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CONVERTING BEYOND PRINT

One of the best things about being a narrow web label converter is the opportunity to use existing equipment and skills to diversify your business. In this edition of L&L we take a closer look at how die cutting and finishing skills can open up new, value added markets.

Called by many 'functional' converting or 'converting beyond print', we are talking about a wide range of applications requiring accurate die cutting from a web of material, often on difficult and expensive substrates. These applications include - but are by no means restricted to die-cut components for cell phone manufacture, facia panels for cars, medical items like bandages, access cards, transit cards, apparel tags etc etc.

The technical key to this business are the rotary cutting tools, which often have to be specially selected for use with highly abrasive materials. The same debate rages between solid and magnetic tooling - with mag dies able to handle longer runs of abrasive materials then ever before - but technically there is nothing here that can't be handled by any competent narrow web converter.

Converters on both sides of the Atlantic have pioneered these applications - Schreiner Etiketten in Germany was a World Label Award winner for its work in the medical industry, for example. The challenge is how to enter and sell into these specialist markets, and a good way in is often through supply chain partners to the auto, consumer electronics or medical industries, rather than the end users themselves. It is these companies which are looking for a point of differentiation in a highly competitive market always tending towards commoditization. Perhaps you already supply product ID, information or brand labels to these companies, and it would be worth discussing a more innovative or efficient way to manufacture the products themselves on your web converting equipment?

Much functional converting work, of course, takes place in the Far East, close to where the goods themselves are manufactured, so you need to think hard about where the low hanging fruit might lie closer to home.

ANDY THOMAS

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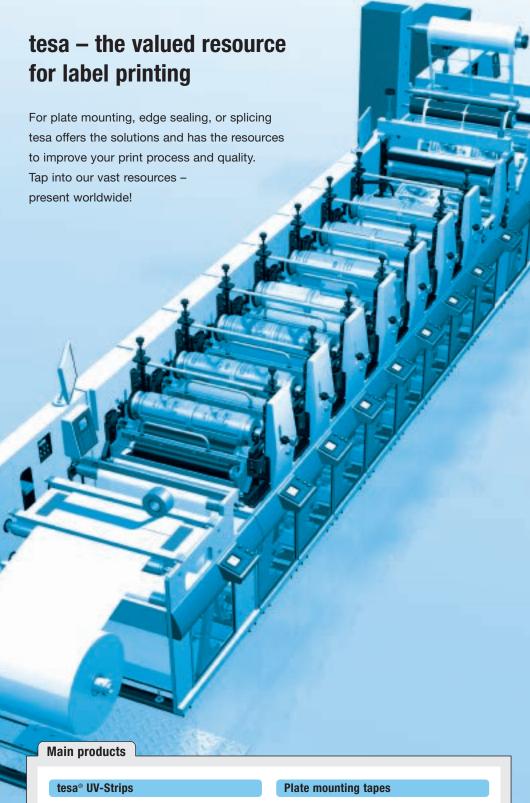
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INBOX

Digital printing offers extended opportunities

'Over the past five years or so the digital printing of labels has undoubtedly become a mainstream printing process,' writes industry expert Mike Fairley in an article on L&L.com's blog.

Head to labelsandlabeling.com/blog for the full piece, while here we publish some of our readers' comments.

My business partner Gavin Scott and I formed Borble specifically to address the market opportunity we saw in 2004 – a shift to shorter run and bespoke product labels. We conducted comparative press trials and brought the first Xeikon of its type into the UK early 2005. The label industry gave us four years to establish a virtually unchallenged lead position in the UK and in January 2009 we added a Xeikon 3300, investing into the recession. Both these presses have GM inline finishing so we have the critical mass to handle volume and deliver the essential short run service.

A case-study: a cheese maker customer rang to say he has run out of labels and is sending a driver over to collect some more. Our reply was to meet the driver half way – we don't hold stocks but can print on demand instantly if necessary.

With artisan manufacturers creating world class designs for a wide variety of low volume specialist products, and large manufacturers re-engineering their processes to address market niches and take cash off the shelf, we have experienced a continuous growth and expanding variety of demand. I estimate some 50,000 different label designs printed in five years, millions of labels for hundreds of customers and thousands of label users. However this is not a total swing (and does not have to be). The print technologies of digital and flexo co-exist and as the digital footprint extends through press speed and printer experience, so the flexo process continuously improves. This presents some obstacles for digital while the label market re-defines itself in the post-recession emergence of lean manufacturers supplying quality products just in time. Where do we go from here? – watch this space.

Barry Griffiths, Borble, UK

One of the problems I have seen with digital printing happens when the customer requires a much larger quantity of labels that were originally printed on a digital press. The economics of the digital print process become challenged. On the other hand, trying to match the print quality on a flexo label press can be difficult, unless the flexo pre-press is adjusted to match the color gamut of the digital press. George Cusdin, Flexgraphic Printing Services, USA

Our company has recently invested in a new digital printing to allow us to offer our customers the highest quality self-adhesive labels possible. Being involved in the food and pharmaceutical market means we have to produce fantastic products each and every time; without digital printing this is much harder.

Anon, Matform Self Adhesive Labels, UK

We often find that people new to digital printing try to compare running costs too closely to flexo. This misses the point that you very correctly make in your article: digital printing is all about creating NEW opportunities for label converters. Honestly, we're not trying to replace anyone's flexo presses. We readily admit that if you want the cheapest possible running costs on longer runs, flexo will likely always be the best choice. But if you want to be able to run 5,000 or 10,000 labels in full process and Pantone-matched spot colors at 2400 dpi in less than an hour, digital is pretty much the only way that's going to happen. Add to that custom sizes and shapes with no dies required and now you've got capabilities that simply

Mark Strobel, Primera Technology, USA

didn't exist until very recently.



DSCOOP PANEL HIGHLIGHTS NEED FOR BRAND OWNER EDUCATION

The Dscoop brand owner panel session made it clear that brand owners require more education on the opportunities that can be realized through digitally printed labels and packaging. The conference's panel, which included Texas Instruments, Bic, P&G and Frito-Lay, generally appeared to view digital printing only as a way to economically produce mock-ups and product trials.

These were some of the comments: 'For the size runs that we do, it doesn't make sense to use digital'; 'When you compare digital print to PMS it does not match'; and 'Our brand color is not going away: this is one of the problems with digital'.

The audience, filled with converters from around the world, HP and its partners, was frustrated with the inability to communicate their capabilities to more receptive ears. Many comments were voiced from the crowd in an effort to make the panel aware of the recent advancements of the technology – throughput, frame size, color management and more.

Heineken's success with its 'Your Heineken' campaign was shared in the Web 2 Print session on the subsequent day, vividly proving that even the world's biggest players can find a place for digital printing in their portfolio. Your Heineken gives consumers the ability to custom design their own shrink sleeve label; a six-pack with personalized labels sells for 15 euros – an over 200 percent mark up. The project has been so successful that it will be taken into more European countries in 2010 and will be made available in a 24-pack. Wonder what a case will cost? Brand owners need to be better educated on what the label and packaging industry can truly offer them. They must become more knowledgeable, not only with digital printing, but also with the industry's sustainability efforts, its advanced media introductions and added value capabilities, extended gamut printing opportunities, HD flexo and color

L&L's End User Newsletter, to be launched in Spring 2010, will be a solution for this issue. It will grow the awareness of the industry's continual advancement amongst its customers, closing the gap through education.

Danielle Jerschefske, L&L

NEWS

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST **GLOBAL LABEL STORIES**

STORK SELLS AKL FLEXOTECHNIK TO INOMETA TECHNOLOGIE

Rotary screen printing technology manufacturer Stork Prints has sold its German subsidiary AKL Flexotechnik to Inometa Technologie. The sale will be effective as of May 1, 2010. CEO Dick Joustra commented: 'This direction will allow us to further focus on our core of rotary screen technology, digital laser engraving and digital printing for the graphics and textile industries. We are confident that with our choice for Inometa, the customers of AKL will benefit from their knowledge of rollers and sleeves.'

CCL ACQUIRES AUSTRALIAN **HEALTHCARE LABEL PRINTER**

CCL Industries has acquired Purbrick, a privately held company based in Melbourne, Australia. Purbrick supplies patient information leaflets and pressure sensitive labels to global pharmaceutical customers located in Australia.

Geoffrey Martin, president and CEO of CCL Industries, commented: 'Purbrick will change its trading name immediately to CCL Label and become part of our global network of GMP-designated label supply facilities for the world's leading pharmaceutical companies. I am very pleased that the company's management team has agreed to remain with us on a long-term basis. This acquisition demonstrates our continuing ability to find situations in the label sector that meet both our strategic and financial criteria to enhance shareholder value.' With headquarters in Toronto, Canada, CCL Industries now employs approximately 5,600 people and operates 59 production facilities globally.

LIGHTNING LABEL LAUNCHES **iPHONE APPLICATION**

iPhone users can now get a free custom label printing quote in less than a minute with the new iLabel application from Denver, USA-based Lightning Labels, a digital label converter. To download the world's first iPhone label quoting application, users can go to iTunes and search for iLabel. 'It's fast, easy and can be done from anywhere,' noted Lightning Labels founder Peter Renton. 'Fill out six selection fields and get a price almost instantaneously. I've been able to get the entire process down to a little over 30 seconds.



GLOBAL ASSOCIATIONS AGREE JOINT INITIATIVES

THE L8 GLOBAL LABEL ASSOCIATIONS hold second summit meeting

The world's leading label industry associations held their second summit at the FINAT Technical Seminar in Barcelona in March, agreeing to closely co-ordinate policies on environmental management and sustainability.

Representatives from the eight organizations heard a presentation from Mike Fairley, strategic director at the Tarsus Labels Group, on trends in the global environment debate and the need to develop a cohesive industry-wide response. A networking dinner was later hosted by the Tarsus Group.

The inaugural meeting of the 'L7' group took place at Labelexpo Asia in Shanghai last December, representing TLMI (USA), FINAT (Europe), LATMA (Australia), PEIAC (China), LMAI (India), JFLP (Japan) and SALMA (New Zealand). This group was recently joined by ABIEA, the Brazilian label organization, to make up the 'L8'. The members of these eight label associations are believed to represent some 70 percent of the annual global production of self-adhesive labels.

In a statement, the L8 members endorsed the pressure-sensitive label industry's commitment to a more sustainable and environmentally responsible future and offered to 'support the ongoing industry measures to further reduce the environmental impact of labels, encourage more sustainable label materials and production processes. The group also pledged to help meet changing industry and customer recycling targets, and to work towards the continued reduction of label waste.

In a significant development, the L8 members will seek to give the industry a more prominent voice in the global forums where government legislators, brand owners and packaging organizations are already formulating policies on sustainability issues which will directly impact label converters and suppliers.

The L8 associations are currently promoting a range of different environmental management and audit systems - including ISO 14001, EMAS and LIFE - and support the use of materials and schemes that 'encourage sustainable and renewable resources', such as FSC, PEFC or SFI.

The G8 representatives pledged to inform the wider industry about the solutions already being developed to maximize cost-effective recovery and recycling of self-adhesive label stock waste, as well as the sustainability advantages of thinner, lighter label materials.

Commenting on the outcome, TLMI chairman Frank Gerace said: As the largest retailers in the world increasingly seek transparency throughout the supply chain, all of our companies will be impacted and held accountable for the environmental initiatives and standards we integrate into our facilities. It is essential that the world's label associations come together to address these issues so that we may speak with a collective voice.'



OMET CUTS DIE TOOL COST

MONOTWIN-CUT unit uses single mag cylinder

Omet has developed a new die cutting device that simplifies the die cutting process and is claimed significantly to reduce costs.

Known as the MonoTwin-Cut, the new unit uses a single magnetic cylinder for all label sizes, thereby eliminating the need for the converter to hold a range of different and expensive tooling. MonoTwin-Cut operates by rotating at constant speed during the cutting phase, while its servo control motor allows it to adjust its idling speed to the acceleration and deceleration of the press while staying perfectly synchronized for the next cut.

Available for both the Omet X-Jet (digital) and Omet X-Flex (flexo) series of presses, Omet says the precision of its 'cut to print' register and production speed capability makes the MonoTwin-Cut ideal for all types of label and any print run length.

Major advantages to the converter include the elimination of potential production problems associated with late delivery of tooling. The unit is simple and intuitive to use, requires no lifting tackle for heavy cylinders, and completes a changeover by simply replacing the cutting sheet. Operational control of the unit, web tension, and waste extraction is all carried out via the main operator control board, while pre-register and register control is fully automatic.

For the X-Jet the MonoTwin-Cut is available with magnetic cylinder repeat of 20" (508mm), a die length min of 8" (203.2mm) and max 14" (355.6mm), with mechanical speed dependent on cylinder size. For the X-Flex magnetic cylinder repeat is 28" (711.2mm), with die length 12" (304.8mm) -20" (508mm).



TLMI ANNOUNCES EUGENE SINGER AWARD WINNERS

The Singer Award is given annually to four narrow web converting companies; each company within a certain sales range category. The 2010 TLMI Eugene Singer Awards were given to the following companies at the association's recent converter meeting in Palm Springs, California:

- Fountain Valley, California-based Coast Label Company won in its category for the third time. The small company category is defined by annual sales of less than USD \$6 million.
- Fairfield, Ohio-based Kopco Graphics won for the mid-range company category, defined by sales of \$6-\$14 million. This is Kopco's second TLMI Eugene Singer Award.
- · Aurora, Illinois-based The Label Printers won for the medium company category, defined by sales of \$15-\$35 million. This is The Label Printer's first Eugene Singer Award.
- · Longwood, Florida-based Consolidated Label won for the large company category defined by sales greater than \$35 million. This is Consolidated Label's eighth Eugene Singer Award.

TLMI president Frank Sablone commented: 'TLMI would like to congratulate this year's Eugene Singer Award Winners. The association's converter members continue to realize the benefit of participating in the TLMI Ratio Study, and the tangible ongoing value the study provides to their businesses and to their business planning strategies. TLMI is honored to be able to continue to provide this service to our converter members.'

MARK ANDY ADDS TO PERFORMANCE RANGE

Mark Andy has launched newest addition to its Performance Series product line – the P5. Incorporating the print-head design common to all Performance Series presses, the P5 is claimed to provide fast changeovers, simple operation and superior print quality.

Repeatable settings and limited operator steps allow quick set-up - a 4-color job can reportedly be set up in just three minutes. A minimal amount of ink required for production runs, as well as short web paths (53in/135cm between print heads), can reduce material waste by up to 50 percent, says the company.

Jeff Feltz, product manager, Mark Andy, said: 'The first model of the series, the multiple servo P7, is our higher-end solution for complex applications. We are excited to offer the same, savvy print station and flexible frame design in the P5, a machine for the everyday converter looking to achieve servo-driven productivity and high quality levels, at an extremely appealing value.'

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST **GLOBAL LABEL STORIES**

MERCIAN LABELS GROUP ACQUIRES AC LABELS

UK-based barcode labeling specialist AC Labels has been acquired by the Mercian Labels Group in 'an assets and goodwill deal' securing the long term supply of variable data barcode labels and the AC Labels brand.

'AC Labels has a fantastic reputation in the marketplace as a market leader in complex variable information labeling,' said Dr Adrian Steele, managing director of Mercian Labels. 'We are establishing a new operation in Derby specifically to serve this demand, and are delighted with both the support shown from the client base for the acquisition, and also the opportunity to acquire the brand of AC Labels. This new subsidiary of the Mercian Labels Group complements our other specialty companies in manufacturing tamper evident security labels, Label Lock security seals and short run digital, hotfoil and flexographic labeling.

The new company will continue to manufacture complex constructions of selfadhesive labels including variable data and barcodes, serving the medical, pharma and logistics marketplaces, and is now involved in ensuring a seamless transition for existing customers of AC Labels and to secure and expand the prospects of the business in Derby, UK.



SUN CHEMICAL OPENS PLANT IN GERMANY

Sun CHEMICAL has opened a manufacturing plant in Frankfurt, Germany, to serve the food package printing market. The plant was built using clean room and HACCP directives to ensure that the 'best possible standards' are adopted in manufacturing of Sun Chemical inks, says the company. Representing an investment of 4 million euros, the new facility is dedicated to production of sheetfed packaging inks. The facility features two new blending stations: one for low migration inks; the other, which is housed in a separate building to avoid cross-contamination, is used for conventional inks.

To ensure the purity of the inks manufactured at the Frankfurt facility,

all raw materials are hand-inspected to make sure they contain no contaminants and have low odor as required by European food regulations. Additionally, quality control officers are on-site to check product quality at all times.

'Food package printers are facing tremendous challenges today,' said Rudi Lenz, CEO of Sun Chemical. 'In addition to cost pressures and stiff competition. they also face demanding sustainability requirements and some of the strictest ink migration standards on the market. Our customers rely on us to provide them with solutions that help them meet those challenges. That's why Sun Chemical's investment in the Frankfurt plant shows our commitment to providing excellence.

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EDALE LAUNCHES NEW PRESS

OPEN HOUSE showcases Alpha-Multi flexographic press

Edale hosted a series of open house events during March to mark the launch of its new Alpha-Multi flexo press. The events saw potential and existing customers, as well as suppliers, visit the company's head office in Hampshire, UK, to see demonstrations of the new machine.

One visitor was Adrian Steele, managing director of converter Mercian Labels, which currently runs an Edale Alpha press. 'Overall, this is a great piece of design, he said of the new Alpha-Multi, 'and should be an easy upgrade for those like us at Mercian with an existing 4/5 color Alpha. In fact, it's so innovative that it should really be nominated for an award

somewhere, showing what the best of British engineering talent can design."

The Alpha Multi can print up to nine colors in a footprint of just 5 square meters. The press can be purchased as an upgrade to an original Alpha, which reduces investments costs, or as a new stand alone press. A twin stack arrangement, which Edale says is unique, allows one stack to be in production while the second stack is being made-ready, ensuring maximum efficiency.

Edale says it will hold further open house events throughout the year and will launch a number of new products in the coming months.

3M TO ACQUIRE A-ONE LABEL BUSINESS IN JAPAN

3M has agreed to acquire a majority stake in the A-One branded consumer and office label business and related operations.

A-One is said to be the leading office and consumer label brand in Asia, and the second largest worldwide. It has been majority owned and operated by the Arai family since its inception in 1959. A-One label products have been manufactured from its Togane plant for office and consumer customers throughout Japan for over 50 years. A-One CEO Hiroaki Arai will continue to lead the business, bringing A-One within the 3M global network.

'A-One will significantly enhance our ability to create a global label platform that services our customers and delights our loyal 3M end-users,' said Bill Smith, vice president, 3M office supplies division. 'A-One not only provides immediate critical mass in Japan and valuable know-how for label production, it accelerates our penetration through the Asia region and underscores 3M's commitment to be a global leader in the consumer and office label business.



Müller Martini VSOP Variable Sleeve Offset Printing



The technology of the VSOP web offset press provides the capability to take advantage of many market trends in packaging: flexible packaging, labels (shrink-sleeve, IML, wrap-around etc.), folding carton and liquid packaging. The press runs up to 365 m/min (1200 ft/min) and produces the complete size range (381-762 mm/15-30") by using lightweight print sleeves. The VSOP is available in web widths of 520 mm (20 1/2") and 850 mm (33 1/2") and offers a great number of hybrid configurations with flexo. gravure, screen etc. - Grow with VSOP.





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MULLER MARTINI



BEVERAGE MARKET

BOOSTS PS GROWTH

BEVERAGE is third largest PS sector, says FINAT report

The beverage market was the third largest sector for self-adhesive labels in Europe during 2008, according to a recent end-user market survey and industry report commissioned by Finat, the international trade association for the self-adhesive label industry. A total of 430 million square meters of self-adhesive materials were consumed on the bottling lines across Europe in 2008. During the period 2005-2008, the beverage segment was also one of the fastest growing markets for self-adhesives – driven primarily by the growth in premium and export beer sales.

'In an age of abundance, design has become crucial in building and maintaining brand value,' said Jules Lejeune, managing director of Finat. 'And this is especially true for premium products. Self-adhesive technology offers marketing departments a wide choice of label shapes and film finishes, which bring added cachet to a bottle and set it apart from the rest of the pack. With a choice of paper or filmic material and the ability to combine different printing and finishing processes, brewers can significantly improve shelf impact by incorporating several different colors and finishes to their label including metallic, tactile, gloss and matte.'

'The no-label look is a good example of the type of innovation being adopted by the global brands in both the beer and spirit segments,' said Andrea Vimercati, president of Finat and sales manager of Pilot Italia, an Italy-based self-adhesive label converter. 'But it's not just the big global brands that are benefiting from the technology. Comparatively small print runs actually favors self-adhesive labels, making it easy for converters to quickly

adapt label content for smaller premium microbrewers.'

It's not only premium beer segment that has benefited from self-adhesive labels, says the report. The flavored alcoholic beverage (FAB) segment has experienced double digit growth over the last five years. While penetration of self-adhesives is now high in this segment, it does appear to be peaking, according to the report.

Self-adhesive has also dominated the premium glass-bottled mineral water market, although growth in this segment slowed recently as consumers looked closer at their spending budgets and governments and agencies around the globe started to question the environmental value of bottled water.

New growth opportunities also lie in the high-value spirits end of the market (whisky, vodka, etc.). The secondary packaging and security features – required to prevent tampering and provide proof of authenticity – offer growth potential for self-adhesives in the segment. Holograms, security and other anti-thief devices can be built into self-adhesive labels, extending the value of the label well beyond promotion.

The report also highlights some of the challenges and opportunities facing the self-adhesive industry. Technical challenges related to the removal of labels on returnable bottles are already collaboratively being addressed by the major laminators and label converters around the globe.

The beer sector has also traditionally invested heavily in glue applied application equipment, though this situation is changing rapidly as a new generation of machines are installed.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

KOLLMAN GROUP ACQUIRES PRIME GRAPHICS

Kollman Label and Packaging Group has purchased Prime Graphics, a US-based converter of packaging and decorative labels which supplies consumer product companies within food, beverage, personal care, medical and private label markets.

Kollman Label and Packaging Group was formed in 2008 and completed its first acquisition that year of folding carton printer Dixie Printing & Packaging. The group is engaged in bringing together medium sized companies in the labeling and packaging industry. The companies jointly market their products to food, beverage, pharmaceutical and personal care companies in North America.

Kevin Kollman, president of Kollman Label and Packaging Group, said: 'The acquisition of Prime Graphics is consistent with our strategic plan to grow the organization by providing our customers diverse product offerings within the packaging industry. Prime's capabilities and mid-west presence will be a great complement to the Dixie folding carton customers and will now allow Prime's current customers one source for their carton and flexible packaging needs.' Prime Graphics will continue to operate out of its Wood Dale, Illinois location, under the new name of Prime Label & Packaging.

KLOCKNER INVESTS IN ASIAN AND US PRODUCTION CAPACITY

The Klockner Pentaplast Group is adding to its global production capacity for shrink label films in its Rayond, Thailand and Rural Retreat, USA facilities. The company will also add PVC production capacity to the Thai site. The investment, which includes two tentering lines and PVC production machinery, totals USD \$37 million. Sixty-four new employees will be added worldwide. Startup is targeted for early 2011. The new tentering lines will produce PETG and PVC shrink films and will add 15,000 tons of shrink film capacity to the company's existing global production.

Pentalabel shrink films are available in a range of transverse-direction oriented (TDO) and machine-direction oriented (MDO) shrink films specifically designed for full-body or partial sleeve labels, promotion packs/multipacks, tamper-evident closures, capsules (wine caps), roll-fed, and roll-sleeve labels. The films are typically printed for highly decorated labels that provide food and consumer products with 360-degree graphics.

Primarily used for pharmaceutical, shrink base film, and thermoformed packaging applications, the new PVC investment will add 12,500 tons of capacity. The line is engineered to meet the requirements and regulatory standards of the pharmaceutical industry. Klockner Pentaplast says it is now the only local producer in the Asian region to meet these manufacturing standards.



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The S-CON Compact is easy to operate and offers an amazing grade of flexibility despite minimal space requirements for processing material from roller to roller or from roller into single labels. The functional modules are positioned on a solid base frame and impress with their optimized accessibility and their comprehensive scope for design.

Ideally suited to produce different products such as:

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- technical labels and adhesive parts
- special labels
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Speed: up to 160 m/min Machine length: 2430 or 2930 mm

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TOYO ACQUIRES FLUID INK

JAPANESE supplier strengthens US base in packaging and labels

Toyo Ink International Corp., a member of the Toyo Ink Group, has formed a new subsidiary, Toyo Ink Technologies, for the acquisition of specified assets of Fluid Ink Technology, of Moorpark, California. Toyo Ink Technologies will assume ownership of all of Fluid Ink Technology's intellectual property formulas, brands, certain equipment, and employment of certain sales and technical teams.

Fluid Ink Technology will continue to exist under a new name and provide products and support for Toyo Ink Technologies from its two locations in Moorpark, California, and Plainfield, New Jersey. Fluid Ink Technology customers should see no changes in how day-to-day business is conducted, says the company, while sales, distribution, brands and support service will continue as normal

Fluid Ink's technical experts have developed an array of flexographic, gravure and ultraviolet ink products for the flexible packaging, paper packaging and label printing markets, for both wide and narrow web applications.

With the acquisition, the Toyo Ink Group will also strengthen its position in the US packaging inks sector, a move in line with the group's global expansion plans.

'Fluid Ink Technology has a longstanding reputation for product reliability and unparalleled customer support. The addition of its name, technology and sales and technical teams instantly boosts Toyo Ink's presence in North America,' said Toyo Ink International's president, Mamoru Sasajima. 'Toyo Ink also remains dedicated to local production. The new venture enhances our ability to better meet local demand for a sustained competitive advantage.

'The combination of the Toyo Ink Group and Fluid Ink Technology brings significant new synergies to the table,' said Jim Newkirk, president of Fluid Ink Technology. 'The strength of our combined product, service and technology portfolio will create tremendous growth opportunities and customer value for years to come. It's a win-win situation for all involved.3

Headquartered in New York, Toyo Ink International Corp. is the holding company for the North American operations of parent Toyo Ink Mfg. Co., Ltd. of Japan.



AVERY DENNISON APPOINTS NEW BOARD CHAIRMAN

Avery Dennison's board of directors has elected president and CEO Dean A. Scarborough to succeed Kent Kresa as chairman of the board.

The change took effect upon Kresa's retirement on April 22, 2010 at the annual shareholders meeting, in accordance with the company's policy that directors retire at the age of 72. As chairman, Scarborough will continue in his roles as president and chief executive officer.

Avery Dennison former chairman Kresa said: 'In the five years that Dean Scarborough has been CEO, he has led Avery Dennison's global expansion and guided the company during an exceptionally challenging recession. He has built a strong management team and led the development and implementation of a sound strategy for future growth. I have enjoyed working with Dean and my other fellow directors, and I am confident in the new leadership structure of the board.'

Director David E. I. Pyott has been selected as lead independent director. Pyott, chairman and chief executive officer of Allergan, is one of ten independent directors on Avery Dennison's 12-person board.

ITALIAN COMPANIES COMPLETE MERGER

A merger between Italian companies Icap-Sira Chemicals and Polymers and Irsea, which began on October 1 2009, has been completed.

The deal will bring additional expertise and capacity to Icap-Sira's portfolio of coloring systems for PSA applications. It will add around 5,000 tons of production each year to Icap-Sira's pigment dispersion business, as well as bringing further benefits to its polyurethane production.

Icap-Sira offers emulsion- and solvent-based acrylics and pigment dispersions to the pressure sensitive adhesive industry.

LABELS&LABELING



BENSON GROUP PROVIDES LABELS FOR FIRST AID PRODUCTS

BENEFITS of integrated manufacturing system demonstrated

Medica Packaging, the pharmaceutical packaging business of the Benson Group, has detailed the packaging elements that it has provided for the launch of MedTrade's new Celox Pro and First Aid pads and bandages.

The packaging produced at Medica's Crewe, UK, facility includes cartonboard reverse-tuck-in-ends style containers for Celox Pro Hemostatic products in both 4g and Prefolded 8" x 8" Hemostatic Gauze variants. The individual sachets within the Prefolded 8" x 8" Hemostatic Gauze container carry detailed self-adhesive labels, and both packs include an 8-page concertina folded patient information leaflet also produced at Medica.

Further label elements are included on both sides of two further pouch wrapped products in the Celox First Aid range: single 8in x 8 in gauze pads and 3in x 5 foot gauze roll. The company says that these labels, produced on clear polypropylene and printed in full color, incorporate fine screening techniques to achieve excellent graduated images. which are often difficult to achieve in flexographic printing. The plates were created for Medica Packaging by Creative Repro, Daventry, using its recently developed Evolution Screening.

Paper self-adhesive labels were provided for a fifth product, Celox First Aid Nose Bleed Dressing. The five

shaped Celox pads are housed in a solid plastic carry case with identification and patient information labels front and back.

Originally developed to assist military medics with some of the worst wounds imaginable, Celox is now available to help manage all types of trauma. For example, it will help save lives on the battlefield; gain control in a serious emergency; handle a workplace or sporting incident; or rapidly stabilize a minor cut, laceration or nose bleed.

'The team at Medica was tremendously helpful right the way through the process,' said Guy Eason, project leader at MedTrade. 'They liaised very closely with the artwork studio in order to get the final files just right, and, because we are very much in the launch phase of these products, were able to provide us with very realistic minimum order quantities. The fact that Medica was able to produce all three packaging elements for us was a massive bonus.'

Mark Kerridge, Benson Group md, said: 'This is a fine illustration of Medica's ability to produce the three elements of printed cartons, patient information leaflets, and printed labels to meet a clients packaging demands. The labels produced for the Celox First Aid pouched products are an excellent example of a high-quality but cost-effective solution for what is currently, in its introductory phase, a short-run product.'

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST **GLOBAL LABEL STORIES**

PRIVATE EQUITY FIRM ACQUIRES **MAJORITY STAKE IN SMYTH**

Smyth Companies, a manufacturer of labels and label application equipment, has sold a majority share of its business to Novacap, a private equity firm based in Montreal, Canada.

John Hickey, CEO of Smyth Companies, said: 'Smyth has concluded a year long search to find the right partner and we are pleased to announce this partnership with Novacap who will supply the capital and acquisition expertise to expand our reach throughout North America and worldwide.'

Novacap's stated mission is 'to invest in middle market companies that have the potential to become world leaders by helping to develop their markets, technology, and operations'.

The Hickey family, proprietors of Smyth for more than 100 years, along with the entire Smyth management team, will retain a significant ownership stake in the company and continue in their current roles.

FLINT GROUP TO ACQUIRE INK MANUFACTURER TORDA

Flint Group has signed an agreement to acquire Torda, a manufacturer of printing inks for the packaging markets in Northern Europe, the Balkans and the Middle East, with a substantial presence in Eastern Europe. Torda generated revenues of approximately 23m euros in 2009.

This acquisition is the third step of Flint Group to foster its expansion in Eastern European markets within the last twelve months. In 2009, Flint Group acquired the Russian packaging ink manufacturer and distributor Premo Inks. In January 2010. Flint Group announced the expansion of its packaging inks manufacturing operations in Poland to meet increased demand.

Charles Knott, CEO and chairman of Flint Group, said: 'The acquisition of Torda supports our strategy to grow in the packaging print consumables market in a sustainable and profitable way by strengthening our position in the faster growing markets. Moreover, Torda has some excellent technology positions which we will be able to leverage throughout the global Flint Group Packaging organization.'

The transaction is expected to close by the end of March 2010, subject to the approval of the antitrust authorities. Financial terms have not been disclosed.

NEW PRODUCTS





ALPHA-MULTI FLEXO PRESS

UK press manufacturer Edale has launched its Alpha-Multi machine. The new press can print up to 9 colors in a footprint of five square meters. It has the same short web path and quick job change as the company's original Alpha machine, and is said to offer the benefits of a modular machine but at a reduced price.

Edale has installed over 150 of its original Alpha presses in over 50 countries. A compact 3-, 4- or 5-color flexo press, it is available in 250mm and 330mm web widths and has a footprint of two square meters.

The Alpha-Multi has a twin stack arrangement which allows one stack to be in production while the second is made ready.

UK converter Kingfisher Labels has purchased the first of the new presses. Director Martin Jackson said: 'The compact footprint and its ability to run a 5-color or a 9-color thread up ensures minimum waste which appeals to Kingfisher Labels as it allows maximum flexibility on existing projects as well as providing expanded capabilities as future trends and production requirements dictate.'

Edale held an open house event at its facility in Hampshire during the first week of March to demonstrate the new machine

INKJET PRINT ENGINE WITH 11 INCH WIDTH INDUSTRIAL INKJET

Industrial has launched its new inkjet print engine, ColourPrint 282, which has a print width of 282mm (11 inches).

The standard module provides full color print using CMYK inks. ColourPrint uses KM1024 printheads from Konica Minolta, and in line with customer requests the unit can be fitted with different printhead models using six, 14 or 42 pl drop sizes. All KM1024 printheads can run in grayscale or high-resolution binary modes; the ideal mode can be quickly selected in software for any particular print job. The total number of printheads used in the ColourPrint 282 is 16, or four printheads for each color.

'Our previous model, the ColourPrint 142, has only half that print width, and for many industrial sectors we found that 142mm is just not enough. Particularly in the label and packaging market a wider solution was needed. Our new print engine comes very close to the A3 sheet format,' said John Corrall, managing director of Industrial Inkjet. 'We do not offer full stand-alone printing systems. Instead our print engines are sold to machine builders or system integrators who are looking for a simple easy and reliable inkjet solution. To our customers using our print engines is a way of hugely reducing the lead time before they can deliver a finished product.'

LABELING SOFTWARE RFID WIZARD

THARO SYSTEMS

Tharo Systems has launched RFID Wizard for its EasyLabel labeling software, which allows the creation of EPC (Electronic Product Code) and DoD (Department of Defense) smart labels. RFID projects that do not require the EPC or DoD RFID code can use EasyLabel to directly program HF or UHF smart labels in a hexadecimal or ASCII format.

EasyLabel brings the option to import parts of or all RFID data from sources such as databases, serial files, user input, existing barcode or text fields and external text files. The RFID data, encoded in the RFID tags, can also be printed on smart labels as a text or barcode field.





3 DESTRUCTIBLE PVC FILM MADICO GRAPHIC FILMS

Madico Graphic Films, a UK-based supplier of pressure sensitive coated film products for durable label applications, has extended its range of tamper evident substrates for security marking requirements with the addition of a satin white destructible PVC film backed with a lay-flat sheet liner. Once applied, the destructible PVC offers 'excellent destructibility and instant tamper evidence on a broad range of substrates, even when applied to low energy surfaces', says the company.

Upon tampering or attempted removal, the material fractures easily, thereby preventing subsequent re-application elsewhere. As such, the film enables printers to effectively serve the automotive, electronic and consumer goods sectors with a deterrent against warranty thefts, false insurance claims and counterfeiting. This makes the new film suitable for an array of applications, such as electronic security seals, fixed information/warning labels and asset tracking stickers.

Madico's new destructible PVC labelstock is said to offer excellent dimensional stability and superior UV, humidity and chemical resistance, as well as five year outdoor durability in temperature ranges from -40 deg C up to +85 deg C. The film also offers further security measures thanks to a coating of PAT1 acrylic adhesive. Offering good adhesion on a broad range of surfaces, the automotive-approved PATI exhibits low adhesive ooze combined with good chemical and elevated temperature shear resistance.

4 DIE FOR LUXURY GOODS LABELS GERHARDT INTERNATIONAL

Gerhardt International has launched its Texture Flexi die for the converting of wine and luxury goods labels, which the company says can reduce tooling costs by up to 80 percent.

The die is an alternative to the traditional embossing method of using solid dies, while its design is said to reduce the set-up time of the label printing press significantly.

Use of the latest chemical milling processes means that even thin lines and the smallest patterns and details can be embossed on the label, according to specific customer requirements.

NEW TONERS XEIKON

Xeikon has introduced QA, its new range of Quadrupled Adapted toners. The toners come in two types: the industrial version (QA-I), and the productivity version (QA-P). QA-I toner has been developed specifically for the packaging and labeling market, and claims major advances in image quality, light fastness, food safety and ecological benefits. QA-I toner is dedicated to Xeikon's 3000 label printing press; QA-P toner is aimed at the document printing and book printing markets. Lode Deprez, VP consumables and process group at Punch Graphix, said: 'We've decided to offer dedicated toners – because each application has its unique requirements, we focus on developing the most appropriate toner for that specific application.

'The packaging and labeling market, for example, demands a larger color gamut, better fast lightness and higher food safety than the document printing market. With the QA-toner, customers working in the packaging and labeling market get a toner that's tuned for their specific needs. The choice of the pigments and the way the toner has been designed also improves the lifetime of the fuser drums.'

NEW PRODUCTS

5





HOT MELT ADHESIVE DISPENSING APPLICATOR NORDSON CORPORATION

Nordson Corporation has introduced a series of high speed hot melt adhesive dispensing applicators, called MiniBlue II, that are claimed to provide greater productivity, less maintenance and reduced downtime in packaging operations.

'The compact MiniBlue II applicators combine module and solenoid technology to achieve more than twice the operating life of any pneumatic applicator in the packaging industry,' said the company in a statement, 'while delivering fast, 2 millisecond cycle times in a size that fits virtually any parent machinery and packaging application.'

In the MiniBlue II, patented and patentpending hydraulic seal technology is paired with new high-speed Saturn Platinum (SP) solenoid technology to provide consistent performance in demanding environments. Packagers achieve lower total cost of ownership from less frequent module replacement and minimal need for solenoid adjustment, says the company. The Saturn Platinum solenoid valve does not require the additional cost and wear-andtear of an electrical spike driver to achieve high speeds.

SOLVENTLESS THERMAL SILICONES BLUESTAR SILICONES

Bluestar Silicones has launched three solventless thermal products specifically designed for the coating of PET film: SilcoleasePoly 330, SilcoleasePoly 334 and SilcoleaseADD 380. These solventless thermal silicone products are aimed at coating untreated PET film for label applications such as beer bottle labeling.

Sean Duffy, global market manager for the Silcolease range, commented: 'These products illustrate our dynamic attitude towards the release coating segment. Thanks to their high performance and Bluestar Silicones' expertise, these products will allow our customers to improve their level of competitiveness: Poly 330 is optimized for anchorage and cure speed and Poly 334 is best suited for lower release requirements. We intend to complement this existing range with new crosslinker and additives from our soon to be launched Optima II range of systems to offer even better performance on PET and other filmic substrates.'

WEB OFFSET PACKAGING PRESS

Goss International, a manufacturer of wide-web newspaper printing presses, has introduced a web offset press with variable repeat capability for label and packaging printing. Goss has appointed PacSys to assist in marketing new Goss presses for packaging applications in North America, including new Sunday web press models featuring variable repeat capabilities.

'Variable sleeve web offset technology is gaining momentum as a high-quality, cost-effective alternative to flexo, gravure, sheetfed offset and traditional cassettestyle web offset for many packaging applications,' said Klaus Dietel. 'By adapting proven Sunday press technologies to address the specialized requirements of this market, Goss International has created exciting new possibilities for packaging producers to cut costs and achieve higher productivity and quality."

The new Goss Sunday press models are available in narrow and wide web widths from 20 inches (510 mm) to 75 inches (1905 mm) for flexible packaging, label and folding carton applications. They feature quick-change sleeve technology to allow variable repeat settings.

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Uet label

ANDY THOMAS looks at trends in wet glue label stocks with leading UK converter John Watson Printers and paper supplier Donald Murray Paper

The name John Watson Printers is synonymous with drinks printing, the production of labels and packaging for the wine and spirits business that flourishes in Scotland. Recently it co-hosted with Donald Murray Paper a wine tasting evening with Master of Wine Rose Murray Brown.

'The event was a thank you to our customers and to the French mill Zuber Rieder who, following an introduction by Donald Murray Paper, have helped us on a couple of key account developments,' says Robert McLachlan, joint managing director of John Watson Printers.

These projects included the development of a pearlised paper which would hold fast on bottles for Morrison Bowmore Distillers' Auchentoshan brand and the switch from a metallised paper to a wet strength label paper with a very upmarket "writing paper" feel for William Grant's Glenfiddich range.

'Impact is important; the customer must be dazzled,' says McLachlan. 'More colors, more processes – foiling, embossing, die-cutting; these are the key trends. With the global downturn there have been some economies but these have largely been fine-adjustments and are often made to the packaging rather than the labels.'

The Glasgow-based company has been in business since 1851 and today offers a design and print service which puts the emphasis on top quality results, quick delivery and competitive pricing.

Paper is a major factor in the quality of result and the printability of a job. John Watson Printers has a major say in the paper selection, advising end users and the specialist drinks

design houses on developments and on paper performance on press.

It runs two six-color Speedmasters, each with one or two coaters in line, but it also house the world's longest Heidelberg B2 press, a 15 unit monster with a model name to match - the Speedmaster CD 74-L-9-YY-L-X3(UV). To add value to a label it also runs Blumer and Busch die-cutting machines, and Gietz foiling and embossing lines.

The right paper choice as well as the design, fonts, shape, format and color consistency of the label can and does boost brand recognition and shelf appeal. John Watson's distillery and winery customers want loyal customers to recognise their favourite brand and new, younger buyers to be attracted to the product. Labels and label stocks are subject to changing fashions and the selection available evolves.

So John Watson Printers has high expectations of its paper merchant. It must provide choice, delivery, technical support and advice so that it remains at the labels forefront. 'Donald Murray Paper comes in with ideas and technical support. They advise us when we need to make a label more robust or address any other challenge. When necessary they will bring someone across from the mill. A good merchant understands the market we serve and how labels are applied and bottles stored,' says Robert McLachlan.

Donald Murray Paper is part of PaperCo, a merchant business that delivers local service, value and a 'one stop shop' choice of high quality, environmentally sound papers, boards and other printing substrates, digital hardware, litho and digital



trends

consumables, envelopes and packaging solutions. The company has FSC, PEFC and ISO 14001 accreditation and strong Corporate Responsibility credentials.

The Glasgow branch of Donald Murray Paper supplies 30 uncoated papers from Zuber Rieder's stock system plus an unlimited number of variations of their standard products. This included bespoke embossing and felt designs, color matching and bulk products. Zuber Rieder is a top niche mill on the French-Swiss border between Dijon and Bern. Its 100 staff produce 7,000 tonnes of paper a year, all of it high quality and often bespoke uncoated papers of 70g plus.

Paul Johnston-Knight, Zuber Rieder's UK label specialist, describes the specific requirements of the wet labels market. 'Paper has to remain stable under varied and adverse conditions. After all many Scottish products are exported. The paper needs high wet strength, reverse side sizing to achieve a controlled cobb. There needs to be some rigidity for high speed bottle labeling and fibre direction has also to be considered. The wet label should have good opacity and rub resistance.'

John Watson Printers is all too aware of the practical issues. So as well as selecting papers for maximum impact – it runs a variety of whites, pearlescent effects and metallised stocks - it will also be very conscious of the usability and robustness of the stock. One such issue is stock stretch or shrinkage. This is a common concern for all types of commercial printer but John Watson Printers has underpinned its reputation for quality by investing in Heidelberg's Prinect closed loop color management products and this enables it to compensate for any change in the paper, allowing it to retain color consistency and registration on the run. More critical on the practicality scale is the label backing. As Paul Johnston-Knight suggested, the reverse must be rough enough to enhance label-to-bottle adhesion at the bottling plant. The trend for many wines is to have the main label but also a smaller label applied. This has directed the wine industry to look at self-adhesive solutions for label application and John Watson & Co are actively investigating this market.

'No one can serve the wet labels market with a press with less than six colors,' says Robert MacLachlan. 'Single pass production is the ideal. Heidelberg now offers foiling in-line but the beauty of flexo is that it is a truly one pass operation. We are categorically not moving away from wet labels; they will survive for many years to come because it is an established process and wet labels are cheaper and preferred by many of our customers. Self-adhesives represent a supplementary service we can offer the drinks companies which want to change and are investing in that change at the bottling plants.'

Also this year John Watson hopes to add ISO 14001 environmental accreditation to its ISO 9001 quality standard. Being able to specify label stock widths that minimise waste is important to the company and for some work recycled or sustainable stocks are the right choice.

Paul Johnston-Knight comments: 'Environmental credentials have become more and more important in the last two years. Everyone is more aware of the importance of the environmental impact of their buying habits. This means that products which can display the recycled content of FSC/PEFC certification count. These include Zuber Rieder's Pollen, Marbre and Anaca label papers. The new PZR paper made from a by-product in the manufacture and refining of sugar from Bagasse is being well received for the same reasons.'

'Donald Murray Paper is a great company to work with,' says Robert McLachlan. "They provide stock holdings of the various labeling materials and support us with contingency back up supplies that gives us a 'just in time' service and they can supply that quick reaction needed when we have an urgent requirement.'

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ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS



NEW BUSINESS FORMED TO **BUY POST-CONSUMER PLA**

BioCor has announced its launch as a new venture in the business of buying, aggregating and processing post-consumer polylactic acid (PLA), the 100 percent plant-based bioplastic. BioCor says it will capitalize on the ease with which PLA can be converted back to its original lactic acid feedstock for subsequent use in a variety of existing end markets.

BioCor executive director Mike Centers explains that BioCor will pay recyclers an economically attractive price for PLA in any packaging format and work with recyclers to achieve efficient separation of post-consumer PLA from other plastics. BioCor provides recyclers with a market for any post-consumer PLA they process. The company will also collaborate on PLA recycling pilot projects and work with federal, state, and municipal entities, non-governmental organizations, consumer groups and recycling organizations.

'Greater sustainability in plastic packaging depends on decreasing the carbon footprint of the plastics used and on recapturing and re-using a greater percentage of post-consumer packaging,' said Centers. 'Plastics made from renewable plant sources such as PLA, which is 100 percent bio-based, offer a means to achieve these goals. I've joined BioCor with the intent of making a business out of buying the post-consumer PLA already out there in the market. I believe the economics of selling recycled PLA to a variety of lactic acid end markets are compelling. The BioCor business will conserve nonrenewable resources, lower carbon emissions, and reduce packaging waste.

PLA can be completely converted back into its fundamental building block, lactic acid, and then reformulated into a biopolymer. PLA can also be commercially composted and used for soil enrichment. BioCor's primary focus is on supplying recycled PLA to those interested in lactic acid uses.

Centers is a 20-year recycling industry veteran and founder of Titus Maintenance and Installations Services, an installer of Material Recovery Facilities (MRFs) and supplier of MRF maintenance services in the western US. He was also president of CMMA, a California, US-based consultant. Located in Concord, California, BioCor is currently hiring.

ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

THE LATEST ON SUSTAINABILITY ISSUES

FTA ANNOUNCES ENVIRONMENTAL **EXCELLENCE AWARD WINNERS**

The Flexographic Technical Association (FTA) has recognized two of its members in the 10th Annual FTA Environmental Excellence Award competition. Specialty Printing of East Windsor, Connecticut, took top honors in the competition with its process improvement initiatives and Robbie Fantastic Flexibles of Lenexa, Kansa, earned an honorable mention. Specialty Printing is a label manufacturer dedicated to the design and conversion of forms, labels and packaging products for the government, medical and retail industries. The facility implemented a recycling, conservation and cost savings project that boasts a significant positive impact on the environment. As a result of the program, Specialty Printing was able to reduce running waste an average of one million feet per month, reduce set-up times by more than half, and significantly reduce water consumption.

Robbie Fantastic Flexibles produces bags, pouches and packaging films for a variety of markets. The company, a certified SGP printer, developed a sustainability program using the Sustainable Green Printing Partnership criteria as the framework. Robbie implemented a continuous improvement project resulting in 15 percent landfill reduction by December 2009 and a goal of another 15 percent by December 2010. Awards were presented at the National Environmental, Health & Safety Conference in Indianapolis, Indiana.

POLYFIL UNVEILS MICROCELLULAR **POLYMER TECHNOLOGY**

Polyfil Corporation has introduced a new technology, called Ecocell, which can create a microcellular structure (cells less than 100 micron in size) in many polymers. The product is claimed to reduce polymer use by up to 50 percent and can reduce carbon footprint by up to 45 percent. There is also a decrease in energy consumed with a product made with Ecocell compared to the same product made conventionally, says the company.

Ecocell infuses small particles of gas-generating additives into the polymer melt during processing. Upon induction of a chemical reaction, the particles release a small volume of gas producing a cellular structure at a size unachievable with present day chemical foaming agent (CFA) technology. This will expand the polymer by up to twice its volume at little or no penalty to energy consumption.

Ecocell can be used with low and high density polyethylene, copolymer polyethylenes, polypropylene homopolymers and copolymers, crystal and impact polystyrene, PVDF, TPOs and TPEs. Ecocell is intended for use in applications such as thermoforming, sheet, structural foam molded parts, oriented polypropylene films, foamed labelstock, blow molding, injection molding, extruded profiles, plastic lumber and more.

SCREEN LAUNCHES 'GREEN' CTP TECHNOLOGY

Screen has launched a range of B1 thermal platesetters, PlateRite 8000N, that consumes less electricity and is compatible with chemistry-free plates. 'This new generation is better for the environment, better for production and better for your pocket,' said Screen Europe marketing manager Tim Taylor. 'The trend is towards lower run lengths but more jobs with more color. This leads to a need for even greater plate volumes so Screen has increased productivity all new models and ensured that the full range of automated options that support high plate volumes is available.





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Health Check



These days, Americans are all too aware of the value of an annual check-up. But certainly, this is a global concern. Like people, businesses too can benefit from a rigorous yearly assessment, with an objective evaluation of the activities, risk exposure, and possible 'inoculations' that can shield it from the prevailing diseases that appear to be spreading across the industry.

With this thought in mind, Dr. Bob's clinic is now open. Let's start your health assessment by becoming aware of the current environment and how it is affecting you. Once aware of an issue or opportunity, only then can you position yourself to take action. We need to examine areas to watch that are vital to your business and markets. We also need to take a look at some realities of your business – and points where you might be vulnerable. From there, we can agree on an approach to keep you healthy. Open up, and say 'ahhhh.'

INITIAL EVALUATION

The majority of people leading label companies today are entrepreneurs-founders, family successors, or proven visionaries from the management team. By nature, these people are optimistic and believe whole-heartedly in their vision and marketplace opportunities. For the same reason they envision a bright future, these people can tend to miss oncoming challenges. Perhaps they are not experiencing any symptoms. Perhaps they are not feeling any pain. Or, perhaps they have chosen to ignore them and hope they'll go away.

We know from history that even those thought infallible can succumb quickly in crisis situations. We are certainly in one of those critical times. Every business owner, director, manager, and sales leader must remain abreast and in tuned to the circumstances around them. Now is not a time for emotional attachments or indulgent self-assurances. If others are coming down with 'the plague,' you can too. In fact, over the past two years, one of the most surprising trends is that label companies are continuing to make the same mistakes as their fallen counterparts – failing to shape up their fitness regimen to account for the new economy. Whether you are flourishing like an Ironman contender or struggling with your daily workout, every company must be making wise moves to ensure its long-term trajectory.

YOUR "WELL-COMPANY CHECKUP" FOCUSES ON FIVE COMPONENTS:

FINANCIAL HEALTH: A BUSINESS BODY SCAN

As the lifeblood that runs your business, your current finances (cash, loans) are perhaps the most critical factor for your health. Availability of infusions is rare, so we need to focus on what we have and where we are at. Your lender may be suffering more than you are – which could be more of a problem than you imagine. While some companies are being shuttered after long, public battles, others are being seized after a few months of imperfection.

Consider your compliance with your banking agreements. These agreements are designed to help the lender evaluate your ability to pay on time and over time. Are you making your payments? Are you requesting extensions? Have you missed anything? Are you keeping your lender in the loop regarding

new business wins, major customer sign-ons, and other growth plans? While these agents typically judge on a 12-month cycle, a two-month blip could promote an immediate attack. Lenders have become aggressive. Because of the dynamics in their own industry, they are more likely to flip from innocuous to lethal - a change that can set your company into a whole new life adjustment.

Indeed, the covenants of your financial obligations have become fragile. Banks lend money to people who do not need it and are in the best potential to repay. They are not risk takers, and they do not understand your business or markets you are part of. That said, if they follow the mainstream press, they may believe they do. Thus, they are unlikely to be viewing labels or any segment of print favorably.

You need to confront this, head-on. Keep your lender involved - and friendly - with your business. Provide them with copies of any positive reports and projections, and tune them in to winning RFQs. sales development efforts. environmental initiatives, and any other actions that impact your business.

SALES FORECAST/ESTIMATES: X-RAYING YOUR OPPORTUNITIES

One of the best views of your future can be gleaned by studying the results of your estimating activity. Like an X-Ray, it looks through to the bone - offering



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

results have made it the exclusive Bob Cronin at bobrcronin@aol.com, or call +1 630 323 9700. in-depth views of your progress. More important than the value of possible projects is your close rate. Trying times have diminished estimating power, with some customers and prospects using competitive bids simply to create bidding wars and get 'best pricing.' This undermines our very business. Every label company needs to focus less on capturing an unprofitable job - just to fill capacity - and more on the overall value proposition. Labels are a very unique part of the economy; we need to band together to secure our image.

I am not a believer in the accuracy of sales forecasts, especially with the limited window we have for creating opportunity. However, I do believe estimates offer a great management tool to bring about change. Carefully review your estimating activity against close rates. How do these differ from your sales meetings? Is a reality check in line? Use this information to sell - or to readdress your salesforce on their activities and focus.

PRODUCT MIX AND MARGINS: **MAKING HEALTHY CHOICES**

Knowing what you are selling is perhaps less important than knowing where you are making money and where you are not. Study the products you produce and the margins they currently provide versus historical sales. If you are seeing a shift in 'best' offerings for your company, take guard. New dynamics are wreaking havoc on old stand-bys. If your products/services categories are down, seek new options. Economic influences have

END CUSTOMER MARKETS: INOCULATING YOURSELF **FROM DANGER**

been drastic; some forever

changing the landscape.

Whether your customers are new or long-term, you MUST gauge their value by the last few months. If your best customer has gone into arrears, it's time to re-evaluate your position. Standing by a valued partner may seem noble, but nobility doesn't stand a chance against your bankers.

Research and keep tabs on your prime vertical markets. If you do not have the resources, check in with PIA, Labels & Labeling, or other valued industry advisors. The contagious nature of

customer operations have brought down more top performers than you can imagine.

PLOTTING YOUR LONG-TERM **HEALTH OR RECOVERY**

Industry trends give you a view of what has happened and what may be occur moving forward. Thus, you cannot stake claim in last-month's increase or last year's harvest. Every day, there is information that affects what we need to look at, research, or care about. To succeed, we need to use everything that is available in the market and take positive action.

What matters most is what's coming next. If you have not aligned yourself with a strategic growth partner (consultant, M&A firm, etc.), now is the time to do so. Be it value enhancement, corporate development, large-scale growth, or simple ongoing operation, an outside partner can be just what the doctor ordered.

Today's pressures can be far more harmful than what the average germ-killer can address. They say 'An apple a day keeps the doctor away.' As practitioner for your health, I recommend more. Be more diligent in your actions, more strategic in your direction, and more sound in your customer strategy. Take more precautions and 'eat more

vegetables.' And, by all





The future offset platform is based on sleeve technology

Lars EriksenPresident & CEO



MO+LINE

The New MO-4 offers a Revolutionary Offset Platform System
based on Lightweight Sleeve Technology.
Designed for Integration with the Nilpeter 'Dream Line'





The MO-Line of advanced platform-based presses with sleeve technology delivers state-of-the-art offset combination printing.

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The new platform-based offset press is integrated in the Nilpeter Dream Line concept, that takes platform technology to an even higher level, because it offers previously unattainable levels of flexibility.

The new MO-Line platform integrates the revolutionary Easy-Load sleeve technology. Printing technologies can be switched quickly, and embellishment modules added easily, in any desired combination. In short, with the MO-platform you can configure your press to fit any job – and with reduced costs of tooling and the low cost of prepress, it expands the market opportunities.

nilpeter.com: Download your copy of InSight - The Nilpeter Magazine, or contact us for an exclusive copy...



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SCENARIO A. ANTI-PACKAGING RIOTS

Thousands of angry consumers storm big box stores in US. cities tossing blood onto products the next few years? Here are a few: in clamshell packaging after an 8- year-old girl nearly dies from severing an artery when trying to open a toy package. Police force rioters out of the stores, arrest hundreds.

SCENARIO B. TWITTER DRIVES GREEN ACTION

Millions of netizens, stirred to action in Europe and the US by a flood of tweets and Facebook messages, refuse to buy products that aren't minimally packaged and don't meet green standards.

Which scenario is more likely in the future? Neither, of course, except that consumers are increasingly uneasy about package safety and need for packaging. They have new tools in social networks to act on those fears. Packaging is a visible target for consumers and regulators concerned about sustainability, waste, safety, convenience, and cost.

Meanwhile, packaging gains new capabilities. Digital technology brings efficiency, product adaptability, and economical short runs in printing and manufacturing. It is connecting design with consumer inputs and rapid prototyping. Soon package intelligence will be extended to the consumer's hands. For example, smart pharmaceutical packages track when patients push their tablets through the foil

Packaging will not go away, or be driven away. Modern lives would be difficult without packaging. It will be critical to make that case. The package can connect and coordinate activity from production information to inventory, through the logistical system to retail. It links consumers to information they need, and can identify the package's recyclability. RF tags or barcodes can even signal which producer is responsible for reclaiming the package materials.

So what are the forces and factors likely to drive changes in packaging over

CONFLICTING CONSUMER ATTITUDES AND BEHAVIOR -

consumers are more frugal and there is more hostility to what people consider 'over'-packaging, but most would be unhappy without the convenience of packaged goods.

SUSTAINABILITY – how low (carbon) can we go? Packaging has plucked the low-hanging fruit of the easiest lo-carbon adaptations. The next decade will demand bigger changes in processes and systems. Expect greatly reduced materials used in packaging, and goals of 80 or 90 percent recovery. Digitization and automation will enable comprehensive recovery and re-use of packaging materials. For example, robotic waste bins could sort recyclables from trash and harvest compostables automatically.

REGULATION – could be provoked by consumer action, however safety and the push to limit carbon emissions and curb waste are the primary drivers. Regulation from the strictest jurisdictions will influence what happens around the world, and bears close monitoring.

DIGITIZATION – the digital revolution is overturning print media, hitting newspapers especially hard. With the burden of brand attraction and information moving more onto the package, converters may become a dominant producer of paper-based information. Eventually, consumers will get most product information online by scanning the package barcode or RF tag with their phone or tablet computer, and linking to online information.

RETAIL – digitization will shape retail as consumers use sophisticated online tools to buy. Shipping packaging becomes a norm. Digital technology, such as packaging that interacts with a cell phone, can also enhance brick and mortar retail by giving the shopper instant access to reviews and information, enabling instant offers and coupons, and perhaps telling the product's story with images and sound.

THE ECONOMY – the current focus on price and value can enable producers to pare away what matters less for consumers, and focus on what matters more. It looks like the new frugality—at least some of our new habits - could be here to stay.

These forces of change drive new challenges, but also new opportunities for packaging. We are at a moment of potential redefinition of the value of packaging, embrace of new technology, especially digital, and with an opportunity to redefine and reframe what packaging means for the consuming public.

Leading Futurists recently posted ten trends shaping the immediate future in packaging. (link http://leadingfuturists. biz/future-packaging/future-packaging-20102020/top-10-trends-shapingpackaging-2010/).

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Jennifer Jarratt and John B. Mahaffie, Leading Futurists, LLC, are offering a 2010 multi-sponsor program on the Future of Packaging, with partners PTIS Global. See: www.leadingfuturists.biz/ future-packaging for more information, and follow our tweets at @packfutur

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Converting beyond print

BARRY Hunt examines how functional converting with die cutting can open up added-value opportunities

At the recent biennial FINAT technical seminar, Mike Fairley delivered a call for action: the self-adhesive label industry should actively position itself as a core part of the broader packaging industry. This year's FINAT congress offers the theme 'Creativity and innovation: the way for tomorrow'. Speakers will emphasize the fact that label printers can expect some fundamental changes in the connection between label demand and supply in the years to come. Therefore, they should be innovative and focus on solutions-oriented approaches to business, rather than relying on manufacturing-oriented approaches.

Behind all the business-speak, the message could hardly be plainer. The industry faces some real challenges as uncertain economic conditions continue. Fortunately, some tangible advances in raw materials and technology will help it deliver added value and sustainability for end-user customers. This will increase as more label converters look for opportunities beyond the hard scrabble of serving prime branded-labels markets with their eroded margins. Witness the growing numbers of label printers who have developed niche applications for film-based flexible packaging products. Digital printing is now a mainstream process noted for generating added-value opportunities for both labels and packaging products. Similarly, end-user needs are being met by informative leaflet/labels and multiple-layer constructions, as well as utilitarian products like variable data labels or RFID/smart labels. The use of holographic techniques and specialized inks and coatings has also grown to add to the versatility of narrow web production.

Innovation is already wired into much of the industry's collective DNA. Which is why it is worth examining another sub-strata of specialization that goes beyond these applications. Here the accent is less on printing than on using die cutting to convert multiple-layer materials. The products themselves may seem far removed from the decorative effects associated with prime labeling, yet their utilitarian applications form part of large markets with huge potential. They include multiple-layer gaskets, seals, filtration products, medical dressings, skin care products and patches. Invariably no printing is involved, but other types of related products include some form of printing, coating or overlaminating. These could include automobile fascias, instrument panels, graphics for gauges, decals as brand identifiers, nameplates, conductivecoated labels for electronic goods, and membranes for mobile phones.

One could describe it as functional converting. In many ways it resembles the converting of self-adhesive labelstocks, but the materials used have very different performance criteria and technical characteristics. Some are familiar, such as high performance polyesters or acrylics for producing die cut labels to identify products or components in extreme conditions. Others come from the converting industry, such as adhesive transfer tapes, double-coated foam tapes, and single or double-coated tapes. Look at the suppliers' websites, especially 3M's converting web pages, to obtain an impression of the scale and diversity of such materials, as well as the numerous end uses.

The product information posted by the larger converters is





also illuminating. For example, the Brady Corporation based in Milwaukee sees itself as a leading manufacturer and marketeer of global die cut solutions that identify and protect premises, products and people. Its Asian subsidiaries, especially those in China, show how just how closely this converting sector must shadow the major manufacturing industries. As one the UK's largest converters and distributors of self-adhesive tapes, PolarSeal's information on its quality accreditations and cleanroom facilities indicates the level of commitment required to serve the medical, diagnostic and surgical sectors.

Most of these organizations do not consider themselves as being in the label business. Yet, there is a connection in terms of equipment used, albeit on a smaller scale, as well as the finishing techniques they use. Proof of this lies with the activities of some of our industry's leading companies. Those that are well established in functional converting include CCL Industries, Pago's self-adhesive label division, Schreiner Group and Strålfors. Some smaller label printers are also developing partnerships with end-users to develop innovative products. This is usually done by setting up dedicated sales and manufacturing divisions, which primarily serve the medical, pharmaceutical, body care, brand/product security, engineering and logistics sectors.

A COMPOSITE FACTOR

Several strands unite such enterprises, not least an entrepreneurial willingness to take risks. Much effort must also go into researching suitable markets, while examining individual



production strategies. But at least prospective entrants do not lack for encouragement and advice, as typified by Andrew Voss, UK-based managing director of Madico Graphic Films. 'Many established converters can benefit from entering what is still a relatively untapped market, he says. While the tapes and special laminated materials certainly cost far more than conventional labelstocks, the profit margins in converting them are proportionally higher. Also, it's not a crowded market, so label firms should definitely consider the opportunities. We know some firms that have started by supplying high performance labels to industrial customers and have ended up by supplying large volumes of such items as die cut pads, seals and similar composite products.'

Understanding what constitutes a composite is an essential aspect of the converting market. Just like conventional self-adhesive labels, each of the laminated layers has a specific purpose or function. High performance labels are composites. In this case, the layers can enhance thermal resistance, add dimensional stability, or resist tearing and chemicals. Layers also act as a carrier for anti-counterfeit technologies, an electrical circuit, or an RFID antennae laminated between two surfaces.

'We always try to educate customers, and the engineering community as end-users, that a performance label is not "just a sticker". Materials selection ultimately influences the type of converting processes', says Dr Jim Williams, founder and chief technical officer of Polyonics. 'For example, the fibrous nature of some synthetic non-woven specialty papers means only flatbed steel rule cutters will give clean cuts. I advocate defining the material requirements to perform unerringly in order to determine the converting process to use. Clearly, a company's in-house capabilities will restrict the types of composites with which it can comfortably convert. We discovered many years ago that converting polyimide label materials was significantly different than converting polyesters. The same will undoubtedly hold true as a converter works in the world of high performance composites. Not only will the engineering of materials for an application be more demanding, but also the process engineering and tooling will be more involved.



'One can envision composites in which the die cutting "tonnage", rewind tensions and torque control, as well as the type, configuration and materials used for the cutting mechanisms, will determine the relative success of converting the newer materials', Williams adds. 'Clearly these "uncomfortable" areas will command and support higher margins in the long term. That is, these will not be easy projects. Ideally the delivered value (as defined by the end-user customer) and engineering difficulties will hold higher margins for longer periods of time.'

THE CUTTING BUSINESS

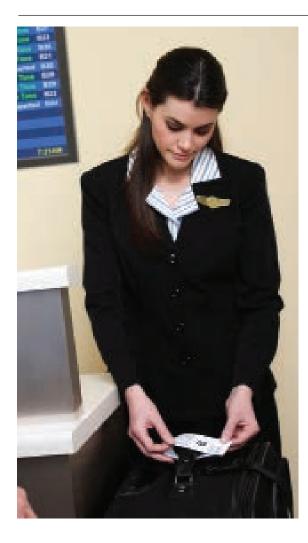
Semi-rotary and flatbed cutting techniques are still widely used,

but where possible rotary die cutting using flexible steel die plates mounted on magnetic cylinders have become the most popular method. As in conventional label production, the dies are far less expensive to make compared with solid steel rotary dies. Lately they have benefited from various proprietary hardening or coating techniques which extend their practical

Bo Meyer, group technical director of Gerhardt International, says the expected life of hardened flexible dies now equals that of solid dies. 'In the high tolerance markets a solid die cannot be repaired without changing all of its tolerances, which means its benefits disappear. Many converted products form part of some device and have higher tolerance demands compared with prime labels. The materials can be made from cork, thin metal, foam, rubber, tissue or multiple layers of materials laminated together. They are very different from stock label laminates, so the cutting profiles must be material specific. Flexible dies with a high blade can cut uncompressed material up to 0.9 mm, or higher if the material can be compressed. Some types of work require a test die before making the final flexible die for production to see how the product behaves in the machine. Today's fast turnarounds means we can easily make small changes in order to produce the right functional

It is widely recognized that flexible die plates are not suitable for all narrow web converting operations. Dr Andre Gysbers, marketing manager of Wink Stanzwerkzeuge, said obviously users should check whether a material is too thick to pass through the cylinder gap before ordering. If it is they must use flatbed cutting with a steel rule die. 'In some cases the cutting module may require a vacuum device to prevent the cut out products from falling into the machine. Other parameters include plate height, cutting angle, cutting edge profiles or whether edges require a coating or laser hardening. Die life is





another important factor. Even the thinner materials may be so abrasive that they will quickly "kill" the cutting line of a flexible die, even if it is coated or laser hardened. Each application needs its own solution, so there are no standard recommendations.'

Incorrect loadings, or pressures, on the cutting die will also shorten die life and cause excessive wear on the cylinder bearers. In extreme cases poorly controlled loading will lead to the disintegration of the bearer itself. In recent years the leading rotary tool suppliers have developed several methods that replace the conventional stepped anvil approach to obtaining variable depth cuts. One example is



CASE STUDY: CONVERTING BEYOND PRINT

Hofprint Etiketten, a specialist Dutch label printer, recently installed the VEGAplus LF330, Prati's top-line die-cutting label finishing machine, for a range of both printing and non-printing applications (see p 39).

Based in Groenlo, the Netherlands, Hofprint Etiketten specialises in the supply of customised labels to a range of industries. One of these is the textile label industry where, for example, the company recently undertook a project involving the finishing of plastic labels applied to medical garments. To meet the stringent demands of both this industry and others, the company looked extensively for a suitable label finishing tool.

'We serve a wide range of markets and versatility was a key selection criterion,' says Albert Hof, Managing Director of Hofprint Etiketten.

The VEGAplus LF330 customised for Hofprint Etiketten is equipped with an unwinding module for diameters up to one metre - including the roll-lifting unit, two die-cutting stations and an automatic register control. The rewinding module is processed on a three shaft changer with glueless, patented attachments.

Hofprint Etiketten also had some additional requirements. The company needed automatic pitch winding and a number of specific attributes for textile labeling – such as pinfeed holes. These holes enable the textile to run perfectly round, ensuring a smooth run through the machine.

'Those extra requirements were necessary to meet the deadlines of our customers,' explains Hof. 'You need to be careful with the logistics of textile labels. The pinfeed holes ensure there are no problems whatsoever in the transportation within the machine. This saves us time and money and makes sure everything is on a roll.

Hof also comments on the multifunctionality of the machine: 'We do a variety of finishing jobs on the VEGAplus LF330. The machine allows finishing of both non-printing and printing applications. We do, for example, UV flexo printing and thermal transfer for a variety of label applications. We then pass the label reels on the VEGAplus for regular die-cutting finishing jobs. At the moment, medical label applications are booming and we are getting a lot of requests. This is where we really appreciate the Prati technology – the VEGAplus is so fast and flexible we can handle both large and small print orders.



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Kocher + Beck's GapMaster, which allows operators to accurately set the gap between the magnetic cylinder and the rotating counter cylinder. The latest version eliminates adjustments to the unit frame and increases overall flexibility. (Interestingly, K+B has introduced TecScreen, screen printing materials. The process has long been closely identified with the converting of industrial and commercial products.)

ADVANCES IN OFFLINE TECHNOLOGY

While conventional flexo or combination presses are often impractical for these type of products, many roll-to-roll or roll-to-sheet alternatives are available. In fact the growth of web converting as a sub-sector gives a good guide to the way the industry has diversified. Lately it has benefited from the application of servo-assisted technology, giving fast changeovers between film or paper substrates of differing thicknesses. Servo drives also ensure accurate web tension and transport control, which is essential when running with multiple die cutting modules. Manufacturers of dedicated web converting systems offer a variety of modular designs to support laminating, screen printing, foil embossing, RFID inlays, and booklet-label feeds, as well as rotary or semi-rotary die cutting from multiple units.

Besides rotary cutting, creasing and perforating modules, Schober also supplies multi-functional converting

equipment. One of its latest products, named Dragon, is designed to convert multiple layers of self-adhesive materials into components for mobile phone, hard discs, electrical conductors and insulators, shields, filters, gaskets and seals. Another example is Edale's Lambda series of modular converting platforms, which complement the company's flexo press series. Later this year it plans to introduce a roll-fed flatbed die cutter, ostensibly for small cartons, but for converting a variety of other products. Delta Industries recently launched Spectrum II, a web converting machine with inline rotary die cutting and its so-called island placement module offering optional functions, including flexo overprinting.

Rotary and semi-rotary die cutting units are among the newer options for A B Graphic International's roll-fed Omega series. Tony Bell, sales director, says this Lego-like approach to adding functions is essential to meet changing market conditions. 'There has definitely been a strong movement towards converting the more exotic types of films during the last few years. We have also found this applies to our Digicon series of roll-fed finishing lines. Although aimed at the digital printing market, the availability of rotary or flatbed screen units and die cutters has led to wider interest among a varied mix of users.'

Some machines have derived from slitter/rewinders with added die cutting units. Companies like Bar Graphic

Machinery, Daco Solutions, Prati and RotoControl have introduced new models with such options as flexo overprinters, preregistration devices, and glueless turret rewinders. In March Rotoflex introduced the dedicated LT system, a 100 percent web inspection system option for its finishing equipment, especially those with a die cutting capability.

The company's worldwide sales manager, Kevin Gourlay, says that interest in this type of equipment is

SPECIALIST MATERIALS

A good example of the specialist labelstocks required for 'Beyond Print' web converting are the latest anti-static polyimide label materials released by Polyonics for PC circuit board applications. The company's Tribogard label materials are designed to withstand the extreme manufacturing processes undergone in circuit board manufacture, and conform to REACH, RoHS, and HALOGEN FREE requirements of the electronics industry.

It latest Tribogard label materials help address the problem of electronic device failure caused by electrostatic discharge (ESD) events, which can damage circuit boards.

When a standard label is removed from the liner, it generates static electricity, which can discharge and destroy sensitive components during application. Tribogard materials also prevent significant charge build-up on the label surface which can result in a static discharge event.



picking up and can introduce profitable opportunities: 'Overall, end-user customers tend to pay piece rates for die cut products, which makes much of the converting business very attractive to label printers looking for new opportunities.' Like other manufacturers, he notes that among the global growth areas, China and other parts of Asia are proving especially good markets for die cut enabled machinery. 'Many of those installing the machinery are subsidiaries of western companies, with many supplying die cut components for cell phones.'

Matching the type of material with the most appropriate cutting method is obviously crucial. For example, the speed and accuracy achieved with rotary die cutting cannot be applied to the thicker materials, such as the thick foams used for some gaskets. Some see an increased role for digitally-controlled laser die cutting in this regard, although there are limitations with certain thin-gauge films. The technology uses laser beams and lens systems, originally developed for machines that prepare the base boards for steel-rule flatbed cutters. Today's systems feature fast offline job preparation, pre-production testing and on-the-fly job changeovers. Tool-less laser cutting is ideal for handling small run lengths of digitally-printed labels, on-demand jobs and certain converted products. But while the take-up of this technology has been underwhelming among label converters, it is growing among the product marking specialists, including manufacturers of membrane keypads and switches. Several manufacturers of web processing equipment now offer the technology for both roll and sheet-fed applications, including AM spa (LabelRZR) Cartes Srl (Laser 350 series); Delta Industrial Services (Mod-Tech Edge Laser); A B Graphic International (Sabrextreme option for Omega converting lines); and Spartanics (Finecut).

For the record, another method of employed by some industrial converters is water jet cutting of sheet materials. It uses abrasive compounds as well as water, which are forced through a directional nozzle under high pressure to create a 'beam' of fluid. This method is said to cut through almost any material, from paper to ceramics, with an accuracy to 0.1mm. The abrasives within the solution ensure minimal edge burring and reduce material deformation.

In summary, the many and various processes that make up functional converting are worth examining. Their potential extends to many industrial and commercial sectors. Meeting quality-led and time-intensive demands from end-users may be second nature for most label printers, but identifying new markets and developing the know-how to convert some costly raw materials may be a harder challenge. So it not an easy market to enter, even though the various processes involve proven and familiar technology. Nevertheless, much of the label industry is good at meeting new challenges. In their desire to spread the gospel of innovation and creativity throughout the industry, could the speakers at this year's FINAT Congress be pushing at an open door?

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL **STORIES**

FLEXO CONCEPTS OPENS UK SALES OFFICE AND DISTRIBUTION CENTER

Flexo Concepts has opened a sales office in the UK to expand its distribution channels in Europe. Paul Reeve, who previously represented the company's MicroClean line of anilox cleaning equipment, will head up the office and promote the MicroClean and TruPoint doctor blade brands in the region. The company has also opened a local distribution center for its MicroClean media and ReNew cleaning products. Flexo Concepts presently supports a global network of representatives and resellers; the UK office is the company's first overseas location.

As European sales manager, Reeve will have direct responsibility for these product lines in Great Britain and Ireland and will work to expand the company's presence in the sheetfed offset market throughout the continent.

Dave Burgess, vice president of sales and marketing, said: 'Paul has done a great job representing our products over the past six years. His track record, industry experience and understanding of the local business climate made him our first choice for the position. This expansion shows our commitment to supporting our sales channels and customers not only in the US, but worldwide.

Reeve has 12 years' experience selling equipment and consumables to the flexographic printing industry. He spent eight years at JM Heaford, a supplier of flexographic and gravure pre-press equipment and manufacturer of proofing and mounting equipment. Before that, Reeve sold chambered doctor blade systems for four years. He will operate from a home-based office outside of Manchester, England.

RAKO CHOOSES AVT AS PREFERRED **INSPECTION SUPPLIER**

European label converter Rako Etiketten has named Advanced Vision Technology (AVT) as its preferred supplier of automatic inspection systems for on-line and off-line process control and quality assurance.

Rako installed its first AVT system in 2001 - a Helios on a Leomat slitter. AVT will now share its new developments with Rako and prioritize integration of its technology at the label converter's production sites.

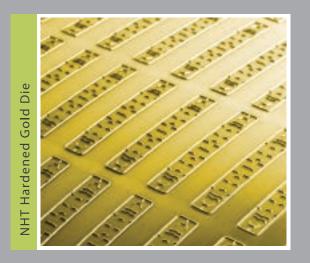
'Naming AVT a preferred supplier is the next step in our continuing relationship with Rako,' said Amir Dekel, VP marketing, AVT. 'Rako has been a strategic partner for a number of years. The strengthening of the relationship means that Rako will benefit from the latest AVT solutions, while AVT will gain the latest information about the requirements of label converters.

Rako has ordered additional WorkFlow Link products to be mounted on more of their Gallus presses and Leomat rewinder. WorkFlow Link gathers quality information from the presses, via PrintVision/Helios II 100% inspection systems, and feeds the data to the rewinder where defective material can be removed. WorkFlow Link takes control of the rewinder, ensuring that defectfree labels are delivered to the customer.

AMCOR ACQUIRES ALCAN PACKAGING

Amcor has completed the acquisition of Alcan Packaging. 'This acquisition provides Amcor with leading global positions in the nominated strategic growth markets for flexible packaging and folding carton packaging for tobacco,' said the company in a statement.



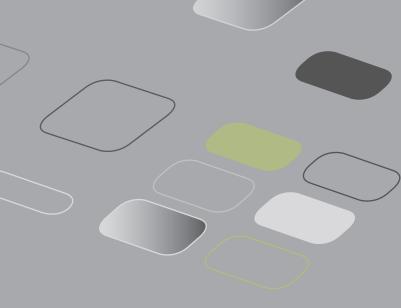


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Flexible Dies & Rotary Tooling





Talking Flexo

THOSE interested in in-depth flexographic knowledge should head to the FFTA Annual Forum and InfoFlex Exhibition in Las Vegas. Danielle Jerschefske previews the event

The Foundation of the Flexographic Technical Association hosts its Annual Forum and InfoFlex Exhibition at The Paris Las Vegas in Las Vegas, Nevada on May 2-5. Seminars cover an array of topics including a closer look at FIRST reproduction guidelines, emerging trends, sustainability, streamlining digital workflow and more. The event launches with the third Annual Phoenix Challenge College Competition that invites teams of students from North America's top packaging schools to battle each other for various titles. Students are given a year to address a given task and present their solution for an expert panel at the Forum. Teams are judged on overall aptitude, research, concept, graphics and execution. Last year's Overall Champions hailed from California Polytechnic State University.

Seminars commence with Flexo 101: Meeting the Challenge. Here attendees learn key concepts for successful flexographic printing, including design workflow, consistency across shift changes and removing variables from the process. Do not miss industry veterans Mark Mazur, DuPont Packaging Graphics and Mark Samworth, EskoArtwork, address flexo's competitive advantage for packaging graphics.

Prepress: Streamlining the Digital Packaging Process gives tips on how to increase the efficiency of digital packaging workflows. Featured presenter Margie Dehm, Sara Lee Corporation, talks about streamlining from a brand owner's experience. As the category manager for packaging graphics, Dehm explains how Sara Lee has reduced lead times by as much as 40 percent with the proper use of its workflow software.

The Emerging Trends & New Technologies session is for flexographic printers looking to find more ways to add punch to their products. Learn how to most efficiently get the print to substrate and how to best measure color using ICC color management and tight process controls. Highlighted speakers include All Printing Resources' Richard Black talking about on-press color control; Tim Claypole, WCPC Swansea University, focusing on printing for polymer electronics; and Tim Cain from cast & cure provider Breit Technologies explaining advancements made in reduced waste holographic technology.

An entire morning is dedicated to educating attendees on the benefits of FTA's FIRST 4.0 guidelines for process reproduction and improvement. In FIRST From the Front Lines hear flexo converter Prairie State Group speak on its FIRST experience;

prepress firm Schawk Inc. talk about 'closing the loop'; and brewer Diageo discuss consistent reproduction.

Substrates covers COF and Rub Resistance measurements, surface coating to meet the demands of modern day packaging and advanced press technology, and trends in coated liners. Steve Rote of M-real USA Corporation will discuss lightweighting, washboarding, mottle and the need to cut energy and starch

John McDonald of brand identity and packaging design firm Brandimage-Degrippes & Laga presents in Inks: Delivering the Message through Collaboration. McDonald explains the process of selecting brand color pallets for CPCs to positively interact with consumers through packaging. From design to store shelf, ink has an important role to play in communicating with the consumer. Other topics include: tonal ranges to meet design expectations; capturing accurate color data; printing the expected results; and delivery of the correct color.

The Sustainability session provides converters with some clear answers for this term. Attorney Mark Hammond's talks about the FTC's Green Guides, educating printers on how to avoid making false marketing claims. This session should not to be missed, as the Green Guides are a basis for the Sustainable Packaging Coalition (SPC) Labeling For Recovery Project. Sonoco supports Hammond with a discussion on waste reduction, landfill diversion and recycling while Alcan Packaging reviews the pros and cons of climate initiatives.

FQC – Flexo Quality Consortium gives the participants a well rounded review of the variables found in controlling the quality of flexographic printing. FQC acts as a standing committee that investigates process variables to further develop reproducible process concepts. Attendees learn how to create a correct data set using the newest advancements in G7 specifications and hear one converter explain why they're participating in the G7 Characterization project. Presentations also cover ECG ink selection, anilox roller volume significance and ink spitting.

New this year, at InfoFlex Exhibition leading consumer brand companies discuss topics such as color management, consistency and workflow. It offers more networking opportunities, a presentation by the winning Phoenix Challenge College Competition winners, and a display of FFTA's Excellence in Flexography winners.

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Rewind developments

A MAJOR RE-ORGANIZATION of the supplier sector and continued advances in servo technology have characterized recent developments in the inspection slitter-rewinder sector. Andy Thomas reports



ROTOFLEX will show the results of its investment drive at Labelexpo Americas

The key technology trends in the slitter-rewinder sector are closer integration between inspection and networked quality control systems, and the use of sophisticated servo-control systems which can handle a wide range of material types with minimal changeover time. We also see more converters adopting a fully in-line, turret rewinder-driven workflow.

But also of interest has been a major revolution in the supplier landscape in the wake of the collapse of Rotoflex and its takeover last year by the investment group which owns Mark Andy. Kevin Gourlay, international sales manager for Rotoflex at Mark Andy, confirms that all contracts entered into with converters before the liquidation of Rotoflex have been honored, and the company is now set on a course of re-establishing its global presence and implementing new R&D initiatives.

As part of this more aggressive strategy, Mark Andy recently announced the acquisition of the long established Arpeco brand. Ken Daming, business unit manager for Rotoflex called Arpeco a 'star among inspection rewind products,' and said the acquisition 'complements our global growth plans.'

It will be interesting to see how Mark Andy/Rotoflex positions the Arpeco technology as well as Mark Andy's own slitter rewinder range of products. Work is under way integrating Arpeco's sales and engineering into the existing Rotoflex office in Mississauga, Ontario. MAX, the customer service and support team supporting all Mark Andy Inc. brands will be responsible for the sales of Arpeco certified parts as well as the service of existing installations. Ken Daming will remain dedicated business unit manager for Rotoflex and all inspection rewinder business held by Mark Andy.

In terms of technology, Rotoflex has spent the last 14 months investing heavily in research and development. These efforts have resulted in the Genesis control system for all standard Rotoflex machine models as well as a new integrated 100% inspection system.

Genesis is designed to be an intuitive touch screen-based control system which integrates full label inspection, expanded defect management, advanced missing label and matrix detection and full compatibility with other in-plant information

systems.

The real-time, high speed processor on board the Genesis claimed up to 300x faster than its URC predecessor - handles multiple functions simultaneously. Independent lane configuration provides the converter the ability to run multiple sizes and shapes of labels on one roll, detecting defects regardless of label contour, size or color.

In addition to a variety of reporting options, operators have instant access to user manuals and videos through the high-resolution HMI. Setups are claimed quick and easy due to automatic repeat detection and sensor calibration.

The LT 100 percent web inspection system was developed exclusively for Rotoflex by Erhardt & Leimer. The pixel-resolution camera detects defects, missing characters, registration issues with print and die cut, ink streaks and splashes. Its patent-pending diffused lighting component enables the inspection of difficult surface finishes, including embossing, metalized surfaces and holographic images and materials.

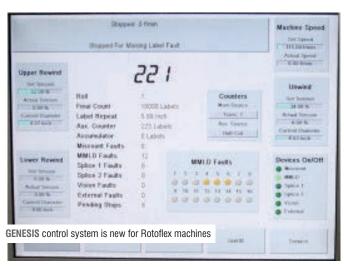
The LT solution is immediately available on new 13 inch (330 mm) and 17 inch (430 mm) Rotoflex VSI, VLI, DSI and DLI models and as retrofits on existing installations.

A company to emerge from the original winding up of Rotoflex was Rotocontrol, which has spent the intervening time setting up a global agent network and building on its RSC compact slitterrewinder inspection machine product line. The latest package of enhancements includes a moveable operator console, standard motorized slitting system, improved razor slitting cartridge as well as an onboard, 800mm roll lift option. The new configuration was first seen at an open house in Barcelona hosted by local agent Esagrf, with the RSC integrated with a Nikka 100% vision system and inkjet printing station.

Another new entrant to the global slitter-rewinder market is KPG, formerly the European sales operation for Kopack and now distributor of highly specified print/converting systems under its

KPG is now selling a range of label slitting and inspection/ rewinding machines manufactured in Japan, and up to now only available on that country's domestic market. Available in web widths of 270mm and 420mm, the systems are able simultaneously to inspect ten lines and slit up to 11 lines. Operating speed is 200m/min and 'jog' speed 30m/min for strobe light checking of the printed image.

The 270 system has a footprint of 2.5m x 3.5m and can handle





SEE the Titan SR8 slitter rewinder in action on LabelTV on L&L.com

800mm diameter rolls with an optional roll lift. Standard features include infra-red edge sensor, totalizing counter and automatic tension control. A barcode scanner can be specified and linerless labels can be inspected and slit using special blades.

ABELLY

AB Graphic International meanwhile continues to expand its slitterinspection-rewinder arsenal, adding the high speed, high capacity Omega HSR. The HSR features larger unwind/rewind diameters and runs at speeds up to 400 metres/min (1312ft/min). Available in web widths of 330mm (13"), 430mm (17") and 530mm (21") the HSR is equipped for 800mm (148in") unwind and 610mm (24in) rewind diameters. Standard features include electronic web guide with ultrasonic sensor for opaque and clear substrates, scissor knife slitting, auto knife throw off and a choice of rewind mandrels from 25mm (1") to 75mm (3"), Options for the HSR include Flytec 100% print face camera inspection, missing label detection, flag and splice detection, crush or razor knife slitting, rotary die cutting, bulk waste rewinder and motorised reel lifting.

Grafotronic has introduced a new table top slitter-rewinder, the TT 250, together with mobile unwind and other accessories for increased production efficiency. This joins the company's

slitter/rewinder range, which runs from web widths 250 to 530 mm. Grafotronic has meanwhile announced full commercialization of its modular U-Line system, first seen at Labelexpo Europe, and capable of multiple production modes to cover virtually any types of pharma related labels and booklets. It was developed with Swedish label printer Nordvalls. Typical speeds are up to 180 m/min in high speed one way only inspection mode. The system can also be configured to inspect Braille and with inkjet marking.

Value-added finishing has become an increasingly critical element in an integrated digital print system, and the latest supplier to build a machine for this sector is Bar Graphic Machinery. Eire-based label converter Label World recently installed a BCM Elite slitter rewinder to finish its digital labels. Md Declan O'Rourke explains:

'Due to the recent economic crisis we have noticed that many of our customers are leaving the ordering until the very last possible minute. This of course creates a strain on our manufacturing capabilities as it does with any other manufacturing company. Once the labels have been printed on our HP digital press, all emphasis is focused on finishing the labels off-line in the fastest possible time. The recent installation of BGM's Elite 370DTR Die Cut To Register Slitter Rewinder has proven to be outstanding and above all our expectations.'

O'Rourke says operators can re-register the machine within approximately 3-4 meters of material using the automatic registration mode. Job changeovers take between 10-15 minutes from start to finish. 'In many cases the DTR is capable of completely

finishing the product far quicker than even setting up our existing equipment.

The diversity of applications for inspection slitting-rewinding equipment is shown by a recent list of installations received from Ashe Converting Equipment. Lattice Labels in St. Neots, UK, has installed a 410mm-wide servo-driven Opal inspection-rewinder, with the servo systems cited as critical to allow rapid changeover between different materials. Interestingly, two Ashe installations demonstrate the strategy of fully finishing a label job on the press using a turret rewinder. The press operator then becomes responsible for a 'blank reel to packed roll' workflow.

Ingogroup in Girona, Spain, has invested this year in a fully servo-driven in-line 4-spindle turret rewinder from Ashe. The machine has been installed for two months and is already production cost savings, according to the company. This label producer, located north of Barcelona, is relatively new to the industry, giving it the opportunity to set up an efficient workflow from scratch.

Sharp Labels in Sudbury, UK, has invested in an Ashe Opal 4 spindle glueless turret rewinder, which company moves from press to press, adding versatility to their production scheduling. Again, the machine is fully servo driven, enabling an array of substrates to be run non-stop and in a 'one pass' operation.

EMIS Ltd, based in Warsaw, Poland and manufacturer of the Flexor line of inspection slitters and rewinders and die cutting machines, recently installed a 380C+ model to ETIX s.r.o. based in Brno, Czech Republic. The Flexor 380C+ re-register die cutting and slitting rewinding machine is fully servo driven and the re-register die cutting unit was adopted to fit the range of magnetic cylinders ETIX was using already on its printing press, which saved costs for the Brno-based converter. EMIS also announced the appointment LPP Ltd., run by Les Bradley, as its agent for the UK and Ireland.

'We are excited and proud of our agreement to move forward together with LPP,' said Adam Robak, international sales director for Flexor, 'We see LPP as a competent partner who will not only sell but also install, service and maintain our equipment. LPP has many years of experience and will be a strong partner to enter the UK market."

Bobst group company Titan meanwhile continues to report further installations of its well established Titan SR-series slitters. A further six machines have been added by PS film laminate converter FLEXcon, bringing the number now in full production in the USA and Europe to 18 machines. This follows an order for a third SR8 slitter to an 'important European customer in the labels industry'.

Another materials manufacturer to invest in cutting edge slitterrewinding equipment is Turkish company Umur, which has installed two Kmec KRO machines for the production of small thermal rolls. The KRO rewinder, up to 1350mm wide, is designed to work with paper

substrates from 40-160 gsm, delivering

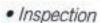
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LABELS&LABELING

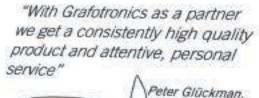
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Pharma giant takes labels in-house

LEADING GLOBAL HEALTHCARE SUPPLIER B.Braun has taken its short run label printing in-house with the installation of an EFI Jetrion inkjet system. Elinor Zuke reports on a potentially worrying development for label converters

A leading Swiss label converter lost a big client last year. The competition offered substantial savings and flexible just-in-time printing. But the rival wasn't another converter - it was the customer itself using in-house digital printing.

B. Braun, is a giant multinational healthcare supplier. Headquartered in Germany, it has production facilities in every continent and in 2009 recorded sales of 4.1bn euros. Its Infection Control products are produced, bottled and labeled at its plant in Sempach, Switzerland. Since March 2009, its labels have also been printed on site.

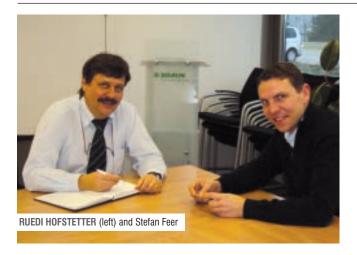
The Infection Control portfolio covers a thousand products. together requiring 2,500 labels. The tipping point for going digital was when B. Braun wanted to redesign all labels on the product range. 'The plate costs alone would have been hundreds of thousands of Swiss francs,' says head of packaging Ruedi Hofstetter. 'We couldn't have changed the design while we were reliant on a printer. It was a clear decision in that respect, but we also saved money on printing from the beginning."

B. Braun compared different presses and opted for two Jetrion 4000s. Jetrion won out because of its easy maintenance, Hofstetter says. 'It's really easy to work with. We only have to change the colors.' The ability to print directly onto substrates was an important factor in choosing Jetrion, while tests leaving the labels for 24 hours in alcohol or lotions confirmed that UV printing is suitably durable without varnish.

The presses and the accompanying Digicon finishing line are operated by Franz Leuthold. He joined the company

working at chemical filling machines having previously trained as a chef. 'They were looking for someone and I thought why not,' he says of his move into press operation. Leuthold received two weeks of training from Jetrion and showed colleagues how to operate the press afterwards. The steep learning curve came with finishing rather than printing. While AB Graphics also conducted training, he says 'I had a lot of





experiences on my own too.'

PRINT ON DEMAND

While reduced inventory is an oft-cited benefit of digital printing, it's a particularly pertinent one in medical sectors where changes in regulatory requirements can mean the destruction of pre-printed stock.

B. Braun placed orders every six weeks and with minimum quantities of 50,000, leaving thousands of rolls in storage. In fact the room that now houses two Jetrion presses, the computer terminal and finishing line is the same room where they used to be kept. Now there is just a shelf with no more than 30 reels ready to go. Functional printing is absolutely essential for B. Braun. 'Print on demand can't have any problems. We have no stock so if there are no labels, there is no filling,' Hofstetter says. Having two Jetrion 4000s is



almost an insurance policy in this respect, as they print on alternate days, and never simultaneously. A typical day will see between 20 and 30 jobs. When Labels & Labeling visited 51,096 labels were scheduled to be printed that day, with job sizes ranging from nine to 17,400.

Weekly order sheets are given to the printer by the logistics department. Entering the article number of each job opens the relevant PDF design and run length. Variable data (which changes per job, but not within them) is input by EFI print manager prepress software. There is no inspection equipment, however - the first and last labels are just manually compared with the PDF proof.

'As long as you don't lose a jet, you're fine,' says Jason Oliver, Jetrion European sales director. 'If you do lose one it'll stay out until the last label. And B. Braun save themselves tons of headaches not having 100 percent inspection.'



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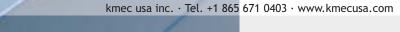




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The colors on the labels printed with Jetrion were not as bright as with flexo, René Bründler, labels and packaging, says. But brand colors are not a concern, and he is still content with the end result. To ensure consistency, the external printer of the company's cardboard boxes instead tries to match the Jetrion color.

While this case is concerning for the converting business, it is perhaps less threatening for printers of more color-sensitive designs. B. Braun also plans to keep in-house printing to short runs. 'It's clear when you have big quantities to go outside, but for shorter runs to stay in-house.' says Hofstetter.

Jetrion's Jason Oliver is confident that B. Braun marks the

start of a trend, and expects to confirm other end-user deals in the near future. 'I don't think it matters what the design is. Although B. Braun doesn't attempt to make their labels highly decorative, it is definitely something other end users could and will do.

'If I were a converter, I would be paying attention. It's not like their business will go away overnight. However, label converting is already a very competitive business. Having large label buyers doing their own printing will make it even tougher. The best way to survive and grow is to stake a strong position in a proven, low cost digital printing system. That would be the Jetrion.'





HD Flexo drives quality at MCC

MULTI-COLOR CORPORATION has used a 4000dpi upgrade to its EskoArtworks Cyrel Digital Imager to implement high definition flexo printing. The results have been spectacular, as Danielle Jerschefske reports

Founded in 1916, Batavia, Ohio-based Multi-Color Corporation is a leading industry provider of label solutions supporting the world's most prominent brands, including producers of home and personal care, wine and spirits, food and beverage and specialty consumer products. The converter is the world's largest producer of in-mold labels and one of the largest producers of pressure sensitive and heat transfer labels, and a major manufacturer of high-quality wet glue applied labels and shrink sleeves. Multi-Color has 13 manufacturing locations worldwide – seven in the US, five in Australia and one in South Africa.

In 2003, Multi-Color kicked off a Lean Manufacturing initiative that has been aggressively implemented across the company to optimize performance within each of the business units. This continuous improvement program is designed to increase value by improving quality and increasing velocity while reducing costs and decreasing operational cycle time.

One significant factor that affects modern label production is the push towards more complex label designs; Multi-Color's customers are certainly pushing the limits of graphic design. Each label seems to have more and more soft transitions, and a need to hold highlight details to make them work.

ENTER HD FLEXO

HD Flexo combines high resolution, 4000 dpi optics with proven screening technology, making it possible to achieve outstanding print quality with a straight-forward plate production process. The technology allows printers to reproduce the full tonal range while maintaining easy set-up and implementation. There's no need to edit images in pre-press to compensate for standard flexo's deficiency to reproduce the full tonal range, which saves time and money. Plus, the plates produced with HD Flexo have proven to deliver consistent print quality compared with conventional plates, and can be used in longer press runs, resulting in longer press uptime.

HD Flexo brings a raft of other advantages. The sharp detail in plates produces high-quality text and line art. Tints are smoother and easier to print. There is a smooth vignette transition throughout the highlights to 'zero' and a significant contrast in highlights and shadows without visible, hard edges.

The solution also offers noteworthy sustainability benefits, as there is no film to dispose of after plates have been imaged. And because HD Flexo technology works with thermal plate processing, there is no need for solvents.

KICK START

In its Batavia, Ohio plant, Multi-Color operates a complete EskoArtwork pre-press system, including an Esko CDI Spark 4835 flexo plate imager – just a few months old. It has most recently invested in the supplier's HD Flexo technology, which provides better detail in the highlights and, in turn, provides significantly improved vignettes.

Greg Myers, Multi-Color VP, information technology, explains: 'Overall the HD Flexo implementation went rather smoothly. We had the technicians come in, install the software and the optics upgrade, offer us training, and got us going. Most importantly, they were very good at making sure they were working around our production schedule, not disrupting production.'

Multi-Color placed a target on press and tested a number of line screens. They looked at the results to determine the best screen configuration, and conducted a fingerprint of the press.

'HD Flexo simply filled in the gap we had in the highlights,' says Jason Hess, Multi-Color graphic technology manager. 'We are able to take advantage of existing screening and screen sets, and are able to hold that highlight detail. Also, we've made no anliox or ink changes.'

HD Flexo has been in place for four months, and in production for three months. Already, there has been an important impact on customer jobs.

Graphics quality has taken a significant step forward. There is much better highlight detail and overall transitions in the highlights of gradients. Hess continues, 'Before, we couldn't get a good dot between 5 percent to zero. Traditionally, while we loved to get the dot for some very nice print effects, we just lost it. With HD Flexo we always have that detail. Also, we do a lot of object-based screening – customizable, multiple screen sets in a single piece of art. HD Flexo is compatible with this. We're particularly using it more and more in our workflow to produce custom labels. We are also finding, as expected, that when

you image at 4000 dpi, the type is better and is approaching offset highlight quality.'

A detailed job with complicated design was put on press for one of the company's larger customers, for a product that will be on shelves throughout the country. 'The design of this label took advantage of vignettes as well as spot and fluorescent colors,' Hess says. 'The gradients and soft transitions interact with each other. It is beautiful. Without HD Flexo, the result would not have been same. We haven't pushed HD Flexo with higher screen rulings - yet, but we plan to move in that direction. That is where you have to look at color management and fingerprinting presses again, repro quality, ink, the anilox, and other factors. But, these are the same things we would have to look at if we were going to increase screen rulings with traditional plates, so not much will really change in the process.'

PRODUCTIVITY BOOST

Hess explains: 'our largest customers are creating some very complex designs. In the past when we printed them with our flexo presses, it was not uncommon for a pressman to 'raise his hand' and point out during a press run that he was getting a harsh transition in a vignette. We'd let him adjust the impression pressure on the press to compensate for the lack of highlight detail, but if you increase the impression, you're going to wear out the plates faster. Typically, we would have to make a second set of plates to complete the run. Of course, this takes some time, and adds cost to the job. HD Flexo, with its highlight details, allows us to run the job without wearing out the plates. No longer are pressmen raising their hands.

'Pressmen are also noticing that makereadies are faster. It's a productivity increase that is seen when highlight detail is visible at the start of a run, without requiring additional adjustment on press.

'Along with that, the CDI's hardware upgrade has not had an impact on plate imaging productivity. While they are imaging at 4000 dpi rather than 2400dpi, the CDI is operating at virtually the same speed. It does not take any longer to image files."

Multi-Color has an interesting take on HD Flexo. They believe that this is not simply a software solution, but a significant hardware upgrade as well. Because the Esko CDI can now image at 4000 dpi, this technology opens up the flexibility in the future for new and even better screening technologies. HD Flexo is important not just for what Multi-Color has today, but its future potential for imaging upgrades.

'HD Flexo answered the question our customers have had regarding flexo highlight detail and quality,' concludes Myers. 'EskoArtwork has been a very good partner. They're in constant communication with us, and understand what we need to deliver exceptional products to our customers. They also welcome feedback from us. We are innovation focused - and our customers are demanding. Multi-Color is answering that demand, with the help of EskoArtwork.'

ERP INCREASES OUTLOOK VELOCITY

THE Outlook Group is using Prism's ERP software to speed response to customers, writes Danielle Jerschefske

With customers running much leaner, Outlook Group of Neenah, Wisconsin, has focused on a compelling value proposition to grow its business: rapid response coupled with a turnkey solution. The most significant way that the company has fulfilled this promise is through the effective integration and use of the MIS/ERP system provided by Prism.

Outlook Group VP of sales and marketing, George Bureau, says: 'An important part of the unique value we offer to our customers is about being responsive. As the need for rapid response in the packaging supply chain intensifies, so does our need for easily accessible, 'up to the minute' information. For Outlook Group, information technology has become a strategic asset. It's what allows us to quickly respond to our customers—one of our core promises.

DIVERSE SOLUTIONS

Outlook Group is different from many label providers. It offers its customers a diverse range of packaging solutions, including labels, folding cartons, flexible packaging and contract manufacturing. Each Outlook customer gains access to these packaging solutions through a specific customer service person, who is the primary point of contact.

Customer service manager Susan Huszar says, 'This approach allows our organization to respond rapidly to our customer. The customer only has to communicate with us once to get a clear answer. Our information system lets our customer service people be more productive and respond with up to date information. They can view schedules and access critical customer information, real time.'

As all brand owners reevaluate their processes and examine costs, their employees are required to do more with fewer resources. Outlook's responsiveness to its customers and its ability to deliver a multitude of packaging solutions through a single contact provides another benefit for their customers. It can help them do more with less. Bureau continues, 'With a responsive single source solution, there is less need to coordinate the activities of multiple suppliers, and fewer administrative issues to handle. This typically results in a lower total cost for our customers.'

NETWORKED ENVIRONMENT

The networked graphic environment that Outlook Group has created extends beyond customer service into operations. This system helps Operations ensure that projects are delivered on time and on budget. COO Jeff Cheak says, 'All production employees are aware of and work toward production goals for each specific project. With a machine-side view, each operator is able to observe real time performance versus expectations. Machine performance, material consumption and work in process (WIP) tracking information is all collected and managed automatically, allowing shop floor employees to concentrate on meeting and exceeding production expectations.' Large LCD displays throughout the plant demonstrate department and plant wide performance against expectations.

Outlook Group's centralized ERP system also supports the back end of the business. Dana Gilman, Outlook CFO explains, 'We strive to respond to our customers across all phases of our operations. Our information system provides unified accounting information across all business units, allowing us to bill customers accurately and in a timely fashion. Prompt billing has allowed us to positively impact our cash flow.'

With an ERP system in place that increases its agility and responsiveness, Outlook Group has managed to stay ahead of the game, and continues to be a leader in the packaging marketplace.



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Recipe for Success

CONSUMER interaction, streamlined manufacturing, strategic investment and a strong business culture is Yerecic Label's recipe for success Danielle Jerschefske writes

Truly understanding its customers is a core value at Yerecic Label. Communication with the consumer is key and the number one requirement of a label on a package, especially for suppliers in the time-sensitive perishable food market. These suppliers depend on converters to produce a label that will instantly embrace consumers in order to sell product swiftly.

Art Yerecic Sr founded Yerecic Label because he believed in the merit in educating consumers with on-pack labeling. Forty-one years later his son, Art Yerecic, continues this purpose with the support of a strong business culture that no doubt, too, was initiated by Yerecic Sr.

Yerecic Label has realized considerable growth in recent years by specializing in the production of interactive labels for perishable foods, consumer packaged goods and grocery retailer foods. The typical customer demands short lead times, speed-to-market and on-time delivery; product expiration is unacceptable.

To meet these requirements, Yerecic Label uses an impressive cellular production model throughout its business. Customer management cells in the office consult clients from the start, leading them competently through cellular label production, final shipment and application. Tight monitor and management of its supply chain support the ability for this streamlined set-up. And the addition of a Mark Andy Performance Series P7 press has given the converter the newest technology to further tighten its belt while increasing quality.

COMMUNICATING TO CONSUMERS

'Nothing in our world happens without testing and then the subsequent results to quantify the claims,' president, Art Yerecic says. Yerecic Label regularly participates in research programs and in-store testing to rate shopper responses. It published its first Protein Labeling Study I in 2004, and more recently the Protein Labeling Study II in March 2010. Both assessments were completed in cooperation with the Pork Checkoff and the Beef Checkoff, leading US meat trade associations dedicated to promoting its members' interests and to educating consumers.

In response to the results of these particular studies, Yerecic Label features its premier line of Easy Fresh Cooking (EFC) labels. Research reveals that consumers prefer a picture of a finished dish on their label and cooking directions, making the buyer feel more comfortable preparing fresh meats, fish and poultry.

The Easy Fresh Cooking labels are a triangular shaped, two-ply system that when pulled, reveal a convenience cooking chart that assist the user in food preparation. The labels work on a hinged system with one perforated side allowing the top layer of the label, with the recipe, to be removed, while the cooking details and nutritional information remain on the package. The top layer of this peel back technology has the ability to sit down neatly once it's been pulled, keeping the package clean and 'not tampered with' for every shopper.

Easy Fresh Cooking labels have proven to increase sales by as much as five percent. 'Our label products sell more products,' says Yerecic. 'We've achieved this by working together with our customers to better understand their businesses.'

The company has adapted many of these features to ScaleAPeel labels. These labels are similar in concept to the EFC labels, yet have a thermal facesheet for use in a weighscale printer.

'Research shows us that consumers are open to messages in the outer aisles from brands that they trust,' Yerecic explains.

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'They respond well to instant savings on complementary products that make a purchase cost competitive.' For this the company produces AdImpact! labels that match a perishable perimeter product with a well-known brand found in the packaged goods aisles. 'The capability to produce this type of label gives clients a compelling reason to buy from us.' Additionally the converter offers YottaMark's HarvestMark solution bringing consumers the ability to use 2D barcodes in combination with variable data text, barcodes and human readable code to track a product to its origin.

START TO FINISH STREAMLINED PRODUCTION

MARK ANDY Performance Series P7 producing 2 ply labels

Work cells have been a part of the production process on the shop floor for over a decade. Implemented to increase efficiencies in the label manufacturing process, each of the cells includes a Mark Andy press and a slitter, and the majority includes a KTI turret rewinder. Each cell is manned with three people – a press operator, a helper and a finisher.

Every unit is a self-sufficient production area that includes set-up room, sinks, anilox roll cleaning systems and tools that are needed for each job. All are arranged similarly for ultimate flexibility. 'We picture the cells like a race crew pit station,' says Brian Hurst, VP of operations. 'We attack the press from all sides, get it up and running, then head back to our positions.'

Brian Hurst, Josh Yerecic, Art Yerecic and Linda Ciuca

Plates are mounted within the cell and each will soon be equipped with a computer connected to an AVT inspection system. Within about 70 feet, raw material is converted into finished labels on the skid ready to ship.

The cellular concept, or 'Zone of Responsibility', was introduced to the front end of the business a few years following the execution in manufacturing. Management realized that a bottleneck in operations more often than not stemmed from a hold up in the office. Designs, job details and approvals were simply not keeping up with the shop floor.

The Zone of Responsibility brings together the key account manager, customer service representative and graphic artist to best support customers at the beginning of the ordering process. This structure has greatly improved speed-to-market and has increased on-time shipment of labels. Yerecic says, 'It's an extremely lean process all the way through.'

The managing cell links the front and back end of the business. It's physically located between the two areas and is home to production and pre press leaders which lends to an open flow of communication.

Zones are grouped by geography or by product line. Yerecic comments: 'The key opportunity with this set up is that it enables turn and talk. All of the answers can be found in one room. It is especially supportive for any of our cross-merchandising projects.'

Cellular configuration equally complements the company's strategic and conceptual selling method that immerses the sales team into the industry that it serves. Yerecic says, 'If the teams know our customer's business, then they're better equipped to service their needs.'

A part of this selling method is educating the customer on the value that research-based, shopper approved Yerecic labels can bring to their brand. The converter's R&D leader works closely with the sales department to support their consultative efforts. Testing label endurance, application systems and new materials is all part of customer service.

SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT

'We are in an economy where we have to deliver value,' explains VP of purchasing & administration, Linda Ciuca, who oversees the company's annual bids for raw materials. Yerecic Label partners with its vendors through the bidding process where only the best are invited to partake. Ciuca insists that delivery be timely: 'If it's not then we cannot meet our customer's demands.

'The most highly desirable supplier is one who is familiar with the company's ordering pattern and performs extremely well on both the service and technical side. Service is never given up for price.' For this year's bid, Ciuca worked with her purchasing manager to establish truckload deliveries to reduce cost and the P7 press cell (photograph courtesy of Yerecic Label)

company's impact on the environment.

Ciuca and Hurst work closely together as the directors of purchasing and production. The pair over see a KanBan card system that serves as a semi-automated ordering process for raw stock material. Cards are attached to each roll of material once it's checked into the plant. When the press team loads the new roll onto the unwinder, the card is removed and dropped into the designated KanBan card box. Every morning, the purchasing manager picks up the cards at each press and places orders accordingly.

A similar card system has been adapted for plate cylinder organization. When operators select the cylinders needed for their job, they insert press cell cards into the empty units which notify their colleagues of where the missing cylinders are located. Hurst says, 'It's a simple way to ensure the right cylinders for the press are ready and available when it's time to changeover.'

IMPROVEMENT INITIATIVE AND INVESTMENT

Yerecic Label gains strength from its annual Improvement Initiative Process. The process is a system to create a list of opportunity-based, explicit initiatives. The board of officers develops this list, sets monetary goals, establishes dates and communicates the purpose to the company. Each year the process is reviewed and employed corporate wide.

Management assumes the work within their respective areas and empowers each associate to assist in defining the Yerecic Label purpose. For example, reorganizing the cylinder rack with its new effective design was an initiative given to the second shift manager under the goal of lean improvement. All associates have five targets that they focus on daily. Success is the ultimate responsibility of the executive team.

This Improvement Initiative Process and capital investment are directly related. Often times, new capital equipment is required to achieve the goals set for improvement. Yerecic travels en mass to many seminars and tradeshows so his team is able to conduct an effective post-evaluation together.

He says that Labelexpo is an important place for the decision making process. 'We take 10-12 decision makers to the event because all of the equipment suppliers bring depth in staff, allowing us to enhance our analysis. It's the one

place where everybody showcases their best and brightest.' Yerecic Label's 2008 Labelexpo attendees included three 3rd generation Yerecics - Art C, Mike and Josh.

After a thorough investigation of the latest press technology offered by the world's leading manufacturers, Yerecic Label was one of the first converters in North America to install the Mark Andy Performance Series P7 flexographic press launched at Labelexpo Europe in 2009. The company purchased a 12-color, 17" P7 and is extremely pleased.

The P7 is capable of running up to 750 ft/min and features a newly designed, fully servo driven multi-axis print head with auto registration control. 'We bought the press because it's helping us do what we already do better,' Yerecic explains. 'We're using it to produce more of what we specialize in not to break into a new market.'

The open architecture of the P7 suits the company's needs very well, giving it premium flexibility, and shorter web paths that increase uptime and reduce waste. Mark Andy's dependable service played a role in the company's decision, as did the ability to print on unsupported films.

'We've already seen a glimpse of the results that we intend to consistently achieve,' says Yerecic. 'Eventually we expect to have throughput that is 2.5 to 3 times what our 10" presses are currently achieving.'

First shift, lead P7 press operator Josh Yerecic says, 'The printing that comes off this press is beautiful; the color really jumps out at you. And the ability to easily access the web is outstanding.'

All printing plates are manufactured in-house using analog equipment. Management is keeping its eye on the digital technology, but will refrain from investment for the time being since the current machinery works effectively.

QUALITY, TRAINING & ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP

'Do It Right the First Time' is the constant message delivered by the quality assurance department. The company's long-term goal for quality is to have zero defects, reducing the number by half regularly until the goal is achieved. It has created its own Ten Commandments of Quality, focusing on the cost of quality.

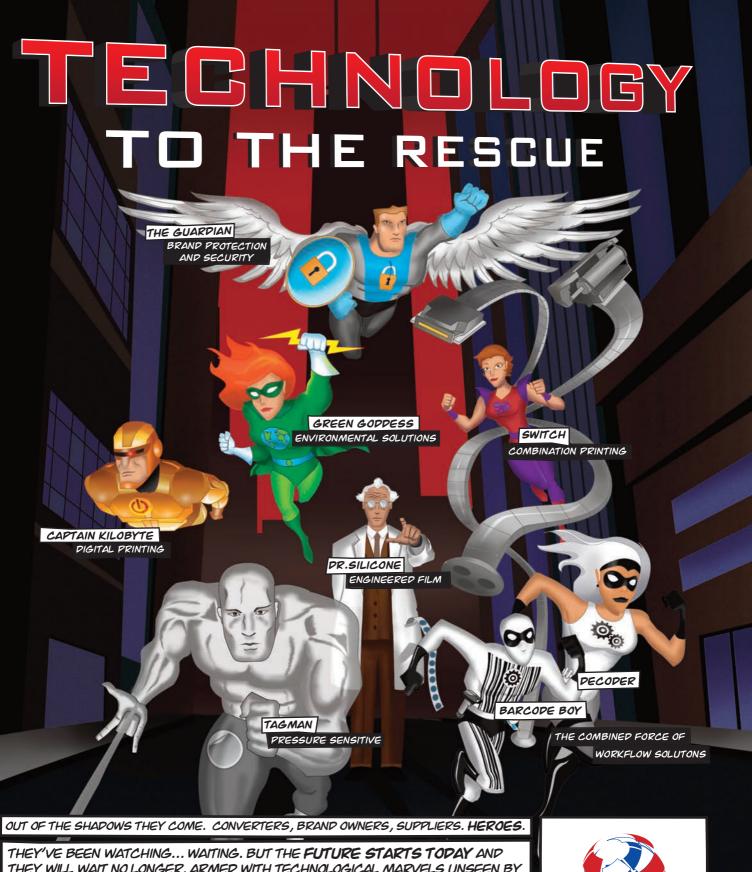
Hurst says, 'We've found that quality is hard to quantify. But, when it's put into a lost dollars amount it becomes easier to analyze.'

Training is conducted in-house using both a handbook and on-the-job training conducted by the training manager. The company's HR manager has developed an effective eleven tier system where employees obtain certifications for their achievements. Based on a developed set of best practices, the system works well for retention because associates can see what actions must be taken for promotion.

The Yerecic leadership team is actively involved in TLMI and has recently applied for TLMI's Project LIFE certification.

OUTLOOK

Educated, focused, communicative and team are all ingredients that come to mind when recalling the Yerecic Label recipe. The company will always work along side its customers to better understand their evolving needs, and will remain active participants in consumer-focused studies. Its rooted purpose will long endure as a valued tradition.



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Enhance Your Brand with StratusGroup

INVESTMENTS in the industry's latest press technologies and a website refresh with a new focus on packaging education and consumer interaction sets up StratusGroup for further growth. Danielle Jerschefske reports

Eighteen year-old StratusGroup, located on the north side of Cincinnati, Ohio, has a lot of experience under its belt. Co-founder Robert Curran began tape distribution and PS label manufacturing in his basement in 1974. Eventually supplying local big brand companies like P&G and Kroger, he thought he was ready to retire and sold his business to CCL. By 1992 Robert had discovered he was not ready for retirement and founded StratusGroup with his son, Curtis Curran.

The father-son team opened shop with 7,000 sq feet to service the health and beauty industry with narrow web folding cartons and later PS labels. Their business portfolio quickly expanded to include HBA, pharmaceutical, food and beverage clients.

'We've doubled the size of the company in the last five years and grew 20 percent in 2008,' vice president Curt Curran says. 2009 marked a year of heavy investment for StratusGroup. The trend in a down market is to cut back spending, but StratusGroup installed two of the industry's newest presses: the Gallus granite-based ECS 340 and the HP Indigo WS6000. It has also overhauled its website to help brand managers and designers better understand and exploit the latest print technologies.

EVERYTHING OLD IS NEW

StratusGroup installed a 9-color 13 inch Gallus ECS 340 with a frame made from granite – yes, the rock. Launched at

Labelexpo Europe 2009, the company was the first in North America, according to Gallus, to invest in this totally new piece of equipment. 'We purchased this to add extremely cost-efficient, high-quality flexo labels,' explains C. Curran.

The fully servo-driven press offers tight registration - especially with the sturdiness that comes from being made of stone. Anilox sleeves reduce change over time and the reverse doctor blade consistently maintains the correct amount of ink to anilox.

Kevin Bennitt, director of applications says, 'by continuously advancing our technology and process we help our customers' business. We are already seeing scrap reduction. The ECS uses less material and less energy with the UV lamp design from GEW.'

The Currans have been impressed with the machine's throughput, commenting: 'we've exceeded volume expectations with the granite press. We love the makeready time with the shortened web path. It has good vignettes and our pressmen are elated with what the ECS can do and with its ease of use.'

DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

StratusGroup jumped into the digital world by bringing in the HP Indigo WS6000 and the new AB Graphic Digicon Series 2. 'Together these machines provide a range of highly sophisticated print solutions tailored to the needs of



our customers,' C. Curran says. 'The opaque white was critical to our decision to purchase the press and finishing equipment.' The WS6000 press is able to meet industry opacity expectations with only one bump of white ink.

C. Curran adds, 'anything that we can do flexo we can do digital. So far we've been successful in all of our market segments, but our challenge remains to continually educate brand owners on our new digital capabilities.'

The company has run various types of materials on the Indigo including a flashy sun tan lotion label made from a difficult to print and convert metalized polyethylene. The press sits in a completely secure room that is only accessible by key fob, which makes it possible to produce pharmaceutical labels while meeting customer security requirements.

All materials are primed in-house and the newly acquired AB Graphic Flytec 100 vision inspection system checks jobs. Primarily for pharmaceutical packaging, it offers complete control of printed images by inspecting, cutting and finishing of multi-lane label webs in a single operation. This includes bar code scanning and grading, golden image comparison and written documentation on every roll.

NEW BRAND STRATEGY

StratusGroup has re-branded itself with a newly designed identity and an interactive website to go with the new look. 'We are very excited about this,' C. Curran says. 'It is a chance for us to cut through the many choices available in our industry. The site is a key point of entry for people to learn about StratusGroup, so we wanted to make it easy for them to understand our capabilities and benefits.'

Marketing manager, Christopher Corgiat says, 'Our company's reputation is one of our most valuable assets and our future success depends on preserving it. We want to seize every opportunity to communicate StratusGroup's precision and high-minded approach. And the logo mark is the pinnacle of the pyramid.'

Stratusgrp.com integrates social networking sites such as Twitter to encourage the converter's customers to follow what the company is doing on a regular basis. The growth that social networking has seen over the last few years yields incredible opportunities for brands to interact with consumers. You can follow the business at twitter.com/ StratusGroup.

Many of the StratusGroup staff participate in social networks like LinkedIn and Twitter hoping to set the stage for future sales. Their aim is to listen, learn, and communicate with prospects rather than traditional advertising techniques.

CARTONS, PS AND MULTI-PLY LABELS

'We are diversified on what we can do, but focused on who we do it for,' C. Curran explains. The company has remained true to its roots, still producing a significant amount of work





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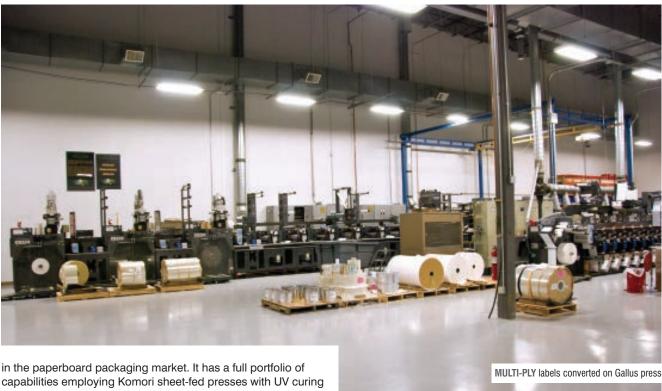
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technology.

StratusGroup actively converts folding cartons, multi-packs, sidewall boards to wrap around various types of containers, trays for product safety and durability, and microflutes that give the strength of corrugated board with offset quality graphics and a point of purchase display. It also does a lot of work with metalized board. Many flat bed die-cutters finish the product packaging efficiently.

Plant manager Charles Fuerbacher explains, 'as a full service feature, StratusGroup provides both digital and flexo labels that coordinate brand color with carton manufacturing. This ensures our clients' brands are unified, on-color and consistent across all types of packaging.

Additionally, the company has the capability to produce multi-ply labels that help customers increase efficiencies and eliminate complicated management of multiple SKUs. A specially designed Gallus press produces this work.

All pre-press, both offset and flexo, is produced in-house. It also produces all of its rotary screens in-house using its own film positives to start. The company uses X-Rite color management and a spectrophotometer to produce consistent color for its customers.

HEIGHTENED SECURITY

'Our customers are under constant government and competitive pressure to keep security high and the cost of goods down,' explains StratusGroup director of quality, Brent Hosier.

Within its technology portfolio, StratusGroup has the ability to provide useful brand security enhancements within its labels and cartons. It uses serialization, color shifting inks, holograms, variable data, EAS Source tags and more embedded into its products to enhance brand security, authentication and pedigree.

SUSTAINABILITY IN YOUR HANDS

StratusGroup has made a number of initiatives to minimize waste, but the most interesting may be their 'Sustainability In Your Hands' program: dedicated to educating consumers on the greenest packaging available. Recognizing that rushed sustainability claims often lead to scrutiny and serious accusations of greenwashing, StratusGroup is working with major brands to reduce packaging material without jeopardizing structural integrity or brand identity.

On press, the Currans are evaluating new technology to start press motors at different times, reduce energy consumption during high demand periods and closely monitor air conditioning energy consumption. Hosier says, 'measuring printed component performance based on OEE and using Six Sigma methodology is critically important to us and our customers.'

In house, StratusGroup has recently changed lighting to a smarter energy system that meets strict energy efficiency guidelines set by the EPA and Department of Energy. It employs motion sensors and lower energy bulbs. Post-press, all paperboard scraps are recycled.

The company has also partnered with Cincinnati energy supplier, Duke, and waste management company, Rumpke, to minimize its environmental impact. Robert Curran says, 'Green is a priority for us and we plan to continually implement more initiatives.

FORWARD THINKING

Robert Curran concludes: 'We established this company to solve our customers' problems, to service them and provide fair pricing. StratusGroup has measured growth because we've left profits in the business and have put the right people in the right positions. We cultivate a positive culture because we want our people to be able to grow and mature. This breeds success.



INSTALLATIONS



FOCUS INSTALLS FLEXO PRESS IN MALAWI

Malawi-based Flexible Packaging Industries has installed a 6-color Centraflex 250 flexo press from Focus Label Machinery. The machine, the first of its kind to be installed in the country, has among its features UV varnishing, three die-cutting units, laminating, video inspection and auto tension control. In addition, Focus has supplied an RT250 slitter rewinder, a Profile A3 platemaker and a Platemate video platemounter.

The new press is to be used for flexible packaging and self-adhesive labels on a range of substrates and was purchased in order to capitalize on a growing domestic market, which relies heavily on imported labeling.

Faizal Khamboo of Flexible Packaging Industries said: 'We had been looking for a compact press which was capable of producing self-adhesive labels and wet glue labels as well as filmic products and light carton board. We first saw the Centraflex at Drupa 08 and were very impressed with the quality and versatility of the press. A few months afterwards, we placed our order and started to prepare our plant in Malawi. The Centraflex press is now fully installed and is already producing high quality labels for our local and export markets. Focus has been very helpful and given plenty of technical assistance in all aspects of this project. I'm sure that we will soon talking to them about our next press.'

NORWEGIAN CONVERTER INVESTS IN MARK ANDY P7 PRESS

Ellco Etikett Trykk, a Norway-based label converter, has purchased a new Mark Andy Performance Series P7 press. The deal is the first P7 sale in Scandinavia and the fourth in Europe since October 2009.

Ellco, which celebrates its 25th anniversary this year, provides labels to a variety of industry sectors, including prime label, cosmetic, health and beauty and pharmaceutical. The largest segment supplied by Ellco is the food and grocery market, followed by beer, wine and spirits.

The new Mark Andy Performance Series P7 is a 7-color, 13 inch (330 mm) full UV press. Added features for hot foil, a Stork screen unit and web turn bar are also included for a variety of decorative and two-sided applications.

US CONVERTER PURCHASES OMET FLEXY PRESS

QSX Labels of Everett, Massachusetts, USA, has installed an 8-color Omet Flexy press with a 10-inch web width. The press contains a combination UV/hot air drying system, hot stamping and cold foil capabilities, interchangeable units for flexo and rotary screen, removable cassettes for fast job changes and interchangeable tooling.

QSX Label owner Robert Karess commented: 'The Omet Flexy provides us with not only additional production capacity but also the ability to offer detailed decorative labels that our customers are expecting us to provide.

'We considered many different presses before choosing Omet. We were very impressed with the overall technology, design and mechanical construction built into the Flexy as well its outstanding web tension control and print registration. This press allows for easy slide-out print cassettes for fast changeovers, which is absolutely essential in today's short-run market and also provides an extremely short web path which ultimately reduces waste and increases job versatility. The many attributes found within the Omet Flexy clearly presented the best choice for us at this time.'

Operation manager John Douglas said: 'I have worked with many high end presses during my 20-year career and I have never seen a press designed so efficiently or effectively.' QSX Labels serves the specialty food and beverage, consumer goods, chemical, industrial and personal care industries.

AUSTRIAN CONVERTER INSTALLS TWO PRATI MACHINES

Austrian label printer Ulikett has installed two VegaPlus modular finishing systems from Prati, a machine launched by the Italian company at Labelexpo Europe 2009.

Ulikett will use a VegaPlus LF450 to die-cut and rewind blank labels and a LF530 model for the video-controlled customization of large-to-small rolls. The company installed a Prati Jupiter TC400 system last year. Ulikett, founded in 1981, produces over two billion labels per year for the food, pharma and personal care sectors. Employing 120 people, the company uses a variety of printing processes including letterpress, digital, UV flexo, screen and offset. The VegaPlus contains an unwinding module for diameters of up to one meter including the roll-lifting unit. The die-cutting module can be equipped with two stations and an automatic register control. The inspection module ensures 100 percent error control with camera steering. The rewinding module can be processed on a central shaft, on two independent, directly-driven shafts or on a three shaft changer with glueless, patented attachments as the user chooses. The VegaPlus can also be equipped with a printing module.





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You're a Survivor

NORTH AMERICA'S leading label manufacturing association hosted its annual event that empowered its members to keep on surviving, reports Danielle Jerschefske

This year's TLMI Converter Meeting appropriately titled 'You Survived the Great Recession, Now What?' offered members the chance to answer this critical question.

Peter Ricchiuti, a comical financial markets professor of Tulane University's business school, has a unique way of exciting a group with economics. He told the audience, 'a recovery is under foot and is ahead of us. The economy regularly bounces back within 6-9 months after the stock market returns – and we are going to see a good size recovery.' Ricchiuti also said that he expects to see inflation creep up and double to four percent in the next two years, implying that it will be a period to buy bonds and sell stocks.

Well renowned business leadership author, Jason Jennings, did a fantastic job of stimulating attendees to re-evaluate the way that they 'steward' their businesses. He said, 'Turn what you do into a cause – bold, inclusive, gives meaning to people's lives. The right culture is the ultimate competitive advantage.' Other useful tips that Jennings shared include: having the ability to let go citing that an ego prevents growth; ensuring that everyone involved, including customers, are aware of a business' business strategy; getting all associates to think and act like business owners. Most importantly, Jennings convinced the group that the best leaders are good stewards. They constantly get their hands dirty, they're accessible and

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they share the cause.

The association announced the winners for its annual Eugene Singer Award for Management Excellence on the final evening of the event. The Singer Award is given annually to four narrower web converting companies categorized by sales range:

- Fountain Valley, California-based Coast Label Company won in its category for the third time. The small company category is defined by annual sales of less than USD \$6 million.
- Fairfield, Ohio-based Kopco Graphics won for the mid-range company category, defined by sales of \$6-\$14 million. This is Kopco's second TLMI Eugene Singer Award.
- Aurora, Illinois-based The Label Printers won for the medium company

category, defined by sales of \$15-\$35 million. This is The Label Printer's first Eugene Singer Award.

Longwood, Florida-based
 Consolidated Label won for the
 large company category defined by
 sales greater than \$35 million. This is
 Consolidated Label's eighth Eugene
 Singer Award.

TLMI president Frank Sablone commented: 'TLMI would like to congratulate this year's Eugene Singer Award Winners. The association's converter members continue to realize the benefit of participating in the TLMI Ratio Study, and the tangible ongoing value the study provides to their businesses and to their business planning strategies. TLMI is honored to be able to continue to provide this service to our converter members.'



TLMI also announced its four winners of the 2010 World Label Awards: Taylor Made Labels, CL&D Graphics, Collotype Labels and McDowell Label.



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Digital Labels open for business



WITH THE DIGITAL LABEL SUMMIT confirmed for 29-30th June in Barcelona, Mike Fairley, strategic development manager at Tarsus Labels Group, discusses the role of digital printing in today's labels business

Over the past five years or so the digital printing of labels has become a mainstream printing process. More than 1,200 digital label presses have been installed worldwide since the first launches of this new technology in the mid-1990s, and close to 250 new presses are now being installed each year into label printing companies in Europe, North and South America, Australia, Asia and even into India.

Installations of new digital presses annually now make up some 15 percent of all narrow-web label presses installed worldwide each year, while the value of digital label sales grows annually at up to 36 percent – against just 4 or 5 percent annual growth for conventionally printed labels. Certainly a powerful argument for continued investment in digital technology.

While the digital label press market to date has been dominated by industry pioneers HP Indigo and Xeikon, the past couple of years have seen over 15 new digital inkjet presses being launched, as well as further models from the main

market leaders – many of these presses being presented for the first time at the Labelexpo show in Brussels last year. Indeed, current analysis indicates that there are now at least 36 different makes and models of digital label presses available to converters from some 30 suppliers.

Certainly, the benefits of buying digitally printed self-adhesive labels are now fully accepted by many brand owner and retail groups. Theses benefits include speed of response, reduced inventories, on-demand delivery, new promotion possibilities, mass customisation and short-run capabilities.

Now those same benefits are being extended into other types of labels – shrink sleeve labels, heat transfer labels, etc – as well as into new opportunities within the printed packaging sectors, with digital printing now being used for the production of high quality printed flexible packaging, tubes, cartons, bottle top foils, sleeves, containers and pails, even games and competitions incorporating variable information.

Major brand owners, such as Heineken, have already taken advantage of digitally printed shrink sleeve labels for market promotions, while many other brands are currently evaluating or using the benefits of digital technology for new label and packaging solutions.

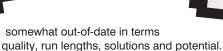
While the web widths of the toner-based label presses of HP Indigo (liquid toner) and Xeikon (dry powder toner) are currently in the 330/340mm range, the new developments in integrating conventional printing with digital UV inkjet printing now allow easier scalability of conventional/digital presses, moving from the more traditional narrow webs up to webs of 420mm (Nilpeter Caslon) or even 630mm (Agfa:Dotrix). Such developments further widen the potential and opportunities for digital presses in the printed packaging field.

From the print-buyer point of view there are a number of value drivers to using digital printing. Ensuring quality and compliance is very important. Taking cost out of the process obviously, and accelerated time to market, as well as offering all sorts of value added services (the converter just delivering a label is pretty much part of the past).

Converters today have to change their service model according to the new requirements from the various players within the supply chain – and expand the scope of their business.



Instrumental in achieving these value drivers is making sure that all players within the supply chain collaborate, preferably online so that costly breaks



All that has changed. Digital is now regularly used for run lengths of 50,000 or more - a market opportunity which represents two-thirds of conventionally printed label jobs. Quality today is excellent. Indeed many label producers quote jobs for both conventional and digital and let the customer decide. Many customers regularly go digital from choice. The breakeven or crossover point between digital and conventional has certainly extended considerably in recent years.

Markets and applications for digitally printed labels now include the key end-user sectors of food, health, beauty and cosmetics, wines, beers and spirits, pharmaceuticals, household cleaning and industrial products, as well as increasing inroads into other sectors such as computers. oil and petroleum products, automotive, white home goods appliances, home maintenance, other retail and consumer

electronics. What seems certain is that this list will continue to grow rapidly, while the benefits of digital printing are now starting to also be found in a wide range of flexible packaging, sleeve, tube, carton, etc, applications. Indeed,

recent research indicates that up to 15 per cent of the installed digital label presses are already producing digitally printed flexible packaging

Such rapid advances will ensure that the Digital Area at Labelexpo Americas from 14-16 September this year will have much for visitors to see. New makes and

models of press, upgraded pre-press solutions, automation software, finishing equipment, etc, as well as seminar presentations on the latest trends and developments and, for those coming new to digital printing, a masterclass on how to get the best out of a digital printing investment.

Before then, a second Digital Label Summit will be held in Barcelona from the 29-30 June. This event will be particularly looking at the latest advances in toner technologies, at all the new developments in inkjet printing, at the expanding applications for digital printing in both labels and packaging, and at where digital solutions can be of benefit to end-users.

What seems certain is that 2010 will be another major breakthrough year for digital printing. Higher press outputs, even greater quality, wider press choice, integrated processes,

improved breakeven compared with conventional printing, key developments in software and pre-press, additional added-value finishing capabilities, and ever more end-user solutions in both labels and packaging.

It is not just digital printing presses that have advanced significantly in the past few years. It is also developments in digital front ends, in automation and integration of digital solutions through the production chain, in new digital software solutions, in workflow organization, in on-line color management and in 'color guaranteed' printing.

Becoming a successful digital label or package printing converter, then, is not just about buying a digital press to go into the conventional printing plant; it also very much to do with whether the pre-press operation is also ready for digital print.

What are the main pre-press strategies for profitable digital label printing?

According to pre-press supplier EskoArtwork, maintaining 'brand equity' requires the accurate reproduction of spot colors. Secondly is the need to communicate with customers, with suppliers, or with people in the converter's own organization - maybe from a different location

There are also many forms of automation possible which reduce errors by eliminating repetitive manual operations. Version control is also essential, and it is vital not to make a second copy of a job if that job is switched to digital.

Added to these pre-press and workflow strategies and solutions are all the continuing advances in in-line and off-line finishing systems for digitally-printed labels and packaging. While conventional die-cutting and varnishing have been the minimum finishing options for digital label presses to-date, the latest equipment has options for hot or cold foiling, embossing, inkjet personalization, 2D barcoding, booklet insertion, hologram registration, flat-bed screen printing, sheeting, over-laminating, 100% web inspection, turret rewinding or slitter rewinding if

All the main suppliers of digital print finishing equipment now also offer laser cutting solutions. Cutting speeds will depend on a number of variables, including material thickness, amount of cutting required, amount of small radius curves and the amount of jumping between features.

Laser cutters are now able to take any vector-based digital image and import this into the cutter's operating software, generating the job set-up within a few minutes.

NEW PERCEPTIONS

While the software, hardware, applications and markets for digital label (and package) printing have developed rapidly over the past few years, many label, packaging, brand owner and retail groups still have a perception of digital that is



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Digital label technology is one of the most exciting areas in label printing and packaging today, impacting on everything from pre-press to printing to personalization.

The opportunities offered by digital technology are varied and extensive, but it's easy to get lost in all the information available. Digital Label Summit 2010 (organized by Labelexpo) will provide a detailed look at all the options and opportunities available, comparing technology, explaining applications and case studies. The use and applications for digital in the package printing field (cartons, flexible packaging, sleeves, bottle top foils, containers, pails, tube laminates, etc) will also be addressed.

Come to Digital Label Summit 2010 and discover new markets and opportunities, get ahead of your competitors, optimize your workflow and find new design solutions.

🔪 29 - 30 June, Barcelona **DIGITAL LABEL SUMMIT 2010** www.labelsummit.com













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HP lays out roadmap

NARROW web flexible packaging is a key development area for HP Indigo as it looks to broaden the reach and acceptance of digital printing in the packaging industry. Elinor Zuke reports

Over 200 people from more than 30 countries attended HP Indigo's labels and packaging event in Israel, where the company's leaders, customers and brands discussed the future of digital printing.

Alon Bar-Shany, VP and general manager, focused his address on Indigo's business model. 'We see this as a very focused industry. Our intent is not to swamp the market with thousands of presses and commoditize the market. Our intent is to add value.' Indigo has 5,300 presses installed with 3,600 customers, but judges its success against the number of A4-equivalent pages they print, rather than sales. 'Frankly that's how we make money and how our customers make money,' he later said in a press conference.

After books and photos, the labels industry is the fastest growing area of digital printing amongst HP customers, growing 77 percent in volume between 2007 and 2009. With self-publishing a relatively new market, labels is growing from a larger base. Bar-Shany predicts that the books market will slow as e-book applications such as Amazon's Kindle become more popular. 'Packaging, however, is in a good place. People aren't going to download wine and drink it through the internet.'

He encouraged label converters to diversify into new markets to increase profitability. After media is bought, staff paid and overheads covered, the average operating profit is 2-3 percent for conventional printing, he said, but higher with digital. 'It's a very dangerous place to be. The question has to be "How do I capture more value of what the customer is spending? What else can I sell?".' Cartons and flexible packaging is one possible answer. 'We believe there's a huge opportunity for our customers. It's the same end customers who want variable data and personalization on labels that do in flexible packaging,' Bar-Shany said.

The WS6000 can print folding cartons and new ws4500s are supplied with the same rewinder as the WS6000 to allow for thinner, flexible packaging. Simon Lewis, product marketing manager, said that HP would release a series of certified adhesives and laminates for

flexible packaging in an attempt to reduce the barrier to entry for customers.

On the customer panel, Joe Foster, MD of Foster Packaging explained how he set up the Flexible Express brand in 2008 to offer short-run printed pouches, bags and reel stock and picked up business across the world. 'We promote digital printing to our customers as a way to enter new markets,' he said. One customer in the US which makes microwavable seafood started with 200 bags of six varieties and is now successful in the market.

Web-to-print was another hot topic on the customer panel. 'Clients want to have a database of labels and upload their designs, which we can take directly to the press,' said Cees Schouten, technical director of Geostick. 'We are losing money on some jobs not because of printing, but time spent on pre-press.' Geostick aim to have web-2-print before the end of the year, he added, Doron Lerner. general manager sales and marketing at S. Lerner, said he wanted to explain the advantages of web-to-print to his customers and double digital business by next year. Amberley Labels MD Trevor Smith said the company aims to 'move away from conventional printing where possible'. Thirty percent of Amberley's turnover will be from digital this year, and the goal for 2010-11 is 50 percent. Digital printing is three times more profitable than 'conventional' jobs, he added.

Amberley won an award in the 2009 Finat awards for a food product label for its Fortum & Mason Still Blenheim Palace Natural Mineral Water at Labelexpo and was nominated for the world label awards. 'We worked to make it better. In the end it was more expensive but added value to the customer's customer,' Smith said.

During a manufacturing plant tour, Simon Lewis, product marketing manager, explained the difference between the WS6000 and ws4500, emphasizing that the newer model did not represent a straight-forward upgrade. The WS6000, now one year old, prints at twice the speed of the ws4500. Its break even point is roughly double, and so is the investment required. 'If you don't have the volume, it becomes an albatross around your neck,' Lewis said. 'But if you have the right production volume, it lowers the total cost of ownership.

To promote digital printing, HP Indigo is trying to increase demand for its customers by marketing to end users. 'We're not selling to them, but asking them to think about it and ask their converters,' said Sharon Rothschild, strategic marketing for labels and packaging, 'We have more success as HP than we would as Indigo, and if it's hard for us, think how hard it is for the label converter.'

'It's a lengthy, multi-year process,' agreed Bar-Shany. 'With P&G they're starting to get it and dictate Indigo presses to some of their customers. But we don't want to replace the converter's relationship with their customer. We want them to expand.'









Making waves

THE Flexo Technical Association has established a contact group for members based around the North American Great Lakes. The success of the pilot program provides a model for other print associations looking to involve their members more closely, writes David Lanska

Hitting the flexo industry like a tsunami, the FTA Great Lakes Group (GLG) has flooded the region with networking opportunities and solid technical content since its inauguration in late 2009. Meeting every other month, the group has developed a regular following and continues to grow rapidly, drawing attendees from several states and as far away as 200 miles.

Started as an initiative of the FTA Supplier Leadership Council, the GLG is a pilot program.

Each GLG meeting has a specific topic of interest, as well as a networking component. Because higher water raises all boats, each meeting includes an overview of FTA resources related to the meeting topic.

The GLG launched into the turbulent economic waters last November with a highly successful meeting focused on sustainability. The meeting was held at Lauterbach Group's new LEEDs certified printing facility. The Lauterbach site was selected to showcase the facility that resulted from the Lauterbach Group's conscious decision to incorporate sustainability into their corporate culture so that it permeates their processes, products and facilities. Rebecca Kerschinske, Lauterbach VP of sales, presented environmental and sustainability issues and opportunities, as well as information on LEEDs certification.

The FTA program segment centered on the many resources developed by and in partnership with FTA pertaining to sustainability, including the Sustainable Green Printing Partnership, the book entitled The Flexo Environment, and PNEAC's Virtual Flexo Plant. Attendees heard details about the Sustainable Green Printing Committee activities and were invited to participate in the annual Environmental Excellence Awards competitions.

The second meeting, held at Waukesha County Technical College, focused on training and employee motivation as the means to improving productivity and profitability. Mike Erwin, president of Tailored Label Products, (TLP) provided an outstanding look at the multitude of ways that TLP fosters a climate conducive to employee and company achievement through a combination of creative rewards and accountability.

Bill Malm, technical specialist for Harper Corporation of America, then spoke about the importance of training as an integral component of quality improvement initiatives and process control. He went on to describe how anilox audits can be utilized to detect training deficiencies and as an ongoing means of ensuring adherence to procedures. Bill's speech included an overview of FTA's TEST (Technical Education Services Team) program and virtual campus.

Our most recent event was held at Harper College in Palatine, Illinois. This program focused on quality improvement and featured speeches by lan Hole from EskoArtworks on High Definition Flexo and Ray Bohnen on the Epson Ultrachrome HDR white inkjet proofing.

In a preview to his FTA Forum presentation, Dan Doherty, VP of Prairie State Group, (PSG) described the stormy seas his company faced due to the company's rapid expansion, which resulted in multiple press platforms running multiple substrates with multiple ink systems. In an effort to calm the water and gain control of their process, PSG implemented FTA FIRST (Flexographic Image Reproduction Standards and Tolerances) into their process. Through a series of carefully implemented steps, PSG dramatically reduced make-ready times and improved first pull color match by over 30 percent in the first year of First implementation.

The final speaker of the night was Richard Black, director of Digital Solutions for All Printing Resources. Richard stole the show with a hilarious and informative presentation on G7.

In addition to the technical content, the group also features presentations on various aspects of social media, presented by Mary Mekelburg of Mekelburg Consulting. Mary has given presentations on the basics of social media, LinkedIn, and incorporating Twitter into your social media marketing strategy.

Corporate sponsors support the events with food, refreshments and even door prizes. At the Harper College meeting, refreshments were provided courtesy of Graymills, Dupont Cyrel Packaging Graphics and All Printing Resources. Door prizes included two copies of The Flexo Environment, as well as a copy of First from the FTA. PIA provided two copies of Common Sense Flexography, and Mekelburg Consulting donated a certificate for Social Media Coaching.

The GLG charges a nominal meeting fee (\$10 for FTA members / \$20 for non-members) with all proceeds directed to the FFTA scholarship fund. To date, the group has donated just over \$700 to the fund.

Riding the tide of success of the GLG, the FTA Supplier Leadership Council is hoping for a ripple effect and has already begun discussions about forming the next local user's group in fall.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

David Lanska is president of D.J. Lanska & Associates LLC, FTA Great Lakes Group chairman and author of Common Sense Flexography. Lanska has been a regular L&L contributor writing about flexographic management issues (see LL archive at www. labelsandlabeling.com). He can be reached at david.lanska@yahoo.com.

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What's the Scoop?

THE LATEST MEETING of HP's fast-growing user group, Dscoop5, highlighted the surge in the uptake of digital printing in the labels and packaging arena – and the knowledge gaps too. Danielle Jerschefske reports

Increased participation, advanced technical sessions and an eye-opening panel discussion at the fifth annual Dscoop Conference 'Dscoop5' painted a vivid picture of the rapid evolution of digital in the label and packaging market.

Founded by HP Indigo users, Dscoop serves as a year-round learning initiative and educational tool on digital printing and everything that goes with successful production. Its website forum and other online resources receive a whopping 40,000 visitors per year. Dscoop's annual conference gathers HP Indigo with its partners and customers to facilitate the sharing of experiences and working together for solutions. Susan

Moore, Dscoop5 chairman says: 'The idea is to bring value without creating competition.'

Over 1,800 people attended this year's conference compared to the 1,100 in 2009, including representatives from HP's Scitex division for the first time. 350 international visitors hailed from Asia, Eastern Europe, the Middle East and Africa. Latin America had the strongest representation with nearly 200 delegates. Dscoop's conference coordinator Eric Hawkinson comments: 'The Dscoop Conference is a place to drive business for HP Indigo users. If vendors and partners want to play in the HP Indigo space then they have to

attend the Dscoop.'

The increased participation by industry players at the conference is indicative of the impact that digital printing has had on both commercial printing and the labels & packaging industry in the last five years.

The conference program quality has progressed alongside this growth. At the first conference content covered the digital basics: opportunities, markets, general capabilities and a technology overview. Dscoop sessions now offer more detailed technical content for HP Indigo's significantly more experienced customer base, and the audience asks more insightful questions, gauging how

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the technology can suit their business best. Still, while installment numbers are high, and the knowledge on the topic has expanded, there appears to be a communication gap between converters and brand owners about what digital printing can do for even a big brand like Heineken.

WS6000 UNVEILED

Converter customers discussed their experiences with their WS6000 presses: Jay Dollries, ILS; Curt Curran, Nosco; Mike Petrulo, Lofton Label; Ed Wiegen,

Dollries said, 'If the job is longer than 2,500 linear feet or if it uses white, then the job is scheduled onto the 6000."

Converters' WS6000 machines are reported to have produced anything between 100 - 100,000 feet (30-300 meters), with the longest known recorded job at 450,000 feet (137,000m). The converter panel felt that the ideal printing range for the WS6000 press is between 6,000 to 13,000 feet (1,800m -3,960m), running best at 15-17,000 feet (4,500- 5,000m). The ideal run length for the ws4500 is between 5-6000 feet (1,500-1,800m).

Curran, who serves on the Dscoop

HP INDIGO WS6000 QUICK FACTS:

- WS6000 launched March 2009
- Over 80 WS6000 presses sold worldwide
- · Twenty different countries
- 50 percent of presses in Eastern Europe, Middle East and Africa
- 60M impressions made worldwide

board for the labels & packaging sector, said 'If a job is over 15,000 feet (4,500m) then Nosco schedules the work to be produced conventionally. However, focus on the business and do not get caught up on run lengths. It's less important and the lines are starting to blur.' Rather than selling on crossover points, the panel encouraged selling digital as a supply chain solution or a differentiator.

It was agreed that the WS6000 press is in fact nearly three times as efficient as the ws4500 press because of its increased speed and size ratio. Most felt too that the WS6000 can print close to 90 percent of the frame. The panel felt that a converter should have at least 1.2M impressions per month to justify investment in a WS6000. 253,000 daily impressions is the record volume for the press.

WS6000 users explained how they had to overcome the challenge of the increased blanket size of 38.5 inches. Switching from the 17 inch blanket on the ws4500 required re-sizing of labels. Panelists also felt that the web handling has improved on the WS6000 and that it holds superior dots compared to the ws4500.

It was also noted that there is no longer a wide disparity between flexo and digital print color. The opacity of the white Indichrome ink has advanced so that only one bump is needed with the WS6000, reducing ink usage and click charges. Several agreed too that they're able consistently to match color between the ws4500 and WS6000 with a 1 to 2 DeltaE.

FLEXIBLE FINISHING SOLUTIONS

Delta Industrial demonstrated its modular DeltaEdge converting technology at the event. The DeltaEdge is a servo-driven converting machine with laser cutting capability. Known for its customizable, plug and play qualities, the company was excited to discuss its new Delta Spectrum II that has been designed specifically for the finishing of materials as opposed to converting. It features a single web path and a fixed die with the possibility to add semi-rotary technology.

ABG demonstrated the finishing capabilities of its Digicon Series II machine. It launched the digicon-lite which offers many of the same benefits as the Series II, but has a smaller footprint.

MATERIAL AVAILABILITY

Fasson's manager of global digital products, David Collins, informed DScoop delegates that 'Avery Dennison will move solutions that exist in its conventional offering to digital. We are dedicated to providing functional product to this area.' Fasson will introduce over seventy products to its digital line and standardize lead times for these products. It will also provide the same service and waste reduction opportunities such as Ready Width.

WEB 2 PRINT

Label Traxx is working together with EskoArtwork to bring a full service B2B storefront that is integrated into the MIS cycle. It will have online tools for design and will offer automated ordering through the MIS. This is ideal for a



"Focus on the business and do not get caught up on run lengths. It's less important and the lines are starting to blur"

digital printer to be able to track all the SKUs of short run personalized orders.

This developing system will incorporate the printing press frame size and account for click charges. With digital offering faster production and more orders each day, it is critical to have an MIS as the hub automating prepress and streamlining throughput. Label Traxx president Ken Meinhardt said, 'The difficulty is in design not work with press. Anytime you give the customer the ability to touch up a proof, it can create more errors and problems than good. This new software will increase the communication between these areas and reduce manual input.'

Check out what Heineken has done with Web 2 Print.

BRAND PANEL – MORE THAN MOCK-UPS

The brand owner panel included professionals from Frito-Lay, Procter & Gamble, Bic and Texas Instruments. The group made it clear that package functionality is key when it comes to food stuffs, ensuring that what it contains remains fresh.

Some of the brand owner's challenges include the ability replicate the performance of a diverse set of films in gauge and structure, and color fidelity and graphics. They are also faced with the challenge of what a product will look like before it hits the shelf. Therefore, it is in prototypes that brands have found a niche for digital. Bic said, 'digital provides real live samples that people can touch,' while Frito-Lay said, 'we use digital for short run work in prototoypes and mock ups.'

The brand representatives said that they like that digital allows them to evaluate colors, to see how a product stands out on the shelf and to understand the impact of design changes on a larger scale.

However, the concept of using digital printing for regular output was not something that the panel felt strongly about. While marketers want to 'cut through the clutter' by speaking to the consumer through the package, this group of packaging engineers were not aware of how to fit digital's capabilities – personalization, photo-like quality, just in time ordering – into their packaging structure.

The audience asked the panel eagerly how the industry could convince brand owners that digital is for more than just mock-ups. The panel replied with some startling responses: 'Digital is still expensive'; 'The product size and run don't make sense with digital'; we will continue to use gravure'; 'we use PMS to color match and digital does not match'; 'our brand color is never going to go away and digital is not able to produce this color sufficiently - this is one of the challenges of digital.'

The brand representatives agreed that digital has unique attributes to offer them: faster speeds to market, the ability to produce financially viable short runs in places like Europe and the ability to keep inventories down. Some realize the advantages of the new business models that the technology creates and see the opportunity for sales growth potential.

Still, the group wants a wider machine to more efficiently address their labels and packaging needs.

COLOR MATCHING

The panel appeared unaware of the color management workflow that the Indigo technology offers, including the ability to develop a fingerprint and to recall a profile. They felt that current digital outputs do not, and must, accurately represent finished graphics in a production color gamut.

Frito Lay switched to Extended Color

Gamut production for all of its flexible bags in 2009. Therefore, the company has chosen to accept color built out of some combination of process hues. HP Indigo technology uses its signature 7-color ink system Indichrome in order to reach a similar color gamut. The trick is getting the buyers and marketers to accept the color hit using process colors rather than using Pantone and PMS colors to match print.

VERTICAL INTEGRATION

There is concern within the industry that with digital printing technology - and even with the advances made with conventional technology - that brand owners will begin to skip label and packaging converters to take printing in-house and become fully integrated operations. The panel squashed this notion, explaining that they specialize in producing products, not in printing.

PERSONALIZATION

Lightning Labels' Peter Renton asked the panel for its thoughts on personalization as a strategy. Mike Ferrari of P&G liked the question and feels there's a lot that can be done with digital printing in combination with digital media. He said, 'Digital media is a force that's happening and we have to play more with it because it will drive personalization.'

Frito Lay is not currently doing anything surrounding personalization, but is interested in tailoring a message to specific audiences. Frito Lay's Kurt Sands agreed with Ferrari that uniting the consumer and social media could prove to have tangible deliverables.

Ferrari concluded, 'The low hanging fruit is clearly on the label side, but that doesn't mean that packaging isn't soon to come.'

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Unilever rolls out color harmonization program

A COLOR HARMONIZATION PROGRAM developed by international branding group LFH has helped Unilever Foods reduce complexity, optimize print processes and drive out costs throughout its brand portfolio

Unilever Foods has partnered with leading branded packaging consultancy LFH to develop a color harmonisation process set to revolutionise the global giant's approach to printed packaging.

The system, known within Unilever Foods as Rainbow, uses LFH's patented Chapter 1 technology to reduce the number of colors used across 150 product lines in a brand category from over 100 to just six.

'Unilever is constantly striving to reduce complexity from its business and to remove costs where possible - particularly in the area of printed packaging,' says Matthew Daniels, Unilever Foods best practice manager, who originally set up the team to study color harmonization systems. The core group included representatives from Unilever's procurement, packaging supply chain and marketing divisions, along with key print providers.

LFH was tasked to carry out a color audit of Unilever's Spreads and Cooking Category, Europe (SCCE).

The audit found that combinations of over 100 different colors were being used across the category. LFH set about creating a fixed color palette, based on just six common colors, which would cover every brand in the category without loss of quality or compromising designers' future creativity.

'We established that significant savings could be realized by reducing the number of colors used across the hugely diverse range of packaging in the SCCE category,' confirms LFH joint managing director Graham Hawkins. 'A key additional benefit to Unilever would be enhanced color consistency across brands which were printed by a number of different printers using different print technologies.'

Joint LFH managing director Mano Manoharan expands: 'We took the color focus of the key brand and built the palette around that. We developed a color space within 85 percent of the pantone range which took out as many of the original 60-70 spot colors as possible. Some brands could now be printed with just three colors, further cutting down on ink useage.'

The Chapter 1 system is all about accurate color measurement from design to print, then working to agreed densities. 'You need to re-educate the whole chain, including those who supply the containers through to the packaging and label printers,' says Manoharan.

Previously, wet proofing had been used to pass jobs. Under the Chapter 1/Rainbow system, all contract proofing is digital, carried out on a Kodak Approval.

'The whole system is color managed,' continues Graham Hawkins. 'We use the same base inks and a consistent window of tolerance. Everybody buys into the proof. Printers must measure their production and everyone in the chain is fully accountable.'

Ink manufacturers like Sun Chemical were brought in to develop standards for the six inks in the SCCE color palette. These are supplied to Unilever's packaging printers worldwide, greatly simplifying the ink supplier's global logistics.

Chapter 1 automatically matches the 6-color palette across different substrates. 'Generic systems like Opaltone have to be adapted for different substrates. We can seamlessly match direct printing, for example, on a tin with a wet glue label on a can,' says Mano Manoharan.

PRINT TRIALS

After spending over a year developing the Rainbow system, LFH and Unilever Foods set up print trials with selected suppliers to prove the business case. Twelve complex designs were printed together on the same sheet and the designs formed into 3D packs, which were taken into a full-scale marketing review alongside existing packs.

'LFH worked closely with our print team to realize



ONE of the products in Unilever Foods' Spreads and Cooking Category Europe (SCCE) range processed through the Chapter 1 system

INTERNATIONAL AGENCY

Established in 1993, LFH is an independent branded packaging consultancy which operates across a number of disciplines including branding strategy, graphic design, structural/3D design and implementation in the FMCG sector. Based in London and Brussels, the agency's client list includes Carlsberg, William Grant and Sons, The Coca-Cola Company, Unilever, GSK and Baltic Beverage Holdings.

the vision,' recalls Ralf Christoffer of Rahning Gmbh, one of the printing houses which took part. 'We were very impressed with the results of the print trial and the opportunity to make substantial savings in time and money'.

In the marketing review, senior stakeholders and brand owners could not tell the difference between the current and new color harmonised packs.

'The team were quite frankly blown away with the results - no one could quite believe that such quality could be realized when using six colors, considering our printers had in many cases been using well over 100!' says Unilever Foods' Matthew Daniels.

Gijs van Schoot, Unilever Foods SCCE supply manager, packaging, agrees: 'Together with the potential from a commercial point of view it was a no-brainer to progress project Rainbow for implementation. "Revolutionary" is a strong word to use, but that's exactly what we're talking here - cost savings as a result are set to be significant.'

For printers, using this simplified palette meant presses could run faster, with the possibility to gang different print designs across the sheet or web. There was an average 30-50 percent reduction in press down time and big savings in waste, while overall economies of scale created more printing capacity.

Cost savings overall are estimated at more than 5m euro/year. 'We're very proud of what we've been able to achieve alongside Unilever,' says LFH's Graham Hawkins. 'This solution will provide Unilever Foods with not only future cost-savings, but also environmental benefits in the long-term.'

LFH recently completed a detailed study of clients using its Chapter 1 system, which details savings of between €00 and €000 per brand sku. The greatest savings are achieved by brands with broader ranges and using similar print processes and

'These research results mean that typical global brand owners with 25,000 plus skus in their portfolio can make annual savings of up to €50 million from our expertise every year,' says Mano Manoharan. 'When you apply this level of savings to the P/E ratios of the typical companies that LFH is now advising, which range from 15 to 24 - you can see that LFH's Chapter1 can potentially add shareholder value of €260 million - €3.6billion.'



LFH Chapter 1 color harmonization system was first used on the Cif kitchen and bathroom cleaner range

NEW PRODUCTS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST LABEL PRODUCTS

POLYONICS UNVEILS MATERIALS FOR

AUTOMOTIVE APPLICATIONS

Polyonics has launched two label materials for use in 'under the hood' applications for the automotive industry. The XF-592 is a polyimide label with a high temperature aggressive acrylic adhesive and a high opacity white topcoat designed for barcode or alphanumeric identification. The XF-807 is an aluminum label material with a permanent high-temperature acrylic adhesive and a high opacity, white topcoat specifically designed for thermal transfer printing. These materials are compliant with the REACH & RoHS initiatives and are Halogen free.

WACKER UNVEILS PACKAGING ADHESIVE

Wacker is expanding its range of vinyl acetate and ethylene-based (VAE) dispersions for adhesives with a new product developed for the requirements of the paper and packaging industry.

Vinnapas XD 05 is said to be a sustainable alternative to existing packaging adhesives based on polyvinyl acetate. In adhesive formulation, a VAE-based product makes it possible to reduce the amount of extra additives. The product is also characterized by high setting speed and good machine processability. This makes Vinnapas XD 05 suited to formulating packaging adhesives, especially for food applications due to its extremely low migration potential.

IMPRESSION BRINGS DIGITAL SYSTEM TO IPEX

Sydney-based digital equipment manufacturer, Impression Technology will be showcasing two models in its new inkjet label printer range Rapid label Systems at the upcoming Ipex exhibition.

The RapidX1 is a roll to roll printer with a 12" OD unwind and rewind capacity, 8 1/2" wide five colour print head, optical sensor for pre-cut and stripped labels and maximum print resolution of 1600 x 1600 DPI.

Individual colours will be available in 250 ml containers to allow long runs without stopping to replenish ink, according to Impression. Maximum web width is 220 mm and minimum web width is 50 mm. Impression continues that the RapidX1 is also capable of printing on continuous media without registration marks. Maximum print speed is 12" per second at 1600 x 800 DPI.

Impression Technology will also be showing the RapidX2, utilising the same print engine technology the X2 has a large diameter unwind, and loop outfeed enabling the printer to run in line with post finishing equipment.

A range of post finishing options will be available, engineered to match the high throughput speeds of the X1 and X2 machines. Finishing options will include: flexo coating, laminating, semi-rotary and flat-bed die-cutting units, as well as Rapid's existing range of embossing, foiling and slitting machines, according to Impression.

Stephen Richardson, director of Impression Technology says, "The all new Rapid Label systems will open new markets at a breakthrough entry level price. Now companies looking to add profit opportunities with Labels to their product range have a full label production system at a fraction of the cost compared to current Digital label presses.

He continues, "The Rapid Label range of X1 and X2 models now make label printing an extremely attractive ROI for a multitude of business either in-house or print for profit. With very high yields and a fraction of the running cost compared to other digital Label presses. Commercial printers especially will love the transparent running costs of the Rapid label Range.

A New Generation of the Edelmann Graphics Equipment for the Label-, Foil- and Packaging Market



At the moment the first machines to the customers' orders of the new STAR-PRINT and LABEL-PRINT model range are being built at the headquarters of the German EDELMANN GRAPHICS GmbH. The newly developed modules with the Sleeve Technology Advanced Rotation in case of the STAR-PRINT as well as narrow-web label printing machine LABEL-PRINT with the semi- and full-rotary application have been excellently accepted by the market. It belongs to the special features of the STAR-PRINT that it is equipped with the printing inserts variable over the repeat range of 24"-44", with the inserts themselves being tooled up with the plate- and blanket-cylinder-sleeves with bearer rings. The printing inserts cover the format of 12" of cylinder circum-

ference as well. It means that an insert starting with 24" could accept the sleeves with up to 36" of cylinder circumference or an insert accepting max. 44" could also be applied with 32". It is a special feature of the 3-layered sleeves that their walls are very thin,

i.e. they are not fitted with extenders. They are hydraulically tensioned and equipped with the adjusted and screwed, hardened bearer rings from the left and right. With that, a perfect offset quality is achieved, which sets the new standards in the sphere of label-, foil- and packaging printing. The sleeve change is easy and occurs automatically on pressing the key button.

The machine could work wet-in-wet as well as with intermediate dryers. It is offered with the web width of 52 cm, 76 cm and 92 cm. The STAR-PRINT has 3 form inking rollers and 1 form-inking-dampening roller. Each printing station is driven with 4 servo motors: for the inking train, plate cylinder, blanket cylinder and counter



pressure cylinder. The machine is designed to work at a speed of 400 m/min. It is perfectly fit for hybrid solutions with the offset-, flexo-, screen- and gravure printing technologies. With that it could be flexibly applied to yield all requested products.

"Made in Germany" guaranties a fast Return-on-Investment.

Also a real new development from Edelmann Graphics is the LABEL-Print. The LABEL-Print is a semi- as well as full rotary, narrow web label press. The maximum web width is 17 1/8" with a maximum print repeat of 16 1/8" in semi rotary mode. In full rotary the press offers a repeat range of 11" - 26". Edelmann has applied for three patents for this system. Due to a great flexibility and high quality of the modules a quick Return-on-Investment is guaranteed.

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With end users increasingly demanding sustainable packaging solutions, the key to reducing your carbon footprint is using only what you need. Take ink consumption – which accounts for about half of a typical printing house's consumable costs.

There is no margin for error when it comes to quality consistency: the pack must look identical from one job run to the next, across all territories. Manually preparing ink recipes is a slow, haphazard process that requires a great deal of trial-and-error. Complex spot colors on a pack can take hours to get right, causing costly production bottlenecks. Excess ink is deliberately prepared to prevent the chance of a shortfall.

Automated ink logistics incorporating a gravimetric ink dispensing system solve all these problems, and offer sustainability by focusing on reduction, reuse and recycling. With an automated system, the exact volume requirements are calculated for each job, often precise to an accuracy of within one gramme. The operator simply keys in the color requirements, as well as variables such as order number and anilox roll type. The ink is then dispensed within as little as four minutes.

The ability to reuse inks is an equally important feature of an automated dispensing system. Should any excess ink remain after the production run, it can be retrieved from the press and re-entered into the system. It is then effortlessly recycled, by being calculated into future recipes. With a powerful software program, such calculations, normally too difficult for human brain power, are executed instantly.

The tough economic climate has encouraged printing houses to take a critical look at their ink logistics. It is not a surprise that we have experienced a greater level of interest in our ink dispensing systems in the last years. Over forty label converters around the world have installed the Colorsat Match, a system designed to dispense small batches of up to 5 kg. Backed up with IMS (Ink Management Software), it has enabled some users to reduce costs by as much as 30 percent.

The greatest benefit is that the right color is ready at the right time, in the right quantity, first time round. But there are a number of other benefits to consider, too.

The software offers time saving management tools, including real time stock control, historical data on inks used for every job, and cost control data. When a repeat job arises, the recipe is recalled from the database, and the ink is dispensed with the same accuracy as the first time round.

Customers are assured they will get the same consistency every time they place their order.

Also, improved logistics are a given: there is no need to rely on an external supplier for complex recipes. All ink is formulated in-house, meaning a much simpler workflow and shorter lead times. Lower stock levels are possible, and warehouse space created can be put to productive use. Moreover, an ink dispenser for label applications takes up under 2m², less than the space needed for manual mixing of inks.

With creation of data-histories relating to each individual job, ink components can be traced, if required. This meets the need from end-users, especially food or pharmaceutical manufacturers, who demand traceability of all packaging components. Tighter legislation requires this information in certain cases. The ink from every lot code – the number that is ascribed to the contents of a specific barrel every time it is refilled - is logged with the mixed recipe, including return inks recycled in new ink batches. This data helps you immediately pinpoint any ink quality problems, should they ever arise.

The printer can cost the job accurately – that in turn gives his customer confidence that the job can be done within the agreed budget. Of course, for the printer, it means margins are better protected. Another important benefit is a cleaner, more presentable shop-floor, because minimal human input is needed to carry out the mixing.

To sum up, a sustainable, automated ink logistics programme is not only the greenest option – it means better cost control and quality consistency, faster production cycles, greater productivity and well managed stockholdings.



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Ipex showcases digital advances

IPEX 2010 will take place from Tuesday May 18 to Tuesday May 25 2010 at The National Exhibition Center, Birmingham, England. Although not a significant event for dedicated narrow web presses, the show does showcase a wide range of new developments in the sheetfed wet glue market, and in the digital pre-press and printing arenas.

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Punch Graphix will use Ipex to launch its new high-end digital label press, the Xeikon 3500. Targeted at the

higher productivity end of the labels market - in the same area as HP's highly successful WS6000 - the 3500 handles web widths from 200 to 512 mm wide and prints at a speed of 19,2 m/min regardless of the amount of colors used.

According to Filip Weymans, business development manager Labels & Packaging at Xeikon, the Xeikon 3500 will be cost-effective on volumes above 4,000 linear meters. Imaging resolution is true 1200 dpi, combining 1200 x 3600 dpi addressability with variable dot density. The Xeikon 3500 is equipped with 5 color stations as standard, allowing CMYK plus white or a spot color. The press can also apply a special security toner for anti-counterfeiting applications.

The Xeikon 3500 can produce up to 570 square meters per hour in four- or five-color printing on a wide range of substrates with weights ranging from 40 to 350 gsm. The press runs on Xeikon's new QA-I toner, approved for indirect and direct contact with dry food.

Xeikon is offering customers with a Xeikon 3000 or 3300 installation an upgrade path to the 3500. Like the 3000/3300, the new press is driven by Xeikon's X-800 digital front-end.

Domino, already a world leader in in-line variable data printing and product identification, will mark its entry into the full-color digital printing market with the commercial launch of its new N-Series piezo ink jet range.

The N-Series line-up will incorporate both standalone label printing presses and modules featuring scalable print-width for OEM integration. The N600 digital label printing press to be shown at IPEX offers 1200dpi nominal print resolution with a native resolution of 600dpi and four greyscales operating at 50-75m/m using durable UV inks. Capable of printing onto a range of paper and plastic label stocks, the N600 will be demonstrated in a reel-to-reel execution with a print width of 333mm (13.1") - compatible with most standard finishing solutions.

The N600 label press can also be configured to operate in-line with a digital finishing solution, such as those produced by GM and AB Graphics, via dancer roller web

infeed. Standard features include automatic head cleaning; if the printer is left inactive for a period of time it will automatically go to the cleaning station so the print nozzles can be flushed and then parked. The fluid management system cycles the ink in order to further reduce the risk of nozzle blocking requiring maintenance. A range of optional quality assurance measures includes vision systems for tracking registration and colour

The capability to handle as wide a range of substrates as possible is afforded by an optional corona treatment module. Domino claims that the majority of industry label stocks can be used without the need to pre-treat and the durability of UV ink jet means over varnishing is not always necessary.

Epson will launch its new digital label press, shown in prototype form at Labelexpo last year. Featuring Epson's Micro Piezo inkjet technology, it is claimed to deliver smooth gradations and excellent color quality on a wide range of media, including standard semi-gloss, film and matte labelstock up to 320 microns in thickness and rolls from 80-330mm wide. The digital label press prints at speeds of up to 5 meters per minute and uses the company's 6-color pigment ink system.

Also on show will be the Epson Stylus Pro WT7900 inkjet printer, demonstrating contract packaging proofs and accurate sample production. The machine offers color management and printing on a variety of flexible film, paper and metallic media.

At the end of November last year Industrial Inkjet Ltd (IIJ) completed testing of its new inkjet print engine, ColourPrint 282, which has a print width of 282mm (11 inches). The system will be shown for the first time on a new reel-to-reel transport system at Ipex.

The standard module provides full color print using CMYK inks. ColourPrint uses KM1024 printheads from Konica Minolta, and in line with customer requests the unit can be fitted with different printhead models using six, 14 or 42 pl drop sizes. All KM1024 printheads can run in grayscale or high-resolution



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binary modes; the ideal mode can be quickly selected in software for any particular print job. The total number of printheads used in the ColourPrint 282 is 16, or four printheads for each color.

Commented John Corrall, managing director of Industrial Inkjet, 'Our previous model, the ColourPrint 142, has only half that print width, and for many industrial sectors we found that 142mm is just not enough. Particularly in the label and packaging market a wider solution was needed. Our new print engine comes very close to the A3 sheet format.

IIJ does not plan to offer stand-alone printing systems. Print engines are sold to machine builders or system integrators who are looking for an inkjet solution. 'To our customers, using our print engines is a way of hugely reducing the lead time before they can deliver a finished product,' says Corrall. 'Our print engines are very simple and easy to integrate.'

A ColourPrint 282 unit is now on demonstration in the UK office of Industrial Inkjet, near Cambridge.

Agfa is showcasing its: Dotrix inkjet module integrated into an Edale press chasis, along with Edale's new servo-driven variable length sheet cutter. This allows jumbo rolls of plain or pre-printed materials to be fed through the press and converted to sheets delivered into shingle or deep pile stacks. Sheets can be cut into variable lengths, on the fly, without the need to change tooling. The sheeter is primarily designed to convert digitally printed webs, but can be run in-line with almost any web fed machinery.

Durst will present its end-to-end solution for digital label printing, including pre-press workflow software, the Tau 150 inkjet label press running at speeds up to 50 m/min (around160 ft/min.). The press uses Durst's proprietary CMYK inks plus White as an additional configuration option.

Completing the end-to-end solution will be a Rotoworx 330 stand-alone, modular semi-rotary die-cutting and lamination system. The unit will have a web-width of 33cm (13"), and is available in a standard version - the 330 with a speed of up to 30m/min - and a high-speed version, the 330HS with a speed of up to 50m/min (~160 ft./min.). The web transport is based on Durst's patented ISO tensioning technology with high registration accuracy of +/- 180 microns and a min/max repeat size of 20.3cm (8") and 40.6cm (16").

HP Indigo will show both its ws4500 and WS6000 digital label presses, along with complete pre-press and finishing solutions. For a full report see this issue, p. 75-76.

Atlantic Zeiser will use Ipex to introduce its Industrial Digital Printing 2.0 (IDP 2.0) system. IDP 2.0 allows customers to build integrated, modular and upgradable systems encompassing transport (web/sheet/single product), and digital printing, print verifying, anti-counterfeiting, track & trace/anti-diversion and bidirectional ERP integration. As part of its IDP Digiline system, AZ demonstrates new model additions to its DELTA, GAMMA and OMEGA printer families, as well as new personalization and inspection technologies.

EskoArtwork is introducing server automation software which integrates and supercedes its BackStage, Odystar and Nexus systems and adds important automation functionality.



Automation Engine 10 forms a central part of EskoArtwork's Suite 10 packaging and print pre-production suite, allowing different levels of automation to be accessed. As an example, the Shuttle component allows an operator to launch an automation task directly from within a Suite 10 editor - ArtPro. PackEdge, DeskPack, Neo, Plato or FastImpose.

Automation Engine 10 also incorporates centralized color management, an imaging engine providing consistent proofing, screening and printing output across all conventional and digital output devices, and a Dynamic Content Engine which allows for collaboration and content management for critical packaging content, including text, bar codes and nutrition tables.

Also premiered at Ipex is Studio 10, a collection of interactive 3D packaging design tools which include the Studio Toolkit for Shrink Sleeves, a Studio Toolkit for Labels, and an online library of 3D packaging shapes - claimed an industry first. This 3D functionality is now available in Adobe Illustrator, PackEdge and ArtPro workstations. Studio exports to industry-standard file formats - 3D PDF, QuickTime movies, jpg - allowing virtual mock-ups to be shared with all supply chain partners.

Studio Toolkit for Shrink Sleeves automates the design and prepress for shrink sleeves on round or irregular shapes, and on multi-packs - including tools for artwork distortion. Users can preview artwork on screen as it is shrunk on the packaging. Pre-distortion tools compensate for the complex combination of horizontal and vertical distortions that come with irregular shapes.

Studio Toolkit for Labels is designed for all kinds of labels on bottles, and includes a Studio Visualizer 10 now directly supports M-real Zanders' Chromolux glossy boards and label papers for use in virtual mock-ups.

Kodak will add a direct laser engraving variant to its Flexcel digital flexo platemaking family at Ipex. 'With the Flexcel Direct System, customers can finally take advantage of the commercial and quality benefits of printing with in-the-round forms,' commented John Cross, general manager, packaging products, Kodak. After previewing at Ipex, the new system is scheduled to ship in early 2011.

Also new is the Digicap NX screening feature, available as part of the current Flexcel NX System, designed to improve the







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visual impact of flexible package printing by improving ink transfer. Kodak also announced it has optimized the color gamut of its Approval digital proofing system for Flexcel NX plates.

Visitors to the DuPont Packaging Graphics booth can see together for the first time a complete system for imaging continuous flexo sleeves for both narrow and wide web applications. The system includes the new Cyrel round thermal processor, exposure and light finisher units, FAST round Photopolymer sleeves, as well as a high resolution cantilevered EskoArtwork - Cyrel Digital Imager. The system can produce more than four high quality imaged sleeves per hour. The first print form is ready to go on press in just 30 minutes

Shuttleworth Business Systems will introduce its Estimating Wizard tool to speed up the quoting process, and Supply Chain Manager, which automatically requests, monitors and co-ordinates supplier quoting.

Supply Chain Manager is a 'software as a service' (SAAS) product hosted by Shuttleworth, which automatically loads request for quote (RFQ) specifications to the web site from the Shuttleworth system. Suppliers are emailed and they log in to the Supply Chain Manager and enter their prices, which are automatically fed back into customer's system.

BEYOND DIGITAL

Outside the digital arena, there will be other launches of items of interest to narrow web converters. Schober will launch automated delivery systems for the production of in-mould labels with the first showing of the RSM 410-IML/MSV. Although the standard configuration of this modular machine includes an M-Stack delivery, the model on demonstration will show the high performance S-Stack, which can be upgraded with an automated delivery system (SMA) including counting, stacking and, if required, banding.

Additional features included in the standard configuration or available as options are denesting station, anti-static device, gap control systems (GCS) and

V-Stack robotics for handling very large products. The machine is available for working widths of 410, 520, 550 and 680 mm.

Other machines to be highlighted include the RFID-CP for medium and small runs of contact-less readable tickets for public transportation cards,

admission tickets, garment and swing tags, and the RFID-TI entry level machine for the production of smart labels. Further technologies to be highlighted at the show include die cutting, laser cutting, sealing/embossing, punching, cut & place, scoring/grooving, gluing/bonding, cutting, collating and product delivery.

uv-technik will present its latest generation of electronic ballasts for UV medium-pressure lamps. The compact ALP-3G ballast incorporates the CANOpen interface for networking several ALP-3Gs and/or the machine controller, power factor correction (PFC) for reducing EMC interference, and a broad control range with infinitely variable power adjustment up to 8,000 W. An air-cooled version of the ALP-3G will also be shown. Parent company, uv-technik meyer, has meanwhile developed a new UV measuring sensor, the SI 1, which is used in combination with the new handheld system HI 1 to measure UV intensity.

Polar is launching CutManager, an interface which links high-speed cutters on-line to the Post press module of Heidelberg's Prinect print management system. The Postpress Data Terminal is incorporated directly into Polar's cutters. The Prinect Postpress Manager automatically sends the operator a job list for his machine, which allows him to start, interrupt or finish operations. Additionally, the machine control system returns status messages and counter readings directly to the Prinect Postpress Manager, with CountMonitor available as an add-on option. This creates a complete data capture system for the cutting process. Data which formerly had to be input manually from daily work slips is now automatically collected while production is in progress. Heidelberg's CutManager P-Net service allows full transparency on cost and performance..

CutManager is only available together with Compucut, and exclusively for high-speed cutter models X equipped with the Xplus option and XT models. Xplus is available for all machine types from Polar 78 upwards.

On the press side, Muller Martini will showcase for the first time its integration of Drent Goebel's VSOP (variable sleeve offset press) technology, which uses different size sleeves to change repeat length instead of separate inserts. The presses have applications ranging from traditional forms and paper labels, unsupported film applications including wraparound labels and shrink sleeves.



Our engineers ideas about clever production-technology? These (out of many) solutions show it: Our **Booklet-Production Unit for Gallus R 160 and R 200 machines** glues and laminates prefabricated Booklets (accurately) onto the simultanously printed web and die-cuts them at the same time. The **Processing-Machine Graficon BM 350** performs, depending on the configuration, the following tasks: Screenprinting,

lamination, varnishing, diecutting and finishing of preprinted labels or the production of

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340 cuts sheets from reels, in stepless formats or controlled by a scanning mark, and stacks the sheets as per the customers request.





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High-productivity printing for labels and packaging

Faster, more versatile, and more efficient than ever – the new HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press gives users who process high-volume label and packaging orders real and tangible investment benefits when it comes to medium print runs.

In a dynamic marketplace, the demand for fast, flexible production of labels and packaging is high. Brand owners need to be increasingly versatile and agile in their response to fierce mounting competition. Conventional print methods can barely keep pace with the challenges of fast-changing product cycles, shorter times to market and short print runs. More efficient, cost-effective solutions are needed, giving printing companies the opportunity to reap the benefits from a label market that is growing at a disproportionate rate.

"The HP Indigo WS6000 is a real 'game changing' technology. It can dramatically reduce the time to market for labels."

Michael Ferrari, associate director, Corporate Research and Development, Procter & Gamble

■ Digital printing prospects: There are good reasons why digital label printing has been so successful over recent years. It offers both printing companies and their customers a number of advantages. These include shorter

production and supply times, greater flexibility and the opportunity to reduce storage costs with on-demand printing.

Digital printing has revolutionised the production process from beginning to end. Instant proofs, reduced quantities of waste, lower costs and the elimination of time-consuming platemaking and setup are now possible. This has paved the way for cost-effective medium-sized print runs and lucrative options such as variable data printing, e.g., of barcodes or best-before dates.

■ Fast and cost-effective: For printing labels, the new HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press is both economic and cost-effective. The total cost of producing print runs up to 4,000 linear metres is considerably lower than that using conventional technologies. At throughputs of 30 linear metres per minute for four-colour jobs, even very large print orders are processed within a very short space of time. Up to 90,000m² or 300,000 linear metres

can be processed per month, singleshift operation.

"The HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press is more cost-effective than flexo on such a wide range of work." Jay Dollries, president and chief executive officer, Innovative Labeling Solutions

A repeat length of 317 x 980mm ensures high productivity, maximising substrate use and reducing media waste. The HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press prints up to seven colours and has a new improved white specially suitable for metalised labels. The HP SmartStream Labels and Packaging workflow solutions, Powered by EskoArtwork supports colour management and ensures precision colour matching to the PANTONE® Colour range.

■ Versatility for a competitive edge: The HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press prints to an impressive quality on a wide range of media between 12 and 450 microns thick. The wide range of





HP Indigo White allows you to print even onto metal and transparent labels.



Versatile labels are particularly popular with customers in the foodstuffs industry.



HP Electrolnk ensures precise reproduction of brand and company colours.

colours, substrates and applications offers economic advantages as do maximised uptimes and user-friendly digital printing. The HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press is the key to profitable new applications and business opportunities.

■ Partner solutions extend the possibilities: The range of applications is extended and supplemented by hardware and software products from leading manufacturers of printing solutions such as coatings used for the application of water-based primers or UV over-varnishes. Modular ABG Digicon solutions are specially designed for efficient label finishing. Many other media partners offer

various self-adhesive papers and films on rolls and foils.

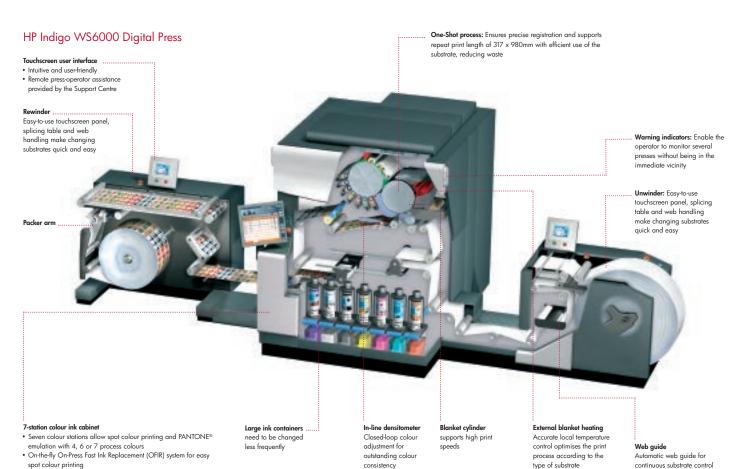
"The HP Indigo WS6000 with the traditional high Indigo quality appealed to us and allows us to meet our customers' needs even better."

Isidore Leiser, president, Stratus Packaging Group

■ HP Technologies and the environment: HP Indigo WS6000 Digital Press uses exclusive liquid HP Electrolnk, giving you the choice of mixed spot colours and four, six or seven-colour PANTONE® simulations enabling the accurate reproduction of brand and corporate colours. With no start-up waste and the ability to print only what you need, the HP Indigo

press offers savings in time and in materials. The press also has environmental features that help keep costs down. Power consumption is 25 percent lower than that of traditional printing machines and an oil recycling system reduces the use of consumables and production of waste by about 50 percent.







Evolve to survive

DELEGATES TO FINAT'S 2010 TECHNICAL SEMINAR were warned of the need to evolve – like the butterfly – in order to survive and thrive in the face of multiple threats and opportunities. Andy Thomas reports

Taking as its central theme 'Self-adhesive labels adding value', the biennial FINAT technical seminar drew nearly 200 participants to Barcelona in March.

The seminar tackled the wide range of issues facing label converters today, starting with the necessity of adding value rather than selling on price and volume.

In his opening address, FINAT president Andrea Vimercati said converters should draw on the resources of their supply chain partners if they are to deliver 'a continuing stream of innovative solutions' to end users

Iban Cid, president of Barcelona-based label converter Germark. Cid explained that his company achieved over 12 percent growth last year by asking one simple question: 'how could we help our customers sell through innovative labels?' Continued Cid: 'customers are now saying "do not sell me labels, help me sell my products!"

Germark set up an innovation committee to examine clients' brands, bringing together the company's expertise across all departments - R&D, sales, pre-press, press operators and applicator specialists. Some successful outcomes included a peelable label with unique promotional codes for a major drinks brand; onserting a dry tattoo promotion onto a yoghurt lid – dispensed in rolls backed by PET liner for high speed application; dry peel promotional cards, again on pet liners, for a promotion on a can multi-pack; and multi-layer promotional magnets supplied on the roll and applied automatically to the pack.

LABELS&LABELING



ENVIRONMENT

Despite all the talk about 'the environment', most converters have no idea how hard and how fast they are going to be hit by this out-of-control juggernaut.

Label industry guru and seminar guest speaker Mike Fairley told delegates that the labels industry must take its place with the wider packaging community to influence the debate on 'sustainability' before inappropriate and costly solutions are imposed on the label supply chain by global brands and national legislators.

'The environment and sustainability will become the biggest issues for the label industry over the next few years,' said Fairley. 'The industry needs to have a greater involvement and influence in the development of global packaging industry sustainability initiatives, in promoting environmental management systems and in providing better guidelines for converters on meeting global standards and best practice initiatives.'

Demonstrating Fairley's point, FINAT's environmental expert Paul Verspoor looked at how current EU legislation will affect the labels industry in the very near future.

Even in apparently simple areas like solvent management regulations, new guidance and reporting procedures for a wide range of pollutants and emissions are constantly arriving, said Verspoor. REACH regulations, which require extensive toxicology and exposure testing of all chemicals used in the formulation of inks and coatings, are already imposing huge costs on the supply chain. Verspoor noted that the cost of documenting just one chemical constituent, ethanol, has already reached €1m (\$1.35m). And key issues with REACH have still not been resolved as implementation deadlines loom - for example how to treat products manufactured by 'non-EU supply chains'.

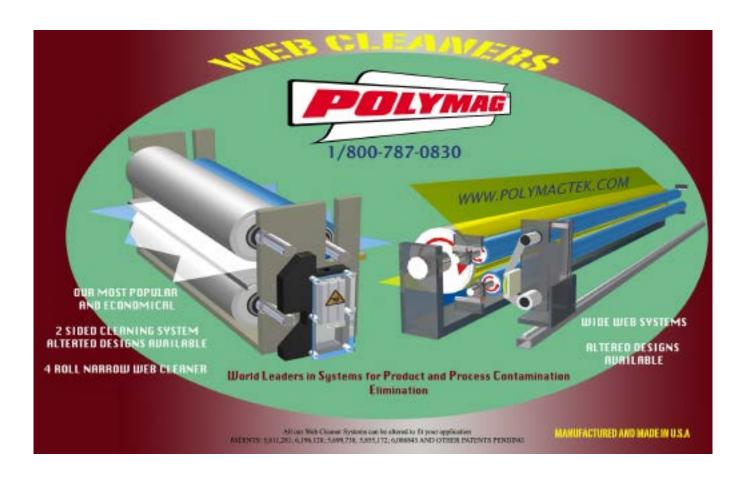
And REACH only partly overlaps with other lists of banned products being drawn up by Non-Government

EUROPEA/RUSSIA/MIDDLE EAST **MARKET OVERVIEW**

Avery Dennison Fasson presenter Eelko Leewenburgh took a look at the European and Middle East PS labels markets, noting that the market has bounced back from the depths of recession in Q4 2008 with a growth rate of + 4.8 percent for Q4 2009. This has been largely driven by PS film, growing at 7.4 percent.

The highest growth regions (2008-2009) have been Russia at +5.6 percent and the Middle East, 5.3 percent, followed by Eastern Europe at 3.1 percent. Western Europe by contrast grew at a painful 0.6 percent.

Leewenburgh outlined the challenges facing the industry and the opportunities these presented: for example, environmental legislation has opened the door to the use of thinner materials, 'green' substrate and recycling solutions such as PET liner.





Organizations (NGOs) and Trade Unions, such as those claimed to cause occupational diseases.

Nano materials are proving another REACH headache. Are they 'new' substances which require their own testing regime, or a different form of existing bulk chemicals?

SUSTAINABILITY: THE UP-SIDE

On the positive side of the environmental debate, converters who have implemented schemes such as ISO14001 or TLMI's LIFE, have increased efficiency and saved money by cutting out waste.

Gallus' Kishore Sarkar used machine data to demonstrate that sustainability can indeed be translated into direct cost reduction. The new Gallus ECS340 'granite' press uses the new generation Hg-UV lamps which use a closed loop water-cooling system and do not require exhausting. Sarkar pointed out that a standard 8-color UV press exhausts 4-6.000 cubic meters of hot air into the press room, requiring expensive and energy intensive air conditioning. Using the new lamps, Sarkar estimates direct savings of €5-7,000/year (\$6.7k-\$9.5k), with substantial reductions in CO2 emissions and a quieter work environment.

Gallus has also moved its RCS330 presses from 200 W/cm2 UV lamps to 140 W/cm2 units with the same curing power. An 8-unit press running at 100m/ min would cut CO2 emissions by over 15,000 tonnes a year, reducing energy consumption by 80,000 kilowatts a year and saving €8,000 (\$10.8k).

Sarkar also noted that press heat emissions can be put to work via a heat exchanger to provide the factory with free heat the and hot water.

Looking to the future, Sarkar noted that LED-UV curing - already demonstrated on the Gallus ECS340 at Labelexpo Europe reduces energy consumption to just 8-10 W/cm2 per lamp.

Echoing Mike Fairley, Sarkar said CPGs will only speed up integration of 'sustainability' into all their packaging programs: 'like it or not, every label converter needs urgently to develop strategies to reduce energy costs, reduce waste and cultivate a lean manufacturing sensibility.'

The most important sustainability area the PS industry has to tackle is liner waste, and several collection and recycling initiatives are under way. Another response is linerless labels, and Mike Cooper, business development director at Catchpoint, talked delegates through new technology developments which addresses some of the limitations

of the technology.

Arca is among a group of companies which has found a way to add variable information to linerless labels with the development of logistics labels printable by both thermal and thermal transfer systems. Machine manufacturer Ravenwood has launched a linerless sleeve system which cuts paper stock, overprints variable information and sleeves a fresh meat pack in one operation.

Pago, meanwhile, has launched a linerless cut & apply system for high quality clear film labels, and L&L has recently covered the commercialization of PE Labeller's Roll Adhesleeve system (LL6 2000).

Turning to his own company, Cooper said Catchpoint's US licensee, WS Packaging, is trialing systems capable of applying both conventional and linerless labels using a converted Herma 400 applicator operating at 70 packs/min.

Cooper discussed what equipment converters would need to manufacture linerless labels - for example the ETI Cohesio, Edale Lambda.

MIGRATION

Converters supplying labels to the food industry have to be aware of the increasingly complex issues surrounding food contact and migration.

Niklas Olsson of Flint Group Narrow Web sought to clarify the situation regarding inks and migration. After dismissing migration-related food scares as 'more fear



Thomas Gulden of the Schreiner Group explained how the German Association of Self-Adhesive Manufacturers (VskE) is setting about the establishment of a health and safety standard for label converters. Importantly, the VskE's initiative has been supported by the German Employers' Liability Association

Gulden outlined the health and safety challenges facing today's converting shops from solvents, UV inks and cleaning agents, to potential dangers from noise, radiation and high speed web converting equipment.

The VskE has drawn together a contact group consisting of the ELIA, ten pilot label converting plants, three ink manufacturers. three cleaning agent manufacturers, two machine manufacturers and one UV systems supplier to develop the first draft of the new code.

ways ink can affect food products, starting with odor and taint. Odor and taint can be caused by a range of components including coatings or additives in (or on) a film substrate, improperly cured inks and by-products generated by the curing process.

Migration is another complex issue. Chemicals can migrate from a label not only from the printed side, but also from the unprinted side where components migrate through the liner to the backside of the label. So called 'Set-off migration' is caused when sheets or rolls are stacked before filling and substances migrate from the printed side to the unprinted side of the substrate.

> The range of substances which can migrate in this way is broad: plasticisers or alcohol

> > MAY 2010 | L&L





wash and cleaning chemicals, photo-initiators and other low-weight components from both substrate or adhesive.

Because these risks come from different points in the packaging supply chain, Olsson said close co-operation up and down the chain is essential, as is Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP).

'For label converters this means traceability for each ink batch, substrate roll and anilox, and a complete record of press speed, humidity and print sequence. Each of these factors could affect later migration scenarios.'

Olsson said there is no migration risk if the packaging substrate provides sufficient barrier properties - for example glass containers, tin cans and aluminium foil



thicker than 9 microns. 'But we still advise our customers do to a migration test! We have had examples where end users have switched from glass, which is a barrier, to PET which is not, without informing the label supplier. Also, factors such as the size of the label and the pack can affect the risk assessment. Smaller packs have higher risk factors, for example. The printer has a direct responsibility to know where their products will be used.'

In the case of UV inks, testing is particularly critical since UV curing is a process with multiple variables - lamp condition, press speed and so on. 'And not all free radicals will react - at least one percent of photoinitiators are left to migrate after curing."

Olsson noted that a new generation of low migration UV ink technologies are now available under guidelines released by the European Packaging Inks Association. The downside of these inks is higher viscosity, higher price and slower curing.

ADHESIVE TECHNOLOGY DEVELOPMENTS

The latest developments in adhesives technologies were a prominent theme in the technical papers delivered to the

UV ACRYLICS CHALLENGE SOLVENTS

Wolfgang Ziegler of Novamelt looked at advances in UV-acrylic adhesive technology, noting that in many key areas performance is comparable to solvent-based acrylics. Indeed, in some applications like adhesion to non-polar surfaces, performance is superior.

Ziegler said label converters carrying out their own coating and laminating for high end labels can switch to UV-acrylic HMPSA from solvent based equipment for a relatively low-investment. UV-acrylic is particularly effective when coating/ laminating equipment is integrated into



the printing press, said Ziegler.

The challenge for converters is obtaining proper adhesive curing and choosing the correct release liner, but performance advantages will include high levels of transparency, chemical resistance, UV resistance, good adhesion to standard packaging materials, excellent die cutting and suitability for high speed label application lines, said Ziegler.

Key applications discussed by Ziegler included wash-off labels, wet wipe closure and high permanent labels.

DISPERSION PS ADHESIVES

Dr Cornelis Beyers at BASF looked at the latest developments in dispersion-based PS adhesives. Using double chamber systems - and adjustable pressure on both chambers - it is possible to achieve foam-free coating at speeds up to 1,000 m/min. Research priorities include measuring the elasticity of dispersion as indicated by filament lifetime.

The company is also researching direct food contact plasticizer-free removable



Mike Fairley highlighted the rapid growth in digital label printing and the need for label associations to better embrace this new technology, look to develop new standards and guidelines for digital quality and performance, and to extend membership benefits to new generations of digital label converters.

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adhesives for paper labels. Plasticizers are used in removeable labels to increase tack, but can accumulate in the recycling chain and migrate into food. BASF's non-plasticizer technology actually has a better tack performance and can still be removed from a glass container after ageing at 60 deg, says Dr Beyers.

Another area of research is whitening-resistant adhesives for clear-on-clear labels. Dr Beyers said the key factor in reducing water sensitivity in bi-modal dispersion adhesives is homogenous film formation - and the key to obtaining this is control of particle size distribution.

• RECYCLING FRIENDLY ADHESIVES

Dr Ulli Naegele, head of R&D at Herma, looked at a new generation of 'fully biodegradable and compostable' adhesive technologies which will cut the energy and costs involved in removing adhesive from paper before recycling. In its pilot plant, Herma has demonstrated that UV-curing solvent-free acrylic adhesives can be removed 'near complete' from the substrate – to an efficiency of up to 99 percent compared to waterbased PSAs at 89 percent.

TECHNOLOGY WORKSHOPS

MAINTAINING TENSION

Martin Automatic's Graham Waters looked at the problems caused by inconsistent web tension and how to control it. To illustrate the complexity of tension control, Waters invited delegates to think about one car towing another - which has the most important job? The answer is the car being pulled, which must maintain correct tension on the rope using 'retardation.' In the same way, a web press uses servo drives both within the press and on the unwind to brake the web in response to feedback from sensors. To give them a chance to do their job, press speed must be kept as constant as possible (which in turn requires regular maintenance). Waters outlined common causes of inconsistent web tension, including badly wound or out-of-round rolls and inconsistent substrate caliper.

• TOLERANCE IN DIE CUTTING

Prof. Dr. Dirk Burth, University of Applied Sciences Munich, discussed the Institute's laboratory model for predicting the cut-ability of a label stock. The cutting tolerance of a substrates is defined as the moment a material 'bursts' to the end of the cut above the liner.

Paper was found to have the highest die cutting tolerance (30 microns), followed by PET at 25 microns and OPP 35 at 16 microns. PE is the most difficult material to cut accurately, with a tolerance of just 9 microns.

Prof. Burth's team found much better die cutting tolerance in the cross web direction than the machine direction, and that tolerances depend on the backing liner material – PET supports a higher cutting tolerance than BOPP, for example. The thickness of the backing liner does not seem to influence tolerance levels.

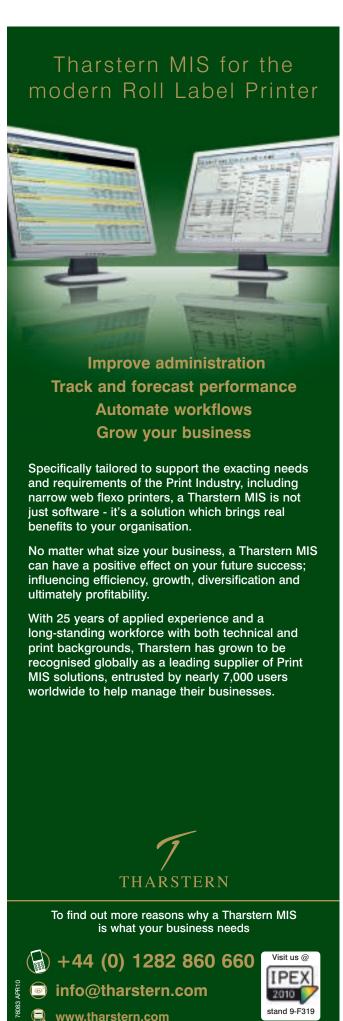
The behaviour of the adhesive turns out to be a very important factor in assessing die cut tolerance. Prof. Burth explained that die cutting is a two-step process. First, the face stock is compressed, pushing the adhesive aside. Second is the breaking of the face stock, at which point the cutting blade makes direct contact with the silicone layer because there is no longer an adhesive barrier. The Munich program looks at the resulting adhesive bleed and also the formation of filaments which further impact the efficiency of the die cutting operation.

A key recommendation of the research is that manufacturers should characterize label substrates by die cutting tolerance – the higher the tolerance, the easier the cut.











Nilpeter India

NILPETER'S Indian joint venture manufacturing agreement with Proteck will see the first locally-built FB3300 Servo on display at Labelexpo India. Andy Thomas reports

At Labelexpo India, Nilpeter will show for the first time a new FB3300 Servo press built by the company's joint venture manufacturing partner, Proteck, in India.

Founded in 1985, Proteck is a well established 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 and Screen.

Proteck is also a manufacturing company in its own right. One division builds and programs CNC machine tools - recently opening a major new manufacturing plant - and another designs and builds a range of pre and post- press equipment including CTP processors, coaters, screen presses, joggers and guillotines. A separate division, based in Nevada in the US, is dedicated to software development for the North American printing and packaging industries. Proteck is also a major manufacturer of packaging machines designed and built for OEM customers in Europe and India.

Nilpeter India's sales department is headed by Manish Kapoor, who has been in the industry for over 15 years, with the application department by C. Kanivannan. The managing director is Alan Barretto.

'We use the same high quality Nilpeter parts as normally expected by the label printer,' says Alan Barretto. 'The obvious advantage for the Indian printers is shorter delivery times of the press itself. However, quick delivery of parts and service, all only hours away, no matter where in India the press is installed, makes us stand out from competition.'

PRESS CONFIGURATION

Starting from the infeed, the FB3300 Servo shown at Labelexpo India incorporates a convenient splicing table with pneumatic hold-down bars which speeds roll splicing, while the S-wrap dancer system ensures accurate tension control. Programmable 40" unwind and infeed modules enhance precision even further. With four individual zones separated by three driven nip points, the web infeed system gives the press consistent tension control.

Ergonomic slide-out print stations accelerate make-ready times, and serve as a base for Drop-In cassettes. They come with removable ink pans and tool-free, quick-change print cylinders, anilox, and doctor rolls.

Quick print-head adjustment and anilox roll change provide for rapid make-ready and clean-up. The Midpoint Pacing system resets the tension between the print and die-cutting stations, improving register and reducing waste.

The press is designed for ease of maintenance, with easy-to-lift covers and wide-opening doors ensuring fast access to the back of the press.

Nilpeter says its Instant Registry Response (IRR) system and helical transmission guarantee superb print quality and low waste. IRR enables multi-direction lineal register adjustment without affecting web tension – dramatically reducing set-up times.

The Control panel features an ergonomic operator interface with wide spacing between stations for operator convenience and easy web inspection.

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Focus on latin america

JAMES QUIRK rounds up the latest news from the region, including the foundation of the first Mexican label association and the announcement of a special guest speaker at Label Summit Latin America



TOP L-R: Jorge Moreno Wonchee, La Etiqueta Fina; Jesus Ramirez Ruiz, Eticom; Fabian Silva Yedra, Etiquetas Anro; Nidia Silva Yedra, Etiquetas Anro. Bottom I-r: Hugo Cruz Hernandez, Coflemex; Keren Becerra Rangel, Lobo Impresores; Sergio Figueroa Siuder, Etiflash de México; Rigoberto de Paz Nuñez, Etiflash de México.

MEXICAN LABEL ASSOCIATION **CREATED BY GROUP OF CONVERTERS**

The Mexican Association of Label Companies (La Asociación Mexicana de Etiqueteros), AMETIQ, has been created by a group of companies: Coflemex, Eticom, Etiflash de México, La Etiqueta Fina, Lobo Impresores, and Etiquetas Anro. The converters decided to unite after identifying common problems and seeing that there was no national association that could help to resolve them.

AMETIQ's founders include companies with many years of experience in the national market as well as ones that have achieved a significant market share in a short space of time. The new association seeks to mix new generations of leaders in the Mexican label market with older ones, which it hopes will create a synergy that will stimulate growth.

Its primary aim is to strengthen the flexographic label converting industry through the active collaboration of each of its members. The association is seeking further partners, both converters and industry suppliers, who are interested in helping to achieve this objective. AMETIQ intends to make the most of synergies between converters that can help to bring benefits to participating companies.

The association has launched a

website, www.ametig.com.mx, where members can find a variety of data, including information on clients that have caused payment problems or shown bad practice; employees who have defrauded companies, have stolen or acted unprofessionally; suppliers who have shown bad business conduct; and publication of the minutes of each monthly meeting. There is also an informative blog in which useful data is shared between members, as well as product previews, tips and technical consultations.

AMETIQ plans to arrange a wide range of activities in the medium term, citing examples such as capacity sharing, seminars with suppliers, communication with other label associations around the world, national promotion of members, collaboration with educational institutions, support for the creation of a technical flexography course, setting up a jobs forum, creation of national industry standards, research into new technology. donations to the community and data gathering within the sector, among others

Monthly meetings will be held so members can share experiences. opinions and useful information. The association can be contacted at informes@ametiq.com.mx.



HENKEL LAUNCHES ADHESIVE FOR 'NO LABEL LOOK' IN **LATIN AMERICA**

available in Latin America

Henkel, a global manufacturer of industrial adhesives, has launched a third generation of synthetic adhesives called Optal LG 30, an adhesive for wet glue labeling. The company, headquartered in Germany, has offices in Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia and Mexico to serve the Latin American market.

With the rise of 'no label look' applications in beverage sector, particularly beer, and cellulose film labels replacing BOPP, the company saw the need for a synthetic, high performance adhesive which also has a brilliant, transparent film.

This new adhesive technology for the application of transparent labels, with wet glue label systems which are traditionally used for the high speed application of paper labels, allows the application of labels similar to transparent self-adhesive labels but without costly investment in selfadhesive label application equipment.

With the new Optal LG 30 adhesive, which will shortly be available in Latin America, and accompanied by new developments in permeable labels, which allow the drying of the water-based adhesive, it is possible to label glass bottles with transparent labels, without needing to change the traditional applicator to a water-based adhesive, normally used in paper labels.

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LABEL SUMMIT LATIN AMERICA **ANNOUNCES SPECIAL GUEST SPEAKER**

Label Summit Latin America has confirmed a special guest speaker for the morning of the first day of the conference. The event, which takes place in Mexico City on May 11-12, will feature Mexican marketing expert Alejandro Watson advising attendees on how to diversify marketing strategies during times of financial difficulties.

Watson, a consultant to a wide range of national and international companies, associations and educational institutions, will outline practical ways of differentiating yourself from the competition. This is the first time the Labelexpo Global Series has recruited a guest speaker from outside the label industry for one of its conferences, and managing director Roger Pellow is delighted to offer delegates the benefits of an internationally-renowned expert's knowledge. 'We are working hard to differentiate this year's Label Summit Latin America in Mexico, and are very happy to announce the participation of Alejandro Watson,' he said. 'With his impressive record of consulting for leading companies and organizations, he will be able to offer delegates extremely high-level advice on how to distinguish themselves from their competition.'

Alejandro Watson has worked with a number of leading companies in implementing marketing and sales strategies and launching products. He currently has roles at two Mexican companies: he is founder and director of Watson & Asociados, a commercial consultant; and acts as a partner director for GPW Representaciones Corporativas, which represents companies in the tourism industry.

In the area of academia, he has presided over more than 50 courses on subjects such as leadership, the formation of autonomous teams. human resources as a differentiator in the market, personal branding, marketing, effective negotiation, time management, revenue management and more. He has spoken at a variety of conferences for companies. associations and institutions, including at NBTA, Expo Antad, Semana PYMES México and Expo Capital Humano, and is part of the speaker network of Speakers México.

The courses and conferences given by Alejandro Watson are characterized by maintaining great congruence



ALEJANDRO Watson will advise attendees on how to diversify marketing strategies during times of financial difficulties

throughout their content, imagination and creativity in their context, and for his unique style of communication which combines humor with depth in the themes covered.

He is a founding partner and has served as president of the Mexican business of HSMAI, the global association of commercial executives in the tourism industry, and was the founder and is current vice-president of education of the Mexican business of Meeting Professionals International (MPI). He has also participated in the directive committee of SITE.

He has been a member of a diverse range of organizations, including being a consultant to OCCM, the Mexican office of conventions and congresses; part of the marketing committee of Concanaco-Servitur, Mercadotecnia de México (headed by CPTM), and as a tourism consultant to the President of the Republic. He is a contributing editor to Alta Hotelería magazine and is a columnist for a number of other publications. He is a member of the technical study committee, in the area of marketing, for the San Ángel Center of Advanced Studies, having acted as a professor for the institution, and has consulted for a variety of businesses.

LATIN FOCUS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST LATIN AMERICA LABEL STORIES

ROTOCONTROL APPOINTS DISTRIBUTOR IN SOUTH AMERICA

Rotocontrol has appointed Brazilian company Forpack International Trade as the exclusive distributor for its range of finishing equipment for the narrow web industry throughout South America. 'After spending two weeks in Brazil and Chile visiting converters, I witnessed first hand the exciting demand for finishing machines.' said Ralph Beier. Rotocontrol's international sales manager. 'Forpack approached Rotocontrol seeking to represent our products and after observing how professional and well-connected they are, I am convinced they will do an outstanding job.'

Orlando Esteves, managing director of Forpack, commented: 'Latin America is a quickly growing market, with a high demand for superior quality and reliable finishing machine technology. After monitoring activity generated from Rotocontrol over the last year, we were convinced the line was a perfect fit for our suite of conversion product.

Forpack specializes in packaging conversion equipment, narrow web flexo label printers and wide web flexo machines.

ETIRAMA APPOINTS ADDITIONAL SALES AGENTS

Citing continuing growth in machine orders, Brazilian press manufacturer Etirama has appointed a number of new sales agents.

Among the countries in which the company now has direct representation are Greece, Italy, India, Iran, Mexico, the Netherlands, Portugal, Turkey, USA and Venezuela.

'Our goal is to continue this growth and servicing customers in the manner in which they deserve,' said the company in a statement

MICA CORPORATION EXPANDS OPERATIONS IN BRAZIL

Mica Corporation has appointed B.Y. Engenharia as the exclusive representative of its product line in Brazil. Backed by the technical and administrative support of the US-based Mica team, B.Y. Engenharia will help to grow Mica's business in Brazil. B.Y. Engenharia has been in business since 1989 and represents several international equipment manufacturers across a variety of sectors.

Mica Corporation specializes in aqueous products for the flexible converting industry. including for flexible packaging and labeling applications. Founded in 1971, the company manufacturers water-based primers, coatings, and adhesives.



Changing course

THE PRAGATI GROUP of companies has set up a dedicated narrow web division, transferring the value-added model from its commercial operations to the production of PS labels. Andy Thomas reports

Established in 1962, the Pragati group of companies is a full service provider for commercial printing clients in India and around the world. Like so many printers in India, Pragati is a family-run business with an actively engaged younger generation. Narendra Paruchuri's eldest son Harsha has been involved in the business for ten years, and his younger son Hemanth for two years, having recently completed a mechanical engineering degree at Purdue University in the US.

Having established its credentials in the commercial offset field – the company was voted Sappi International Printer of the Year for the second time in 2008 – Pragati has recently expanded into packaging and flexo labels.

This proved to be a good move. Throughout the worst of the global recession, April 2009 to April 2010, the company's flexo label business grew by 60 percent. This year the company was the winner of five FINAT label awards.

'In 2000 I saw the writing on the wall for commercial print with 3G phones and the internet dominating communications, so I decided to move into flexible packaging and cartons, and after that, to start up a flexo labels operation,' says company CEO Narenda. The company's offset division was already producing wet glue and wraparound labels.

The success of the flexo labels division has been achieved by selling added value, and not selling on price - a lesson well learned by Pragati's commercial offset operation. 'A key ingredient in our success is acting as part of our customer's team, rather than just another vendor,' says Narenda. 'We aim to understand the customer's needs and suggest ways to maximize value, such as improving product stand-out, or providing economical size/material recommendations.' Part of the service includes digital asset management. Another important part of Pragati's total service solution is fulfillment and contract packaging, with teams available to shrink-wrap, label, pack and courier to a customer order.

The success of this strategy can be seen in Pragati's Blue Chip client list, which includes Tata, Ranbaxy, GSK, P&G, Diageo, Hindustan Unilever, Boeing, Mercedes, Reliance, Ford, Mitsubishi, Vodafone and Lufthansa.

Selling added value in the flexo market has proved more of a challenge. 'We try to talk always to the brand managers, but this is an industry where few have been trained in flexo,' says Narenda Pragati. 'It makes our job easier that we are seen as a technology leader in the commercial offset market.'

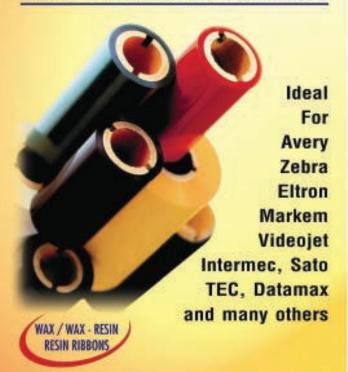
An example of successful value selling is Pragati's work for Dabur hair oils and shampoos, a US\$1.4bn Indian company. Pragati worked with the company's Delhi-based product developers to launch a range of five premium Uveda shampoos. They helped position the product as a premium product by incorporating a tactile texture effect and embossed screen UV, using an Orthotec press for screen printing and embossing.

The Uveda SKUs were carefully color-matched – a major source of expertise at Pragati, which, among other

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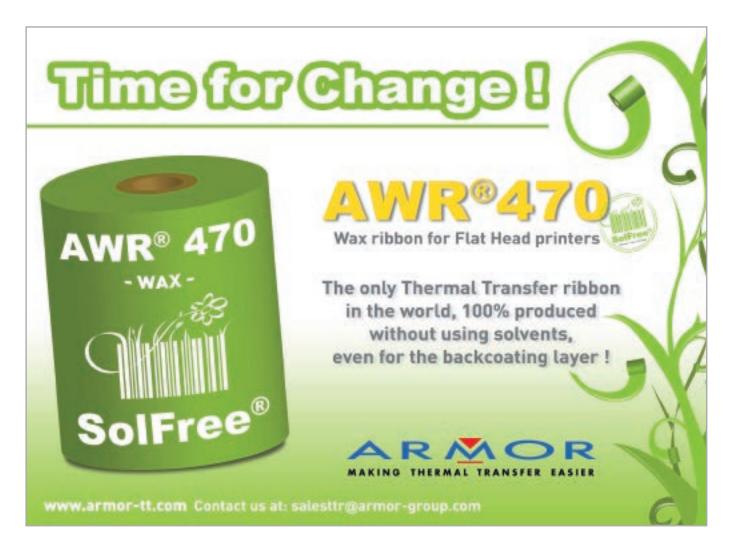


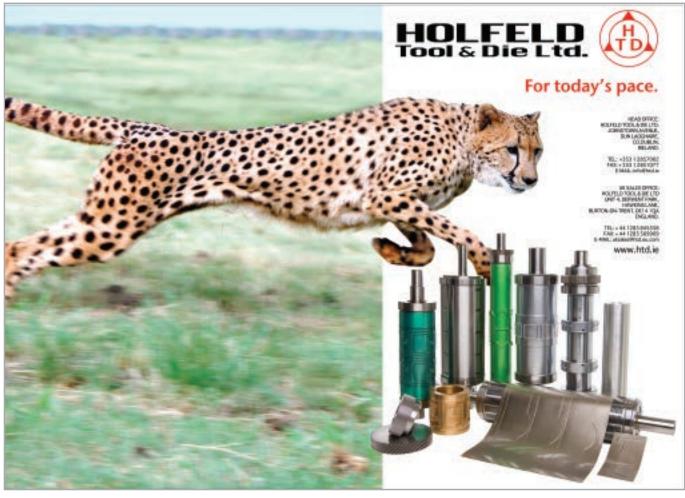


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challenges, color matches materials used to manufacture Saris with offset

Anti-counterfeit is another area where Pragati is adding value - particularly for its pharma customers - and the company is using embossing to apply OVD-like effects, where the image changes with the viewing angle.

NEW DIVISION

The Pragati group today employs over 500 people, with 300 working on the commercial offset side, 200 in packaging fulfillment and 40 in the Flexo

Pragati Flexo was set up to convert high quality flexographic labels, primarily for the beauty/personal care, pharma, FMCG and liquor markets. A full range of label types are produced, including pressure-sensitive labels on paper and film, roll-to-sheet wet glue labels, shrink sleeve labels and in-mould labels. Finishing options including holographic UV effects, textured UV coatings, micro-embossing, scratch-offs, combined front and back

RISING SAP

Pragati has implemented an SAP management information system (MIS) covering the whole gamut of operations from estimating to stock control and plant management. SAP is a key ingredient of the company's Lean manufacturing drive, which has included the implementation of 'pre-makeready' teams to keep the presses fed with work. The goal is single order entry and to make each job fully traceable based on Avery Dennison and Raflatac's material codes. Management can log in 24/7 to view the progress of any job.

printing, rub-and-sniff, and raised/braille UV effects. Pragati Flexo also offers specialist products such as multi-layer piggy-back labels, peel-back labels and non-tearable removable labels.

The division is equipped with two UV flexo presses: an 8-color MPS EF410 and a Nilpeter F3000. The MPS servo-driven press incorporates automatic register control including the die-cut unit. 'Cool' UV curing and chill drums allow materials down to 12 micron BOPP to be handled, while board stocks up to 300 microns can also be converted and cold foil units are rail mounted for additional flexibility. The presses use digital flexo plates supplied by an outside shop.

The EF410 and F3000 join a Codimag Viva 340 press. This latter is specified with letterpress, rotary hot foil - using a magnetic plate rather than a solid cylinder -flexo varnish unit, rotary screen (using both Gallus Screeny and Stork screens) and a combined rotary/ intermittent embossing unit from Kocher & Beck. 'We bought the Codimag to handle the short runs which digital might handle, but with integrated high level finishing,' says Hemanth.

A big issue for Pragati was the difficulty in finding and retaining trained flexo press operators. When the plant was set up, it took up to eight months to find suitable candidates.

Additional equipment includes an Omega slitter rewinder with AVT 100% defect detection system, two Orthotec presses, equipment for shrink sleeve forming and cutting, and a JM Heaford plate mounting system.

In its first year of operation, Pragati's Flexo division won three LMAI awards in the flexo wine & spirits and flexo

"Pragati Flexo was set up to convert high quality flexographic labels, primarily for the beauty/personal care, pharma, FMCG and liquor markets. A full range of label types are produced, including pressure-sensitive labels on paper and film, roll-to-sheet wet glue labels, shrink sleeve labels and in-mould labels"

cosmetics categories. 'High end wine like Sula and whisky is a key growth area for PS,' says Narendra. 'A problem for us, however, is that label stock suppliers are not selling wine label stocks in India. At the same time, volumes are currently so low, that a company like Manter can only offer a minimum of a container load, which is currently too much for us to use.'

Pragati is sometimes able to employ its packaging division's strengths in the service of Flexo customers. One recent project involved developing an anti-rabies label incorporating a syringe accessed by a tear strip.

The Flexo division has also produced flexible packaging - a promising area for future growth. As an example, a project for Unilever involved producing short runs of flexible packs for product testing which would have been uneconomical using gravure.

Following its runaway success, Pragati's Flexo division is to move to a new 140,000 sq ft plant, along with the packaging fulfillment division. The building is currently being fitted out and is planned to be certified to ISO14000.



Regal progress

SINCE MOVING ITS BUSINESS from tin printing to PS labels, Regal Creative has become a major player in the PS label converting sector. Andy Thomas visits the company as it prepares to move into flexo

One of the most important qualities of the successful entrepreneur is the courage to shift the focus of a business when circumstances change, moving from a declining market sector to one set for rapid and profitable growth.

Thus it was with Regal Creative, set up in 1994 by K.K. Bajajan entrepreneur with over 30 years of experience in the printing and packaging industry. The company initially pioneered decorative tin sheet printing for metal container manufacturers. But when the metal printing business came under pressure from cheaper Chinese imports, K.K.Bajaj began to look around for new opportunities in the packaging field. After a visit to the India Label show in Mumbai, he decided to take the plunge into labels, and in 2006 set up Regal Creative Products as a dedicated self-adhesive label converting operation.

Regal's first press was a letterpress. 'Letterpress is simpler than flexo, and for our new business we wanted a machine that could handle shorter runs,' says K.K. Bajaj.

Regal Creative is today a 45-strong company running four printing lines producing up to 10,000 sq m of labels a day. The ISO 9000-accredited business services customers in the cosmetics and toiletries, pharma and automative industries, with a customer list taking in key Indian and global brands.

The company buys its materials from Avery Dennison and Raflatac. 'But we do want these suppliers to add more to their

locally available ranges,' says KK Bajaj. 'At present we have to wait for materials to be shipped from abroad, and this is also more expensive.'

Regal Creative's 16,000 sq ft main production plant is fully air-conditioned. Equipment includes three 6-color rotary UV letterpress machines with flexo UV varnishing, hot foil stamping, lamination and die cutting. Screen printing is carried out off-line along with a lot of hot foiling. The company's second factory houses a 6-color letterpress with varnishing unit, converting both PS labels and composite laminates for manufacturing tubes.

Regal makes its own plates and maintains a graphic design facility which supports a country-wide network of sales offices in Kochi, Chennai, Bangalore, Hyderabad, Mumbai and Kolkata. What of the future? Creative is already a very successful business, growing at up to 15 percent a year. The next phase of development will see the installation of a UV flexo press. Why the move to flexo? 'We are getting more longer run work, and flexo is ideal for that,' says joint director Rakshit Chawla. Any jobs longer than around 7,000 running meters will go to flexo.'

Both K.K. Bajaj and Rakshit Chawla see an accelerating move to PS film and higher value added combination printing. 'No look labels - PP face on PET liners - in particular are growing fast,' says K.K. Bajaj.



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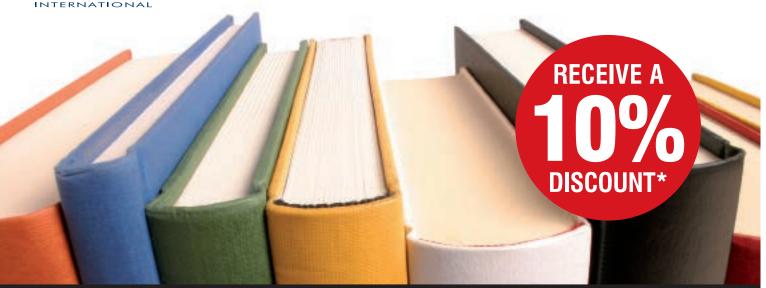
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Flexible trends

A new web tension control system has maximized the efficency of a VSOP press

Vuye Flexible Packaging - a division of Drukkerij Vuye has installed Martin Automatic unwind and rewind units on its second VSOP narrow web press at its new facility in Oudenaarde, Belgium, 'to add flexibility and improve production efficiency,' according to general manager, Lieven Vuye. The result is a production line that regularly operates close to its maximum rated 400m/min top speed, and makes Vuye's typical run lengths of 20,000 meters extremely cost effective to produce.

The 520mm VSOP press is in seven-unit configuration with intermediate drying between units 5 and 6 to allow reverse side printing. A flexo unit is fitted for water base or UV varnish, and crucial to the decision to install the VSOP was 'its variable repeat length capability, sleeve technology, and offset print quality,' according to Vuye, whose first VSOP was one of the early presses off the line back in 2005. The machine was originally brought to market by Drent Goebel, but the intellectual property now resides with Muller Martini following the demise of Drent Goebel.

'We have a pioneering philosophy here at Vuye and when I looked closely at the market for new technology to invest in, the VSOP had no competition,' says Lieven Vuye. 'Any teething troubles with the press were outweighed by the flexibility it allowed us to offer our customers - I estimate it gives us three times the capacity of a fixed size machine,' he added, pointing out that a close cooperation between manufacturer and user was responsible for many of the software developments that are now standard fitting on the

The decision to expand capacity beyond the company's traditional sheet fed business began in 2004. Deciding that the next phase of investment needed to move the company away from the highly competitive and fragile commercial market, Vuye cast his eye at print for packaging, and in particular in-mold labels (IML). With years of offset knowhow in-house, he discounted the wide range of flexo presses available for this type of work.

'I chose IML because I had heard that it was difficult to do, and I enjoy a challenge! In fact, our production has polarised to filmic labels, pouches, shrink sleeves and 'Flowpacks', using OPP, PET, and PVC substrates,' he explained.

Vuye Flexible Packaging is essentially a start up venture, attracting no crossover business from its commercial print customers. It specializes in short to medium run work, where it offers fast turnaround on orders and a high level of personal service. 'Flexibility is our USP because we are a small operator in the market. To maximize the effectiveness of our production cycle we needed to automate as much as possible and that is why we fitted Martin equipment,' explained Vuye.

'Our customers demand the quality of gravure printing but do not have the high volume needed to defray the expensive set up costs of these presses.' By fitting an MBS automatic unwind and splicing unit, and LRD automatic rewinder, Vuye can operate profitably on runs as short as 500 meters. 'When combined with offset print quality, this makes us ideal for test market work and sampling, or for products where frequent



type changes are required,' he added.

Since installing the Martin equipment, Vuye claims to have seen the dramatic fall in set up times and material waste that allow such short run work to be profitable. The substrate is delivered in giant rolls of 520 mm widths for loading into the MBS splicer. By removing the need to stop the press for roll changes, Vuye has removed one variable in the quality equation and reduced overall production time.

In addition to improving the press' performance, Vuye says the Martin equipment has also improved the efficiency of his operatives, and allowed the company to produce more

Vuye Flexible Packaging currently employs 12 staff and operates from a new 5,000 square meter production facility on a plot twice that size. Working a double shift pattern, the company has set 25 percent as the annual growth target for 2010, a figure Vuye is confident of achieving on runs lengths from 500 - 250,000 meters.

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OPINION

UV-LED Curing -Contender or Pretender?

ROB KARSTEN, director of European Sales, Phoseon Technology, argues that LED is the long term future for curing both on digital and on conventional narrow web presses

The current economic downturn has been less than kind to most industries and the label and package printing business is not immune. But while such a downturn leaves its mark on printers and print equipment providers, it is also a time of opportunity for new and innovative technology to rise and shine in the market.

During positive economic times, introducing a new technology can sometimes be difficult due to the hustle and bustle associated with designing, building and selling equipment. When times are good, companies do not always see the need to adopt a new technology, even if it has significant advantages for them.

One of the technology areas that has gained significant foothold in the market is UV-LED based curing and drying systems for UV inks. These systems are gaining traction as an alternative to traditional mercury vapor lamp systems - and for good reason. At LabelExpo 2009, UV-LED curing systems were displayed on digital presses from Atlantic Zeiser, CSAT, Stork Prints and Durst. In addition to digital label printers, the new Gallus ECS 340 flexo press showed that even in traditional press applications that the UV-LED technology certainly has met the technical requirements to meet specific curing and drying requirements.

Yet as with most new technologies attempting to usurp a deeply entrenched and time tested rival, there are barriers that make full scale acceptance more challenging in the short term. In the case of UV-LED technology, these barriers are being eroded and the technology has now made its presence felt in the market.

STATE OF THE ART UV-LED TECHNOLOGY

UV-LEDs are a solid-state electronics technology that does not use mercury and does not produce ozone, making it a



safer and more environmentally friendly than traditional lamp technologies. While the UV-LED as a component is useful, the key is producing practical and cost effective UV curing systems for specific applications with the right capabilities to suit customer needs.

Phoseon's latest product is its proprietary Semiconductor Light Matrix (SLM) technology for use in high power light applications. It uses a tightly-integrated array of high-intensity light-emitting semiconductor devices. The light produced by standard UV LEDs is limited by the discretely packaged design. Phoseon's SLM approach is to use proprietary packaging, optics, and thermal design to optimize the output in terms of total light produced and cost per watt of light produced.

UV-LED VS MERCURY LAMPS

Why should UV-LED based systems be even considered? There are some important, fundamental differences between UV-LED lamp systems and traditional mercury-based lamps.

UV-LEDs are inherently long-life with UV diodes typically rated to perform for many tens of thousands of operational hours. When integrated into a practical UV curing system then useful lifetimes of typically 10,000 hours and beyond are possible. In contrast, mercury bulbs are considered a consumable item with replacement typically expected every 1,500 – 2,000 hours of operating use.

INSTANT ON/OFF

Solid-state UV-LED lamps can be switched on and off instantly - within several milliseconds - so shuttering systems are not required. Furthermore, the ability to run the UV-LED system on an 'as needed' basis reduces the overall duty cycle of the device and can substantially extend the practical lifetime of the lamp. In contrast, mercury-based lamps typically require a warm-up period and are often required to be kept in a standby mode and/or shuttered when not actually curing ink.

HEAT ON THE SUBSTRATE

Since more than half of the total energy created by a typical mercury lamp is output in the infrared (IR), managing heat load on the printed media is a reality that manufacturers have had to face on their UV product lines. While filters and other techniques have been used to minimize the heat delivered to the substrate and while media cooling systems such as water chilled drums have been used, the issue of heat can limit the type of materials than can be printed and can increase the operational system costs due to hot air extraction/treatment, media cooling, etc. In contrast, UV-LED based lamps emit a very narrow range of UV energy (typically UV-A) with zero IR energy emitted.

POWER CONSUMPTION

While an argument can be made that the 'quantum efficiency' of mercury vapor lamps and UV-LEDs is roughly comparable, our general experience is that UV-LED systems require less than half the total power required to provide comparable curing results. To a large degree this is a function of a properly formulated UV-curable ink which accepts more of the energy from a narrow output UV-LED system, so that more of the total light produced is useful for the actual curing process. This power savings will increase when air extraction, media cooling, and energy required to maintain the mercury vapor lamp's non-printing standby mode are considered.

ENVIRONMENTAL AND SAFETY

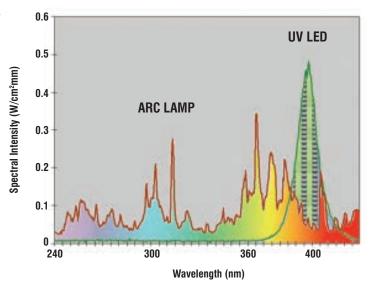
While traditional mercury-based UV lamps have been widely deployed and accepted in a variety of industrial and printing applications, the printing systems manufacturer has to carefully design his system to ensure that no operator or person near the UV curing system is exposed to potentially dangerous UV wavelengths or heat. This fact has an impact on the total size, weight, and portability of a traditional mercury-based UV system that typically has to be fully enclosed and shielded so that no human can see or touch the enclosure while the lamp is operating. In contrast, UV-LED systems emit no UV-B or UV-C wavelengths which are inherently more dangerous to the human eye. Also, most UV-LED designs do not transmit substantial heat to the lamp enclosure itself, reducing the design constraints placed on the inkjet system designer. Since mercury is not used within an LED system and because no ozone is created as a byproduct of the narrow-band UV-A energy, LED-based systems are inherently environmentally friendly.

APPLICATION TO LABEL CONVERTING

While in concept UV-LED technology can be applied to all drying and curing process of UV cured materials, the reality has proved to be more challenging. The single biggest hurdle to mass adoption has been the reality that most pre-existing UV curable materials are not optimized for the practical wavelength outputs of commercially available UV-LED systems. The good news is that UV inks curing with high-wavelength UV-A are freely available today for UV-inkjet, and many are becoming available in 'analog' printing applications such as screen, flexo and offset printing.

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MERCURY LAMP VS. UV-LED SPECTRAL OUTPUT



In addition, recent advances in LED technology make high power LED-based UV sources a viable solution for the curing inks in printing. UV-LED intensity and power capability is now comparable to traditional mercury vapor lamps. Costs for UV-LED curing systems continue to decline, and confidence in the 'new' technology is rising due to customers' positive experiences in the

UV-LED is already becoming more widespread in the digital arena, with many single pass and wide format UV inkjet systems using the technology today, with many more currently in design. The use of the technology in flexo and offset printing applications will likely take more time as the equipment makers and ink providers decide on the best course of action to bring the technology to market.

It's clear that the technical and cost barriers to UV-LED technology are eroding. If the industrial use of mercury continues to be more strictly legislated against, and there are future changes to the EU ROHS, then UV-LED could quickly gain the traction required to become truly mainstream.

While the jury may still be out on the speed and scale of the acceptance of UV-LED curing technology, there is no doubt that the technical and business hurdles for mainstream acceptance will be eliminated. UV-LED curing systems are a contender. We await to see if they are to become the long term champion.



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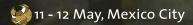
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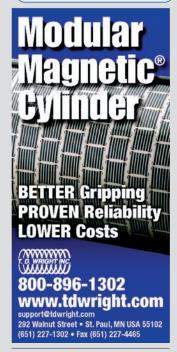
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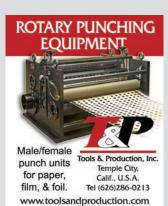
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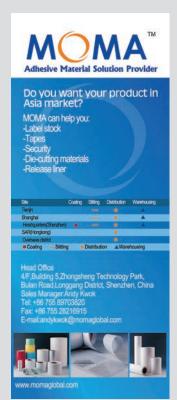
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Did You Have A Good Recession?

WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT? No one asks that...but they should. Recessions are great times to change.... to develop, to grow, to differentiate yourself. And it doesn't matter if you are a company, a team, or an individual. Everyone at all levels should ask the question.

Winners seek out advantage. They look for disproportionate gain. And recessions are great times to get that advantage. So the question stands: did you have a good recession?

As leaders, winners balance effective working on driving cash today with delivering new business tomorrow. They manage the Urgent and the Important. They do it in good times and bad times. Balanced thinking and balanced actions. You should not still be hunkering down and working only on cash flow. You should already be implementing plans for the upturn.

Now is the time to balance last year's survival thinking with growth thinking. What has this recession done to change your customers' needs and how they value your offers? If you don't know, you can be sure one of your competitors does. And if you think it is simply "lower prices" then you're missing the point. Customers always want lower prices. But in reality what they really want is reduced overall costs. So think outside of your standard offer to how you add greater customer value by changing your offer and how you offer it, to existing and new customers.

Practicalities:

Key Benefits of Recessions

- Customers' views of "good value" changes. Your offers should be different now than they were last year.
- 2. Innovations massively increase in recessions (to find new revenues).

- Innovations come from all directions: suppliers, competitors, customers and your own company. Find the innovations that work for you.
- 3. Recessions force managers to re-examine the business, to renegotiate customer & supplier terms and focus on the important. If your costs aren't lower: why not?
- 4. Some businesses will fail, leaving customers looking for alternative suppliers. Have you increased the quality of your customer base?
- 5. Company values dr op, increasing take over opportunities for cash rich, well placed businesses. Are you the hunter or the hunted?
- **6.** Good managers are easier to find. Who have you targeted?

To comment or ask questions: andrewlester@carr-michael.com. For more information on driving progress and growth please visit www.carr-michael.com.

ABOUT ANDREW LESTER:

Andrew Lester is a new contributor to L&L. He is the managing partner of Carr-Michael, business growth specialists. He has worked in a wide variety of sectors and was MD of Jaguar Cars UK from 1996-2001, successfully leading the transition of the company. Andrew is author of the acclaimed book "Growth Management: Two Hats are Better Than One" (Macmillan 2009) which Warwick Business School recommends on their Executive MBA programme and where he has spoken on managing growth. The reviews and first chapter of his book can be viewed at http://www.carr-michael.com/ebrochure.

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With global warming getting worse, Labelmen focuses on environmental sustainability - a green renewable material that promotes energy efficiency and eco-friendly. This is how Labelmen builds up its new generation label printing machine to be compatible with green printing. A newly launched RS-350PS (Alan Type) Multi-Functional Full Rotary/Intermittent Offset Printing Machine is designed and manufactured with green printing concept and 3 patents. It is your solutions provider, cost controller, innovation partner and growth maximizer.







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