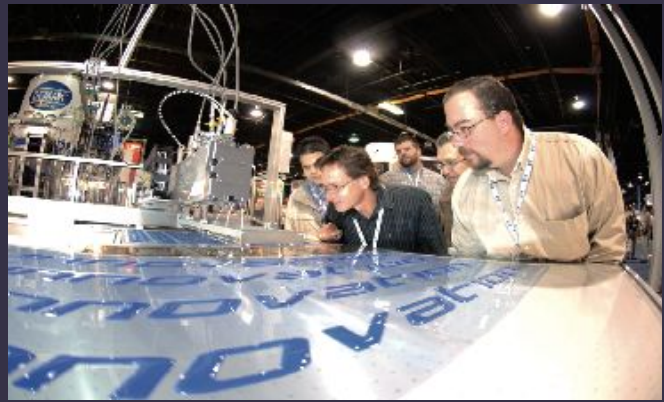
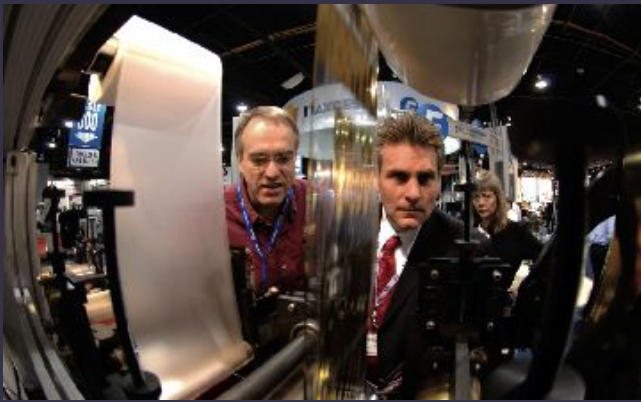


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#### **TESA TAPE**

Manufacturer of PS adhesive tapes, tesa introduced the tesa 52118 Softprint x-Soft tape engineered for 'extremely fine' screen printing. With foam backing tesa says it can combat the effects of press vibrations, allowing printing of 80 lines/cm on most substrates. The newly designed adhesive system enhances mounting performance to press cylinders and optimizes demounting procedures. Also shown were the tesa photovoltaic UV film Strips that can be applied to the substrate to measure the amount of UV light exposed during the printing process

#### **UNILUX**

Unilux promoted two LED-based products that do not burn out, use less energy than xenon lamps, and because they do not need to be replaced, reduce the amount of waste going to landfill. The Pixel is designed for mounting on equipment, while the Pocket Pixel is a hand held device. Unilux does not view LED equipment as a total replacement for standard xenon strobes for the time being, but is involved in intensive development work to produce a higher quality, more sustainable LED strobe solution.

#### **UNIVACCO**

Univacco introduced two new products, cold foil CF5.0 and seamless holographic foils. Cold Foil CF5.0 is designed to run at high speed sheet fed offset presses, such as Heidelberg Foilstar modular and manroland Inline Foiler Prindor. Seamless holographic foils will help printers increase process efficiency and decrease spoilage within the production."

#### **UPM RAFLATAC**

UPM Raflatac showcased its expanding prime paper and film labelstock product portfolio and its HF and UHF RFID product range. In addition, UPM

#### **LABELS & LABELING**

Raflatac promoted the company's sustainability initiative.

The company is test driving a new service called RafCycle, which involves collecting waste from label printers to be utilized in the production of UPM's new product, UPM ProFi. This wood-plastic composite is a tough, humidity-resistant material ideal for extrusion- and intrusion-molded products such as decking, reusable containers, pallets and flooring, among others. UPM is opening its second wood-plastic composite factory in Europe by the end of 2008 to meet growing demand for this innovative new product, and after gaining experience with the RafCycle service, both UPM ProFi and RafCycle will be introduced to the North American market.

Other new products and services included the company's new range of RafEco products constructed with certified face papers, post-consumer waste face papers, biodegradable films, recycling compatible adhesives, repulpable liners and recyclable liners. UPM Raflatac also introduced its Fast Face product and service offering for select non-adhesive products, along with a product range for shelf marking applications and a new polyjetlaser matte transparent filmstock for laser and inkjet printing applications.

#### **XANTÉ**

Xanté (with the former RIPit company) featured upgrades to Symphony Flexo Workflow, an Adobe PDF-based turnkey suite with color management, integral Pantone Color Libraries and other prepress tools. It can drive various output devices, including platesetters, laser or inkjet printers, and plotters. Centralized control is from a single RIP. Also shown was the Illumina 502, a toner-based digital color press, now with a 500-foot reel feeder, for short-run labels, tags and specialty packaging.

#### **WAUSAU COATED**

This paper supplier introduced its line of HP Indigo products, including matte, semi-gloss, and metalized papers, polypropylene and vinyl. It also promoted its line of 100 percent PCW materials, RCA options and a 52# Laser FSC certified liner. Special capabilities such as pattern coated adhesive, pattern coated silicone, tinted silicone and printed liner were also on display.

#### **YUPO**

Synthetic paper manufacturer Yupo launched its YupoGreen initiative, which brings together the company's endeavors in the area of environmental sustainability.

Yupo's synthetic papers are 100 percent recyclable and produce no detectable amounts of sulfur, chlorine, nitrogen or dioxin gases, he explained. 'There's no pulp, no sludge and very little water is used in the creation of our products. Our initiative continues as we explore new programs, which will increase consumer awareness and access to Yupo's recycling processes.'

Yupo has added a PP grade, designed specifically for polypropylene bottles, a UV grade for UV presses, and a new grade focused specifically on sustainability. This grade, made for thin-walled IML extrusion blow molded containers, decreases overall resin use, saves energy and produces a lighter product, which results in more economically sound shipping and transport options.

Another example is new YupoBlue, a synthetic paper certified for use with HP Indigo printers. YupoBlue allows for customized 1:1 and variable data printing, which permits shorter runs and has none of the material waste associated with traditional offset printing, says the company.

Yupo will celebrate its 40th anniversary in 2009, and the company unveiled a new logo designed to represent the sun and the universe.



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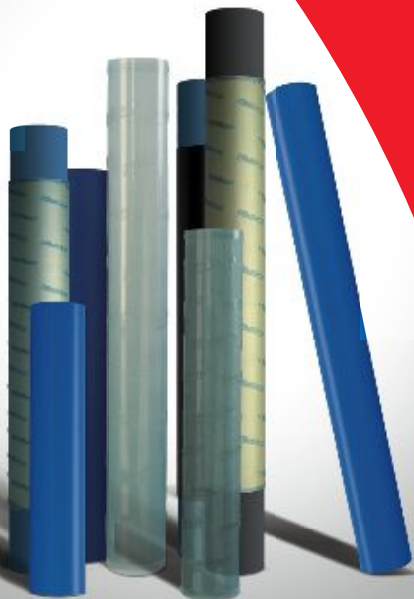
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# ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

## HOT OFF THE PRESS

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### SURVEY REVEALS PAPER'S ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

A lack of understanding amongst the general public of the environmental impact of paper was the key finding of a survey of media buyers commissioned by the UK's National Association of Paper Merchants (NAPM). According to the survey, 95 percent of all respondents, which comprised professional purchasers of communications media, believe that the general public is poorly informed about paper's environmental impact.

Alistair Gough, president of the NAPM, said: 'Every day we are hit by new environmental claims about the detrimental effects of paper, which are clearly having an impact on us all in the communications industry. This survey has enabled us to reveal the true extent of the misunderstanding of these facts, as well as understand the key issues taken into consideration when professionals purchase their communications media.' Significantly, nearly 60 percent of respondents still indicated their preference for paper-based communications over the wide ranging digital alternatives. Reasons cited included a longer 'shelf-life', easier to read and digest the information, its portability, the ability to convey the brand and message, as well as the tactile and physical qualities of paper that can't be matched by digital communication. In addition, 80 percent of media buyers admitted that environmental considerations played a role in their paper purchasing decisions, while 48 percent were concerned about paper's effect on the environment.

#### Other findings from the survey include:

- 27 percent of respondents believe that paper production is a major cause of deforestation
- 55 percent felt that recycled paper is better than virgin fiber grades
- 58 percent didn't know enough about paper's carbon footprint and environmental impact to make informed decisions

'The survey clearly reveals a lack of understanding of paper's environmental impact, and yet, with so many purchasing decisions taking the environment into consideration we need to put the record straight,' added Alistair Gough. 'The NAPM is now taking a stand to tackle this stream of mis-information head on. Our aim is to introduce an industry-wide initiative in Autumn, to dispel these myths and ensure everyone is equipped with the true facts, so they can feel confident about using paper again.'



## AVERY DENNISON RECEIVES FSC CERTIFICATION FOR SEVEN FASSON SITES

The Fasson Roll North America division of Avery Dennison Corporation has received Forest Stewardship Council certification – SCS Certification Registration Number: SCS-COC-001790 – for a number of North American coating and distribution locations.

The Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) is an international organization that promotes environmentally appropriate, socially beneficial, and economically viable management of the world's forests. An independent, third party organization accredited by the FSC to certify companies to their international

standards has determined that Avery Dennison is able to meet strict tracking requirements ensuring Fasson products sold as FSC-certified are sourced from a responsibly managed forest.

The following locations were chosen to support products that carry FSC certification in the expanding portfolio of Fasson EcoFriendly products: Greenfield, Indiana; Fort Wayne, Indiana; Greensboro, North Carolina; Rancho Cucamonga, California; Sacramento, California; Mentor, Ohio; and Neenah, Wisconsin.

## RETAILERS 'TRIUMPH' ON PACKAGING

The British Retail Consortium (BRC) is hailing retailers' 'spectacular achievement' in bringing the growth of food packaging to a standstill. An Independent assessment of the last two years, published by the Waste and Resources Action Program (WRAP), shows the total amount of packaging on food products sold in Britain is the same now as it was in 2006, despite substantial increases in the quantities being sold.

In 2005, WRAP, the BRC and leading food retailers signed the 'Courtauld Commitment', in which they committed to a WRAP target to slow packaging growth to zero by the end of 2008. This has already been achieved despite the UK population rising by an average 300,000 people a year and food sales rising by 1.8 percent a year over that time. Jane

Milne, British Retail Consortium director of business environment, said: 'This is a spectacular achievement by retailers. The UK population and total food sales have risen substantially in two years yet retailers are not using anymore packaging now than they were then. It's clear evidence of retailers eliminating unnecessary packaging from their own brand products.'

In April the BRC and a string of household-name retailers launched comprehensive new, industry-wide environmental commitments as the next stage of their response to climate change. They include a pledge, which goes beyond just food, to reduce own brand packaging by 2013 on a like-for-like basis, compared with 2005 and to work with suppliers to encourage similar reductions.



# ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

## AVERY DENNISON INTRODUCES LINER RECYCLING PROGRAM

PROGRAM in conjunction with Channeled Resources Group

The Fasson Roll North America division of Avery Dennison Corporation showcased its newly launched Liner Recycling Program for enhanced sustainability practices at Labelexpo Americas.

The program – designed and conducted in conjunction with an industry leader in liner material recycling efforts, Channeled Resources Group – educates packaging engineers, consumer goods companies, and end users on recycling options for label liners. 'It is important to note that silicone coated liners, both paper and film,

now have end-of-life options including re-use, re-pulping, and re-processing,' stated Michael White, VP of business development, Channeled Resources Group.

Kevin Rinehart, market segment leader, Fasson Roll North America reinforced: 'This partnership is intended to address the nearly 1.2 billion pounds of liner waste that can be attributed to pressure-sensitive labelstock on a yearly basis. This is an opportunity for converters and end users to differentiate themselves and prevent liner from finding its way into a landfill.'

## IST METZ RECEIVES CERTIFICATE FOR SPARING USE OF ENERGY

GERMAN company rewarded at drupa



ALBRECHT H. GLÖCKLE (right) from the BGDP presents the managing director of IST Metz, Dirk Jägers, with the trade association's 'Energy-minimized UV printing' test symbol during drupa 2008 for its new UV system, BLK-5

At drupa 2008, the German trade association for printing and paper processing (Deutsche Berufsgenossenschaft Druck und Papierverarbeitung – BGDP) awarded the IST Metz group's new BLK-5 UV system a certificate for 'energy-minimized UV printing'.

Prevention manager Albrecht H. Glöckle made the official presentation on the UV supplier's stand during the trade fair in Düsseldorf. According to information from the trade association, the total energy consumption of the UV dryer is assessed for the trade association's test symbol for energy-minimized UV printing. Another basic prerequisite

for all trade association test symbols is the GS or ET symbol (GS = Geprüfte Sicherheit (German safety testing symbol); ET = EuroTest).

The energy-efficient BLK-5 UV system was developed specifically for applications in web printing in which high process speeds often have to be achieved. It uses the available energy very sparingly, yet still achieves a high drying performance. Its increased efficiency means that instead of the equipment previously required for a machine (three type BLK-2 UV units at 200 W/cm), two of the new BLK-5 type of unit at 180 W/cm are sufficient to achieve the same drying results.

There has to be a reduction in energy consumption of at least 30 percent for approval for the trade association's test symbol. The new UV system from IST Metz actually exceeds this requirement, as managing director Dirk Jägers explained during the official presentation at drupa. The BGDP examination had found an increase in efficiency of 40 percent. The reduced energy consumption of the UV system also represents a significant reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, currently the subject of much discussion.

**LABELS & LABELING**

## ENVIRO NEWS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL ENVIRONMENTAL STORIES

### MCCOURT LABEL ACHIEVES ISO 14001 ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

US converter McCourt Label has achieved the ISO 14001 accreditation. The ISO 14001 international standard provides both a model for streamlining environmental management, and guidelines to ensure environmental issues are considered within decision-making practices.

McCourt Label attained the accreditation after a series of audits by NSF at its Lewis Run facility. The site will be assessed annually to ensure continual development of the Environmental Management System (EMS) currently in place. The McCourt Environmental Policy serves as the foundation of the management system.

Dave Ferguson, president of McCourt said, 'We are proud to be one of a few companies in the US label industry to hold this accreditation, and minimizing our impact on the environment will continue to be a focus as the company grows.'

### DENNY BROS JOINS 'GREEN' LEAGUE

Denny Bros Ltd, the creator of Fix-a-Form, a multi-page label, has obtained the ISO 14001 Environmental Standard. This award recognizes the company's ongoing commitment to reduce waste, improve energy efficiency and increase recycling within its Bury St Edmunds, UK, manufacturing facility. Having gone through a rigorous assessment process, the company has become one of a few printers within the UK to achieve the ISO 14001 standard.

MD Barry Denny said, 'we have always believed in the importance of being environmentally-friendly and there are a number of initiatives in place within the Denny Bros group to ensure that our robust policies are adhered to while maintaining superior customer service and product range.'

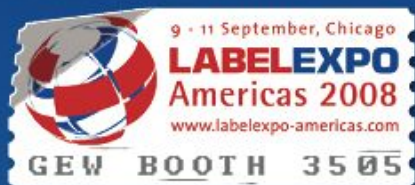
### TORRASPAPEL'S SELF-ADHESIVE MILL OBTAINS EMAS CERTIFICATION

With the addition of the plant in Almazán, Spain, six of the factories of Torraspapel, part of the Lecta Group, have now successfully completed the audits that accredit their compliance with EMAS environmental standards. Before the end of 2008, the certification is scheduled to be extended to all of the company's production centers, including factories devoted to the manufacture of specialty papers, which are currently in the certification process. As a result, in the next few months, all of Torraspapel's production will hold ISO 9001 quality certification and ISO 14001 and EMAS environmental certifications.

The Environmental Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) of the EU is a voluntary system designed to foster continuous improvement in the environmental performance of public and private organizations.



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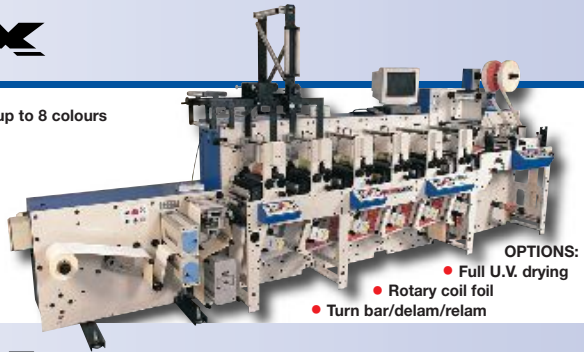
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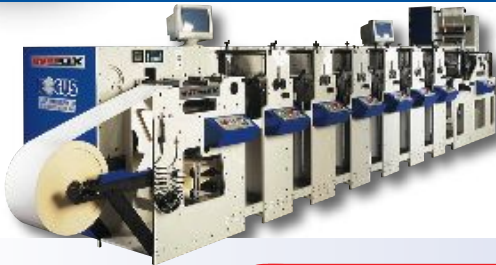
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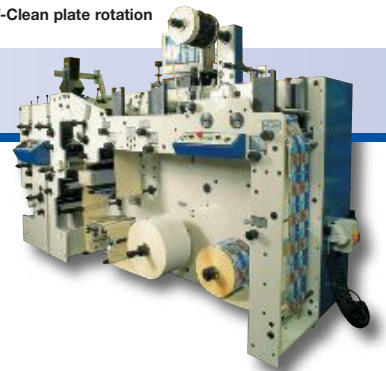
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STRATUS director Isidore Leiser (left) with new Gallus EM410S press

# Profitable in a tough market

**FRENCH CONVERTER STRATUS** has maintained its growth by moving into niche sectors, leveraging centers of excellence and staying Lean. Andy Thomas reports

With 240 employees, a turnover of €5m and occupying 35 million square meters of production space, the Stratus group is one of Europe's leading label converters.

The company has maintained its profitability in the face of a modest Western European growth rate of 2 percent by moving nimbly into niche sectors where it can really add value – and by keeping up a dedicated and active R&D department with its own full-time manager.

As well as pressure-sensitive labels, Stratus is active in wrap-around, shrink sleeve labels, in-mold labels (IML) and flexible packaging and runs 32 production lines across every print process, including offset, letterpress, screen, UV flexo and digital.

The group has three plants spread around France, each of which acts as a Group center of excellence in certain products and technologies.

L&L visited Stratus' SEEC plant, the Group's biggest operation based just outside Lyon. It has a turnover of €20m, 140 employees and a dedicated sales force of 11. It specializes in IML and

shrink sleeve labels.

In the North, close to Lille, is Stratus Etinord, with 40 employees. It specializes in tyre labels, piggy-back labels and textile labels. The Martin, Limoges plant has a turnover of €8m, 60 employees and 11 salespeople and its specialty is digital printing, with two 6-color HP Indigo ws4500-presses. This site also specializes in transfer labels, adhesive-side printing, textile labels, loyalty card technology, wraparound board labels and braille. The plant is also leading Stratus' RFID program.

The group's operations are tied together electronically by the PECAS Vision management information system (MIS) and EskoArtworks' Artpro/Nexus digital workflow system.

'With the MIS we know exactly when a job goes to pre-press, when to press and to post-press, and we can cost those jobs at each stage,' explains Stratus director Isidore Leiser, whose father founded the company. 'We can see the status of any press on screen.'

Nexus and Vision are fully integrated, so a thumbnail image of any job can be

made available to the MIS system, and the MIS system automatically creates job information for Nexus' graphics workflow, preventing errors arising from double keying.

The Group's presses and GMG digital proofing system are calibrated to a common standard. Under test is EskoArtwork's Webway internet-based job approval system for clients who want Stratus to manage their master files and make text and other changes remotely.

Platemaking is centralized at SEEC,

## GROUP CTP

Digital plates are produced at SEEC on a Kodak Thermoflex Mid hybrid platesetter, which provides the flexibility to image digital flexographic and letterpress plates coated with a LAMS ablation layer, as well as film. Tests are underway on solvent-free processing of the flexo plates and a DuPont Cyrel FAST thermal plate processing system will likely be the next step. Offset plates and screen are imaged with film. 'We will move offset to CTP, but we will have to have enough volume,' says Isidore Leiser.



## MOVING EAST

Stratus services key French and global brands across a wide range of end use sectors. The latter include leading tyre brands Bridgestone/Firestone, Goodyear, Michelin and Continental, and in the pharma sector Reckitt Benckiser and Pfizer. Food and consumer goods are well represented through the likes of Kodak, Carrefour and Sarah Lee.

'Our customers are becoming more European and a lot are moving to Eastern Europe,' comments Isidore Leiser. 'It's not feasible to deliver to them there, so we are looking to buy an operation in the region.'

Lyon, with jobs arriving from the remote sites into hot folders, then straight into SEEC's Nexus automated workflow, greatly simplifying process control across the Group's three plants.

This high level of integration makes it easy to move work around the group depending on available capacity and specialization. Isidore Leiser sees this as a key strength: 'Having three sites gives our customers production assurance which is so important today. We choose the route for a job when the job comes in, depending on factors such as size and quantity of the order.'

ISO9001 is implemented across Stratus' three sites along with Imprim'Vert, which is the environmental standard used by the French printing industry. 'It means we do not throw away toxic products and we try to reuse waste products like solvents and printing inks. We are also looking at taking back liner waste,' said Leiser. 'We have trialled PLA and it's no problem on the machines, handling like a PP, including printing on the reverse.'

## ADDING VALUE

R&D is a central pillar of Stratus' growth strategy. The company has a separate R&D department located at SEEC, run by Julien Chauveau, who ran L&L through the company's latest innovations.

Most recently, Stratus has formed an exclusive strategic alliance with a company which develops micro-encapsulated fragrances and scents. Stratus has developed a way of screen printing these micro-capsules onto adhesive carriers. This carrier is placed inside a resealable label, and the act of opening the label breaks a seal and releases the scent. The micro-capsules are effective for 2-3 days opening and closing the label. Julien Chauveau points out that a lot of different products could be micro-encapsulated – insect repellent, for example.

In-mold labelling (IML) has become a specialist area at Stratus. The company prints IML both rotary offset and UV flexo, and has experimented with adding both cold foil and Braille in-line. 'The problem we need to overcome with braille is that the dots are flattened by the injection molding process,' points out Julien Chauveau.

Stratus long ago abandoned attempts to finish IMLs in-line and today has four off-line stripping/sheeting/stacking machines with a rotary die station to cut out shaped labels.

As well as OPP IML substrates, Stratus has printed on OPS IML film, which is required for OPS containers.

Shrink sleeve labels represent a major growth sector for Stratus, and as with IML, the company has been able to add cold foil and Braille.

Booklet labels are another specialty, bolstered by a recent investment in a GRE booklet label production system. Onserted booklet labels, offset printed, can be made up of 24 panels and can incorporate cold foil in the designs. Multi-page reclosable labels can include a wide range of items including dry peel promotional labels, scratch-off panels, games and coupons.

## LABELS & LABELING



Special finishes developed by Julien Chauveau's department have included a 'soft touch' PP laminate applied over cold foil to create a powerful visual/tactile presence, as well as security inks and varnishes.

More recently Stratus has diversified into non-label products such as dry wipes and packaging products including cartons, tags, collars and blister packs.

## PRESS TECHNOLOGY

The latest press installation at SEEC is a Gallus EM410 'S' press. 'These new Gallus presses have excellent registration, enthuses Isidore Leiser. 'Because of the servos we can record the parameters of each job, then recall those parameters for a repeat job. The press is then quickly into register. Some substrates like films would be impossible to print without servos and there are no more gear marks.'

Sleeves have made a big difference both in terms of easier handling and mounting accuracy. 'We were the first to use aluminium sleeves instead of composite sleeves after Labelexpo Europe,' states Leiser. 'With composite sleeves, after one year they can move – the aluminium are much more stable. When they are cut, the adhesive does not damage the sleeve. They are double the price, but it pays for itself.' The press is fitted with ink pumps and chambered doctor blades.

Other production machines at SEEC include a Gidue E-Combat shaftless press equipped with eight UV flexo printing units, twin cold foil units, laminating and delaminating/relaminating units.

For finishing, Status mainly uses Rotoflex inspection rewinders. The company is happy to hold stock for most customers, who pick weekly. 'Handling customer logistics is more complex than printing. We are a service-driven organization,' concludes Isidore Leiser.

## LABEL AID

In Issue 4 (September) of L&L, there were errors in the article titled 'Thinking Big' on page 76. The company is Label Aid Inc. not Labelaid. Carl Hanson is the founder, and Darlene Crooks the president. Apologies to all concerned.

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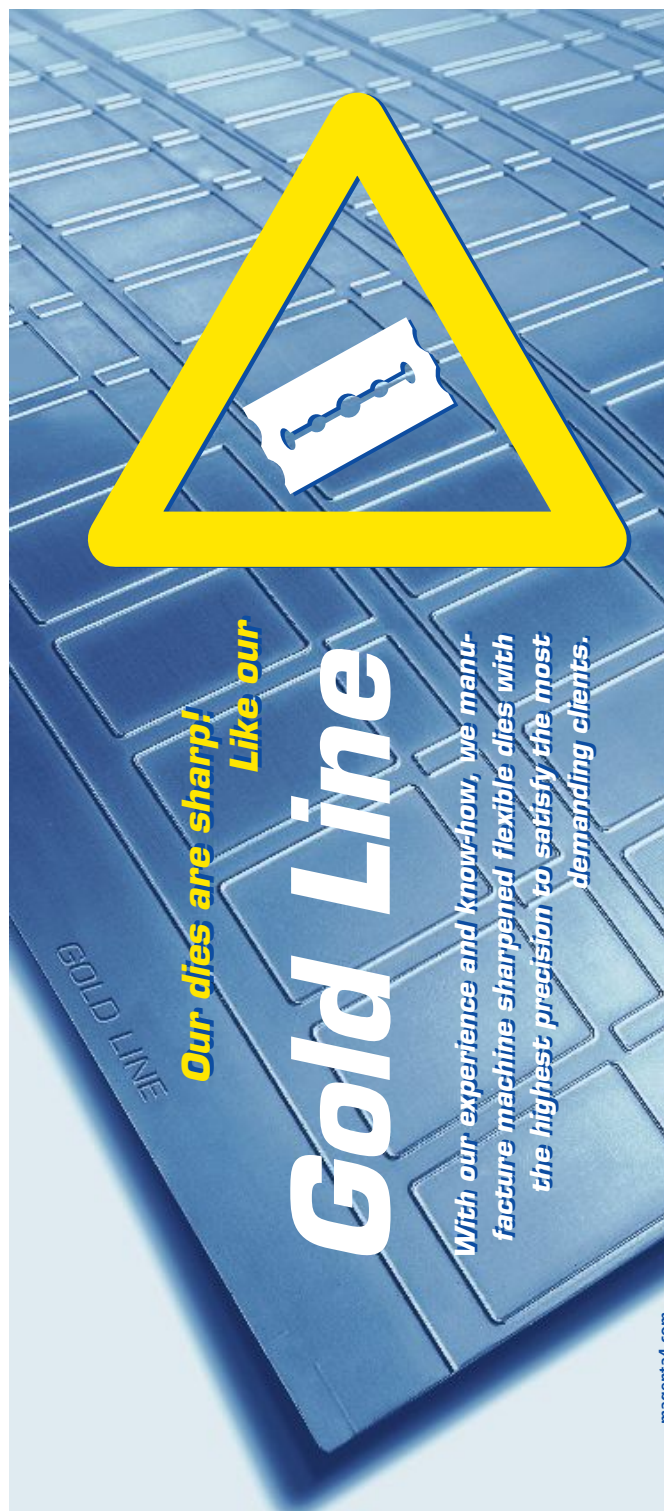
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# YORK LABEL

## building a Dream Team

**IN TWO YEARS**, York Label has built a successful group around nine converters with established skill sets in the company's strategic markets. Danielle Jerschefske reports on a new global player

The notion of a Dream Team conjures up visions of the gold-winning US men's 1992 Olympic basketball team, which raised the game's level and turned basketball into a truly global sport. It showed how a group of individually talented individuals can work together to become an elite team.

Over the past two years, York Label has grown by swift acquisition to be one of the world's preeminent label companies. It has built on a foundation of established prime label printers throughout the Americas, and has plans to add more of the best in its quest to build a label industry 'Dream Team'.

The project was initiated when Rich Egan, former CEO Corporate Express, Document and Print Management, founded LabelCorp Holdings with the intention of becoming 'the world's premier label supplier'.

LabelCorp Holdings' first purchases, York Label and Industrial Label Corporation (ILC) – two medium-sized PS label companies in the consumer products and food and beverage markets – formed York Label in 2006. Through subsequent acquisitions, it secured business in the wine and spirits and pharmaceutical markets, its two other core business sectors.

York's partnership with Diamond Castle Holdings, formalized in August of this year, will allow the company 'to continue to grow through investment in new technologies and strategic

acquisitions to best serve the needs of our customers and core markets,' promises Rich Egan. He predicts the company will double in size and become a major global player over the next few years. How will this be achieved?

### GROWTH: CONSTRUCTING THE DREAM TEAM

#### SOUTH AMERICA

York Label's drive for global growth is designed to better serve its large international clients, who are looking to increase the influence of their brands around the world.

'Our labels are our customer's brand,' Egan explains. These CPGs are looking for suppliers that can provide them with quality, consistency and shelf presence wherever in the world they conduct business.' 'CPGs have a defined objective for brand consistency around the world,' adds Dave Klotter, vice president of marketing.

The acquisition of Cameo Crafts by York in late 2007 'both solidified York's position as the number one provider of wine labels in North America, and simultaneously provided us entry into one of our four core targeted markets, pharmaceutical,' Egan explains. 'In addition, the transaction provided us entry into the fast growing South American wine market through Cameo's joint venture in Santiago, Chile: Cameo Marinetti.





**RICH EGAN** founded  
LabelCorp Holdings

Since the acquisition of Cameo we have made several add-on acquisitions in the South American wine label market and are now the dominant supplier to that market,' he continues. 'It is a great market down there. Chile and Argentina are two of the fastest exporting countries in the world.'

Now Egan has his eyes set on Europe: 'Currently we are looking at the European wine industry. We are convinced that is a good place for us to be and we plan to get there quickly.'

York believes that the wine and spirits sector provides opportunities for high-end value-added label production. Exported South American goods must compete with the level of product decoration found in North America and elsewhere.

With this South American capability, York has the opportunity to provide one-stop solutions for global brand owners looking for brand consistency and standardization within York's other core markets – specifically consumer products.

'The acquisitions of Etiprak and Etiquetas Industriales – together with Cameo Marinetti – created a springboard for us to further acquire consumer products business in South America while increasing our current platform in the prime label market there,' Klotter explains.

#### **NORTH AMERICA**

Throughout North America, York Label is looking to add other established, value-added PS suppliers to its team – especially those that bring complementary decorating technologies.

The company's primary strategic focus in the region is the pharmaceutical industry; 46 percent of the global pharmaceutical market is in North America. 'The North American market is worth about \$600 million and we intend to capture a share of that,' says Klotter. 'We are going to grow this market here and will continue to look for acquisitions.'

Adds Egan, 'while Cameo only supplied labels into the Canadian pharmaceutical market, the joining of the Cameo expertise in this market and the York resources will provide us the ability to open new operations in the United States to service the US pharmaceutical market.'

The company's Canadian customers with US operations are eager to have a domestic supplier and York feels confident in its abilities to transfer its pharmaceutical solutions across. Operations at a new facility are expected to be on the ground in early 2009.

In the same way York Label is working closely with its Cameo sites to fulfill the needs of the wine market – integrating the best cultural-business aspects of the combined businesses – it will also nurture and grow its pharmaceutical business in North America.

#### **LABELS & LABELING**

### **"Our labels are our customer's brand. Their package is their label"**

'The US market holds significant opportunity for us with highly specialized and integrated expanded content label products,' Klotter explains. 'We already have the infrastructure in the US, and coupled with the Cameo proprietary vision, tracking and authentication systems, we feel we have the best pharmaceutical solution in the industry. This customer-driven move will allow us to offer our pharmaceutical customers a proven, high quality domestic solution. We will also be able to leverage the strengths of our entire York Label network of fourteen facilities throughout the Americas.'

#### **CURRENT TEAM PROFILE**

#### **VETERAN PLAYERS YORK LABEL AND INDUSTRIAL LABEL CORPORATION**

York Label was founded in 1947 and remains privately held. The ISO 9001 certified 150,000 sq. ft. plant produces high-quality, mostly pressure sensitive labels for the consumer products market, using the newest combination flexographic, screen and digital printing technologies.

'York continues to integrate all of its consumer products and food operations because the company is committed to becoming the lowest cost provider of exceptional quality prime labels to its markets,' explains Bill Harper, vice president of operations, consumer products and food. 'In pursuit of this objective, we are determining the advantages of certain centralized platforms to support out geographically dispersed plants, as well as the standardization of our IT and ERP systems. Given our continued emphasis on acquisition this will be a continuous work in process.'

The original Pennsylvania-based York Label house has always focused on its major customers, as John Attayek, vice president of sales for consumer products and food, explains: 'we are working hard to grow organically here by truly satisfying our customers, and then will use that leverage for growth in other regions.'

This organic expansion will be accomplished through what York refers to as a 'drilling down' process. 'In all of our four core markets,' Egan says, 'we go after the large national and international

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### **MARTIN AUTOMATIC AND LABELMEN SIGNED AGREEMENT AT DRUPA 2008**

In Drupa this year, Martin Automatic Inc announced that it has entered into a licensing agreement with press manufacturer Labelmen Machinery Co., Ltd. of Taiwan. Under the agreement, Labelmen will build Martin's STS automatic splicers and STR turret rewinds for sale on equipment manufactured by Labelmen.

"This marks the first time that Martin Automatic has chosen to partner with another company for the manufacturing of our products," reported Mr. Roger Cederholm, President, Martin Automatic Inc. "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."

Labelmen has served the printing industry for over 40 years. Mr. Lo, Chin-Shiung, President of Labelmen, commented, "Labelmen develops innovations of press design and integrations of solutions to benefit our customers. This technical alliance with Martin Automatic, a renowned pioneer in the industry, moves our company into a new era of continuous innovation. Labelmen is very happy to cooperate with the world leader in non-stop unwind, rewind, and tension control". Mr. Lo added, "We plan to launch a new Labelmen MN series press, which will have Martin's automatic roll changing equipment fully integrated into the press in the near future."



Mr. Lo, Chin-Shiung, President of Labelmen Machinery Company, Ltd. (on right) and Mr. Roger Cederholm, President of Martin Automatic Inc, signed a licensing agreement at DRUPA in Dusseldorf, Germany.





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**“While Cameo only supplied labels into the Canadian pharmaceutical market, the joining of the Cameo expertise in this market and the York resources will provide us the ability to open new operations in the United States to service the US pharmaceutical market”**

customers. Go for the big guys, gain a piece of their business, and then keep penetrating with our proven expertise. This is really where we drive organic growth from.’

York Label’s other veteran player is Industrial Label Corporation, an experienced manufacturer of pressure sensitive label solutions for the consumer products and food industries.

One of its two facilities is a flexo house that serves as one of the company’s graphics hubs and as a starting point for York Labels’ pre-press standardization system. The plant uses FTA’s FIRST standardizations as guidelines and EskoArtwork technical solutions to manage this process. A DuPont Cyrel Fast has been chosen for in-house printing plate production because, the company says, the plates produced on the machine holds dots, impressions and highlights which allow it to compete with gravure.

Reduction in change-over time during the three shifts that operate five days a week is a key goal, with all raw materials delivered just-in-time. Unlike the York, Pennsylvania facility, there is no automated ancillary equipment used in the plant. ‘There are multiple changeovers during each shift at this facility, so there is no current need for automation,’ says Harper.

#### **TEAM CAPTAIN: WINE AND SPIRITS SET THE PACE**

Mitch Kendall, vice president and general manager of the Cameo Crafts wine and spirits group, is the third generation of his family to lead the business – his grandfather founded Cameo Crafts in 1932. Throughout Kendall’s 26 years with the company, he has played a vital role in expanding the business within this sector and is largely responsible

## **THE YORK LABEL TIMELINE**

### **MARCH 2006**

York founded with simultaneous acquisition of York Label holdings and Industrial Label Corporation – both middle sector consumer products focused label print houses

### **NOVEMBER 2006**

Founded in 1974, York Label purchases LSK Label Co. in El Dorado Hills, California expands company geographically and puts York into the wine, food and beverage industry

### **DECEMBER 2006**

Quality Assured Labels in North Carolina, a consumer products focused company, becomes part of the York big picture further geographic expansion and growth in consumer products production

### **OCTOBER 2007**

Cameo Crafts, Package Service Company (PSC) and 50 percent ownership of Cameo Marinetti, break York Label into international markets in both Canada and Chile. The Cameo organization and Marinetti venture moved York heavily into the wine and spirits and pharmaceutical markets while PSC gave the company more weight in the consumer products and food and beverage markets. These fundamental acquisitions put York closer to reaching its goal of being a significant global partner to its major customers and markets.\*

### **MARCH 2008**

York acquires, through its Cameo Marinetti joint venture, Etiprak, SA and Etiquetas Industriales, both located in Santiago, Chile. Etiprak is a pressure sensitive label supplier for the regional wine and spirits and consumer products markets. Etiquetas Industriales helped York further penetrate the South American consumer products market.\*

### **AUGUST 2008**

York Label partners with Diamond Castle Holdings to ‘continue executing upon the strategic vision of creating the premier, global provider of high quality labeling solutions’.

\*York Label contracted two significant acquisitions on the same day.

for the company breaking into the lucrative Chilean market.

The Cameo facility is located in Sonoma, California, where it services many of the top domestic brands. ‘Ninety-five percent of the work produced at this facility uses numerous spot colors in addition to four color process, and is completed with an irregular screen count,’ says Kendall. Using Heidelberg Speedmasters capable of producing up to 14-15,000 sheets per hour, labels can use up to 25 colors, plus foiling and other decorative solutions.

Label designers and the facility’s technical team work closely with one another before consulting with a customer’s marketing team. ‘It is crucial for us to engineer a label that is affordable, one that we are able to run, and that can be made in high-quality,’



NORM MOEDER vice president  
and general manager



**‘Our customers work with us because we give them the experience and the validation’**

customers need technical support and want to work with a supplier that has strong pharmaceutical knowledge. This credit will help us when we start work in other markets.’

Over 100 employees work in this efficient 70,000 square foot printing house. Since quality ranks high on a customer’s list, QC methods, starting with substrate delivery, are in place to ensure the best is what they get. Full time chemists test all (yes, all) the paper that comes onto the dock, including fingerprinting, adhesion tests, coat weight, varnish, release, etcetera. All other supplies are prepared and validated by quality control prior to initializing the printing process.

Every label is repeatedly authenticated throughout the production process. An automated text verification system, developed in conjunction with Global Vision, examines each full plate of labels for flaws that cannot be found visually. AVT systems mounted on each press check for defects while the work is running. ‘It’s protocol,’ Goodman says. ‘We can tell, and verify to the company that we are always supervising the process.’ There is full traceability of errors, while regular deviation reports ensure that the system is working successfully.

An itemized tracking system sees each label counted and accounted for. While AVT and LVS systems check each roll for defects, a log is automatically produced for each label by reading numbers printed on the back of the labels – a system developed through collaboration with the company’s finishing systems supplier.

#### WHO’S IN THE FUTURE LINE-UP?

With its future focus set on the European wine and US pharmaceutical markets, the industry will continue to see York Label seek out and integrate some of the best converting talent around. There will never be another basketball Dream Team, but York is aiming to put one together for its core strategic markets in the label industry. Will it succeed? Without a shot clock, only time will tell.

**Keep an eye out for more detailed coverage of the York Label movement in South America in a future issue of L&L.**

explains Kendall. Not to mention, it is imperative that the label complies with tax certification laws.

The plant has full-time chemists and engineers who cultivate ideas and put them into action. In fact, 70 percent of the paper used at the plant is crafted by directly exchanging innovative ideas with its paper mill suppliers. This forward-thinking group currently has several proprietary environmentally sustainable substrates sourced from post-consumer waste (PCW), and/or recycled content material.

‘Our Renew product line offers wine and spirits companies the brightest and cleanest premium 100 percent PCW label product on the market, for both wet-glue and PS,’ says Klotter.

Approximately 800 million labels are produced at the plant each year. The average order is for 100,000 cases of wine, which require around 2.5 million labels.

Lean manufacturing, cleanliness and environmental awareness have been a part of the Cameo Sonoma operation since day one. ‘The cleanliness comes from my grandfather,’ Kendall says.

Kendall is constantly on the lookout for innovative technology solutions. In 2007, the plant invested in an ink-mixing machine – it had won a new technology award that year – that produces only the precise amount needed to run a job. Associates evaluate each substrate, taking the design into account to calculate the required ink quantity. Not only does this solution help reduce both costs and waste, it also enhances repeatability.

Choosing sustainable options has always been a priority for this plant, which has been involved in materials recycling and sustainability programs for the last few years. Waste is separated into four different components and picked up by a local recycler. The lights in the plant are low energy and are color directed. Klotter says, ‘We have also started to offer our customers reusable shipper containers to further enhance our sustainable efforts and add value for our customers.’

Stamping and foiling is completed off-line using hand-engraved stamp plates. This is only possible because of the registration capability of the Speedmaster presses and the regular testing completed by five quality control staff members.

Sonoma also hosts two new combination offset Gallus presses with in-line foiling capability – all UV servo. The equipment from this plant is duplicated in both Chile and Montreal for three reasons: one, it provides brand consistency; two, it’s supply continuity planning; and three, it provides the converter back up capacity – a sixth and seventh man, if you will.

#### PHARMACEUTICALS HAVE GOT THE SKILLS

With over 28 years of industry experience, David Goodman, vice president and general manager, Cameo Crafts pharmaceutical group, has developed a reputation for high quality pharmaceutical label production in Montreal, including a proprietary inspection process that ‘exceeds the expectations’ of his end users.

Certifications and awards line the walls of the main office hallway. ‘When you are certified in Canada, then you can be certified worldwide,’ says Goodman. ‘Our



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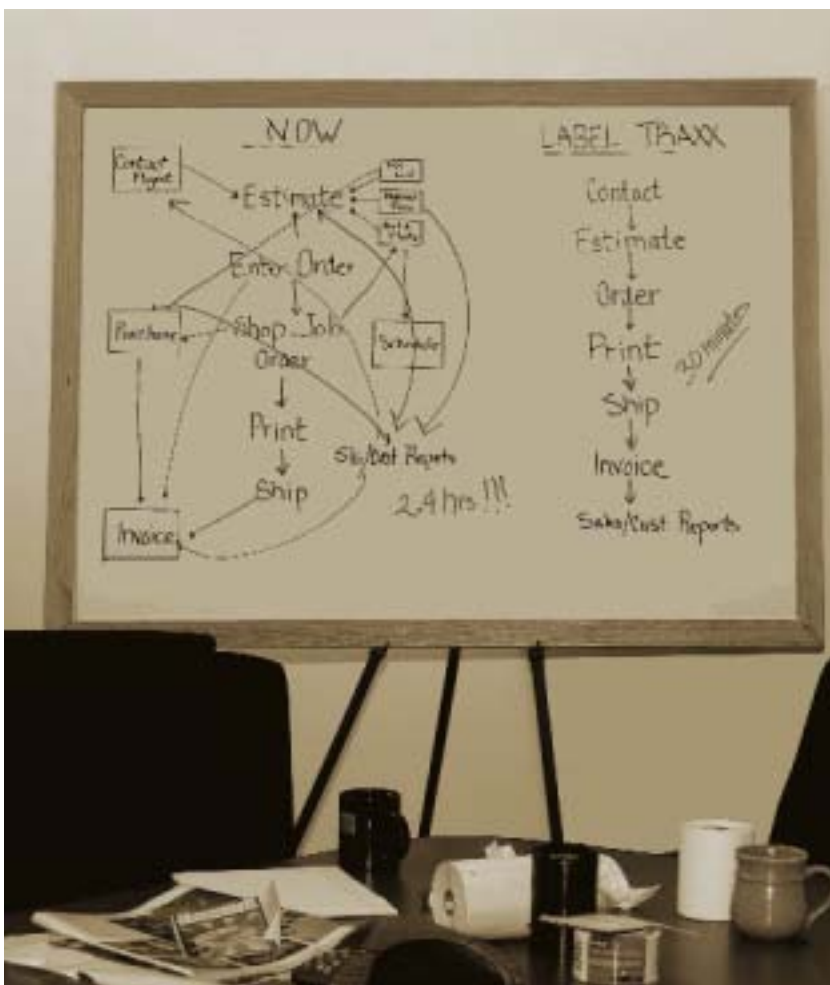
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TAJ MAHAL, Agra

# India takes off

**WITH THE INDIA LABEL SHOW** approaching, Harveer Sahni, managing director of Weldon Celloplast, looks at the history, current status and future prospects of the Indian label industry

The credit for bringing self-adhesive labels, in their present form, to India, goes to a US multinational Johnson & Johnson. In 1965 the company installed a rotary label press and sold converted labels. The credit for converting the first self-adhesive sticker in India goes to Manohar Das Bhatia, owner of screen printer Sharat Industries, who used a PVC face stock with pressure-sensitive adhesive supplied by Calico and a polyethylene sheet as a release liner. Paper could not be used as a face material because silicon release liners were not available. Manohar Das Bhatia was later joined by his two sons Shyam and Rattan. They converted self-adhesive stickers under their brand 'Sharastick'.

Badal Hasija, a screen printer with over 45 years of experience, recalls, 'I even remember the first label he made was for Gabriel shock absorbers and it left me wondering for days, what Manohar Bhatia had produced'.

Jagdish Zaveri of Preeti Arts was another screen printer who produced self-adhesive stickers around the same time, along with Hamid Vasi of Triace, Dinesh Gogari of Diamond Stickers and Vasu Rawal of Prachi Graphics – though their contributions were more in the early seventies. As the 1960s were coming to an end, a young Suresh Doshi from a family of textile merchants, decided to try his hand at manufacturing of self-adhesive wallpapers. In 1969 he traveled to Germany and settled on a Kroenert coater for his new venture. This machine had the capabilities to siliconize and produce self-adhesive labelstocks. Little did Suresh Doshi realize that this plant would be a nursery for the development of the Indian narrow web label industry.

## THE 1970S

In 1971 the Kroenert coater/laminator landed in Mumbai and was installed at Shanti Lal Doshi & Co, the maiden manufacturing venture of the Doshi family. In a couple of years the Doshi's

were ready to try producing labelstocks. Metroark Ltd, which is now Wacker Metroark, was already there to provide the silicone release coatings for making release papers. Solvent-based adhesive was provided by BASF and it was time to produce the first labelstock made in India by Indians.

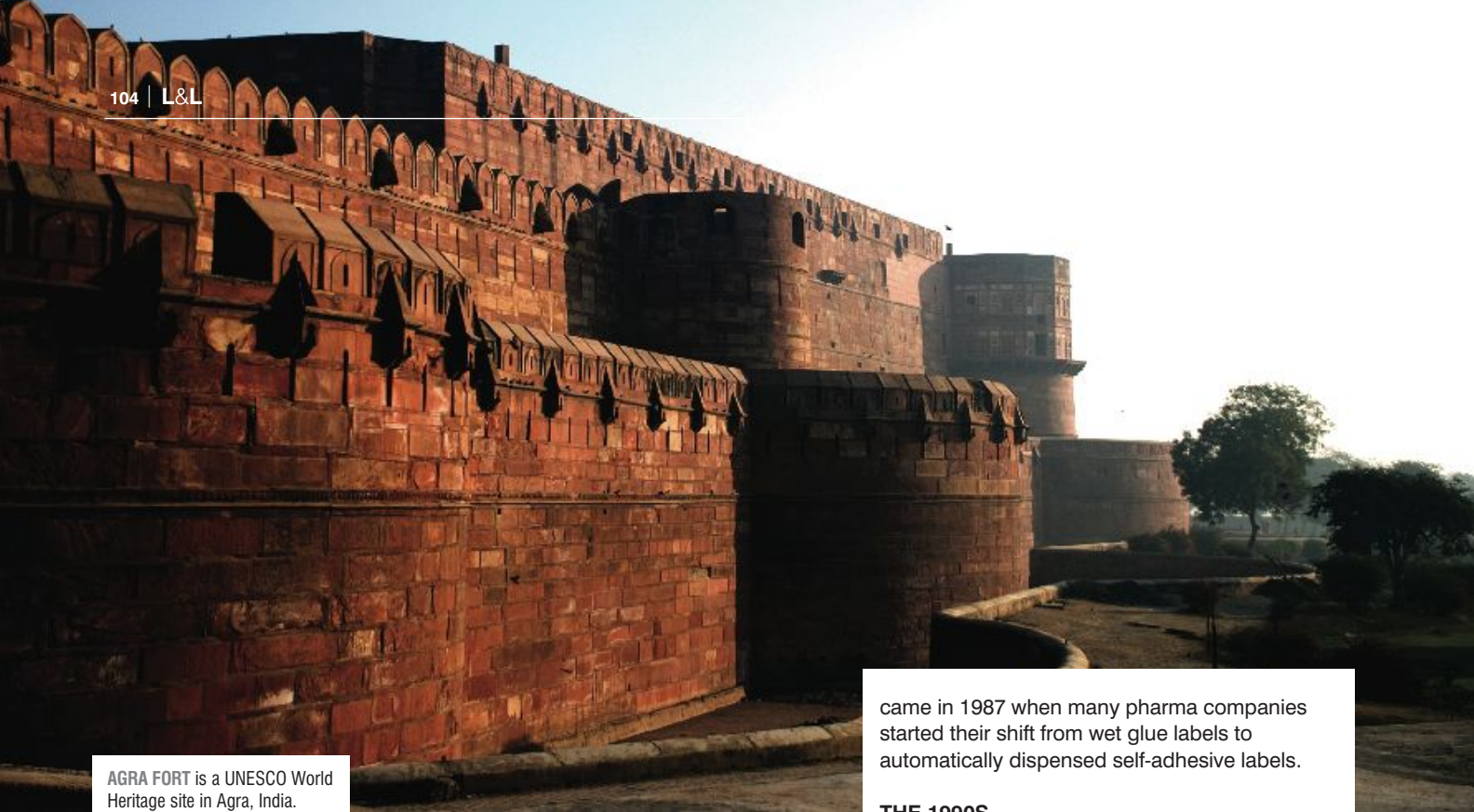
Around the same time that Suresh Doshi left for Germany in 1969, another young man, Jeetubhai Shah, visited the offices of the Standard Type foundry in Himalaya house in South Mumbai. He was surprised to see a die-cut paper label that did not need to be remoistened to make it tacky. It would stick to glass with slight pressure. It was sticky to the touch and would remain so even after having been peeled off many times.

He got from Standard Type foundry a catalogue of Iwasaki machines and joined hands with his income tax consultant and friend P P Bhagat to form a company called International Trading Company at Kalyandas Industrial Estate in Worli. They applied for an import license and imported the first machine.

By the time the press was installed, Shantilal Doshi & Co. was ready with labelstocks. The first advertisement read: 'First time in India self-adhesive labels, die-cut in any shape.' This was a key USP over Johnson and Johnson, which was using expensive rotary dies while International Trading Co. had perfected an indigenous flat bed die making process. This advertisement brought in the first big label customer, Siemens. International Trading Company and Global Graphics were the first roll form customers for Shantilal Doshi & Co., while Sharat Industries was their first sheet form customer. International Trading Co. still exists and is run by Kishore Parekh, the original partners having left the company. Jeetubhai later started a label company called Finearts.

The label industry was extended to other parts of India by the Doshi's. By 1976, they had convinced close relatives Bharat





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Mehta and his brother to set up a label press. Bharat Mehta bought his first Shiki Label press from Ahmedabad, where it was being used to produce unsupported wet glue labels. From this single Shiki he went on to add a fully loaded 8-color Gallus EM 280, a 6-color EM 280, and an Aquaflex. Despite heavy losses from a major fire, a firm resolve brought him back to what he liked best, 'Producing self-adhesive labels'.

Other early entrants into the industry in the west during the seventies were Vidya Mehta of Pressure Tags and the Kapoors of R K Papers.

At the end of the decade, the Doshi's went southwards and encouraged yet another relative, Dilip Sutaria, to become a label printer. He set up Better Labels to lead the march of self-adhesive labels in the south.

In the North, the Doshi's appointed an ex-partner of Dilip Sutaria, P D Khanna and his son Vinod Khanna as their agents in New Delhi. Around the same time, Vinayak Sood of Liddles had installed a Norprint from the UK and went on to add the first Mark Andy in 1983. The year 1979 saw Narula of Rikki Sales start his label printing operations.

In the East, the Doshi's found their first customer in the former national tennis champion Premjit Lal. The Doshi's had completed their reach all over the country and by end of the decade the self-adhesive label industry was an established fact.

According to Suresh Doshi, the biggest boost to the self-adhesive label industry was in the year 1975. Starting with the controversial Rae Bareilly election of Indira Gandhi, when congress introduced self-adhesive bindis ( 'red dot' forehead decorations), to the imposition of the law to make minimum retail price marking on consumer packages compulsory, these decision brought a surge in demand for self adhesive labels.

By 1975 another young Gujarati entrepreneur Pravin Patel had set up a Polytype coater in Ahmedabad to produce silicone papers and labelstocks. 1978 saw Hari Gupta start his H P Lablette in Delhi with his Japanese coater, and towards the end of the decade PCI in Kolkata, IPW, Veekay papers and Geva in Mumbai and Weldon in Delhi had either started or were about to begin commercial siliconizing operations.

### THE 1980S

By the start of the new decade, environment friendly acrylic emulsion adhesive was now in use for labelstock production. In 1982 Kilaru Prasad of Prasad Accumeter had brought in a hotmelt coater from Accumeter in the US where he worked as a sales director. Ananth Rao of Stayon paper followed suite with another Accumeter coater and Interlabels – now perhaps the largest Indian printer – also installed their Accumeter hot melt coater to support their entry into the label printing industry.

According to Bharat Mehta, the biggest boost to the industry this decade

came in 1987 when many pharma companies started their shift from wet glue labels to automatically dispensed self-adhesive labels.

### THE 1990S

This decade was perhaps the most eventful one. Weldon took the decision to switch over from being a mere commercial siliconizer to a prominent labelstock manufacturer, but the biggest event was the setting up by Avery Dennison of production facilities in India. I have always felt their entry changed the way people look at this industry. From being a mere sticker maker, the narrow web label printer became a specialty label producer.

In the same decade we saw printers grow in stature and capabilities. Seljagat, Wintek, S K Labels in the south; Interlabels, Webtech, R K Papers, Mudrika, Icon, Tayabi, etc in the west; Update, Syndicate, Jain transfer, Great Eastern, Prakash Labels, etc in the North. The three brothers at Prakash Labels worked hard in the price marking labels segment to drive volumes that were unheard of in the industry. Syndicate Printers went Global with operations in the UAE.

### THE NEW MILLENNIUM

The world's eyes were now on us, as proved by the Label Summit India in early 2006. The big press manufacturers started coming in: Gallus, Nilpeter, Iwasaki, Gidue, Mark Andy, Rotatek, Focus, Orthotec, the list is endless.

The local press manufacturers also have reasons to be proud. Multiflex, Jandu, RK Machine, Webtech and a host of others were reporting installations constantly. The two dynamic ladies in our industry also emerged as highly successful narrow web label printers in this decade – Amila Singhvi at IPP and Kusum Dungalay at Goodwork.

Our industry leaders Interlabels set up a unit in Africa and added more state-of-the-art presses at a new and bigger facility. Webtech also expanded with new machines and moved to bigger premises. In the earlier part of this decade, over thirty years after making history, the Kroenert coater of Shanti Lal Doshi and Company was sold to Gloss Holdings.

Weldon was the first Indian Labelstock



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manufacturer ever to have exhibited at Labelexpo Brussels and became a global exporter. The India Label show in 2002 was a resounding success, which was repeated in 2004 in cooperation with Tarsus at New Delhi. It was also in 2002 that we saw another historic step – the formation of LMAI. This happened due to the efforts of Amit Sheth and industry stalwarts like Surinder Kapoor of R K Papers, Bhavin Kothari of Interlabels, Rajesh Chadha of Update Prints, Kuldeep Goel of Any Graphics, Vivek Kapoor of Creative Prints (at that time with Icon Prints), to name but a few.

### THE FUTURE

Rapid developments and changes are happening in the Indian market. More international companies have become extremely active. The Indians are also investing across the country. Dozens of Chinese hot melt coater laminators have been installed. Label stock manufacturing is going wider – there are a few 1.5 meter coater laminators that have been installed or are in the process of being installed. A whole new set of offset printers are investing in high-end label presses, indicating a firm shift from wet glue to self adhesive labels.

Narrow web label printers are coming up in smaller cities and towns rather than being restricted only to metros. Installations have been reported at Nagpur, Pune, Indore, Hyderabad, Chandigarh, Ahmedabad, Baroda, Baddi, Utranchal etc.

A host of international label companies like CCL and Bradys are already in the process of setting up shop in India. The successful FINAT & LMAI-sponsored Euro-India label exchange, held on the sidelines of India Label Show 2006, indicated the setting up of a whole new set of joint ventures in the field of narrow web labels. Visitors from over 35 countries registered for that show.

In September 2007 the Indian Label Show was taken over by Tarsus and became a part of the global Labelexpo group. The two years following the 2006 show have seen unprecedented growth. The flock of marketing agents for the international press manufacturers had shifted gear, and were in an aggressive selling mode. The credit of expanding this market goes to the likes of Gaurav Roy selling all those Mark Andy presses; Ranesh Bajaj selling Rotatex, Lintec, Omega, etc; Amit Sheth selling Focus and Orthotec; Heidelberg selling Gallus machines; Vijay Pareekh offering MPS; Autoprint offering Omet; Riefenhauser selling Gidue and the list could go on.

### LABELS & LABELING



The biggest surprise came from Nilpeter. In the seven preceding years they sold just one press, then in the last two years they not only sold four new presses but also announced setting up of a facility to produce Nilpeter presses in Chennai, India. The Indian press manufacturers also made their mark, with R K Machines of Ahmedabad reporting 150 installations and Jandu reporting 26 installations in 2-3 years. There are a whole lot of others.

Two very important recent events were, first, the entry of Raflatrac, setting up a slitting facility near Mumbai and second, the expansion of Avery Denison with another coating/laminating facility near Pune. Competition in the labelstock segment became extremely intense. Many local stock producers suffered due to the erosion of margins and unviable credit terms. With raw material prices climbing and wafer thin profits, the time for shakeout and restructuring has arrived. Many have started looking out towards global markets or venturing into new and profitable products with synergy.

During these two last years a multitude of new printers have arrived on the scene, for example the young Chandan Khanna, who diversified from being a sheetfed offset printer to a narrow web label printer. In just a few years from his first waterless offset Iwasaki press, it became three presses and then at the Labelexpo 2006 he surprised all by announcing that he had bought a Nilpeter and an MPS in one go. Prakash labels also reported unprecedented growth with their multi-location manufacturing and stock facility in the UAE. Interlabels, the market leader, continued to grow not only in India but also in its international operations. In the south, Gururaj of Wintek in Bangalore and Raveendran of Seljagat in Sivakasi were on a roll, reporting fresh investments in the label business.

As inflationary pressure moved from the USA to India, label printers who had made huge capital investments in new label presses started to feel the pinch of competition coming from not only international printers, but also from their local counterparts with their relatively cheaper investments in Chinese label presses.

This period also becomes significant because of the recognition of Indians by the global label industry. It was a matter of pride for me for having been chosen as the only Indian member of a FINAT committee. At the FINAT congress 2008 in Paris, it was heartening to see many Indian faces and creditable that Bharat Mehta of Superlabels of Mumbai and Kamlesh Shah of Letragrafex were recipients of FINAT awards for excellence in printing. LMAI is becoming more active and interactive, once again partnering FINAT for another Indo-European label exchange alongside the 2008 India Label Show.

LMAI is also in the advanced stages of conducting a new label awards competition, while printers from surrounding countries have become or have expressed the desire to be a part of LMAI.

As a young India continues to grow at a fast pace, more and more young Indians earn more and spend more, giving a big fillip to the retail industry. As retail grows, so does the requirement for labels. There may be bad patch or a small pause, but this industry is set to grow, set many landmarks and create history.

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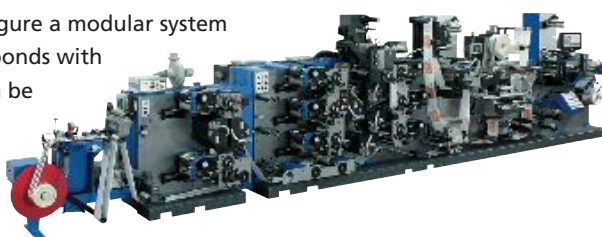
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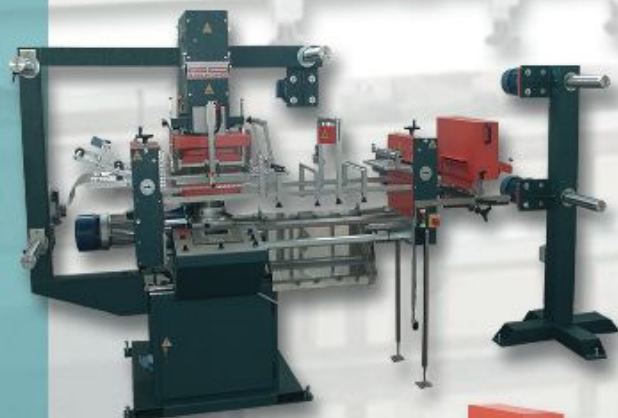
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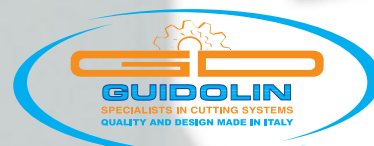
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# Configuring a laser die cut system

**TOM O'HARA**, president of Spartanics, looks at how to match the components of a laser die-cutting system to real-world narrow web applications

It was only a few years ago that laser cutting was a relative novelty in the label converting industry. That is no longer so, and there is now a dizzying array of laser cutting equipment system components to choose from. The challenge to label converters making first investments in laser cutting technology is to source machines that are well-matched to label requirements and to avoid the many models of laser cutters with obsolete software and other out-of-date design features that one can still find in the marketplace. At the same time, one needs to avoid extra costs, which can be as much as 20 percent more, for higher end components that are not required for the great majority of label applications. In this article we will give a brief overview of some of the most important concerns when matching laser cutting technology to label application requirements.

## CONFIGURED FOR NARROW WEB APPLICATIONS

The first question one should ask is whether a particular model of laser cutting equipment is configured and designed for narrow web applications. Those that are, have a 200mm working field and a smaller spot size of 210 microns that is ideal for cutting crisp and sharp complex designs, even in the thin and heat-sensitive substrates used in most label applications. Narrow web laser cutting machines are not only smaller than other laser cutters, but are precisely engineered to work seamlessly in-line with digital printers. This includes modifications to operating software, beyond the smaller physical dimensions that are apparent in narrow web laser cutting systems.

## OPTIMIZED FOR HIGH SPEED AUTOMATIC LABEL REMOVAL

For nearly every label converter, any laser cutter model that makes the automated removal of cut labels from the release paper difficult is not worth the bother. Inferior laser cutters do not use laser sources of sufficient quality to avoid excess heat during cutting. The better quality laser cutting systems that one needs to use in label applications generally have a highly controlled laser with a smaller spot size of 210 microns and the requisite superior laser control software that allows one to do cutting without overheating. Without the advanced algorithms for controlling heat during laser cutting, one finds that the adhesive layers melt in a way that makes release paper and labels stick together instead of coming apart when they are supposed to. This makes these poorly controlled laser cutters inappropriate for any label application involving adhesives and release paper.

## CONTROLLED LASER POWER FROM SEALED LASER TUBE

The quality requirements of nearly all label applications require the better cutting control afforded by laser cutting machines configured to use sealed laser tubes. Unlike flow-through open designs, the sealed laser tubes keep a constant mixture of gases and that in turn allows consistency in both the laser power and the spot size of the laser. In open laser tube systems the ratio of gases in the CO<sub>2</sub> laser (i.e. mixture of hydrogen, nitrogen, helium, and carbon dioxide) is more variable and also requires you to change the gas bottle quite frequently. Every time there is a new gas bottle it means there is a new gas ratio mixture requiring new settings on the laser cutter. It is difficult, if not impossible, to save settings that are usable from one open laser tube to another. Sealed laser tubes, in contrast, will allow one to keep the same settings for more than 10,000 hours that each sealed laser tube lasts. Consistent quality becomes far more doable.

## OPTIMIZED FOR WEB SPEED, NOT CUTTING SPEED

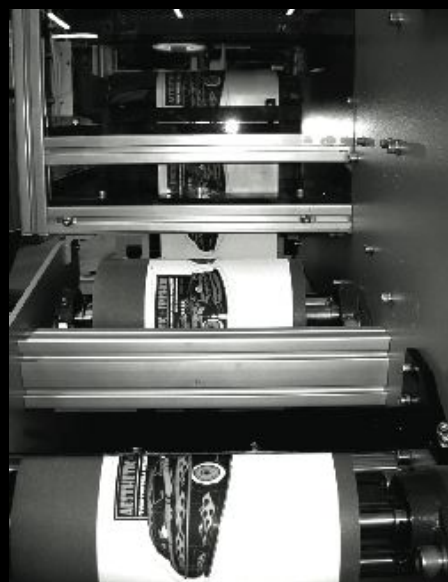
It is important not to be confused by manufacturers' claims on cutting speeds, as this is not particularly relevant to the actual web speed in most applications – the all-important consideration in actual label production.

Figures 1 and 2 show a scalloped edge design created with older technology that cannot optimize for web speed, and the same scalloped edge design created by today's better laser cutters that CAN optimize cutting sequences for web speed. Note that the marking speed (a.k.a. cutting speed) is 0.6 seconds in both cases. However, the cutting sequence that is not optimized for web speed proceeds at approximately 9 percent of the web speed shown in Figure 2, where the cutting sequence is optimized for web speed.

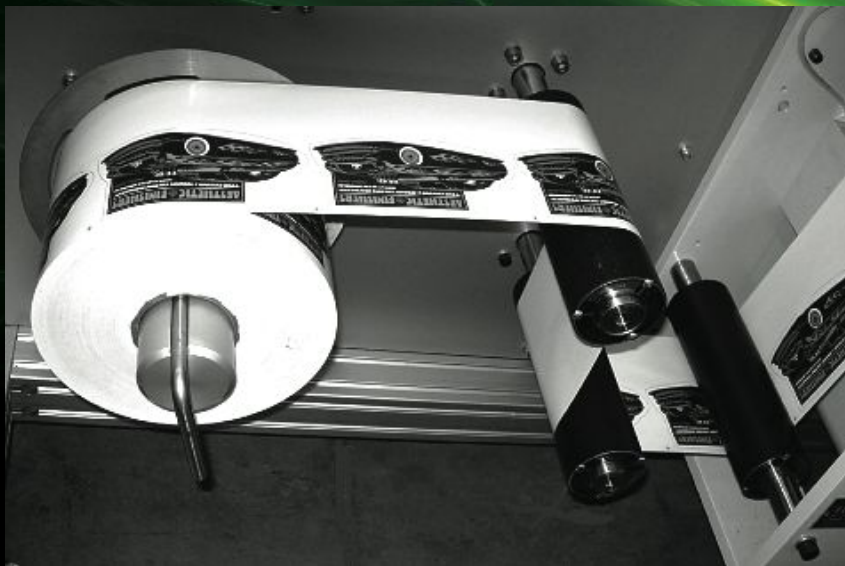
This optimization of web speed is done automatically by the software in today's better quality laser cutting machines, and does not require operator training or input.

## SELECTING SYSTEM COMPONENTS

You can expect a cost difference of up to 20 percent between laser cutting systems







made from high-end components and those that are made with components of lesser quality. As a manufacturer of both high-end and more affordable laser cutting systems, Spartanicus estimates that nearly four times as many label converters – but certainly not all – will be adequately served by lower cost systems. It is important to know that your source for laser cutting technology is not married to particular component suppliers. Best-match components for particular applications (laser source, laser scan heads, etc.) can be sourced worldwide. Lower cost systems can produce high quality outputs IF the underlying software engineering and systems integration are expert.

Knowing your real quality requirements is the first step in zeroing in on whether your operation is better served by low cost or higher quality laser cutting systems. However, there is a baseline of quality that should always be achieved, such as avoiding burn-through marks and achieving a crisp, narrow cut.

If a laser cutting system presents burn-throughs, it usually reflects a poorer quality of software engineering to operate the laser - especially at the start and end of a cut. The soft marking capabilities of today's better quality laser cutters should be considered as a non-negotiable feature, whether a system is high-priced or low-priced. There are systems at all price levels that can and cannot achieve this level of quality and thorough investigation is required.

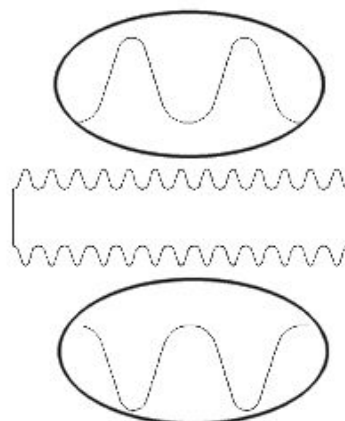
The wattage of the laser should be carefully considered. Most of the commercially available lasers have the best laser beam quality with full power. If you end up using only 10 percent of the laser power from your laser source you can expect significantly diminished laser beam quality. For example, a label converter making kisscuts with easy-to-cut materials and with a 300 watt laser in their cutting system, may be using only a small portion of available laser power and would be better suited by a lower watt laser. In contrast, a label converter making many throughcuts, including more difficult to cut release paper, which also wants to achieve high cutting speeds, would need that 300 watt laser.

The above is a short list of criteria that one needs to first address when sourcing laser cutting technology.

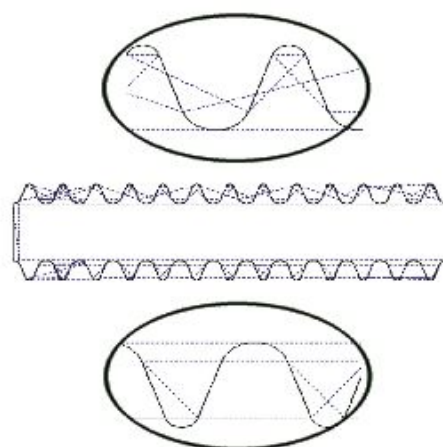
## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Tom O'Hara is president of Spartanicus, which manufactures the family of Spartanicus Fineprint laser cutting systems as well as die-cutting equipment, screen printing systems, and other equipment used by worldwide label converters. Inquiries can be directed to [tohara@spartanicus.com](mailto:tohara@spartanicus.com). For a more detailed discussion of the above, converters can refer to the Spartanicus Technical Guide: How to Match Today's Laser Cutting Technology to Application Requirements, available by writing to [LaserCuttingTechnicalGuide@spartanicus.com](mailto:LaserCuttingTechnicalGuide@spartanicus.com).

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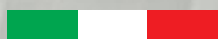


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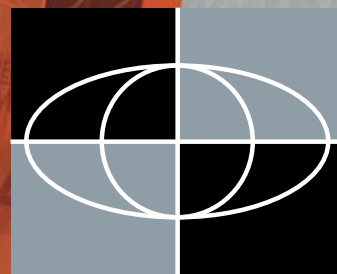


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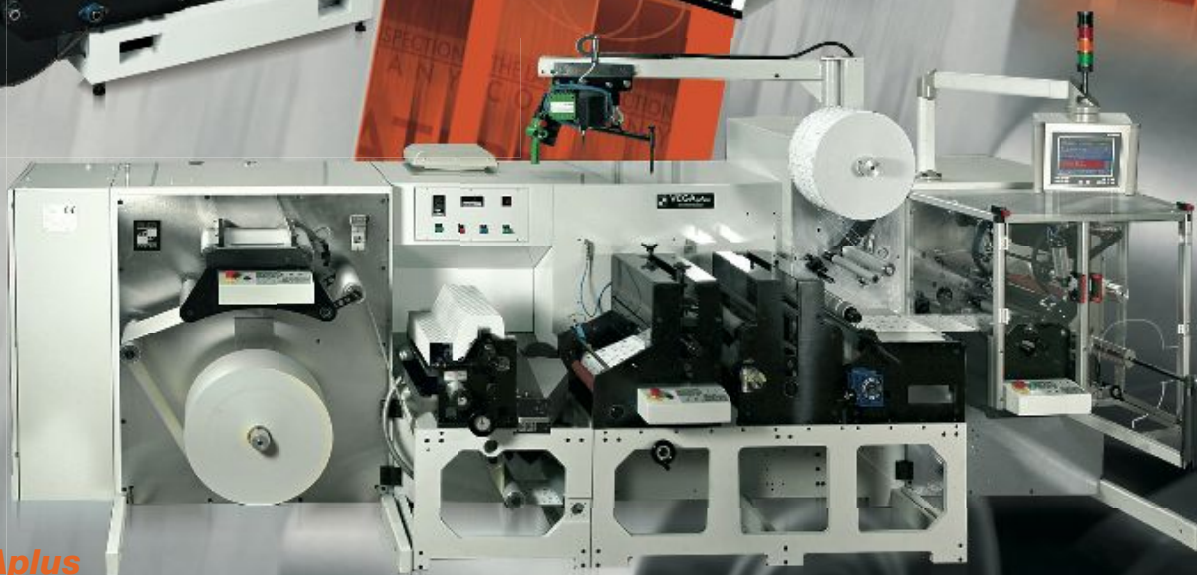
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# Migration issues

**TO** ensure there are no migration issues with UV inks and food packaging, get the printed product tested to European standards, argues Steve Fisher, MD of Mirage Inks

There is a great deal of misunderstanding surrounding UV cured inks deemed suitable for food packaging use. Standards can vary considerably between European and North American regulations, with unsubstantiated claims only adding to the general confusion.

Mirage was a pioneer of cationic UV technology, but in the last year developed its own range of free radical UV products suitable for adhesion to polymer films, so we have no axe to grind with either technology.

When printing UV inks on food packaging it is important that the printer and ink manufacturer form a close partnership. Both parties' interests can be protected by a standard confidentiality agreement. The ink manufacturer has a responsibility to formulate inks which minimize any likelihood of migration. The printer has the responsibility to ensure that the finished article is fit for purpose, so will need to be aware of any ink components with the potential to migrate.

From a legislative standpoint, inks applied to food packaging materials are not covered by any specific harmonized European legislation, but all inks should comply with EC regulation No.1935/2004, which states: 'Any material or article intended to come into contact directly or

indirectly with food, must be sufficiently inert to preclude substances from being transferred to food in quantities large enough to endanger human health or to bring about an unacceptable change in the composition of the food or deterioration in its organoleptic properties.'

It is important to remember that if there is insufficient or no toxicological data available for the components utilized within the ink formulation, the migration results will need to be below 10ppb (ten parts per billion or 10µg/Kg). Consideration should also be given to products that were not part of the original formulation but could be created by the reaction/curing process.

EU Directive 2002/72/EC lays down an overall migration limit (OML) of 60mg/kg, or 10mg/dm<sup>2</sup> of surface area, and a specific migration limit (SML) for individual substances. The directive contains a positive list of monomers as well as an incomplete list of additives used in the manufacture of plastic materials. Substances used only in the manufacture of printing inks are not listed and so do not come under the scope of this directive. If ink components are listed, they must meet any SMLs that are set for them.

The raw materials for food packaging must not under any circumstances belong to any of the following categories: carcinogenic; mutagenic; toxic for reproduction; toxic and very toxic; and colorants based on, or compounds of, certain heavy metals.

A substance with sufficient toxicological data – EFSA requires three negative in-vitro mutagenicity tests – is acceptable if its migration does not exceed 50ppb. Above 50ppb it is acceptable only if supported by favorable toxicological data and/or evaluation carried out in accordance with EFSA guidelines.

## TRANSFER MECHANISM

The transfer of a substance to a foodstuff can occur by migration through the substrate, by set-off on the non-printed side, or via the food contact side of the substrate when reeled or stacked. Migration is dependent on several factors including ink film weight, ink formulation, product type, environmental conditions of use – for example storage temperature and shelf life – and type and thickness of the substrate or container used to package the product.

It is important that testing is carried out by a recognized organization with the appropriate analytical capability and



## HIGHLIGHTS

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## LABELS & LABELING

equipment. In Europe, this information is available through the European Printing Ink Association (EUPIA), part of CEPE.

Migration testing generally makes use of food simulants like water, acetic acid solution, ethanol solution and olive oil. The printed side, as a worse case can be extracted and if levels are below the acceptable limit, further migration tests are not necessary.

The Council Of Europe(Public Health Committee) have issued a policy statement concerning inks applied to the non food contact surface of packaging which includes a list of evaluated and non-evaluated substances. However this was generated from the original plastics directive 2002/72/EC, which does not include all materials used in printing inks. Therefore many organizations, including EUPIA, believe these lists to be outdated and unworkable. To this end EUPIA is compiling a separate inventory list which encompasses the majority of raw materials used in ink manufacture.

It is thought that either the EUPIA list will replace the CoE list or they will be amalgamated. It is also envisaged that these will become 'positive' lists at some point in the future and certain countries may adopt them into their national legislation.

### THE AMERICAN VIEW

Approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is not required for inks/coatings or components that do not become part of the food when used as intended. However, if components from inks migrate into food at more than minimum levels they would be considered indirect additives. Hence an ink can only be said to be in compliance with FDA regulations if it complies with applicable FDA pre-market clearance or is otherwise exempt from pre-market clearance and is not going to render the food/product injurious to human health.

The FDA's approval/support of a Food Contact Notification (FCN) for a Food Contact Substance (FCS) is based on exposure and the cumulative estimated daily intake of a particular substance. In general, for a cumulative exposure of >0.5ppb but < 50ppb to be acceptable, two mutagenicity tests are required

## FURTHER READING

The European Printing Ink Association has produced a range of useful documents including guidelines on printing inks applied to the non-food contact surface of food packaging materials and articles. This includes the relevant legislative requirements and a selection scheme for raw materials, and details the testing methods to be used for the evaluation of the migration of components used in food packaging. It also sets out the responsibilities of the ink manufacturer, the packaging manufacturer and the filler in order to comply with legal requirements.

EUPIA's Good Manufacturing Practices for the production of packaging inks is included in the CoE's policy statement as Technical document No.2. The EUPIA opinion on the European Union's GMP states that they believe that if inks are supplied for food packaging which have been made using the concepts of the EUPIA GMP and guidelines, this will give maximum support to packaging manufacturers looking to meet the criteria of the Framework and GMP regulations.

EUPIA also publishes Frequently Asked Questions on the legal status of printing inks, while its Inks for Food Packaging provides a good general overview.

to establish its safety under the FCN program. This differs significantly from the EU, where a migration level of up to 50ppb requires three mutagenicity tests.

A recent article issued by Radtech North America has suggested that certain free radical resins, monomers and photo-initiators can be used for food packaging with a migration limit of 10ppm (ten parts per million). This we believe is very misleading and would not meet EU requirements.

At least one major end user has produced a guidance note on UV printing which includes a list of authorized photo-initiators and acrylates they will allow to be used in free radical ink formulations. A study carried out in 2004 by Kings College London reported on the potential migration on ink/packaging components through secondary packaging into food, detailing several instances of free radical photo-initiators being detected at unacceptable levels.

International law firm Keller and Heckman possesses an in-depth knowledge of both US and EU packaging law, and its website ([www.khlaw.com](http://www.khlaw.com) and [www.packaginglaw.com](http://www.packaginglaw.com)) is a useful first port of call for organizations requiring a more complete explanation of the differences between US and EU regulations,

This merely underlines the importance of making certain that our industry is capable of providing a safe package.

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# TLMI and L&L host golf day

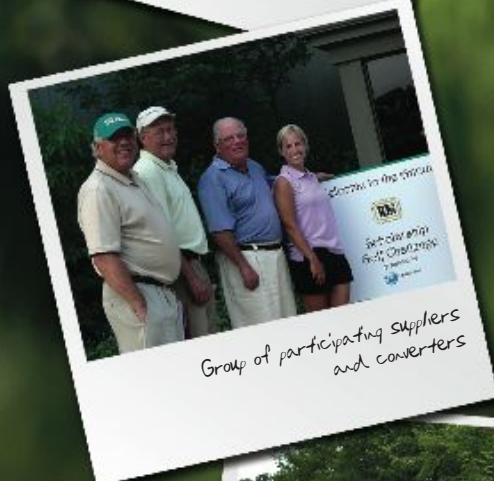
**THIS** year the Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute has been commemorating its 75th anniversary at various occasions in anticipation for its grand birthday bash to be held at this year's Annual Meeting in Palm Beach, Florida.

Preliminary celebrations were had over cake, candles and cocktails on July 21 at the 9th Annual TLMI Scholarship Golf Challenge. Held to raise money in support of industry education, the event, hosted by Labelexpo and Labels & Labeling magazine, was yet another success.

While nine years in comparison to seventy-five sounds trivial, the golf tournament has raised a significant amount of money – over \$100,000 – for the trade association's scholarship fund during its short tenure. Always held at Lake Barrington Shores Golf Club, this year's participants helped raise the total even higher. The winning four-some of Ray Buisker, Brian Buisker, Phil Saran and Greg Hague finished the day with a score of 61 coming in at 10 under par. Congratulations! And thank you to everyone that participated!



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ON the shop floor:  
a Mark Andy LP3000

# Wal-Mart's in-house converter

**WAL-MART** has its own label production facility with a consummate lean manufacturing process, supported by its suppliers and an exemplary recycling system. Danielle Jerschefske reports

When Sam Walton opened Walton's 5 & Dime store in Bentonville, Arkansas back in 1951, he couldn't have imagined the widespread growth and success his small-town operation would achieve, nor the impact it would eventually have on the world's market and its people.

The first Wal-Mart discount store opened in 1962 and a mere five years later there were 24 stores in Walton's home state reaping in \$12.6 million in sales. Its size and revenue has created millions of jobs and boosts the local economies in the surrounding areas of store locations. Since 2000 alone, the local population of Bentonville has grown an impressive 20 percent and continues to grow as many of the uber-retailer's suppliers establish offices nearby. Now, nearly 60 years later, Wal-Mart has over 7,357 stores in 14 markets around the world.

The size and sales of the company is hard to grasp, with annual sales in 2007 reaching \$345 billion. This annual revenue is five times that of Microsoft, and is greater than the economies of 144 of the world's countries.

With its immense size and prodigious impact on the global supply chain, Wal-Mart created its own Printing and Mailing Distribution Center (PMDC), near its home office, to decrease the amount of outsourcing the company must do. PMDC is a 198,000 square foot facility that employs 300 full-time associates.

It is home to the company's mailing center, which works as an independent post office only for the company's own mail. It also contains a bindery, printshop, silk screen and flexographic departments and a warehouse to contain its finished materials. For its label printing needs, Wal-Mart uses a Mark Andy 2200 and a Mark Andy LP3000, both 13 inches and six-color.

Attached to the front of both presses is a Martin Automatic splicer, and added to the ends of each is a Martin Automatic rewinder. 'These tools help us to eliminate waste and reduce downtime,' says Marty Vavra, PMDC's label products manager. 'This is top of the line equipment and not only is our production better with it, but morale of associates improves because they know they are working on the best available.'

From the presses, the printed label master rolls are removed from the rewinder and put onto one of two Omega Vectra slitter/re-winders before they are packaged and sent out. 'The labels we produce are for our bakery, deli and warehouses,' says Rick White, silkscreen/flexo department manager. The shop is, for

the most part, running 24 hours a day, seven days a week with 25 associates focusing on label production only.

A small run for the label house is 7-800,000 linear feet, with runs reaching to lengths of 1.5 – 3 million linear feet. 'With the longer runs, we do not have much downtime,' Vavra explains. 'Nonetheless, it is a team effort to minimize

downtime when it does occur'. On average, the shop runs about 160 – 170 million linear feet of label stock each year. PMDC's label division has seen a 233 percent growth in the last four years.

Because of the vast quantity of labels that Wal-Mart needs, it is impossible for PMDC to produce enough labels to meet its demands. 'We have about five or six other label suppliers that we work very closely with,' Vavra says. 'In fact, we have learned to embrace our competition. We bring them in and share and learn together to improve the quality of the labels and our operations.'

Surprisingly, the work does not always go to the lowest

**"It is an important part of quality because flowing waste out of the building promotes cleanliness and efficiency"**



OPERATOR preparing the Martin Automatic splicer



MARTIN AUTOMATIC and Omega equipment



RICK WHITE and Marty Vavra in the label department of PMDC



bidder. Vavra stresses the importance of quality and the need to continue to improve. At PMDC, each job goes through a rigorous quality control check from inks to finished product to ensure that all is in order. A job is not started without operator and management approval. 'You've got to have a second set of eyes look at the work,' Vavra says. 'There have been no quality recalls at PMDC from 2004 to 2008.'

#### SUPPLIER RELATIONSHIP SUCCESS

Much of PMDC's label stock is supplied by Ricoh. 'We have fantastic relationships with our suppliers,' Vavra explains. 'It is crucial to our success. For example, Ricoh is in our building each month. And when they, or other suppliers, come in, it gives them a chance to discuss problems openly with our associates on the shop floor. It is in this way that they can obtain a press operator standpoint. We also require all of our suppliers to regularly come to our facility to give educational seminars to the associates. It is a great way to train our associates hands-on.'

Training, Vavra notes, is a major investment, but brings a great return. He says that PMDC has a great relationship with many of its competitors and often benchmarks their facilities to learn how operations are conducted there. 'We feel that it is very important and provides extreme benefit to see how another team works together to achieve success,' he says. 'Our success really comes down to the people. We constantly emphasize training and share as much as we can within the company.'

Besides training, managers at PMDC strive to create a family atmosphere and understand the importance of communication within a team. Each shift has a meeting to discuss the workload for the day as well as review the jobs completed in the past days. Every two weeks, there is an all-associate meeting. 'There is a lot of information sharing,' White says.

#### LABELS & LABELING

#### ENVIRONMENTAL INITIATIVES

While PMDC has always recycled parts of its waste, three years ago an all-inclusive recycling program began. This initiative would document all PMDC waste volumes, income, and initiatives to reduce waste. Senior management was fully behind the program from its beginning but left it to the recycling team to gain approval and employee buy-in from each department. A recycling station was created to determine what could be salvaged from the trash compactor. The next step was to invite local recyclers to the plant to identify recyclables and bid on the recyclable materials. Recycling stations were set up throughout the building. The team set up a table for associates to place recyclable items on in order to verify all of the different waste streams in the facility. From there, the next step was to find a location to recycle each type of waste found within the plant, and to create an area to consolidate the waste. 'The key was to make it convenient,' Karen Eshleman, quality manager, says. 'We have an area in each department to appropriately categorize the waste it uses the most, and there is even a recycle bin next to each associate's desk. Paper and plastic recycling bins are located throughout the facility.' The volume of waste is tracked through a PMDC designed recycle tag that allows the plant to trace what goes out on each pallet. All data is recorded daily and at the end of each month verified with the recycler's statement.

The recycle tag has two sheets – one for PMDC to hold and one for the recycler to file. As each box of waste is loaded on the truck, its exact location, (eg far back right on the top) is tracked to ensure a reliable chain of custody. This gives proof should any questions arise about what is in a specific trailer.

Once the use of the recycle tag was implemented and documentation began, it became very clear that the

label department produced a lot of label stock waste, specifically matrix. PMDC invested in a baler that is attached to a vacuum matrix waste remover that has proven to be operationally efficient. The stock runs automatically from the press to the baler, generating up to seven bales per day. In July of 2007, PMDC joined with DONCO Paper Co. to recycle its matrix into an industrial fiber for reuse. The cost of this initiative is comparable to the cost of sending the matrix to a landfill.

Eshleman says, 'It is an important part of quality because flowing waste out of the building promotes cleanliness and efficiency.' 'We do it because it is the right thing to do and it makes the business run better,' Vavra explains further. In 2007, PMDC recycled 89.8 percent (12 month average) of its total waste and had six trash compactor pulls. This year to date (June 30, 2008) they have had two trash compactor pulls and are averaging a 97.2 percent recycled waste. PMDC has discovered appropriate avenues for the various waste streams and is earning \$3-500 per day from various recycling initiatives.

The question of sustainability is rising to equal importance with price and quality. Company executives ask PMDC the same question it asks all of its other suppliers: 'Yes, we want quality, yes we want price, but what are you doing regarding sustainability?'

#### SUGGESTIONS

'It is just as simple to do (recycling) as it is not to do,' Vavra says. 'If you are already doing it, figure out how to do it better. Get together with your local recyclers and find out what they can reuse and evaluate sourcing from other suppliers who have simple, innovative options. For instance, at PMDC, we are looking at coreless rolls of label stock because it is a simple way to reduce paper usage.'



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# Tracking with holograms

**ROLL AND SHEET-FED PRINTERS** can benefit from track and trace holograms, says Ian Lancaster, general secretary of the International Hologram Manufacturers Association

The counterfeiting explosion is being driven by increased industrial globalization, extended supply chains, the growth of brands, weak regional law enforcement and lenient criminal penalties.

Moreover, the impact of the internet as a conduit for counterfeit goods and the impact of high quality reprographic technology have also made it easy and affordable to copy brand packaging.

So, against this backdrop, it's little wonder that the hologram has emerged to become the primary choice for an expanding range of anti-counterfeiting and brand protection applications.

The technology's ability to incorporate other data forms and product tracking information is becoming increasingly important, and commercially acceptable, with the added bonus of being able to link on-pack product identification with supply chain management, market enforcement and forensic support services.

A burgeoning gray market economy (where legitimate goods are produced in unauthorized quantities or diverted to a market in which a retailer has no right to sell them) means that counterfeit products turn up for sale anywhere in the world from street corner traders in the big cities to small villages in remote provinces.

Tackling this issue typically requires the marking of individual items with a unique serial number or 'license plate'. These can then be tracked through the whole supply chain process from the production line to final point-of-sale.

Armed with the information this facility provides, companies and the anti-counterfeiting agencies that work on their behalf can examine products found in cheap flea markets on the other side of the world, on the premises of an unauthorized retailer or dealer or on a 'fly-by-night' website and pose the question: 'How did it get here?' – an important first step in beginning to find out what happened and where the problem lies.

Today's advanced holograms offer beneficial 'track & trace' features which can help users generate unique sequential, encrypted or random serial numbers or identify and mark products overtly or covertly either via special self-adhesive labels or directly onto product using a variety of print technologies.

Serialized, self-adhesive labels with a hologram can be produced by printers in one of two ways. One way is to begin with holographic label stock obtained from a reputable holographic security supplier. This material can be kiss-cut, waste stripped and serialized, then slit to single width rolls. (See Fig. 1 below).

Here, the printer is basically performing a converting and numbering operation. Before describing the second method, it is worth mentioning that self adhesive

**"Company executives ask PMDC the same question it asks all of its other suppliers: Yes, we want quality, yes we want price, but what are you doing regarding sustainability?"**

labels normally are machine applied and therefore must be produced in roll form. Ideal for the narrow web converter but not for the sheet fed printer.

A technique in which the printer can add more value is by application of the hologram to printed paper label stock. The hologram is obtained as continuous rolls of hot stamping foil and transferred onto the paper by means of equipment designed for this purpose (e.g. Dimuken). See Fig 2. Entry level machines for this purpose begin at \$50K with \$100-250K being a more realistic range. Such an investment provides the ability to fulfill orders

## THE INTERNATIONAL HOLOGRAM MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION

The International Hologram Manufacturers Association (IHMA) is made up of over 80 of the world's leading hologram companies. IHMA members are the leading producers and converters of holograms for banknote security, anti-counterfeiting, brand protection, packaging, graphics and other commercial applications around the world. IHMA member companies actively cooperate to maintain the highest professional, security and quality standards. More at [www.ihma.org](http://www.ihma.org).



of 1,000,000+ labels on a regular basis.

Alphanumeric or barcode serialization can be carried out at various stages of the print conversion stage and a variety of printers (inkjet, thermal transfer etc) are readily available for this purpose. The technology selected and type of serialization provided must be determined by the client who will almost certainly need to 'read' the tracking code at the moment it is applied to his product.

The identity of individual items can be linked to packaging through a unique code, which in turn can be linked to case ID, pallet ID or container ID. The recording of this so-called parent child relationship between unit pack, carton and pallet is the beginning of an electronic pedigree which allows the item to be tracked throughout the many layers of the distribution chain: from the factory and packaging through distribution to the final user.

This type of usage can also be used to capture important events in a product's life cycle – QA rejects and product returns, for instance – creating a flexible database that offers product history and other business reporting benefits.

Of particular value to the brand owner (and a strong financial incentive to make the investment in such systems) is the fact that the information generated at this labeling stage can be linked

to the company's ERP (enterprise resource planning) system which links in a single database the data needed for a variety of business functions such as manufacturing, supply chain management, financials, projects, human resources and customer relationship management.

When brand owners or licensors make agreements to enable a third-party to produce licensed products, a security device is typically used to ensure authenticity and to help keep track of royalties. Sequentially numbered anti-counterfeit security labels are supplied to the manufacturing site in exactly the correct number corresponding to the quantity of items ordered.

Here, the role of the hologram is to act as the security device – an integral part of an all round added value information toolkit designed to support the secure ordering, shipping, tracking and control of components. The inclusion of serial number tracking enables the licensor to search the history of a particular serial number and identify to whom that item was shipped and when. Conversely, if any items are discovered in the marketplace lacking the security label, it is automatically unauthorized thus opening the door to prosecution of the vendor for illicit trading.

A prime example of this is in the merchandising sector, particularly for

sporting events such as the Olympic Games, the FIFA World Cup and the American Football Superbowl. Licensed merchandise produced and sold to promote and capitalize from such events now routinely feature serialized holograms as the key authentication device in track and trace programs. The 'evergreen' merchandise of all the US sporting leagues have also used serialized holographic labels and tags for many years testifying to the effectiveness of such programs.

These ensure the effective distribution of tags and labels to official licensees, the collection of revenues from these licensees and, in return, the protection of revenues from the growing array of sophisticated and hard-to-detect counterfeits that plague such events.

Elsewhere, German cosmetics giant Beiersdorf has stamped out counterfeiting of its popular Nivea branded range of hair care products in Russia with the use of a technology called HoloSpot, a miniaturized self adhesive label with which contains four different levels of security – including an overt holographic numeral, holographic microtext, a projection hologram and an encrypted digital code unique to each product, with the data written to the labels in a real-time production environment using a lithographic system linked to a database of production information.

The company introduced the feature along with an awareness campaign to distributors advising them not to buy outside legitimate supply chains, and within a year of its introduction, the company reported an absence of counterfeits.

Unquestionably, one of the keys to the success of holograms since being adopted for authentication purposes in the early 1980s has been the ability of the printer to offer a complete service package to the client. This generally means holding inventory of the numbered labels, being able to supply them against on-line purchase orders and to keep meticulous records of what was shipped where, and when.

Above all, the client needs to be assured that none of his labels will be allowed to slip out of the back door. Surveillance cameras and access controlled work areas are essential together with security background checks on workers and secure waste disposal procedures for non conforming product.


The printer will generally need to provide his client with two manuals, a quality manual and a security manual each describing, in detail, the procedures in place designed to ensure a consistent and secure product. This all sounds complicated and it is true that significant investment in technology and training is required but help is always at hand to guide printers through this process.



**Fig 1:** Paper based, self-adhesive sticker, die-cut to register, waste stripped with two channels, registered image hologram applied (middle square on right hand side)



**Fig. 2:** Die cut, waste stripped, holographic labels, individually numbered and supplied in rolls



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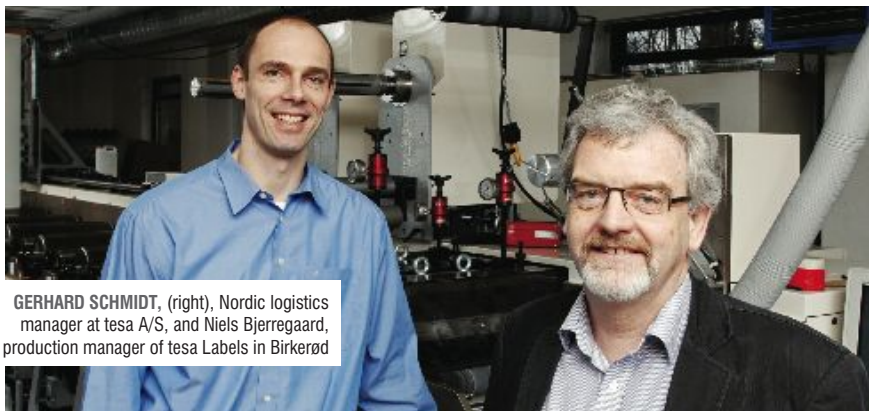


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# INSTALLATIONS



GERHARD SCHMIDT, (right), Nordic logistics manager at tesa A/S, and Niels Bjerregaard, production manager of tesa Labels in Birkerød

## 8-color Nilpeter FA-4 tesa A/S Birkerød, Denmark

tesa Labels, based in Birkerød, Denmark, has installed an 8-color Nilpeter FA-4 UV-flexo press. It is a 420 mm-wide machine with two die stations and a turnbar which permits in-line reverse-side 4/4 printing. The machine also has a lamination unit for delam-relam applications. Tesa produces mainly for the pharmaceutical industry, where the demand is now for stock management, rapid turnaround and short runs of labels which require strong brand colors.

According to Niels Bjerregaard, tesa's production manager, the Nilpeter Easy Load sleeve system and gearless anilox sleeve technology greatly reduce makeready times. Screen cylinders can also be changed quickly and easily. The FA-4 can print at up to 175 m/min.

tesa has also invested in a modular press workstation system from Danish company Custmo ApS, which organizes cylinders, sleeves, rollers and plates within easy reach of the press.

## Prati Jupiter TC400 inspection rewinder Hally Labels, Australia

Hally Labels has installed a Prati Jupiter TC400 slitter rewinding inspection machine at its recently acquired Buckner Labels operation in Brisbane. Hally looked to upgrade its slitting and rewinding capacities with a machine that could handle thinner substrates without stretching. 'We were looking for something that could run faster, but we had very specific requirements around the unsupported webs, using very thin films and trying to run them at speed without any stretch or tension issues,' explains Mike Haworth, finance director of Hally Labels.

'Unsupported film is used for wrapping around the product, with glue applied,' explains Australian operations manager Tania James. 'Stretched film distorts the printed images and also creates dispensing problems, as the eye-marks used by the machine change position. But the software-controlled rewind tension measurements on the Jupiter

TC400 keep the material in constant web tension, preventing this stretching.'

The Jupiter maintains three rewind tension measurements, keeping constant web tension. It also inspects for missing labels and waste, presenting all defects at the correction table. Whilst rewinding, a constant tension on the shaft and variable tension on the substrate prevents conic distortion on the reel.

'The other aspect for us was the ability to present cleanly finished and edged rolls,' states Tania James. 'Unsupported film has a tendency to take a variable web path because it is so light. On non-servo machines, you get a feathering of the edges on finished rolls. But with the Jupiter, Prati has been able to develop a smooth edge.' Tania James estimates that since the Jupiter TC400 began operating, production speeds have increased by 30-40 percent. The TC400 was supplied through Gallus Australia, Prati's local distributor.



## 12-COLOR NILPETER FA-4 ROYSTON LABELS

As part of an on-going investment program, Royston Labels has installed a Nilpeter FA-4 combination press. With a web width of 420mm the new press is capable of printing up to 12 colors, screen or flexo, individually or in combination, onto a wide range of substrates. The press has the additional advantage of movable hot and cold foil units and over-lamination.

The press is located at Royston Labels' facility in Royston, Hertfordshire in the UK, which has recently been expanded by 8,000 square feet.

Paul Clayton, managing director Royston Labels, states: 'Installing a new press is a big investment. We felt that the Nilpeter FA-4 was a highly versatile and flexible system. The new press further supports our drive to push the quality boundaries yet further in UV flexo technology. The servo driven press has tighter controls which will help support ongoing targets of reducing waste and set up times in what is already a highly efficient manufacturing operation. The press will also significantly increase our production capacity'.

Royston Labels have been producing self-adhesive labels for over twenty-five years.



MIKE HAWORTH, finance director of Hally Labels



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# Bud-WISE-er

**DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE** talks to Spear USA to find out how Anheuser-Busch's Precision Printing facility fits into its growth plan

Spear USA announced its purchase of the Anheuser-Busch label printing facility, Precision Printing, in Clarksville, Tennessee, at the beginning of the summer 2008. This move marks the second strategic step in a year made by the label printer to ensure its continued growth within the beverage market. Already well known in the industry as one of the top pressure sensitive beverage label producers, Spear's acquisition of a mostly wet-glue production plant certainly puzzled many; nonetheless, it's a move that fits well into Spear's forward plans.

Founded in Cincinnati, Ohio in 1982, Spear has grown to have six facilities around the world. The South African location was established and built in 2007 primarily to support SAB (South African Breweries) with wide-web gravure and narrow web combination capability. It currently produces approximately 90-95 percent wet-glue paper, a big difference from Spear's other facilities that manufacture nearly 100 percent pressure sensitive work.

Production at the newly acquired Clarksville plant is mostly roll fed paper – less than half is pressure sensitive. It has similar gravure presses to those used at the Spear plant located in Fulton, New York (acquired from Sonoco in 2003); two gravure presses, a 52 inch and 26 inch, provide the capacity the plant needs to run a 24/7 operation. The wider press is used to complete the longer runs efficiently, requiring a changeover, on average, once every 3-4 days. To meet its clients' needs to take products to market faster, the factory more recently installed the narrower web press which requires significantly less changeover time, averaging 3-4 changes each day.

## WET-GLUE TO PRESSURE SENSITIVE

Prior to the inclusion of the Clarksville and South African plants in its portfolio, Spear was basically a PS print house, doing jobs mostly in the film 'no-label look' beverage market. Dan Muenzer, VP of marketing, says, 'Spear is a drastically different company than it was a year ago.' These recent moves have created a large shift in operations within the company, but only temporarily.

In the short term, Spear is exploring

the best ways to fill its recently acquired wet-glue capacity where it makes strategic sense. In the longer term, the

**"The use of pressure sensitive labels in the beer market has steadily grown from 10 billion PS labels in 2006 to 18 billion in 2008. We anticipate seeing this growth continue"**

company will maintain its focus on the growth potential within the pressure sensitive labels market worldwide. Muenzer says, 'PS is the way to go. We anticipate rapid growth in pressure sensitive label production.'

With the acquisition of the Clarksville plant, Spear has positioned itself in the high-volume wet-glue paper business

that it will slowly, but surely, transition into film pressure sensitive. Muenzer explains, 'it's an interim step to supply wet-glue labels to our customers until they are prepared for the switch to pressure sensitive. The use of pressure sensitive labels in the beer market has steadily grown from 10 billion PS labels in 2006 to 18 billion in 2008. We anticipate seeing this growth continue.'

Muenzer believes end users will ultimately invest in PS label applicator machinery: 'Eventually beverage companies will make the switch because of the improved efficiency and increased speeds. But it will not be a quick change because it requires capital to shift application lines to PS lines.' He expects to see that transition completed by 2020.

Spear recognizes that the shift will be more difficult in the fast emerging





## NORTH AMERICAN LABEL SURVEY

According to the most recent market survey and analysis conducted by Mike Fairley, over 90 percent of converters in North America produce pressure sensitive labels. The survey found a small decline in the amount of glue-applied paper labels converted.

countries like Brazil, Russia, India and China, so its initial focus will remain on Mexico and South Africa as well as parts of Eastern Europe.

## METALIZED PAPER

Along with the acquisition of the Clarksville plant, came the large brewer's proprietary metalized paper technology. Anheuser-Busch invested in a Metalizer in the early nineties to make metalized paper in an effort to build marketability and differentiation

on the shelf and to lower costs. The process involves vaporizing the metal, then vacuuming it to the paper. Next, it is coated, dyne levels are tested and it's taken to a slitter running at up to 525 m/min.

'There is a real strategic advantage with the metalized paper technology at that plant,' Muenzer says. Previously, Anheuser-Busch had kept the technology under wraps. 'Now Spear has the ability to take the technology to our existing customers. The plant provides our company with the opportunity to break into other markets outside of beverage.'

## "PS is the way to go. We anticipate rapid growth in pressure sensitive label production"

This opportunity to expand into other markets is precisely how Spear plans to reach capacity. 'We are not going to focus on price,' he says. 'We will move only where it makes strategic sense. The equipment allows this.'

Spear is branding this new opportunity as Precision Paper to clarify to clientele that it is still the PS focused company they know and trust, but that it also has this brand to offer and sell to its clients. The marketing and promotion of the paper will remain wholly in North America

## MORE ABOUT THE CLARKSVILLE PLANT

Clarksville has been manufacturing gravure cylinders in-house since 1995, producing anywhere from 12-15 each day depending on the width. It uses combined technologies from BST Pro Mark and Unilux to inspect labels for defects and automatically flag them for the operator. The process can move as fast as 400 ft/min.

Rotoflex die cutting machines capable of moving at 300 ft/min are used to convert the labels. The plant managers moved conversion to flexible die technology years ago because of the cost savings and changeover time reduction. And everywhere feasible, the plant has installed a vacuum assist to help associates with lifting. It increases safety and improves production time.

The facility is also home to three sheeters that have embossing capabilities. Here, quality checks like ink rub and lay flat are done regularly. A rotating six man crew operates the machines, addressing ergonomic issues and helping the team avoid injuries.

As part of a turnkey solution offered to the brewer, the plant will continue to participate in weekly inventory management for all of the Anheuser-Busch plants. Needs are identified up to three weeks in advance so that delivery can be met a week prior to when the labels are scheduled for application. This process eliminates would-be plant downtime, saving the customer money and benefiting Clarksville, now Spear. The service is available for all of

the work produced in the plant, not just Anheuser. 2.3 billion labels are shipped out of the facility each month, equaling about 120 sq m/year. This means that Spear has the potential to transition over 28 billion labels a year from wet-glue to pressure sensitive at the Clarksville plant alone.

The plant has had a 'no landfill' initiative implemented for a few years. With kaizen projects and lean manufacturing improvements, there is little waste produced. Any recovered paper waste is sent overseas where it can be properly incinerated.

## INBEV

The recent purchase of Anheuser-Busch by InBev has not had any effect on Spear's label production for the brewer, and Spear does not anticipate that it will. It has a contract to supply a large majority of the labels for multiple years. The printer now actually conducts more business with the brewer than the combined Clarksville and Spear business before the merger. Still, Muenzer does admit that it will get progressively more difficult to achieve cost savings. 'The real work will be coming up with even better, more efficient ways to keep costs down.'

Prior to the merger, Anheuser-Busch had initiated a program with a goal of reducing costs within the supply chain by 1 billion dollars. Spear is confident that it will remain as its preferred label manufacturer.

Spear has collaborated with suppliers such as Avery Dennison – FRNA to promote pressure sensitive technology and help relieve the strain of growing price pressures.

'In all, the transition in ownership could not have gone better,' Muenzer says. 'Clarksville has a great group of people that have welcomed the change. The biggest conversion for its new associates will be their reliance on Anheuser-Busch-size resources. Still, it gives the plant a chance to move out on the front side and show the industry what it's capable of.'

In summary, the purchase of the Anheuser-Busch plant has presented different challenges for Spear to overcome than its traditional businesses. Even so, the converter expects to continue to prosper in its quest to be the world's premier pressure sensitive beverage label supplier with the title: 'The King of Bevs'.



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**The first Label Printer's Forum, was excellent from start to finish. It was intensive, constructive and gave me a lot of valuable insight. The seminar was the perfect size, just about 25 people and the discussions among fellow FINAT colleagues allowed us to really share experiences and learn about industry trends.**

*Bjarne Svensson, Production Manager, Flexiket Denmark*

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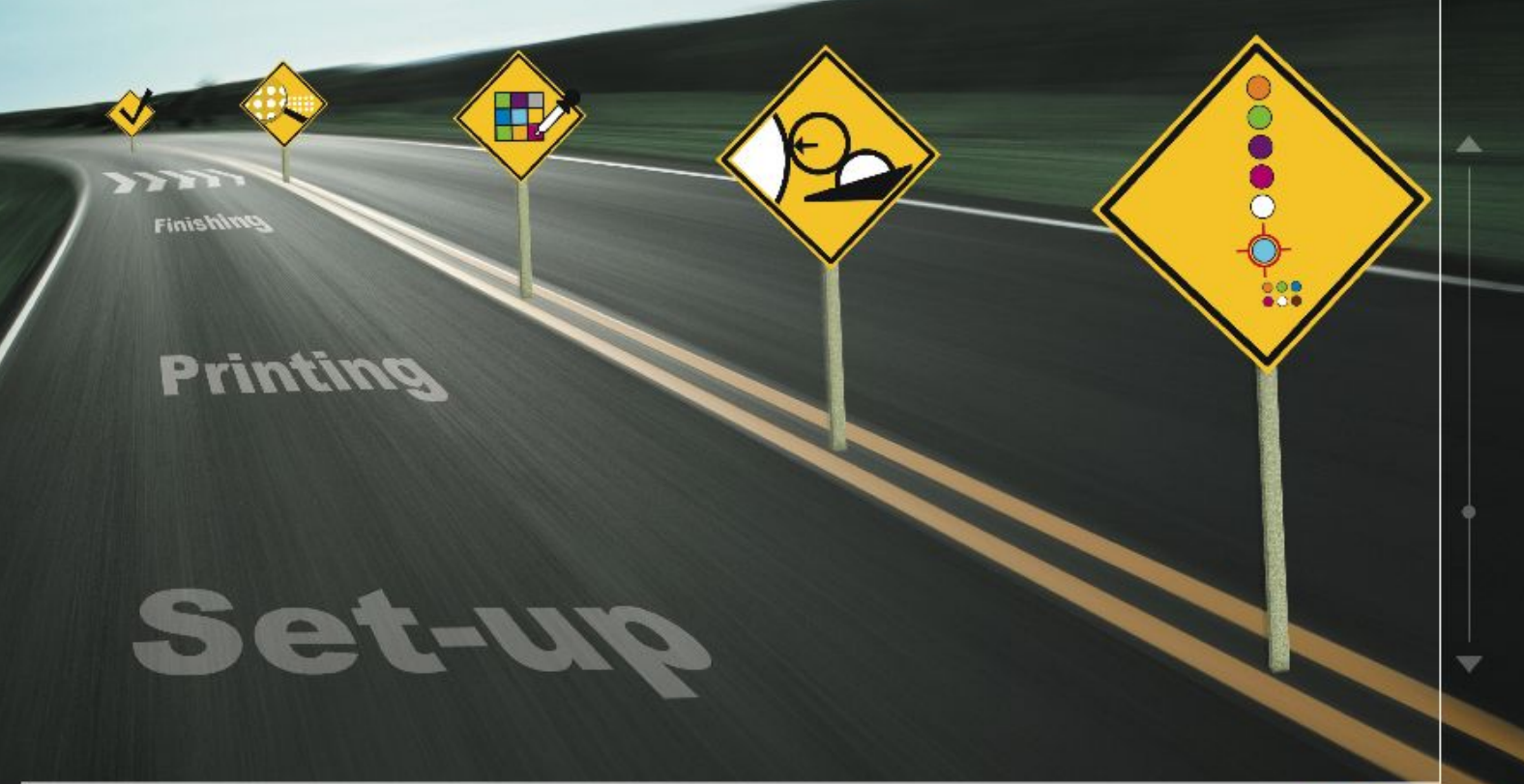
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# Comparing the footprint of solvent and thermal plates

**IN** an environmental and costs-based study commissioned by the Flint Group Flexographic Products division, solvent plates showed some advantages over thermal-based processing

The ongoing public discussion about CO<sub>2</sub> emissions exerts an increasing pressure on consumers and industry which cannot be avoided by label and packaging printers. The branded goods industry is reacting to the growing environmental awareness of its customers and passing on the requirement for the most 'environmentally friendly' production possible to their suppliers. But which technologies are really more beneficial in this respect? And are ecological and economic aspects contradictory, or can they be reconciled?

In order to find objective answers to these questions, the Flint Group Flexographic Products business unit commissioned an Eco-Efficiency Analysis (EEA) with the BASF SE company, looking at alternative processing technologies for photopolymer flexographic plates.

The study set out to compare the processing of flexo plates by solvent wash-out and the thermal technology which has been offered by DuPont for several years.

The final result was that washing out flexo printing plates using solvents had its nose just in front with respect to ecological factors, but came off much better in terms of cost.

## CARBON FOOTPRINT

Wherever climate change is discussed, the term 'carbon footprint' is never far away. The processes surrounding CO<sub>2</sub> emissions are, however, only one factor when assessing environmental impact. An Eco-Profile, on the other hand, represents a larger range of relevant parameters – for example the use of raw materials for a product over the whole manufacturing process – and therefore has greater significance. The so-called Life-Cycle-Assessment (LCA) goes one step further. In addition to the use of the product, recycling is taken into account as well.

With industrial products or processes, economic factors play a decisive role, so an evaluation method is to be preferred which considers these criteria sufficiently. Therefore the Eco-Efficiency Analysis was selected. This standardized and TÜV (German Technical Inspection Agency) validated method is acknowledged by several institutes and authorities in Europe, including the German Environmental Protection Agency, and in the USA by the National Science Foundation among others. It analyses the whole life cycle from raw materials to disposal, including the related costs. For this reason this form of eco-study goes one important step further than, for example, an Eco-Profile according to the guidelines of the ISO 14000 environmental standard.

## COMPARABLE BASE ASSUMPTIONS FOR BOTH TECHNOLOGIES

For the study, comparable base assumptions have been made for both alternative processes. For the printing plate the Flint Group Flexographic Products' nyloflex ACE along with DuPont's Cyrel Fast DFH were the types selected – both in the version for digital imaging. Plate thickness (1.14 mm), format (920 x 1200 mm) and structure were identical in each case. The manufacturers' instructions were implemented when applied to processing the plates. Consumption data and prices correspond to market data and customer information. Details of both alternative processes are compared in the table below.

**TABLE: CONSISTENT BASE ASSUMPTION TO COMPARE BOTH ALTERNATIVE PROCESSES OF PLATE PRODUCTION**

	SOLVENT-BASED PLATE DEVELOPMENT	THERMAL PLATE DEVELOPMENT
<b>PROCESSING METHOD</b>	unpolymerized plate material removed by washing with solvent mixture followed by plate drying and recycling of solvent	unpolymerized plate material removed by heat / PA non-woven
<b>PRINTING PLATE</b>	nyloflex ACE 114 Digital	Cyrel Fast DFH 114 Digital
<b>SIZE</b>	920 × 1200 mm	
<b>THICKNESS</b>	114	
<b>CONSUMABLE MATERIAL</b>	Solvent: nylosolv A 87.5% recycling	PA web 20% excess of nominal consumption
<b>SOLVENT / WEB CONSUMPTION</b>	22.5 l/1000 µm relief/m <sup>2</sup> (for full material removal to relief depth)	11.3 m <sup>2</sup> /m <sup>2</sup> plate/700 µm relief (plate size 920 x 1200 mm)
<b>ANNUAL PLATE USAGE</b>	10.000m <sup>2</sup>	
<b>PLATE VOLUME</b>	10 m <sup>2</sup> per processing run	
<b>USER BENEFIT (UB)</b>	(50% material removal of total relief volume)	

## REMARKABLE DIFFERENCE IN COSTS

Printing plates represent the largest cost factor with plate production (see figure 1). For the study, an identical plate sales price was assumed for both alternative processes. In addition, solvents and corresponding web material were also important factors. Since with solvents a high percentage is recovered through redistillation, the costs for solvent-based plate production are reduced significantly. The remaining



**"When the solvent used to wash out the printing plates is recovered as recommended, these users can achieve a cost benefit of 10 percent and more"**

cost-factors investigated are either comparable or so small that their impact on the overall result hardly needs considering. The bottom line is that the solvent process records a cost benefit of more than 10 percent.

#### COMPLEX FIELD OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The key factors required for an Eco-Efficiency Analysis to assess environmental impact in terms of CO<sub>2</sub> emissions – also known as the 'carbon footprint' – include: the consumption of natural resources, the energy consumption of the whole production process and the impact of each plate production step.

Numerous factors need to be taken into consideration, such as plate manufacture, web manufacture, solvent production, transport, packaging, imaging, exposure, thermal development, washout and drying, etc. Solvent recovery has a positive effect here. As with costs, so the carbon footprint for the overall process of solvent-based plate production emerges as clearly beneficial. A marginally lower value is also to be recorded for material and energy consumption. For thermal technology, the energy-intensive production of the PA web in particular has a major impact.

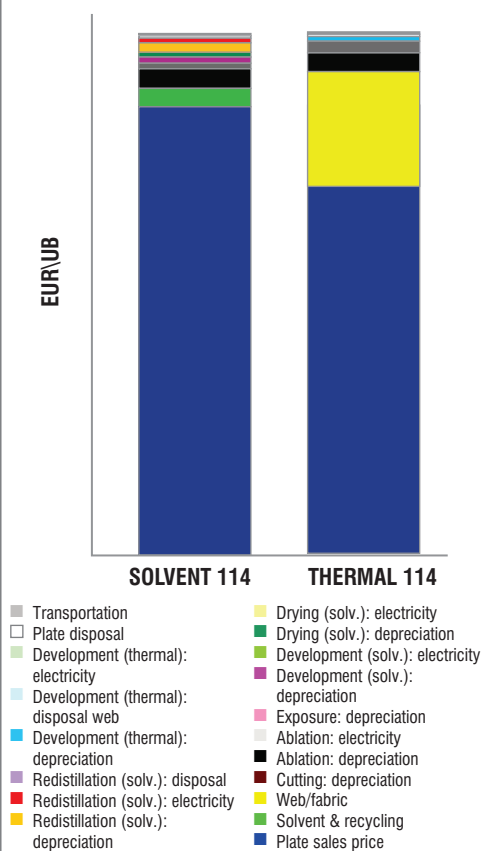
The main causes for emissions which have an impact on the climate are to be found in the production of solvents, web and plate raw materials. The study attests that the solvent-based process has an advantage in the end in this area as well.

#### SUMMARY

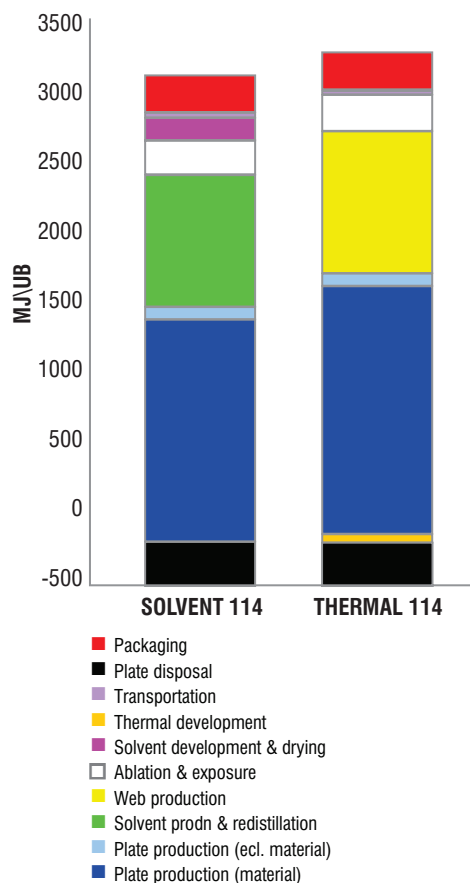
'It is an important finding of the Eco-Efficiency Analysis that economy and ecology

#### LABELS & LABELING

**FIGURE 1: COMPARING THE PROCESS COSTS, THE SOLVENT BASED PLATE PRODUCTION SHOWS AN OBVIOUS ADVANTAGE OVER THE THERMO TECHNOLOGY**



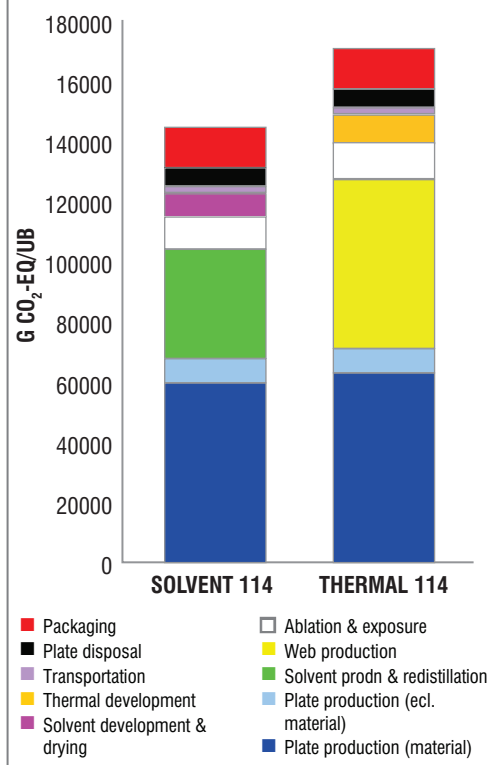
**FIGURE 2: THE THERMO TECHNOLOGY REQUIRES MARGINAL HIGHER ENERGY**



are not contradictory,' commented Dr Jens Schadebrodt, who led the Flint Group team in the project. 'The many users of solvent technology, who do not want to forego the quality advantage of this technology, will be pleased to see this.'

When the solvent used to wash out the printing plates is recovered as recommended, these users can achieve a cost benefit of 10 percent and more with respect to the thermal manufacturing alternative, says Dr Schadebrodt. 'With the carbon footprint the result tends to look similar. The solvent-based technology also shows the most beneficial values here. Both alternatives are virtually the same in terms of the environmental impacts through energy and materials consumption.' If particular pre-conditions change, for example plate thickness, then the effects are comparable for both alternatives, both in terms of costs as well as environmental impacts. If a plate with a thickness of 1.70 mm is used instead of a 1.14 mm plate, the absolute costs rise by around 30 percent whilst the cost relationship remains the same. The emissions increase by around 17 percent with both processes. Conversely, this means that through a reduction in plate thickness, both emissions and costs can be considerably reduced.

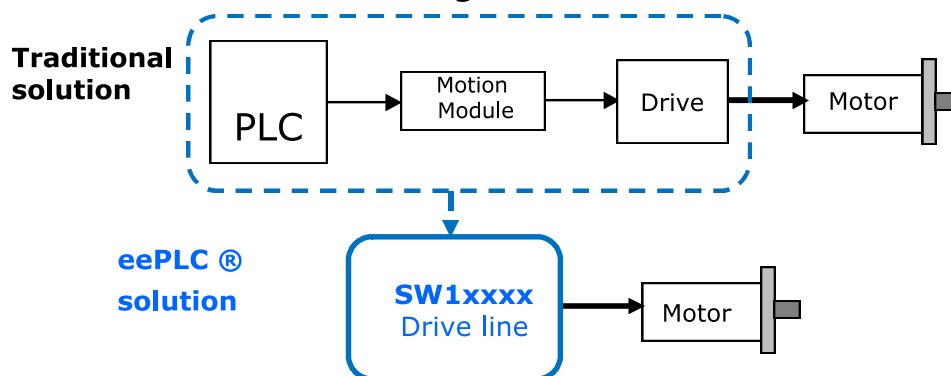
**FIGURE 3: ASSESSING THE WHOLE PROCESS OF BOTH ALTERNATIVES, THE SOLVENT BASED PLATE PRODUCTION CAUSES FEWER EMISSIONS**



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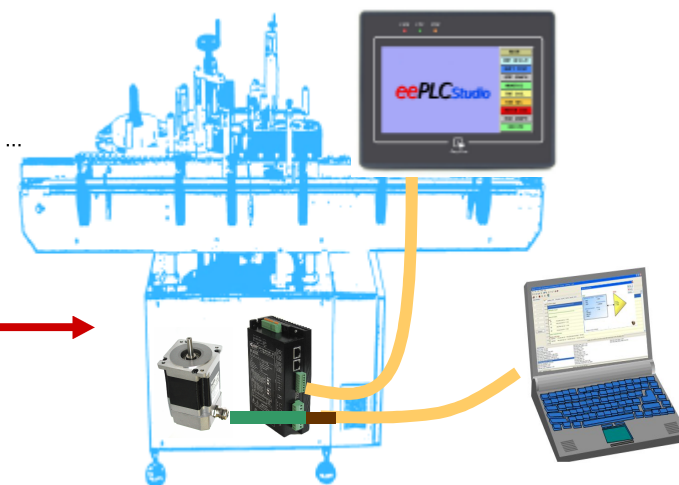
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# HANDS ON

**VINCENT DITROLIO**, president of the DiTrollo Flexographic Institute (DFI), will troubleshoot common practical problems encountered in flexo printing, in this regular series of articles. DiTrollo has worked in the flexographic printing industry for over 19 years, and provides training and consulting through his DiTrollo Flexographic Institute, which is approved by the Illinois State Board of Education and Department of Veteran's Affairs.

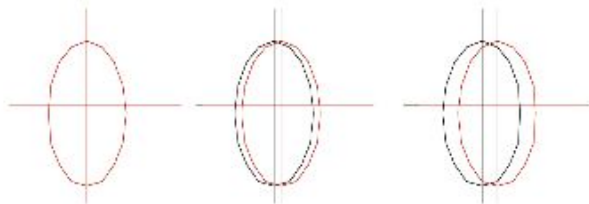
## Press side troubleshooting

In this issue, Vincent DiTrollo takes a hard look at pitch diameter and its effect on print registration. If readers have any questions for L&L's technical consultant, Vince DiTrollo, please email [handson@labelsandlabeling.com](mailto:handson@labelsandlabeling.com)

### PITCH DIAMETER AND ITS EFFECT ON REGISTRATION

We've all seen register marks that do not match perfect, is slightly out and the final one is more out of step. Usually, the first response is to blame pre-press. But of course, what usually happens is that operators split the difference and run it as close as possible with the center of the plate right on and the outer marks slightly out in either direction. One of the causes of this problem may be differing pitch diameters of the print cylinders

#### DIAGRAM 1 PITCH DIAMETER AND PITCH REGISTRATION



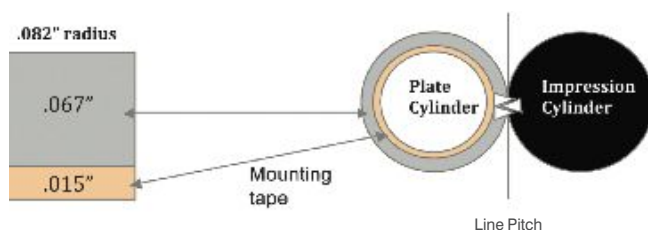
Let's discuss a few definitions first. Pitch line is the imaginary line on the gear at the point of proper gear mesh with another gear. The circumference of the pitch line determines the repeat of the gear. Pitch diameter is the diameter measurement of a gear or cylinder, determined by dividing the pitch line (or circumference/total repeat) by Pi.

Therefore diameter multiplied by Pi equals circumference and circumference equals total repeat.

### CYLINDER UNDERCUT

In order to maintain correct repeat and gear mesh (pitch line) plate cylinders are undercut, that is, they are manufactured smaller in diameter than the final repeat to accommodate for the thickness of the printing plate and mounting tape (sticky back). If the body of the plate cylinder is not undercut when the plate are mounted the correct mesh/pitch line would not be able to be achieved due to the plate and mounting tape pushing the cylinder away.

#### DIAGRAM 2 CYLINDER UNDERCUT



In narrow web flexo typical undercuts are .160" or .164", .164" is the current common undercut. Verify the older .160" undercut cylinders are not being run with newer .164" undercut cylinders. If cylinders were made with different undercuts, we would have .0125" difference in total repeat.

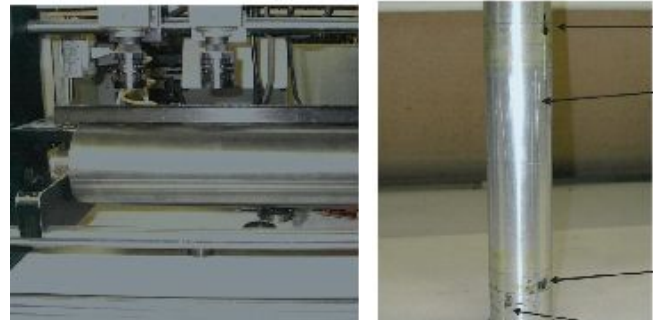
For example, if we have two 88T print cylinders, one with a .160" under cut and the other with .164" undercut that would give:

**Difference in undercuts:**  $.164" - .160" = .004"$

**Diameter times Pi equals circumference:**  $.004" \times 3.14 = .0125"$

**For every .001" difference in diameter equals .003" in circumference/repeat.**

#### DIAGRAM 3 PRINT CYLINDER



On the left, we have a print cylinder with a scratch resistant coating on the right we can easily see many raised grooves caused by using a razor blade to cut mounting tape. When aluminum is cut into the aluminum is displaced leaving a groove and a raised area. These raised areas can cause many print problems, one of which being registration. While most printers are averaging .010" to .012" trap with the above scratches measuring about .0035" only one scratch would give a .011" difference, to say the least that would make it hard to hold .012" trap.

Print cylinder diameter is so critical to ensure proper registration that manufacturers have either stamped diameters on cylinders or identified where cylinder fall within manufacturing tolerances. For example, if a cylinder is on the plus side of tolerance a manufacturer may stamp the letter 'C' on the cylinder. If the cylinder is on the minus side of tolerance an 'A' may be stamped and if the cylinder is in the middle a 'B' would be stamped. In this scenario, the ideal situation would be to run all like cylinder for the best registration. If that is not possible, the next preference would be to run either 'B' and 'C' or 'B and A', but never 'A and C' since they are on the opposite ends of tolerance.




An aluminum cylinder is easily damaged if a razor is used to cut the mounting tape. It is recommended to use a combination



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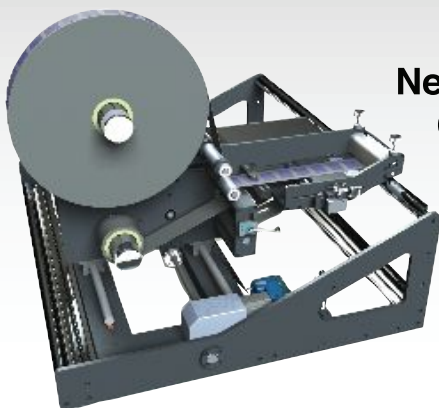
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DIAGRAM 4 WHICH WILL NOT DAMAGE?



DIAGRAM 5 THE USE OF A SCRIBE LINE



of technology and technique to keep from damaging a cylinder. Notice how the blade is run flat along the cylinder smoothly and evenly cutting the mounting tape.

#### THE USE OF A SCRIBE LINE...

While many used the parallel scribe line to cut mounting tape from cylinder this will cause damage to the cylinder creating a bump or egg shaping the cylinder. The scribe line is intended to be used for marking a true straight line on the mounting tape.

#### PITCH DIAMETER AND ITS EFFECT ON PRINT REGISTRATION

In summary, take the time to perform the follow basics in order to reduce the effect of pitch diameter on print registration. Inspect the print cylinders for damage including gear and bearings. Have the cylinders measured for total indicated run out and diameter. Then stamp correct diameters on the cylinders. Ask the print cylinder manufacturer for acceptable tolerances and replace any cylinders out of specification. Have new cylinders stamped with diameter.

#### RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop a handbook or guidebook with common problems in your facility for the use of your production staff
- Keep it simple!

#### TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS

- Always make one change at a time to verify the change was the proper correction
- Note: Making multiple corrections will make the correct adjustment unidentifiable
- Record changes for future reference on job history sheets

#### THE INSTITUTE


The DiTrollo Flexographic Institute, Inc. (DFI) was founded to meet the flexographic industry's need for quality, off-site training to counter the problems of on-the-job training. The institute offers industry-specific training seminars for all skill levels – from beginning press operations to advanced printing applications – and features a state-of-the-art environment where new press operators and seasoned industry professionals alike can gain hands-on exposure to printing and finishing processes.

Additionally, DFI consultants provide invaluable assistance in order to assist you in launching new projects or add a fresh perspective to ongoing projects and implementing Lean Manufacturing initiatives in the production operation.

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## From the industry

Service outsourced to new company

GS+S • GS+S Partner GmbH took on the co-operation contract for service and sales of spare parts for letter press machines, ranges R, T and V at full volume, from GRE Engineering AG on 1st September 2008 signed by Gallus Ferd. Rüesch on 1st April 2008.

GRE Engineering AG was sold by Rolf Reichele to Monika and Roger Wey on 22nd January 2007. After in depth internal and external checks for competence and quality, the new owners outsourced the co-operation contract to the independent GS+S Partner GmbH after discussion with Gallus. The newly founded company concentrates exclusively on sales and service of the named Gallus products, which should improve the quality of service and spare parts sales even more. According to details from Roger Wey there was a positive development in the markets that are already served in the past few months. Additionally the processes are continually being optimised during handling. The re-founding is being accompanied by relocation to a new site. From 1st October 2008, GS+S Partner GmbH is located in Rorschach/CH. Delivery of Gallus spare parts all over the world will now occur exclusively from this site. There will soon be further information on the company website (www.gssp.ch), which is currently under construction. Currently however users can find contact details for the relevant contacts on the website.

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# Plates and platemaking

**ANDY THOMAS** rounds up the latest developments in a range of technology sectors including flexo CTP, engraving systems, sleeves and plate processing

One of the most interesting recent developments in flexographic computer-to-plate (CTP) systems has been Kodak's Flexcel NX Digital Flexographic System, which has this year won awards from PIA/GATF InterTech and the Flexographic Pre-Press Platemakers Association (FPPA). Now the first commercial installations are going in, giving converters and repro houses the chance to see how it functions in the field.

Flexcel NX is an integrated system consisting of a thermal imaging layer, laminator, NXH-series digital flexographic plates, Trendsetter NX (Mid or Narrow) imagers, Squarespot imaging technology and the Prinergy workflow system for packaging.

Up to now, ablation CTP flexo technologies have involved imaging a black mask layer which is integral to the plate before exposure and processing. The NX system, by contrast, images a thermal layer away from the plate, then laminates the thermal to the plate before exposure and processing. At drupa Kodak announced expanded capabilities for the Flexcel NX, which can now produce plates up to a maximum size of

800 x 1067mm.

In a technology demonstration reported by L&L earlier this year, Williamson Printing Corporation in Dallas used its Flexcel NX System to image offset separations using offset angles and with no retouching onto the NX digital flexo plates. Those plates were then mounted on the coating stations of Williamson's hybrid Heidelberg Speedmaster sheetfed press and high quality movie posters were printed at 300 lpi with densities in all colors exceeding 2.0.

Now Yorkshire, UK-based origination house Corniche has made the Flexcel NX system the centerpiece of its LiNX pre-press system. The plate system was tested on a Soma press at UK film converter Cropac, as well as on a newly installed wide web press at the German flexo association (DFTA) in Stuttgart.

The test results showed a low dot gain on 175 lpi screens, leading Shaun Newsome, managing director of Corniche, to comment: 'We believe we will be able to move flexo to another level that will match or even exceed gravure. The ability to use all process colors greatly extends what can be delivered

## NEW PRODUCTS

### FLEXO AND GRAVURE PROOFING JM HEAFORD

JM Heaford has introduced a front loading gravure proof press, named SCOF, developed for off-line job approval, as well as a sleeve dedicated and gearless (servo drive) mounting and proofing machine for wide-web flexo printers. For narrow web flexo printers Heaford has launched a new plate mounting machine.

### DIGITAL FLEXO PLATE PROCESSORS DEGRAF

Degraf has launched three units dedicated to processing digital flexo plates, the Concept 201HTD, Concept 305DW and Concept 305EDLF. All 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. The 201HTD is designed for typical label plate sizes up to 66 x 81cm and integrates the HTD dryer, claimed by Degraf to cut conventional drying times by up to 75 percent.



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Phil Perrin, production director at Cropac, said: 'I have been pleasantly surprised that the application of this technology placed no excessive demands on press conditions, with anilox selection being similar to that we previously produced on standard 120 lpi screens.'

Since the installation in January, successful production runs have been conducted at a number of UK converters.

#### AUTOMATION

A new approach to speeding up the processing of flexographic plates and sleeves, pioneered by Dupont and EskoArtwork is to automate the handling of flexo plates and sleeves from imaging through to automated, solvent-free processing on DuPont's Fast thermal processor.

EskoArtwork has demonstrated a fully automated imaging-to-finishing system based around a CDI Spark 4260 Auto. At drupa the company demonstrated fully-automated plate loading, imaging and unloading in combination with an integrated in-line UV main exposure and back exposure unit and a bridge to a Cyrel Fast TD 4260 thermal processor.

Also at the show, DuPont and EskoArtwork demonstrated an automated 'in the round' imaging and thermal processing system for sleeves. The DuPont Cyrel Fast Round system consists of a Fast thermal processor capable of handling sleeves, working in conjunction with EskoArtworks' CDI Advance Cantilever imager and a new family of Cyrel Fast sleeves suitable for use with alcohol-based, water-based and UV flexographic ink systems.

Although sleeves have been considered much more of a wide web application, the growing number of narrow web press manufacturers building machines for sleeves has opened up this market to sleeve manufacturers.

Stork Prints Group subsidiary AKL Flexo Technik, for example, has introduced a program of durable

## NEW PRODUCTS

### CTP FLEXO AND LETTERPRESS PLATE SYSTEMS

#### JET EUROPE

Screen has launched a new range of platesetters, including the PlateRite FX870 for flexo, letterpress, thermal offset and thermal ablation film, and the PlateRite FX1524. Suited to narrow web imaging applications, the PlateRite FX870 supports flexo and letterpress plate sizes from 200mm x 200mm (7.9"x 7.9") to maximum exposure size of 870 mm x 762 mm (34.2"x 30"). With its multi-channel laser diode, the FX870 optionally offers output of thermal offset plates.

The units feature the company's easy loading function, whereby the operator simply clamps the leading edge of the resin plate and then tapes the trailing edge.

### PLATE CYLINDER COATING

#### NU TECH

Nu Tech's latest plate cylinder coating, PEC HD, is claimed to eliminate two major flexo variables – the removal of cushion sticky back tape, and impression setting of the plate to the substrate.

The company's .375in polymer coatings are applied to the radius of a new or existing plate cylinder, and can 'substantially diminish or remove' the frequency and amplitude of banding or gear marking on narrow and mid-web flexographic presses, according to the company.

'We have addressed the same printing issues with the PEC HD on thin films, which our standard PEC product solves for the pressure sensitive market,' said Jim Wyman, managing partner of Nu Tech Coatings.

### VIOLET PHOTOPOLYMER PLATES

#### FUJIFILM

Fujifilm has launched its 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. The PRO-T processless plate range was originally launched in 2006.

### DIGITAL MAX FLEXO PLATE

#### MACDERMID PRINTING SOLUTIONS

Digital Max is the digital version of MacDermid's recently introduced Max 60-durometer analog hard plate. 'Digital Max delivers all the benefits of Max, such as excellent drape and low tack allowing for long, clean running print performance, plus the fine resolution and imaging capability expected from a digital photopolymer plate,' says the company.

The plate can be processed conventionally using solvent, or thermally in MacDermid's Lava thermal processing system. Digital Max is available in thicknesses from 0.030 in (0.76mm) to 0.112 in (2.84mm), and in format sizes up to 52 x 80 inches (1,320 x 2,032 mm).

### WATER-WASH DIGITAL PLATES

#### ASAHI PHOTOPRODUCTS

Ashai has launched its DEF water-washable digital photopolymer plate, suitable for all types of ink, following extensive field trials at leading European converter Rako. DEF will be produced in thicknesses up to 2.84 mm and maximum plate size will be 900 x 1200 mm – corresponding to the format of the CDI Spark system.

### ELECTRA XD THERMAL PLATE

#### KODAK

Kodak's Electra XD thermal plate is a non-ablative, positive working digital plate requiring no preheat and claimed to offer triple the unbaked run length of the Electra HR plates. Rich Rindo, director global product management, printing plates business at Kodak's Graphic Communications Group, said: 'XD actually industrializes FM screening and fine AM line screens, allowing the work to be repeated day in and day out with consistent, stable quality.' The Electra XD Plate is rated for 500,000 impressions without baking and 1.5 million baked.

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hard-coated and cushion mounting sleeves for narrow web applications. The sleeve's aramid fiber reportedly offers good memory properties, 'ensuring constant clamping force and eliminating the problem of slippage during printing'. Total indicator reading (TIR) is within  $20\mu\text{m}$ , even under extreme humidity and high temperatures on the press, says Stork.

Rotec has also expressed a major interest in developing sleeves for the narrow web market.

An interesting development from Stork is a sleeve quality control system for its laser engraving systems, a scanning device which measures the sleeve before engraving begins, and claimed accurate to one micron. This ensures sleeves are within tolerance, or allow the compensations to be made to the engraving parameters.

The Flint Group flexographic products division meanwhile continues development of its nyloflex ITR sleeves incorporating a LAMS layer.

## ENGRAVING

Direct engraving of flexo formes has greatly improved in quality since the early days of lasering rubber mats, thanks to improvements in engraving technology, software and materials.

One of the main proponents of direct engraving systems has been Stork, which recently upgraded its Agrios flexo direct laser engraver system. The Agrios-M system incorporates an air cylinder and adapter sleeves for swift changeovers between printing forme diameters, and to allow thinner sleeves to be engraved.

Stork says it can now engrave 100 lines per centimeter (at one percent dot), using a new generation of software tools like Active 3D RIP, a pre-media relief-dot generation tool program that boosts half-tone and high-light quality.

Active 3D allows extensive control over the generation of negative and positive dot-shapes and dimensions across the whole tonal range from 1-99 percent density. This includes unlimited dot depth variables, from zero to maximum, and complete shoulder steepness control, with the possibility to vary angles from  $0^\circ$  to  $90^\circ$ . Tighter control of shoulder steepness gives the dots, especially in highlight areas, optimum support, which gives the printing forme improved durability and consistency.



## PLATE NEWS

### POLYWEST USA OPENS WISCONSIN FACILITY

Polywest USA has opened a 10,000+ sq ft manufacturing and sales/warehouse facility in Appleton, Wisconsin. The new facility will manufacture Polywest sleeves, initially including the Rubin Sleeve – a build-up, plate-mounting sleeve for use in flexographic printing applications.

### DANTEX OPENS US SUBSIDIARY

Dantex is bringing its letterpress and flexographic plate products and services to the North American market through its subsidiary, Dantex Corporation, and a new vice president, Richard Mix.

Dantex is the European master distributor for Toray Industries of Japan and introduced the Toreflex water wash flexo plate to the market. The company also produces its own range of specialist processing and electronic pre-press equipment.

Based in England, Dantex has wholly-owned subsidiary companies in Germany and France, sales offices in Austria, Holland and Poland and a network of distributors across 30 countries.

### CREATION REPRO INSTALLS CDI SPARK 4835

EskoArtwork has installed a CDI Spark 4835 digital flexo platemaker at Daventry, UK-based Creation Repro. The investment is supported by a full EskoArtwork workflow solution including BackStage, DeskPack and PackEdge as well as FlexProof and FlexRip. 'Full automation is our goal,' said Matt Francklow, managing director and owner of Creation Repro. 'It is fundamental if we want to meet customer demand and increase productivity.' Creation next plans to install WebCenter, EskoArtwork's web based project management system which allows real time pre-production customer approval and monitoring.

### THERMAL PROCESSING 'REDUCES EMISSIONS'

Research commissioned by DuPont comparing thermal and solvent flexo platemaking 'indicates that thermal platemaking results in a reduction in non-renewable energy of approximately 60 percent and a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions of approximately 51 percent.' Looked at another way, for every 10,000 square meters of flexo plates processed, energy savings would be equivalent to some 33,000 liters of gasoline, while the savings in greenhouse gas emissions would be equivalent to removing approximately 35 automobiles from the road for one year.

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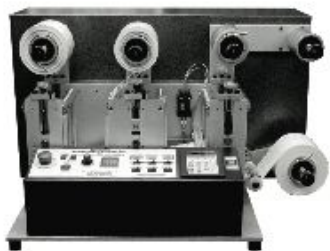


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# Web cleaning



**SHEILA HAMILTON** of Scotland-based web cleaning specialist Teknek looks at the causes of web contamination and different strategies for keeping the web clean

In today's demanding converting environment, all printers must achieve best possible performance from their slitting, rewinding, sheeting, embossing and other machines and systems. The goal is to maximize output, with minimal machine stops and material scrap, to the highest quality. The quicker the current job is processed and dispatched, the quicker a new one can be mounted on the machine for productivity and profitability to continue.

Non-stop operation is what every converting plant owner strives for; anything that interferes with this aim is more than just a minor annoyance. Dust, dirt, fibers, lint and insect debris affect runability: the production of a product at optimum machine speed – the speed touted by the machine supplier, the speed mentioned in the brochure and the speed needed to cover costs. Contaminants settling on a web can affect the appearance, and in some instances the functionality, of a product, which means equipment must be halted in order that plates, impression rollers and other components can be cleaned.

Few would disagree that webs need to be cleaned, ideally consistently and cost effectively. To successfully clean a moving web one must first consider the influences that cause contamination.

Often it's easy to understand where contamination comes from: the manufacturing processes – paper, corrugated and film production – and the processes involved in enabling a converter to make a more marketable product: the slitting, bag making, coating and laminating.

The environment itself is also a cause of contaminants; dirt and debris of one kind or another is everywhere about us. Even a converter's employees may be a source of contamination, unknowingly depositing hair, skin and crumbs onto a web. Static charging makes matters worse by holding contaminants fast – so tight that some methods of web cleaning have difficulty.

Static charges are generated from the contact and separation of the material as it passes over rollers and as it's pulled from the feed roll. Web speeds complicate the issue since the faster the web speed the higher the static charge or attraction.

## WEB CLEANING – WHY?

Even as recently as a few years ago there was room in the market with its own defined class of buyer, for both the producer of value-added products that could command a higher price, and the no-frills operator. However, we all now operate in a global economy, with all that entails. Fewer but larger international groups continue to erode the supplier base, resulting in more converters chasing fewer customers.

Competition is therefore now at its fiercest: there is no longer room in the market for the producer of inferior products; the so-so printer or converter is by and large set to fall by the wayside.

The quality bar is constantly being raised as customers increasingly demand tighter tolerances. Where once a few defects or blemishes might have been tolerated, more and more customers are looking for zero defects. Consequently, a supplier has to work even harder to prove they really do deserve the customer's business.

One of the major sources of defects on a printing press or converting line – even for those companies that operate to a high standard – is the introduction of foreign matter, much

## ENVIRONMENTAL BENEFIT

Printing impacts on the environment in a number of ways, some of which are unavoidable if commercial and product considerations are to be met; others are either avoidable or at least, solutions or workarounds are generally available to minimize any environmental consequence.

The unavoidable aspect of printing is the consumption of resources, which includes the material we put on press and run through our machines – the paper, cardboard, film and foil; the energy, water and consumables, the inks and coatings that printers or converters must use to produce a product for a customer.

Unfortunately, hand in hand with the usage of these materials and consumables comes a need to dispose of paper and other materials wasted in the course of make-ready, production errors and marks and blemishes. Process waste, according to some industry experts, often accounts for around 5-10 percent of the original volume of material purchased in commercial printing, rising to as much as 20 percent for processes such as carton printing.

In the production of labels and flexible packaging, contamination of the web as a result of airborne or surface borne particles is a big contributor to waste. The maintaining of a clean web, therefore, can play an important part in the reduction of a company's impact on the environment. Process waste resulting from blemishes and contamination can be reduced by a web cleaning system, which results in less waste sent to landfill.





of which a converter may seem at first glance to have little control over. Dirt and organic material suspended in the air of a pressroom or converting department can, with the added help of static, become attracted to a high-speed moving web.

Even the material bought in and put on and through the machine can be a source of contamination, as can the very processes that provide the printer with his/her livelihood. Slitter dust, chaff from sheeting, loose

paper fibers, additives and powders can mar the appearance of a product substantially. As

webs and sheets are fed through a printing station, particles are deposited on blankets, impression rollers and plates, resulting in hickies, voids and/or distorted images.

Surface contaminants will impact on a laminating process, and in coating possible problems such as a non-uniform coating thickness or adhesion problems arise resulting in blisters and bubbles under the surface of a finished product.

Not only do these problems affect the appearance, functionality and even, if allowed to slip through, the relationship with the customer, the problem of airborne and surface borne particulate contamination has enormous impact on the profitability of a printer. For example, in the case of a distorted print image, the cause of which has been traced to particulate contamination on an impression roller, the normal course of action would be to stop the press and clean the rollers. In label printing this could, over the course of a day when operating a shift system, result in as much as 1-2 hours downtime and the generation of between 50 to 100 meters of scrap.

Again, dust and dirt transferred directly on a flexo printing plate produces a hickey, and if UV flexo inks are being used, quality defects become magnified, as the ink coat is thinner and stickier than other ink types. Stopping the press, cleaning the plates, starting the press again and bringing it into register – which normally takes at least 10 minutes on a 4-color press, will also generate in the region of 50 meters of scrap.

Over time and taking into account wasted material, unproductive labor and lower than expected product yield – added to which is an increased risk of missing product delivery times, not to mention increased stress for everyone involved – one can see why the need to clean a web and keep it clean has become so important.

Although the astute converter now recognizes the importance of installing a web cleaner and a static control device to prevent dust from being re-attracted to a web, the truth is that not all web cleaning technology is up to the demand of modern processing requirements.

Various methods for cleaning a web are employed, ranging simply from fitting cleaning rags on a transverse bar (definitely not recommended for today's health and safety conscious working environments) to methods such as vacuum and ultrasonic system set ups and the use of static or rotating brushes. Many of the systems involved employ static control devices as well because dust and static are inexorably bound together.

If vacuuming is involved, the power of the vacuum must be applied evenly across the entire web width. If the seal making the connection between web and vacuum is at

## CASE-STUDY: INDIAN CONVERTER INSTALLS FOUR MWCS

New Delhi, India-based label converter Regal Creative has installed four Teknek Mini Web Cleaners (MWC) which are specifically designed for web and reel-to-reel applications. The company says the main benefits have been a substantial increase in yields and reduction in waste.

Mr Bajaj of Regal Creative said: 'We initially installed one MWC on a printing press. However, when we came to evaluate the benefits after just six months of operation, we thought it prudent to order a further three units, one for each of the other presses. We work for a large number of high profile multi-national customers who demand the highest quality standards and find that the MWC helps us achieve this by eliminating any contamination which could affect final print quality.'

Designed specifically for small web sizes and slower speed applications, the

MWC offers a multi-point installation framework, allowing cleaning modules to be transferred between host machines for contact cleaning flexibility.

The slim profile of the MWC, just 75mm (3"), its multi-point cantilever mounting framework, together with the sliding configuration, enables an operator to easily and quickly move cleaning modules to different positions on a machine or even to different machines.

The Mini Web Cleaner is suitable for many reel-to-reel applications ranging from label printing to in-mold decoration, TAB (taper automated bonding) and flexible circuit production.

all compromised, the effectiveness of the cleaning operation becomes compromised. Proper positioning and configuration is essential; as is matching vacuum output with the speed, width and type of substrate to be cleaned. Vacuum methods of cleaning are relatively successful in that they can remove moderate levels of contamination, i.e., around 25 microns. Unfortunately, the quality demands on web users today have increased to the level where 25 micron cleaning or thereabouts is simply not sufficient.



Other methods of cleaning include the mechanical use of brushes, a disadvantage of which is that they can scratch the surface of sensitive materials such as thin films. Other methods, involving the use of static

**"The truth is that not all web cleaning technology is up to the demand of modern processing requirements"**

elimination bars and vacuum actions with direct mechanical contact with the web, are also in use. In this instance the debris is agitated and freed up for removal by the vacuum.

To successfully clean a web it is important to consider what holds contaminants so tenaciously to a fast moving web in the first place: static and the boundary layer of air.

A moving web creates a boundary layer of air, which has to be penetrated if cleaning is to have any real effect. Some would say surely the application of high-pressure air would break through this layer and particles could then be blown off the surface. In reality this approach doesn't work because the contaminant simply disperses in the air and then settles at another point on the web downstream. The faster the web is moving, the greater the depth of the boundary air layer and the greater the difficulty of removing small particles from the web.

Static charges also have to be contended with. These charges are generated from the contact and separation of the material as its being pulled from the web fed roll and as the material passes over rollers. The result is an electrostatic adhesion that holds dirt and debris to the surface. The faster the web, the higher the static charges.

The contact cleaning concept was originally developed for the electronics industry, and is now widely employed as a productivity and quality enhancer in converting and across the graphic arts printing

sector. Unlike other forms of web cleaning it doesn't scratch or mar the surface of a material surface in any way. Moreover, contact cleaners penetrate the boundary layer of air to remove particles as small as a few microns.

These contact cleaners are suitable for ultra-narrow, narrow, medium and wide web width applications.

Each of the contact cleaners share a degree of commonality in that a special elastomer roller runs in contact with the web, penetrating the boundary layer of air, which non contact systems cannot reach. The elastomer roller removes all particles down to microscopic sizes. In the case of the Teknek system, all contaminant particles are then immediately transferred to a reverse wound pre-sheated adhesive roller, where they become permanently trapped. When the adhesive roller becomes permanently saturated with contaminants, the outer pre-sheet is simply removed – exposing the next underlying adhesive sheet ready for use. A powerful anti-static system can be incorporated within the system to ensure dust or dirt is not re-attracted to the web.

Sounds simple? In reality every element associated with design, construction and configuration is precision engineered in order that components function effectively and in unison. At the heart of the system is the adhesive roll. Teknek, for example, makes adhesive rolls from 25mm wide on up to 1500mm (60") and by the use of special core construction, on up to 3.5 meters (12ft). The company also implemented pre-sheated adhesive rolls.

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# A new role for letterpress?

**RECENT DEVELOPMENTS** in intermittent letterpress technology have led to a renewed interest from label converters looking for solutions for short run, high quality work, argues Victor Bolinaza of Mida Maquinaria

In the last few years, rotary letterpress has been displaced by other printing techniques in many label printing companies. Although the quality of letterpress printing has never been questioned, there have been some reservations about the preparation processes for the work involved in this technique, which includes lengthy periods of time for changes, cleaning of units, and so on.

This is where flexo, thanks to the greater simplicity of the printing units, has proven to be more effective. At the same time, it achieves quality standards similar to that of letterpress. It should be pointed out, however, that achieving this quality with flexo involves precise, delicate and costly pre-press work.

On the other hand, for some time label

printers have noticed that the basis of their production increasingly consists of shorter and more personalized runs.

Rotary presses are not agile enough when numerous job changes have to be dealt with, and other types of machines have proven effective when processing these orders – mainly intermittent web-fed presses and digital presses for really small orders.

Therefore, we have seen a trend where most narrow-web adhesive labels are printed on rotary presses for large runs, or intermittent web-feed presses for medium-size and small runs.

The preferred printing techniques for rotary presses are undoubtedly flexo and more recently offset – although the results of this are still to be seen.

On the other hand, on intermittent

web-feeding presses the preferred technique is letterpress, and to a lesser extent offset for laid surfaces.

The success of the intermittent web-fed presses has been accompanied by the re-emergence of letterpress as a printing technique. Although offset – waterless and wet – is also used on intermittent web-fed presses, it is letterpress that has proven to be the most versatile printing solution with this type of machine. Excepting printing on textured and laid surfaces, letterpress nowadays is of a similar quality to offset, but also includes added benefits inherent to this technique, especially because it transmits a thicker layer of ink which gives printed work more vivacity and color on backgrounds and screens.

In addition, letterpress allows easier use

as it eliminates the need for strict temperature control or wet process supervision.

This leap forward in quality which letterpress has also made is the result of the improvements which have taken place in the different elements involved in this printing technique:

- **Pre-press:** the sophisticated types of software developed for flexo in recent years are also applicable to letterpress. The use and mixing of different types of screens and dots, the separation of screens and colors for printing in different units, the differentiated treatment of lighter or darker areas, and so on, are common procedures nowadays in letterpress printing
- **Plates:** with the new letterpress plates currently on the market, greater dot quality and definition are achieved. 'Digital' letterpress plates incorporating a black ablation layer can be imaged on standard flexo CTP equipment, such as the EskoArtwork's CDI

Furthermore, in the light of the increase in the use of letterpress on intermittent web-fed machines, the latest developments in plates have been directed towards achieving greater letterpress printing quality on textured or laid papers. That is to say, with the references from specific plates for these papers, it is now possible to print backgrounds, quatricromies, and fine text negatives without having to resort to excessive pressure and achieving the standard of quality demanded in today's market. For printers processing smaller and more fractioned orders, new letterpress technology developments include:

- **A system of magnetic sleeves:** it is possible to change from one job to another very quickly and to carry out preparation separately from the machine
- **Ink trays with segmented blades** for rapid, accurate inking
- **New designs for printing sets and inking rollers** which eliminate the effects of double imaging and ghosting
- **New designs for printing cylinders** which give higher quality as regards strike precision and the uniformity of printed dots

## INTERMITTENT VS DIGITAL

Although digital presses are selling fast, there are still a lot of converters, even in mature markets, who prefer the letterpress route, *writes Andy Thomas.*

Hagmaier Etiketten, based in Münsingen, Germany, purchased a shaftless SPM-340LR semi-rotary letterpress from Taiwan-based Smooth Machinery earlier in the year. Thomas Hagmaier explains how it fits into the company's workflow: 'We don't want to produce large quantities of labels – we prefer to concentrate on specialty products. This is the reason we are interested in semi-rotary technology.' The press is ideal for small and medium jobs because of its very fast changeover, says Hagmaier – 'it is so fast it is almost comparable to a digital press. In one day we can change between up to ten jobs. It allows reverse printing at great speed with good registration. We think that these machines are the future, because whereas 5,000 labels are faster printed on digital, jobs of 10,000-20,000 labels are quicker on a semi-rotary machine. Digital, of course, is also very expensive.'

Another machine, which was launched at drupa and is aimed at the same market sector, is the Sanjo LMC Duo. The 'Baby' semi-rotary letterpress comes in a maximum width of 150mm and is suitable for high quality short run printing – or for cases where only a second pass is needed. The ES 150 is available in 2 to 5 colors with the additional equipment including hot stamping, flexo stations, flexible die and/or a laminating unit.

Switzerland-based Graficon, meanwhile, continues to have a good deal of success with its T200 semi-rotary letterpress in Western Europe countries like France, Austria, Germany, and Switzerland, where it is used to produce short runs of 4-8,000 complex multi-process labels as an alternative to investing in digital. Typical applications include cognac labels, wine and cosmetics labels. The machine has low tooling costs and can combine 'cold' UV letterpress, UV/solvent flatbed screen, hot foil stamping/embossing, lamination and flexo UV varnish. The semi-rotary letterpress units have remote ink duct pre-setting.

Lintec, whose local market of Japan is traditionally focused on letterpress, believes that the label industry's trend towards shorter runs is causing a resurgence in demand. 'The Japanese market is made up of short runs, and letterpress is suited to this,' says general manager Sumio Morimoto. 'But we are also seeing a new wave, helped by advanced computer to plate technology. In Japan and the rest of the world we are seeing a trend back towards letterpress.' The company launched a new letterpress machine in Europe earlier this year to respond to this rising demand.

As well as an alternative to digital presses, letterpress machines make good platforms for more specialist converting systems. Ex-Gallus UK MD Claus Nielsen recently set up a company, PGM, which specializes in refurbished – practically re-engineered – Gallus and Arsoma presses. GRE Engineering has signed a deal with Gallus to manage the supply and acquisition of spare parts for Gallus letterpress printing machines, first in Switzerland, Germany and France, and eventually worldwide. GRE already has a successful business upgrading Gallus letterpress machines.

So popular was the R200 that when Gallus ceased production three years ago, Graficon started building its own RPS220 rotary letterpress machines, which share tooling with the R200. 'There are still customers round the world who want to buy R200s, new or rebuilt, especially with more sophisticated features such as servos and pre-setting,' comments Martin Erni of Graficon.

Not surprisingly, Graficon remains a firm advocate of the letterpress process. 'Letterpress is a very simple process and its pre-press can use the same standards as offset,' says Heinz Keller, designer of Graficon's latest UniQ press, which combines letterpress with every other print process. 'If you need exact color adjustment in flexo you have to correct the repro or use specially mixed colors, while with letterpress you can adjust the color during makeready. Letterpress also has advantages against offset. It can run from 10 m/min up to 60 m/min with no color change. You can't do that in offset because the ink/water balance is changing and this creates waste.'

An interesting recent development from Codimag is a wider letterpress machine, the Viva 420, which aims to take on flexo productivity directly while retaining the format advantages of the intermittent process. A machine was recently installed by Stic'Image, a label printer from the Lyon area in France, to complement its Viva 340 machines. 'Today with the Viva 420, we can compete against flexo with letterpress and develop new markets using the same well-known printing technology,' says Michel Journois.

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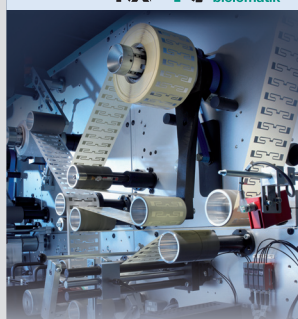
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BY JAY ARTHUR, author of 'Lean Six Sigma Demystified'

**What exactly causes the redundancy and slowness which means you don't service your customers? The five speed bumps of business:**

**1. Making products before customers ask for them is expensive.** Where actual production time is minimal, what takes a long time is the sales process. To save money, make your products right on time. Stop overproducing and making big batches of things. Remember: Don't keep your people busy; keep your products busy.

**2. Stocking large amounts of inventory is expensive.** How much inventory do you have sitting on your shelves or in your warehouse every month? The carrying costs of inventory are expensive. If necessary, close down production for a week so you can use up some of your inventory. Have the production workers clean the plant or fix the machinery—anything other than make additional products. Let your inventory get down to a manageable level that requires less storage space and therefore less money. Remember: If you don't make it, you don't have to store it.

**3. Unnecessary movement of products is expensive.** When you make too much inventory, you have to move it around. Product movement increases your chances of having damaged goods, which you then must either scrap or rework. The less inventory you

have, the less movement (and less damage) your products will face. Remember: If you don't store it, you don't have to move it.

**4. Unnecessary movement of people is expensive.** How much commute time are you or your staff doing while at work? Commute time while at work can be immense. It's not uncommon for people to walk the equivalent of over five miles a day in a 2,400 square foot space just to do their job. Anytime people are moving too much, you need to redesign the space and you'll see a marked increase in productivity. Remember: Walking is waste.

**5. Unnecessary processing is expensive.** Are people doing unnecessary processing steps? One company had an inspection process for incoming goods. But in the many years they've done the inspections, they've never found a single bad product. So if their suppliers have proven to be reliable, why is the company still doing the inspections? Examine your processes to discover what's really necessary and what's simply waste. Remember: Forget how you've always done it; do it right.

**The good news is that you'll likely find that only four percent of your processes are causing fifty percent of your troubles. In other words, you won't have to fix a lot to see a marked improvement.**

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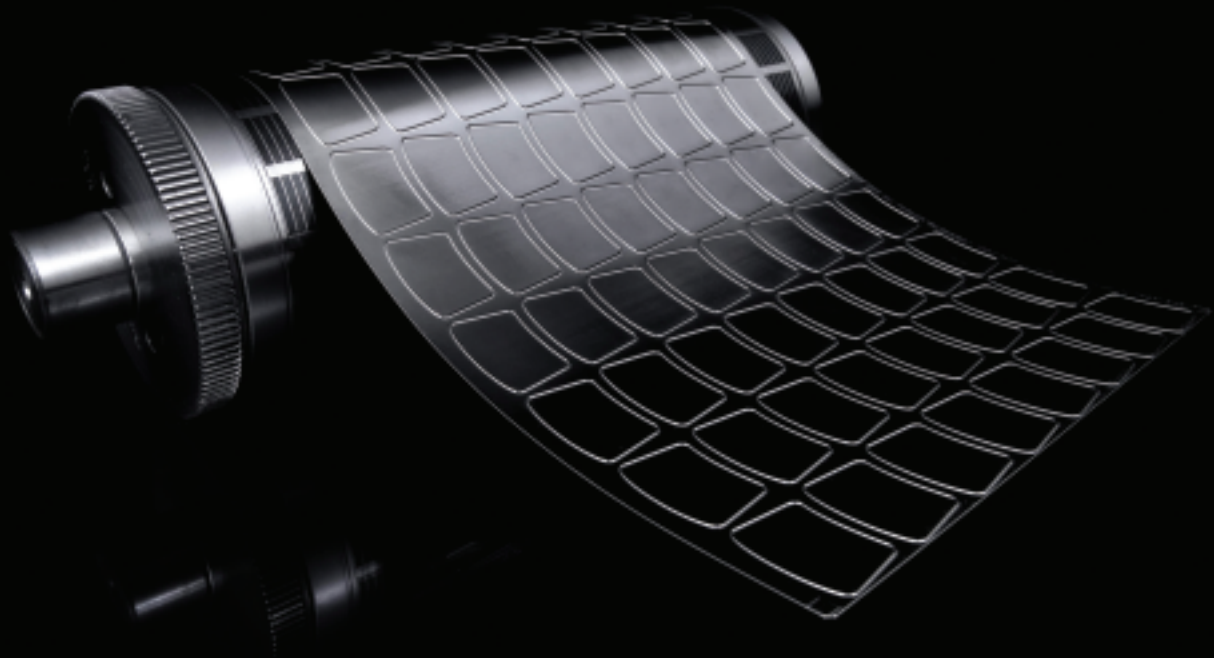


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