LABELEXPO BREAKS ALL RECORDS

A record attendance and technology launches across all sectors reported by L&L's global team

IML IN CHINA

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VOL.33 ISSUE#5 NOVEMBER 2011
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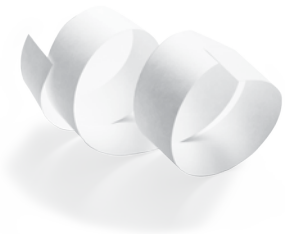

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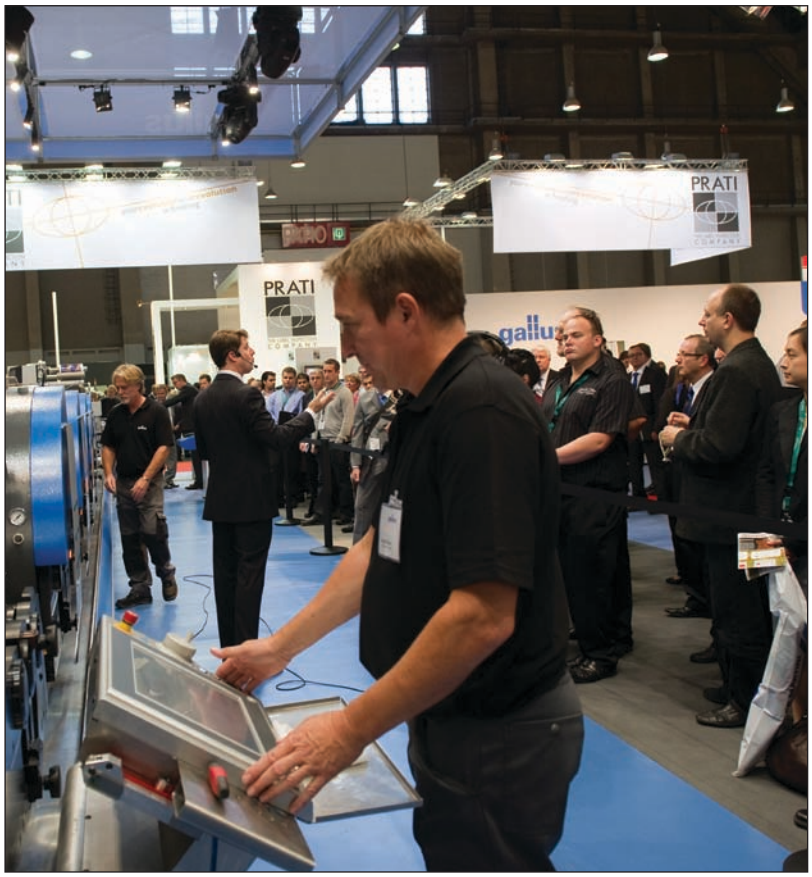

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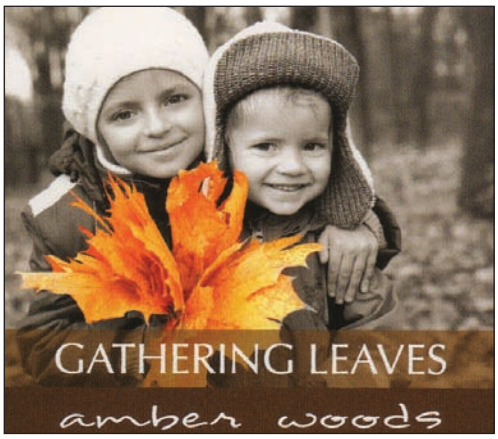

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WHAT'S DRIVING GROWTH AT LABELEXPO?

Labelexpo Europe was the biggest ever event, and all the leading manufacturers of both conventional and digital presses reported healthy sales. How are we to explain this against the backdrop of the Eurozone crisis and talk of a possible double dip recession?

Firstly, it is a fact that the label industry players which survived the 2008-10 recession actually came out stronger: leaner, with costs more under control and moving into value added areas which emphasize service over price. This led to the requirement to invest in new, more productive and value added machinery. It was the postponed investment of the last two years which was the chief driver of machinery and software sales at this show.

At the same time, brands are rebuilding stock levels – but with one crucial difference. They now want to build only the stock they will use in the next production cycle. So although order levels are rising, the number of labels required in each batch is going down; fewer labels, more often. This in turn is driving the requirement for more efficient MIS and for conventional presses and digital finishing lines which can change between jobs economically multiple times in a shift.

A key lesson of the last recession – and other recessions seen by L&L in its 34 year history – is that aggregate label demand remains relatively stable. It simply shifts between segments – typically into the 'value' segment dominated by retailers' own brands, who are more likely to use basic paper labels and less likely to use higher value decorative technologies like foiling.

But even this is changing. All the private label brands are launching product lines targeted directly at up-market branded competitors – Tesco Finest is a great example. The demand is for better graphics and substrates which convey a superior product image, but all at a reduced cost per label compared to the branded alternatives. German value retailer Lidl, for example, has specified high quality rotary offset for its paper labels to create graphics which leap off the shelf.

Opportunities are always created at times of rapid change. Labelexpo showed the supplier community creating the hardware and software tools necessary for entrepreneurial converters to exploit these opportunities to the full.

ANDY THOMAS
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L&L ISSUE 5

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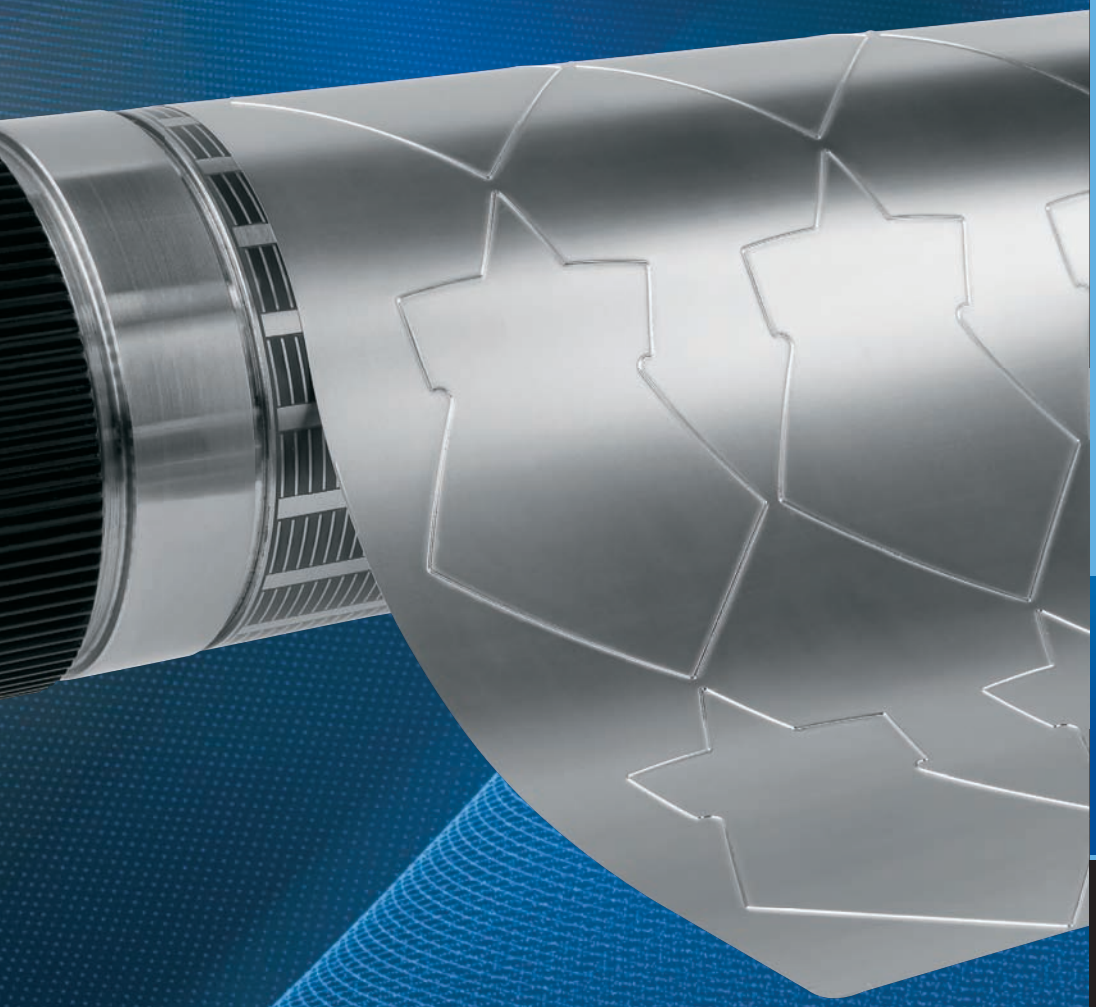

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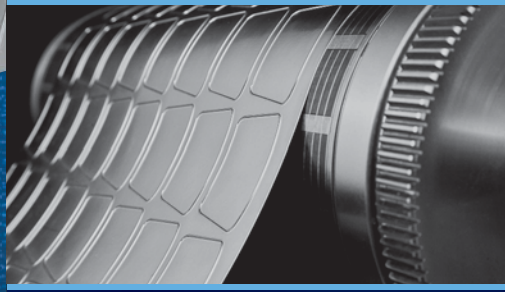

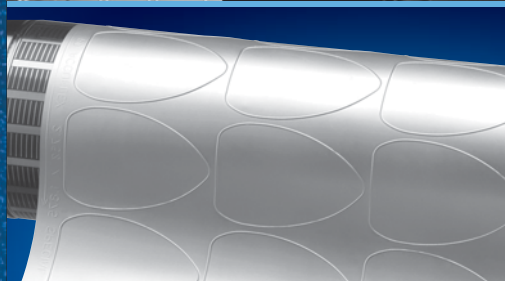

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INBOX

LABELEXPO EUROPE BLOG SPECIAL

Read the full versions of the blogs on www.labelsandlabeling.com/blog

THE MAJOR THEMES OF LABELEXPO EUROPE

For me there were a number of big themes at this Labelexpo Europe: the maturing of digital label printing into a system to rival (and enhance!) the traditional print processes; the development of conventional presses into 'CNC-tooling' systems embedded in digital workflows; the rapid diversification of the narrow web industry into multi-substrate packaging applications; new developments in automated pre-press, press control and quality control functions; a drive to practical sustainability.
Andy Thomas, group managing editor, L&L

TRENDS IN CONVENTIONAL AND DIGITAL PRESS TECHNOLOGY

Conventional and digital narrow web presses accurately reflect trends within the label and flexible packaging markets. The Labelexpo series of events mirror these trends. This year's show was especially useful because of what is happening in the conventional and digital sectors. Besides marking the beginning of a technological circle, the event also showed the robustness of our industry. That's not to say it is immune from the widespread economic gloom, but the industry's general dynamism and all-round optimism leaves it in better shape than any other graphic sector.
Barry Hunt, technical editor, L&L

LABELEXPO BRINGS COMFORT TO THE WORLD OF NARROW WEB

Labelexpo Europe once again emphasized the trends towards digital label printing, added-value solutions, and a continuing move by narrow web converters into areas of package printing. Conventional label press sales and orders during Labelexpo also held up well against previous years – upwards of 90 or so machines – and evidenced by new analogue presses that aim to compete with digital by incorporating quick changeover and short-run capabilities.
Mike Fairley, international publishing director, L&L

INK MIGRATION SOLUTIONS FOR FOOD PACKAGING

Ink suppliers at Labelexpo Europe presented in unison low migration products for the food packaging market, which has especially felt legislative pressures in Europe regarding contamination of products packaged with volatile inks that can infiltrate food and harm consumers. Most suppliers complete internal R&D and migration testing, but also support their findings through third-party evaluations.
Danielle Jerschefske, North America editor, L&L

LABELEXPO DEMONSTRATES INTEGRATION OF CHINESE MARKET

Labelexpo Europe saw dramatic increases in numbers of both exhibitors and visitors from China. On show were suppliers such as King Label, Shanghai Jinda, Labelmen and Link Label, while leading Chinese converters could be seen navigating the exhibition halls. Qingdao Sunlabel even purchased a Grafisk Maskinfabrik DC330 converting line direct from the stand on the second day of the show. The country's strong presence at Labelexpo Europe was proof of China's increasing integration into the international label market.
Kevin Liu, China editor, L&L

IMPRESSIONS FROM A LABELEXPO DEBUT

Labelexpo Europe 2011 broke previous records; 500 exhibitors occupied six halls and 28,636 visitors attended. In a world where you can't fail to notice the struggling economy, with shops closing on every high street and businesses going into liquidation, it was refreshing to feel the buzz from exhibitors and visitors alike. Several hundred new product launches emphasized that our industry is growing and is in a strong position, despite the threats it might face.
Carol Houghton, editorial assistant, L&L

Top industry Tweets:

Danielle Jerschefske rounds up the latest topics doing the rounds of the blogs and Twitter pages

@PrimeraTech GREAT show! RT @daniellejersche: #Labelexpo was absolutely amazing! So much business done, new products everywhere... #packaging #labels @EdaleLimited great first day for us at @Labelexpo - special thanks to @mistermarkjones and @Chris_Chappel for three fantastic demos! great response!

@FINATcom Many thanks to @Labelexpo and @RogerPellow for a great show. The #FINAT stand was well attended and the #Operatorsday was also a success!

@MercianLabels Just met some Indian label printers on the bus to #labelexpo Q."how big is your business?" A. "about $400m USD"... They're buying presses...

@Lorne_Andersen Just bought a FA4, 10 colour UV press from the best press manufacturers, that is, @Nilpeter! Well done Del and Simon.

@ROTOCONTROL #Labelexpo Europe A Great Success For ROTOCONTROL: 18 Finishing Machine orders were received! Read more: http://t.co/VICI1QRX

@PrimeraEU Was by far the BEST #labelexpo we ever have been to. So much customers, partners and interest, we need for sure a bigger stand next time.

@chrisv250 It's been a good week at #Labelexpo in Brussels.Truly the most global show with people from all reaches of the globe.

NEWS

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

CCL ANNOUNCES $30M EXPANSION PLAN

CCL Industries plans to invest USD $30 million during 2011 and 2012 to expand its label operations in emerging markets. The company will build three new greenfield plants and also invest in additional capacity at some of its existing facilities.

A new third plant in Bangkok, Thailand, will provide increased capacity and new technologies to support home and personal care (HPC) and beverage customers in South East Asia. CCL expects its Asian operations to approach 10 percent of global label revenues in 2012. Construction has also begun on a new pressure sensitive label facility in Vinhedo, near Sao Paulo, to support HPC and healthcare customers in Brazil. The new site will more than double the size of existing operations. Additional converting capacity will also be added to the Brazilian sleeve plant in Criciuma to support growth in the food and beverage sector. Finally, the Pacman-CCL joint venture will open a new greenfield plant in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia, to expand the company's footprint in the Gulf States of the Middle East.

Geoffrey Martin, president and CEO of CCL Industries, said: 'Emerging market revenues now represent approximately 20 percent of the company's total sales and we expect growth to continue to accelerate. It therefore makes both strategic and shareholder value sense to allocate a higher portion of capital to these [regions].'

ETI USER GROUP HOLDS ANNUAL MEETING

The ETI Converting user group, International Label Group (ILG), held its annual meeting the day before Labelexpo Europe in Brussels. Members from around the world enjoyed presentations from a series of speakers.

Mike Cooper of Catchpoint spoke about linerless labels and their evolution since the 1970s; Roger Pellow of Tarsus' Labels and Packaging Group discussed trends and opportunities in the label industry. Frederic La Brie and Eric Ouellet, respectively COO and vice-president of operations at ETI, presented the company's new products and technical improvements, including its Miniliner and linerless technology.A table-top exhibition held after the meeting allowed members to network with raw material suppliers. Members also appointed a new president for 2011-2012: Hoessein Hadaoui from Netherlands-based converter Telrol.

THE DIE CHAMBER is kept below freezing so a 'frost' can form on the die surface

AVERY AND GALLUS LEAD LINER REVOLUTION

DIE CUTTING of labels with 12 micron liners made possible with new material/machinery combination

Avery Dennison has partnered with Gallus to develop a revolutionary technology which allows the die-cutting of labels with a liner as thin as 12 microns, while eliminating die strikes. The patented technology for ThinStream has been licensed to the Gallus Group, which has created the Gallus Cold Die Unit to accomplish this major advance in die-cutting technology.

Launching the ThinStream technology at Labelexpo Europe, Avery Dennison CEO Dean Scarborough said 'ThinStream is one of the biggest and most significant advances in die-cutting in decades. Until its arrival, die-cutting liner with calipers below 23 microns was virtually impossible. With conventional kiss-cutting, the die can cut through the liner and cause operational and quality problems during converting and dispensing. Avery Dennison's ThinStream technology overcomes this challenge.'

The ThinStream unit separates the face stock from the liner before die-cutting, cuts the label shape through the adhesive and then reassembles the label. In order to make a 'clean cut', the machine uses a cold die unit, which is kept below freezing. Moisture is introduced into the die chamber, which effectively creates a 'frost' on the surface of the die and prevents the adhesive sticking. The die was specially developed for this application by Rotometrics.

Commenting on his company's partnership with Avery Dennison, Klaus Bachstein, CEO of Gallus, said, 'We see a continuing trend of label printers seeking out and using thinner label materials to meet the environmental requirements of brand owners around the world. We are delighted to partner with Avery Dennison to develop the Gallus Cold Die Unit and bring this exciting new technology to the marketplace.'

Avery Dennison's ThinStream technology and the Gallus Cold Die Unit will be of special interest to label printers with large-volume print jobs on PET liner and can be integrated into a Gallus printing press or operate in a stand-alone version. The first ThinStream/Cold Die installations have been announced at Eurostampa Industria Grafica in Italy and Brook & Whittle in North America (see p.29).

THE EXTENDED HEIDELBERG SITE in Qingpu, near Shanghai, with new assembly hall and logistics center now has a production area of some 45,000 square meters

HEIDELBERG EXPANDS QINGPU PLANT IN CHINA

PRODUCTION area increased threefold in four years

On September 28, Heidelberg celebrated the opening of the third construction phase at its Qingpu site near Shanghai in China. The completion of this phase extends the plant's production area to some 45,000 square meters – a threefold increase in the space of just four years.

The company has been manufacturing small- and medium-format presses and folding machines in Qingpu since 2005. For the past year, Heidelberg has also been producing presses in the 70 x 100 cm (27.56 x 39.37 in) format class at this site, so it now covers all standard machines required by the Chinese market. Around 400 staff work at the site. The machines made there, primarily for the local market, comply with globally standardized Heidelberg quality criteria. In the future, Heidelberg is planning to gradually increase the proportion of such standard machines that are exported to neighboring countries.'China is now our number one individual sales market and plays an important role in our business development,' said Heidelberg CEO Bernhard Schreier at the opening ceremony.

'The demand for print products is growing all the time in China and has more than tripled over the past ten years. Every third machine sold by Heidelberg in China now comes from Qingpu. Offering locally produced machines has enabled us to tap into additional customer segments in our industry's most important future market. Our strategy of taking full advantage of the potential in emerging markets is thus paying off.'

SPINNAKER TO OPEN TWO SLITTING CENTERS

Spinnaker Coating has announced plans for the expansion of its slitting and distribution network, with the initiation of two new company-owned and operated locations in the metro Atlanta and Los Angeles areas.

'Our industry-leading Trimless program, which just celebrated its 250thproduct addition, and our outstanding customer service model are being increasingly embraced by roll label converters who desire the ability to purchase a wide range of specialized products in exactly the amounts they need, and want to do so with full pre- and post-sale support,' said Brady Glett, vice president, roll products. 'These two locations will add further value by decreasing transit times and costs to label converters in the southeastern and western United States.'

Operation of both facilities is expected to commence during the first quarter of 2012.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

WESTERN SHIELD ACQUIRES SELF-STIK LABELS

Western Shield Label Company, a label converter based in Southern California, has acquired Self-Stik Labels, a label printer based in Chatsworth, California, with expertise in the health and beauty and cosmetic markets.

'Phil Hendricks, the founder of Self-Stik Labels, has done a tremendous job in establishing a solid customer base over the last twenty years. We look forward to working with Phil to service and grow these accounts in the years to come,' said Frank Connelly, CEO of Western Shield. 'The timing of this acquisition is perfect since our lean manufacturing efforts have created additional capacity,' added Thomas Moyer, president of Western Shield.

'By joining forces with Western Shield, we will be able to continue providing our customers with the great quality and service that they've come to expect. Western Shield is a top-notch converter and I will be working with them personally to make sure the hand-off goes as smoothly as possible for Self-Stik's customers,' said Hendricks.

Manufacturing will be consolidated into Western Shield's Rancho Dominguez plant, and both companies will do business under the Western Shield name.

EDELMANN RETURNS TO WEB OFFSET MARKET

The Turkish Umur Group has acquired the assets of the Edelmann Graphics in insolvency in Beerfelden, Germany. Business will continue under the name of Edelmann Printing Machines (EPM).

The product range of the narrow and mid width web offset and hybrid machines is almost unchanged and Edelmann will continue to operate in the labels, packaging, forms and security printing markets. The Umur Group, Edelmann's biggest customer, says that Edelmann's management and sub supplier structure will not change. Edelmann will continue to service its branded printing and collating machines installed around the world. The company said in a statement: 'We also want to let you know that the Manroland AG handed over the service and spare part rights for all the Practica machines which are in the market to Edelmann.'

Almost all the sales and service partners worldwide of the former Edelmann Graphics will continue to be the sales and service partners of EPM.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

US INVESTMENT FIRM ACQUIRES PAMCO

First Atlantic Capital, a private investment firm specializing in the acquisition of mid-size companies, has announced that its portfolio company, Resource Label Group, a pressure sensitive label manufacturer, has acquired Pamco Printed Tape & Label, a Des Plaines, Illinois-based pressure sensitive label converter serving consumer non-durable markets such as food and beverage, health and beauty, confection and household products. First Atlantic acquired a majority interest in Resource Label in April 2011.

Pamco is now a subsidiary of Resource Label and Michael Blechman, president of Pamco, remains in his current role. Pamco offers a wide array of printing resources including UV flexographic, rotary screen, foil stamping and digital printing to its customers.

William Burch, CEO of Resource Label, said: 'The acquisition of Pamco furthers our objective of becoming the premier one-stop shop for all of our customers' pressure sensitive label printing needs. Pamco will help us expand our product offerings and better position us to solve our customers' most complex service and application requests. Additionally, we plan to capitalize on Pamco's strong position in the markets they serve.'

REFLEX OPENS SHRINK SLEEVE DIVISION

UK converter has also acquired The Plain Label Company

UK converter Reflex Labels has opened a new division, Reflex Dynamic Sleeves (RDS). RDS will manufacture shrink sleeves for primary packaging, offering both UV and solvent-based flexo, with the ability to do both short and very long runs.

Managing director Ian Kendall said: 'RDS has been set up to reduce minimum order quantities and increase speed to market. Shrink sleeves have long been the first choice of marketing departments, but the comparatively high prices often cause the purchasing team to put the brakes on.

Price increases for self-adhesive labelstock over the last two years have created a swing in favor of shrink sleeves, as opposed to labels. RDS will make shrink sleeving even more accessible to UK brand owners, by taking away barriers such as high minimum order quantities and long lead times. 'We have been supplying shrink sleeves for some time, watching the market demands steadily grow in the UK and observing how the existing suppliers react to those demands. This product is not new – it was invented in Japan in the 1950s – but we have made it newly accessible. Dynamic factors such as rising raw material prices for other packaging formats are a part of it, but really what is driving the marketing and design sector's desire, is how good this product is: the sheer force of impact you can achieve with a shrink sleeved product, how much better your product can look on the shelf than its labeled neighbor.'

Reflex will be working closely with The Greenhouse reprographics and artwork agency, which specializes in adapting designs for packaging applications, as well as drawing on the company's own in-house R&D center.

- Reflex Labels has acquired label firm Rivers (Midlands), which traded as The Plain Label Company. Reflex will incorporate the business into its group operations. Reflex says customers of The Plain Label Company, which went into administration earlier this month, will be contacted over the coming days. Reflex offers a wide range of primary packaging options, including self-adhesive and linerless labels, flexible packaging, shrink sleeves, barcode systems, artwork and reprographics.

A revolution in table-top digital label printing and digital dieless finishing is now here!

A revolution in table-top digital label production is now here. Imagine a complete table-top digital label production solution that prints and finishes prime quality digital labels. With a printer that has a wide range of substrate flexibility, a high level of productivity and has an astonishingly low cost per label. Combine this with a digital finisher that has the ability to laminate, digital die-cut without dies, strip, slit and re-wind your finished labels. Imagine a solution that does all that and is so affordable that digital label production is now available to everyone. Sounds too good to be true, doesn't it? It's not.

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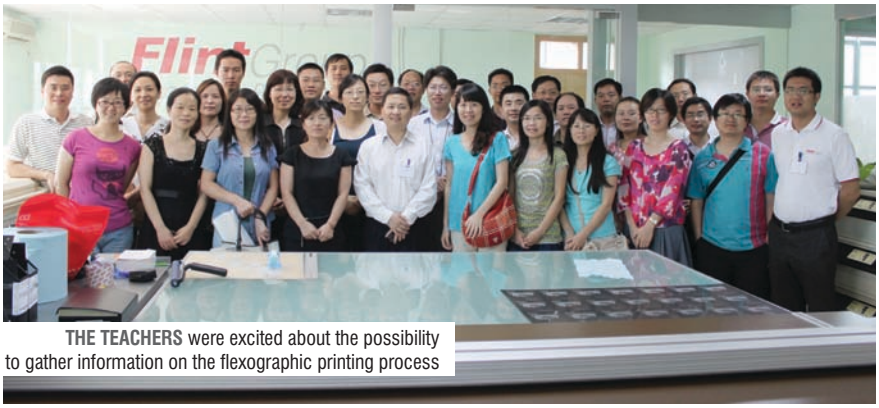


THE TEACHERS were excited about the possibility to gather information on the flexographic printing process

FLINT GROUP HOLDS CHINESE FLEXO ACADEMY

Flint Group has initiated and organized the China Summer Flexographic Academy, which took place for the first time from 18 to 22 July 2011 in Shanghai. Forty teachers from sixteen universities and colleges attended the training and practical sessions, offered by Flint Group and its partners EskoArtwork, Auclean, Tesa, Omet and Avery Dennison.

The company says the aim of the event is to develop the Chinese flexo market, which it describes as growing 'below expectations', partly due to a shortage of training.

The seminar on July 20 was hosted in its entirety by Flint Group Flexographic Products. After a short company presentation and an overview on the Chinese flexographic market, presented by Magenta Zheng, general manager for China, Lee Yushan, technical manager for Greater China, spoke about the analogue and digital plate making processes. Thereafter Sim Cai, senior equipment engineer and technical sales manager, introduced the company's latest develop¬ments such as nyloflex Next technology, nyloflex Automated Plate Processor (APP) and nyloflex In-The-Round technology (ITR). In the afternoon, teachers enjoyed practical platemaking exercises at Flint Group Flexographic Products' Asia technical center.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

ASHE CONVERTING AND EYE-C PARTNER FOR OFFLINE SYSTEM

UK-based Ashe Converting Equipment and German company Eye-C have formed a partnership that sees Eye-C's inspection systems be adapted for and installed on Ashe's ranges of slitter rewinders for both the narrow and wide web markets.

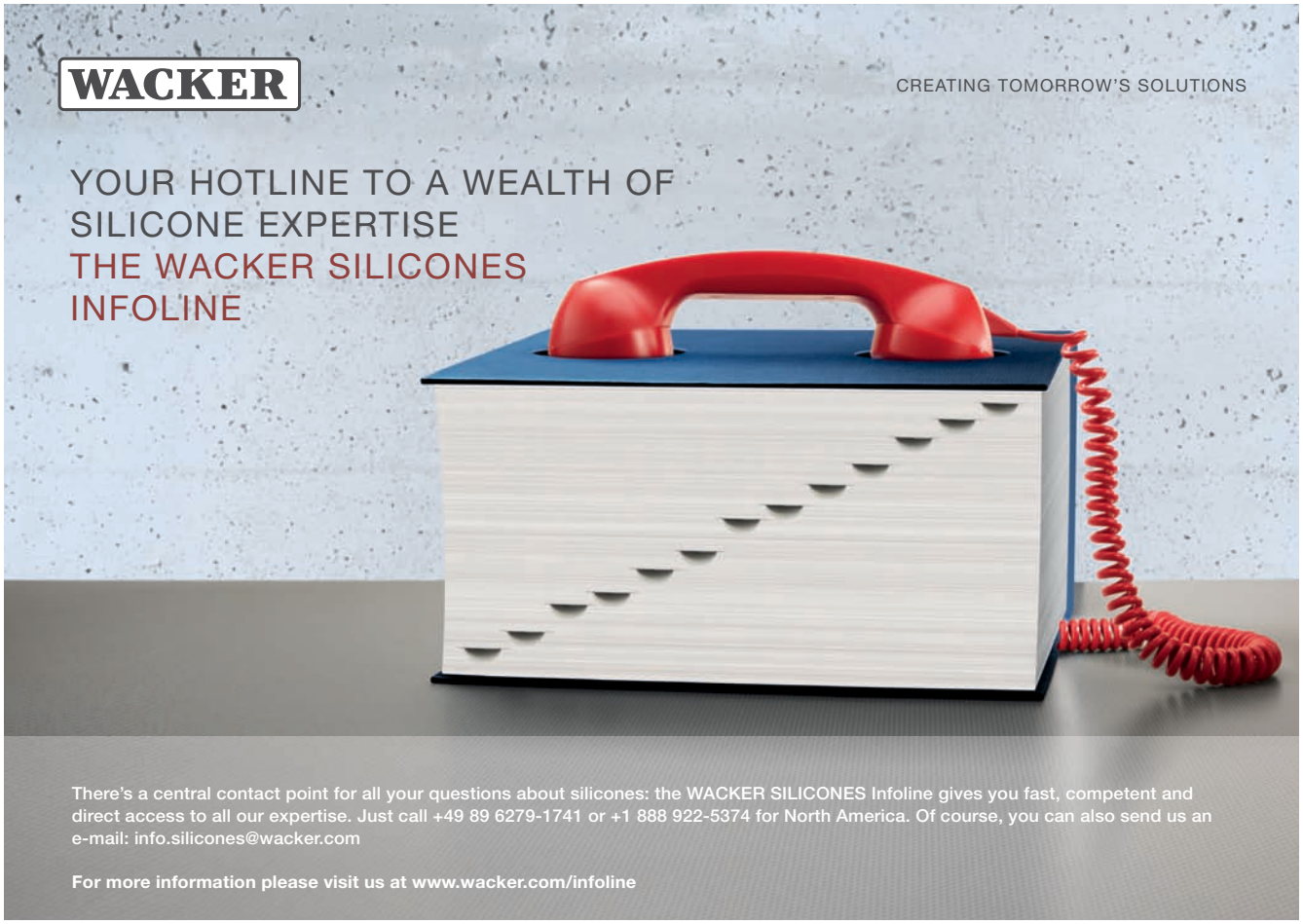
Ashe Converting and Eye-C, who had previously worked together on a number of installations, exhibited together for the first time at Graphispag in Spain in March 2011 to mark the formalization of the partnership.

Simon Godbold, sales manager of Ashe Converting Equipment, said: 'The deal allows us to offer a total package for 100 percent inspection and finishing. Companies are increasingly looking to produce better quality products, so the partnership is a natural step.'

Dr Ansgar Kaupp, CEO of Eye-C, commented: 'Inspection always requires a solid machine base. Ashe has a high quality range of finishing machines and it helps us to offer customers a complete solution.'

TENZA AND SASCOAT PARTNER

UK-based labelstock manufacturer Tenza Technologies and South East Asian labelstock manufacturer SAScoat have entered a reciprocal distributor agreement.



NEWS

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

THOMAS GAVIN and Pierre Noël

ANDERSON & VREELAND ACQUIRES FLEXOLUTION

Anderson & Vreeland has acquired Flexolution, a Canada-based distributor of flexographic printing materials serving Quebec, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island.

Flexolution, founded in 1989 by Pierre Noël, has a Montreal-based sales office and warehouse. 'Pierre's success with the Flexolution team allows us to better serve the Canadian market in one bold move,' said Thomas Gavin, CEO of Anderson & Vreeland. 'Pierre's intense drive and commitment to provide better service and performance is in perfect sync with Anderson & Vreeland's core values.'

Pierre Noël said: 'A&V's state-of-the-art product line and well-recognized technical support are tremendous strengths that will better serve our customers. Combining the strengths of our two organizations will create a synergy to achieve long-term growth and truly benefit all of our customers.' Noël will continue to direct all sales activities for the new company, now known as Anderson & Vreeland Canada, throughout eastern Canada.

'A&V Canada will offer products from leading-edge manufacturers including Flint, Toyobo, 3M, Lohmann, Esko and Stork, backed by a team of sales professionals and an arsenal of technical support,' said Drew Elisius, vice president of operations for Anderson & Vreeland.

Anderson & Vreeland's expansion into Canada further solidifies the company's presence in the North American market. Future plans include the opening of a sales office and warehouse in the Toronto area and then expanding into western provinces. The company has nine distribution sites throughout the United States and three distribution sites in Mexico.

TOYO INK AMERICA EXPANDS PRODUCTION

RELOCATION to new facility will boost production

Toyo Ink America, a member of the worldwide ToyoInk Group, has expanded production of liquid and ultraviolet inks for packaging applications in the North America region.

The company recently relocated its headquarters to a 109,000 square-foot facility in Wood Dale, Illinois, providing extra room for new equipment, an expanded R&D laboratory as well as more sales and technical staff. The new facility is expected to boost production, development and technical support capabilities.

At the new site, Toyo Ink America plans to produce and develop water- and solvent-based liquid inks, offset and UV inks and coatings, primarily targeting the flexible packaging, folding carton, bag, foil and label printing markets.

'The relocation to a larger facility is the latest commitment we've made in leveraging our manufacturing, development and support expertise to grow our packaging business in the Americas,' commented John Copeland, president and COO of Toyo Ink America. 'It provides us with the resources necessary to respond to our increasing customer base in the Americas and immediate need to bring our growing lineup of customized packaging and commercial print solutions to the global marketplace.'

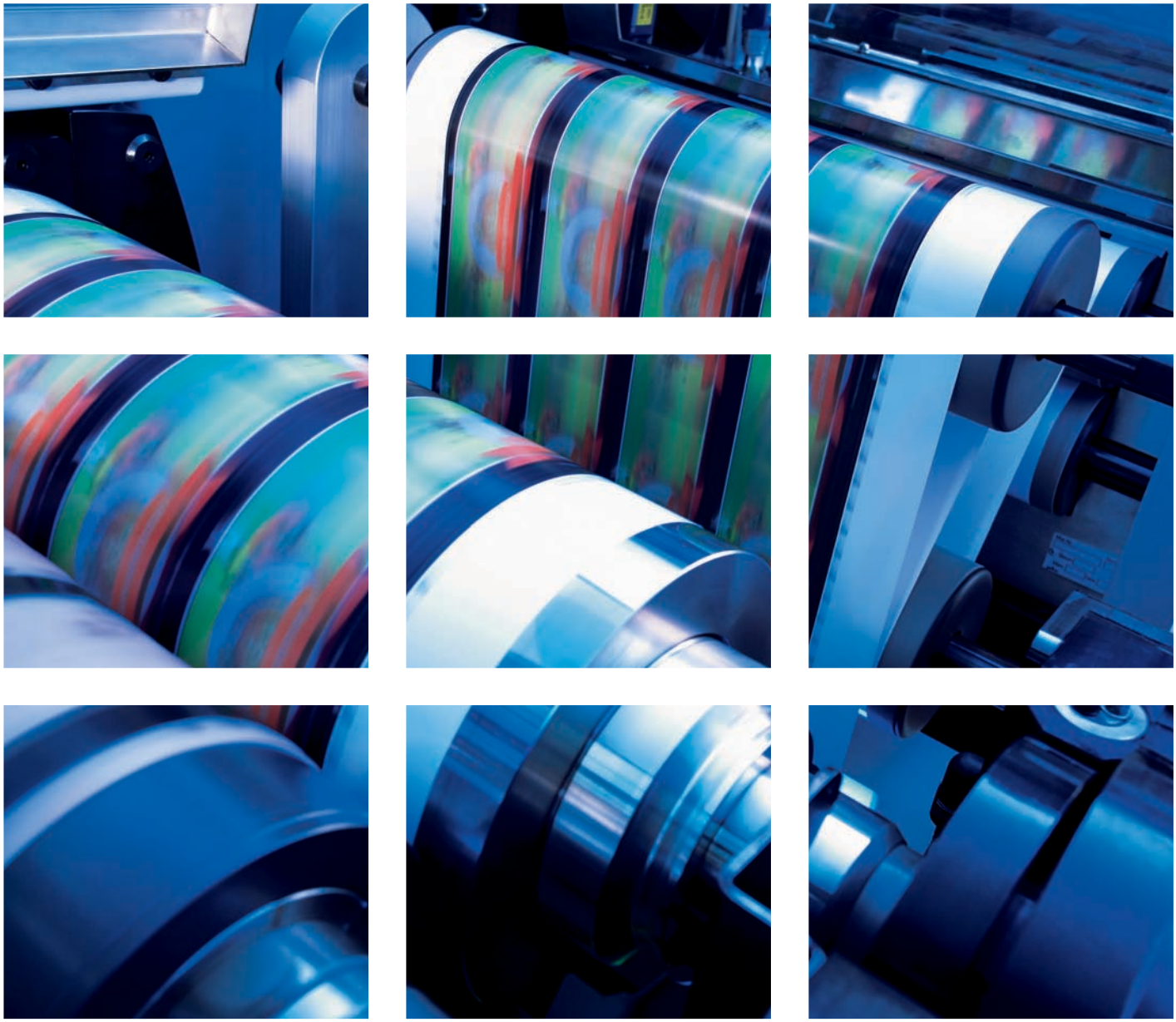
KLÖCKNER PENTAPLAST INVESTS IN GERMANY SITE

RELOCATION to new center of excellence

Klöckner Pentaplast has launched its new center of excellence for PVC and PET shrink-label, adhesive tape, card, and decorative-surfaces films at its Burgkirchen/Gendorf, Germany, site. The center of excellence is part of Klöckner Pentaplast's 40m euro (USD $54m) investment in new manufacturing equipment and technology in Europe to optimize capacity and streamline production processes.

The new equipment encompasses a PET extrusion line, a lamination and embossing line, a coating line, and expanded production capabilities for adhesive tape, as well as a digital printer for decorative-surfaces films. In addition, the investment includes the installation of a new design center and showroom to specifically address the needs of KP's furniture industry customers.

'With the new center of excellence, we can deliver even higher value to our customers by employing the latest manufacturing technology at one location,' said Dr Hans-Joachim Kogelnik, president and COO of Klöckner Pentaplast Europe. 'The investment will also strengthen our PET production capabilities and will further enhance our multiple and diverse polymer range of innovative film solutions.'



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DUPONT PACKAGING GRAPHICS will market products such as these hard surface bridge adapters manufactured by Inometa, as part of the DuPont Cyrel round flexographic printing workflow

DUPONT TO MARKET INOMETA COMPRESSIBLE ADAPTERS

PLAN to optimize Cyrel round sleeve systems

DuPont Packaging Graphics has announced a global agreement to market a series of print adapters and adapters for CDI imaging manufactured by Inometa, as part of the DuPont Cyrel round flexographic printing workflow.

The Inometa compressible adapters are designed to optimize the performance of both Cyrel round Thin sleeves and Cyrel Fast round Thin sleeves, and are said to provide excellent register accuracy, low dot gain and outstanding print quality from run to run. Made of precision fiberglass, they are engineered to be sturdy and smooth running with minimal run-out. The adapters have a rubber stop and bayonet locking system for superior handling and long life, and are available in all standard sizes.

'This multi-year agreement confirms that Inometa and DuPont are jointly committed to accelerating the introduction of the quality and productivity of in-the round flexographic printing into the marketplace, meeting the growing demand in all regions,' said Matthias Heinzel, global business director, DuPont Packaging Graphics.

'We are very excited to partner with DuPont, one of the innovative leaders of the flexo industry,' said Dr Ulrich von Hülsen, general manager of Inometa. 'Our adapters are ideally suited for in-the-round applications because of our deep knowledge of composite technology combined with our expertise in flexographic engineering.'

UPM RAFLATAC OPENS SLITTING CENTER IN MOSCOW

BOTH film and paper labelstock supported

UPM Raflatac has opened a new slitting and distribution center in Moscow, Russia, which will supply the local labeling market with film and paper labelstock.

The terminal started operations in September and will serve customers in the Moscow region, the country's biggest labelstock market.

'Covering the number of customers in the Moscow region and providing the strictly required 24-hour delivery are obvious reasons for having a terminal close to Moscow,' said Dmitrij Strechin, country manager, Russia and Kazakhstan. 'Moscow is a highly competitive area for both printers and suppliers of self-adhesive laminate, so operations need to be in accordance with very high quality and service standards.'

The Moscow terminal complements UPM Raflatac's service and logistics network in Russia, comprising a slitting and distribution terminal in St Petersburg and sales offices in Moscow and St Petersburg. The new Moscow terminal further strengthens UPM Raflatac's position in the Eastern European market.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

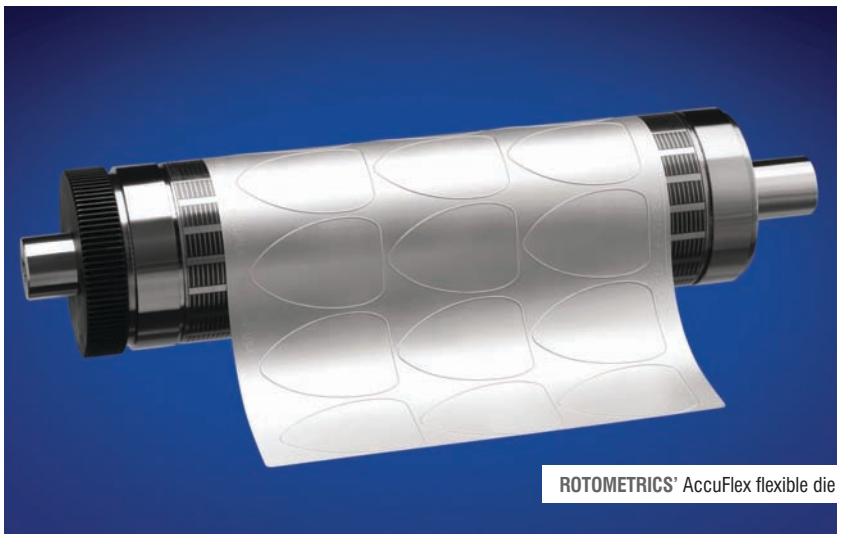
AVERY DENNISON EXPANDS UL-APPROVED PORTFOLIO

The Label and Packaging Materials division of Avery Dennison has secured UL recognition for four additional thermal transfer ribbons as part of its Fasson customer-ready durables label portfolio.

The resin-based black thermal transfer ribbons are UL-recognized for use with two UL-recognized Fasson base materials: a 3mm synthetic paper that is a matte white polypropylene, and a 2.3mm glossy white biaxially oriented polypropylene with a top coat. Both of the Fasson products are said to be cost-effective alternatives to PET (polyethylene terephthalate) for indoor and select outdoor applications, and can be used with or without an overlaminate. Armor Industrial Coding and Printing, DNP IMS America Corporation, limak and ITW Thermal Films manufacture the new ribbons.

'These additional thermal transfer ribbons give printers more options for helping their OEM customers cost-effectively meet their UL label-adoption process needs,' said Paul Purdef, manager, thermal transfer films, Avery Dennison Label and Packaging Materials. 'The Fasson customer-ready durables portfolio streamlines the process for obtaining UL recognition of printed labels. OEMs can now do in two weeks what has typically taken fourteen to thirty-six weeks.'

In addition to the new resin-based thermal transfer ribbons, the full portfolio of optimally engineered Fasson product combinations includes UL-recognized flexo UV and water-based inks; digital UV inkjet; wax/resin thermal transfer ribbons; and adhesives with a broad temperature range.



ROTOMETRICS' AccuFlex flexible die

ROTOMETRICS EXPANDS ASIA-PACIFIC PRODUCTION

LOCAL ACCUFLEX PRODUCTION starts in Australia and Thailand

RotoMetrics will begin production of its AccuFlex flexible die at its Melbourne, Australia, facility at the beginning of September. The company also plans to manufacture the full range of its Gerhardt-branded flexible dies, including the laser-hardened 5* flexible die.

Michael Bryant, RotoMetrics' CEO, said: 'As the only domestic die tooling manufacturer in Australia and Thailand, we are making strategic investments in flexible die technology and expanded local manufacturing capacity to offer the full range of rotary solutions to our key customers in the fast-growing Asia Pacific region.'

Meanwhile, RotoMetrics has appointed Shaun Pullen as sales director for the Asia-Pacific market. Pullen will be based in the company's regional headquarters in Bangkok, Thailand, and will direct sales offices in Australia, India and China as well as agent networks throughout South East Asia.

'With new flexible die and hot foil products now available with unbeatable lead times and local service and support, we are delighted to be adding resources to our team under Shaun's leadership,' said Karen Moreland, RotoMetrics vice president of sales.

FURTHER EXPANSION AT INTEGRATION TECHNOLOGY

The first in a three-phase development program at Integration Technology Ltd (ITL)'s headquarters at Upper Heyford near Oxford, UK, has been completed with relocation of sales, technical and administration personnel into a newly refurbished 20,000 sq ft building with capacity for future expansion.

In addition to housing the company's day-to-operations, the new building – located opposite the company's former administration block – is also home to ITL's customer center, which offers application testing in addition to meeting facilities. The new building forms the nucleus of a suite of further planned facilities, in addition to a new production hall, to be opened in phases two and three of future development at ITL's headquarters over forthcoming months.

Additional production of ITL's SubZero miniature UV emitter is now underway at the company's recently opened facility in China. Located close to Hong Qiao Airport in west Shanghai, newly registered subsidiary Integration Technology China is building ITL products to satisfy the demands of the local market.

While key parts are currently sourced from ITL UK, locally-derived content will be increased during the coming year leaving only key technology components imported. Meanwhile, production of the SubZero for all other regions continues at the company's UK headquarters.

ITL's North American headquarters is in the process of moving into a newly refurbished and expanded office within its location in Chicago, Illinois. The new facilities are over twice the size of the existing offices.

HP UNVEILS CAPTURE PORTAL

NEW PROGRAM offers expanded range of content and training

HP has relaunched its HP Capture program with a new online interface and expanded range of content and training.

Designed for use by HP Indigo and HP large format digital technology users, the Capture program offers HP's Print Service Providers (PSPs) a range of educational aids and tools designed to help them manage and grow their businesses. HP has expanded its suite of classroom-based educational courses from two to eight. One-day based classroom courses now includes training on 'Building a strategic marketing plan', 'Building a variable data business', 'Vertical markets – targeting for growth' and 'Web-to-print planning for success'.

The tools section has been updated to include HP SmartPlanner 3.5, the newly enhanced job estimator and planning tool, designed for both HP Indigo commercial PSPs and label and packaging converters. It can estimate and compare job costs for both digital and conventional presses, in terms of time, cost of production and profit margins. SmartPlanner 3.5 is automatically updated to ensure that the results are based on current technology, allowing users to make informed decisions when choosing how to produce a job. Updated tools now available to all users include: customer case studies; how-to guides; market reports; vertical market guides; self-promotion marketing templates and the direct marketing tool kit.

The HP Media Solutions Locator tool, which contains a library of over 3,500 media selections, has been improved for intuitive navigation. The media list is now segmented by country, so that users can find out who to talk to and where to buy substrates through links to local sellers.

Information on the Digital Solutions Cooperative (Dscoop) and Shift, the HP conference for label and packaging converters, as well as information on customer awards and the PSP and HP Graphic Solutions Partners can be found in the communities section.

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Improved packaging performance

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- Reduced emissions and energy use, less solid waste in manufacturing processes vs. aluminum foil
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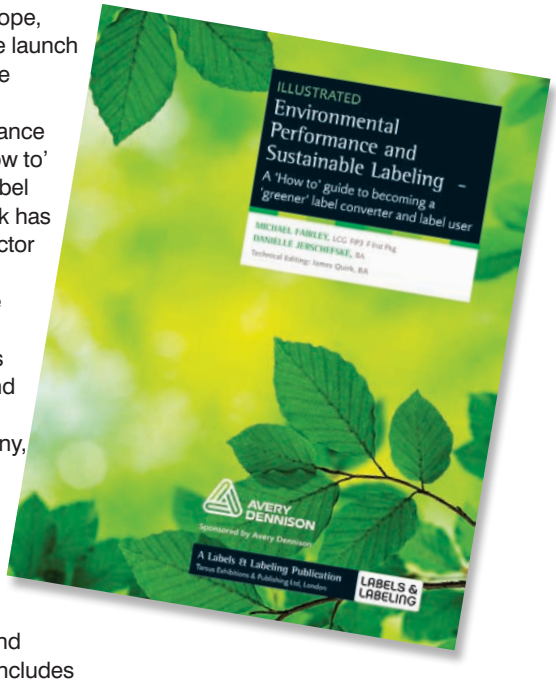
ENVIRO NEWS

L&L PUBLISHES 'HOW TO' GUIDE TO SUSTAINABLE LABELING

On the first day of Labelexpo Europe, Labels & Labeling announced the launch of a technical guide to sustainable labeling.

Entitled Environmental Performance and Sustainable Labeling – A 'How to' guide to becoming a 'Greener' label converter and label user, the book has been written by Mike Fairley, director of strategic development for the Tarsus Label Group, and Danielle Jerschefske, Labels & Labeling's North America editor. The book is sponsored by Avery Dennison and Dean Scarborough, chairman, president and CEO of the company, wrote the sponsor's foreword. Calvin Frost, CEO of Channeled Resources Group and chairman of TLMI's Environmental Committee also contributed a foreword.



This latest book in the Labels and Label Technology Series, which includes other 'How to' guides and technical encyclopedias, provides label converters and industry suppliers with information about the environment, sustainability, climate change and waste debate as it affects the label industry, and reviews the legislation, guidelines, directives, protocols and industry initiatives that have been introduced over the past 10 or 12 years. It sets out guidance on how the converter or supplier can go about establishing an environmental management system, implement ISO 14000, EMAS, LIFE or supplier Scorecard programs in the areas of materials selection and usage, production performance, carbon emissions, waste management and disposal, lifecycle assessment, transport and distribution, and concludes with a chapter on retailer and end-user considerations.

Throughout the book there are guideline environmental policy statements that the converter can adapt and use, case study examples of how companies are meeting environment and sustainability challenges, together with flow charts, diagrams and other illustrations that help to analyze and explain environmental solutions. It is hoped that this new 'How to' book will guide the industry towards a more sustainable – and profitable – future.

'Environmental Performance and Sustainable Labeling presents the problems as well as offers the solutions and consequences for those that don't make changes or improvements,' said Calvin Frost. 'I urge you to read it thoroughly. It celebrates this print technology but also tells us that ultimately the future is in our hands.'

AVERY DENNISON PUBLISHES FIRST SUSTAINABILITY REPORT

Avery Dennison has released its first Sustainability Report, detailing the company's 2010 sustainability initiatives, performance and goals. The report conforms to Global Reporting Initiative guidelines. It describes how Avery Dennison is working collaboratively to bring products to market that increase the sustainability of the industries it serves. 'We are delivering on our promise to improve our footprint and work with suppliers, customers, end users and communities to help them become more sustainable,' said Dean Scarborough, Avery Dennison's chairman, president and CEO.

ENVIRO NEWS

YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST. THE NO.1 FOR ENVIRONMENTAL NEWS

UPM RAFLATAC EXPANDS RAFCYCLE PROGRAM IN EUROPE

UPM Raflatac's RafCycle labelstock waste management process has expanded to include waste-to-energy. UPM Raflatac customers in Europe can send their labelstock by-products for reuse as a source of energy in a combined heat and power (CHP) plant which supplies heat and energy into the operations of UPM's paper mill in Schwedt, Germany.

'The purpose of conventional waste incineration is to reduce the volume and get rid of the waste, but UPM's power plant in Schwedt burns solid fuels to produce heat and clean energy,' said Erkki Nyberg, director of business development for the UPM's Engineered Materials Business Group. 'These fuels include recycled paper de-inking residue, waste wood, as well as paper and plastic rejects from the paper recycling process. Now, as part of RafCycle, self-adhesive labelstock waste has been added to this list.'

Drescher Euro-Label, a label printer from Gorzów Wielkopolski in Poland, is a pioneer in supplying labelstock waste fuel to UPM Schwedt. Marta Stańczak, marketing and environmental specialist at Drescher Euro-Label, points out the benefits of the RafCycle process and collaboration with the UPM paper mill: 'Until recently the costs of waste re-utilization were increasing by 20-30 percent every year. After calculating the costs of waste disposal and transport to Schwedt, it turned out that we were able to reduce our expenses on waste disposal by 70 percent. And the difference will grow bigger every year, because waste management gets more and more expensive.'

UPM Raflatac says there are benefits for many parties in the RafCycle waste-to-energy process. Firstly, there is less landfilled waste, which is beneficial for the environment. Secondly, label printers in Europe now have a sustainable and reliable way to dispose of their waste. Thirdly, UPM Schwedt is able to minimize the use or – ideally – substitute the use of waste wood and fossil fuels. UPM Raflatac benefits as well, being able to offer customers not only a labelstock product, but the service to complete its life-cycle in the labeling value chain.

ENVIRO NEWS

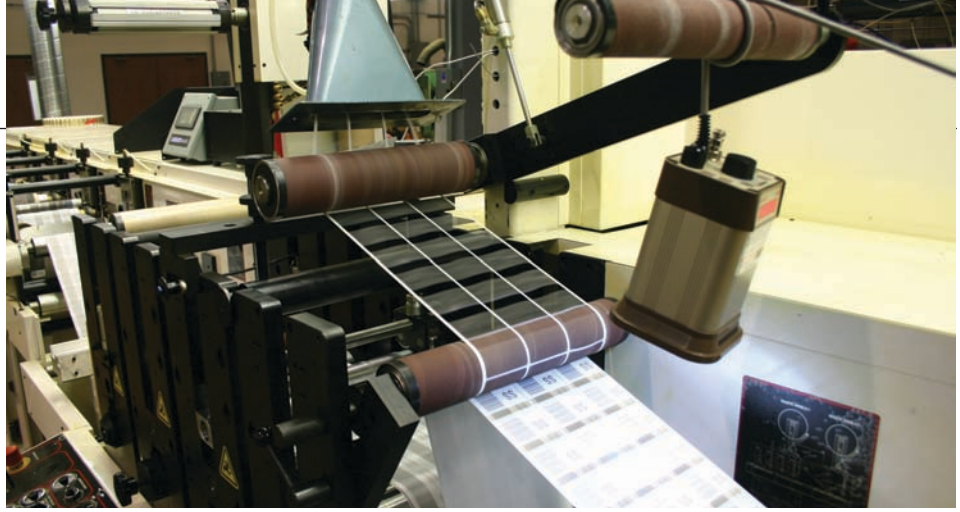
YOU HEARD IT HERE FIRST.
THE NO.1 FOR ENVIRO NEWS

LOPAREX'S PLANT NOW LANDFILL-FREE

Loparex, a global release liner manufacturer, has announced that its Hammond, Wisconsin, manufacturing plant is now landfill-free as of August 2011. This means that Loparex is now directing 99 percent of all of its waste away from landfill.

The company launched a 'going green' program across all its Americas locations in June last year, and appointed Jim Miller, business development director of the Hammond facility, as 'corporate sustainability champion'. Miller now heads a team of seven employees across the region dedicated to implementing Loparex's sustainability initiatives.

Miller estimates that 20 percent of his time is devoted to green initiatives and that 10 percent of the other members' time is set aside for green tasks and data generation. Based on those numbers, Loparex says it has dedicated the equivalent of a full-time employee towards the effort.



PRECISION AIRCONVEY AND CRG PARTNER FOR WASTE DISPOSAL ALTERNATIVE

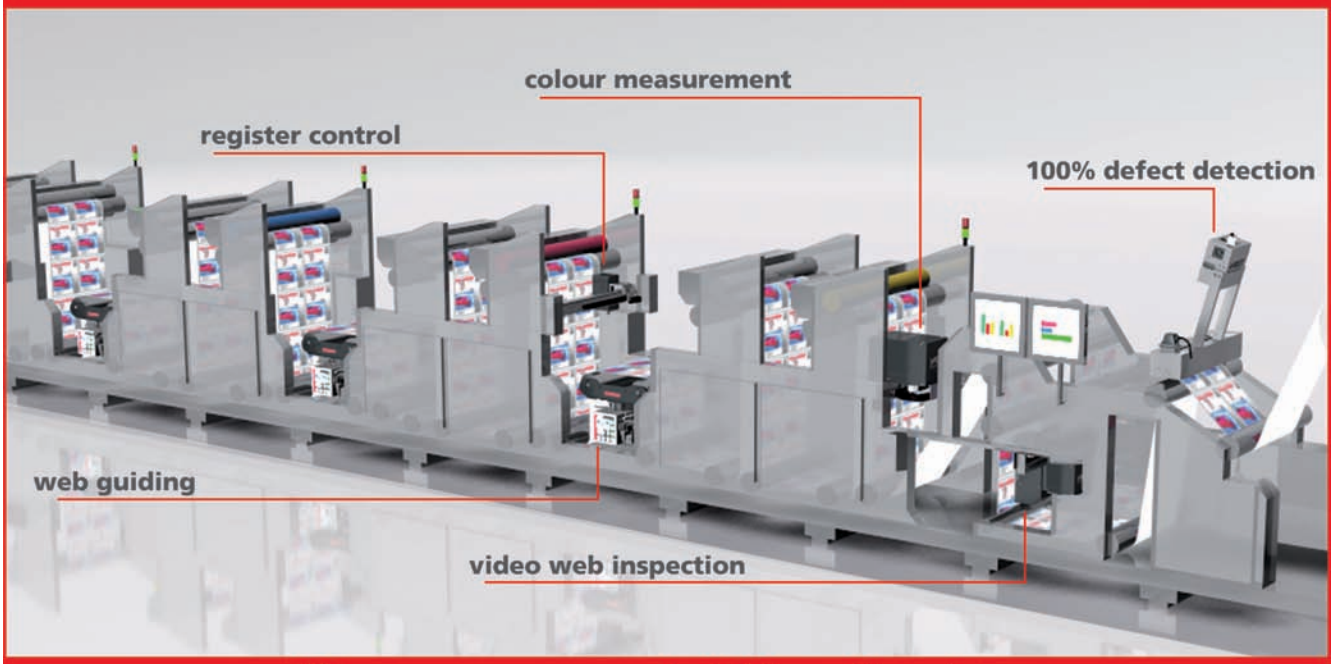
Converting equipment manufacturer Precision AirConvey (PAC) and pressure sensitive label rollstock supplier Channeled Resources Group (CRG) have formed a joint venture offering a sustainable solution to managing label matrix waste that aims to divert the cumbersome material from the waste stream and convert it to energy.

Developed to help label converters, printers, mail houses and other label matrix waste generators eliminate disposal costs for landfilling and/or incineration, the joint venture features a turnkey approach that encompasses capturing the label matrix waste at the press and conveying it to a baler via an automated label waste handling system, collecting the baled material and hauling it to a nearby Greenwood Fuels waste-to-energy processing plant for use as feedstock.

An environmentally friendly concept that also cuts costs, the joint venture is to operate as a viable operation without government subsidies by earning a fee from the waste generators for the service that reportedly saves substantially versus their recurring disposal fees.

'The logistics involved in collecting and hauling waste is usually what prevents recycling and waste to energy programs from being cost-efficient,' said Precision AirConvey's CEO Tom Embley. 'Our systems corral the waste in one place and Channeled Resources knows how to streamline logistics on a global scale so we're very confident in the future of this partnership.'

Quality Assuring Systems by BST International



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FRENCH WINE PRODUCER REPORTS SUCCESS WITH PROLINER PP30

Used by Castel for the application of labels in its two bottling centers of Castel Languedoc Roussillon and Blanquefort Bordeaux, the UPM Raflatac ProLiner PP30 release liner has allowed the French wine company to improve its productivity and environmental performance.

'The filmic release liner is characterized by lower weight and volume than paper-based glassine and results in both economic and environmental benefits for the largest producer of French wines,' said a spokesperson for UPM Raflatac in a statement. 'Made from polypropylene, ProLiner PP30 is thinner and tougher than traditional liners and allows real productivity gains. For the same diameter, the reels are longer and can have 20 percent more labels, which means fewer reel changes on the bottling line, so less waste.' Castel invested in a new labeling machine and the resilience of ProLiner PP30 has helped increase the application speed of the labels on bottles from 12,000 to 25,000 bottles per hour. The ProLiner PP30 release liner is mainly used for label application on the Châteaux Castel bottles and on bottles of brands like Roche Mazet, the best-selling wine in France with 27 million bottles a year.

The recyclability of the ProLiner PP30 release liner is said to have been a key factor for Castel, which has set a target to increase by five percent per year the recycling or reuse of waste. UPM Raflatac has launched a waste management concept, RafCycle, that allows the collection and recycling of labelstock liners, avoiding incineration or landfill of waste. The ProLiner PP30 liners that are recovered can be used as raw material for the wood-plastic composite decking material UPM ProFi.

ENVIRO NEWS

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UPM RAFLATAC ACHIEVES CERTIFICATIONS IN FRANCE AND ITALY

UPM Raflatac has achieved both FSC and PEFC Chain of Custody certifications for a range of labelstock produced at its Nancy factory in France and for its slitting and distribution operations in Osnago, Italy. All UPM Raflatac factories in Europe are now FSC and PEFC certified. The Nancy factory is the main UPM Raflatac site manufacturing wine labelstock in Europe.

DURST GROUP AWARDED ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION

Durst has been awarded ISO 14001:2004 certification for its environmental management system by Quality Austria, a partner for organizations concerned with integrated management systems.

The company says it is committed to the 16 principles of the ICC Charter for long-term, sustainable development, as well as to the principles of Agenda 21 and the Alpine Convention, both of which are important for the Tirol region, where Durst's two main manufacturing sites are located.

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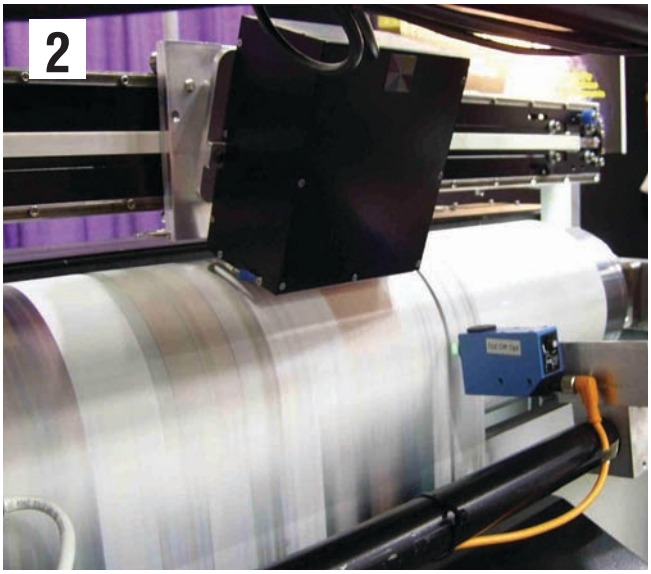

1 SHRINK PS MATERIAL
AVERY DENNISON

A new brand-enhancing pressure-sensitive labeling material for meat and dairy packaging applications was introduced by Avery Dennison Label and Packaging Materials (LPM) at Labelexpo Europe 2011. The patent-pending product, called Avery Dennison Shrink PS, is engineered to survive the vacuum-shrink process without wrinkling, providing both shelf appeal and production-related benefits.

Avery Dennison Shrink PS labels are applied to shrinkable bags off-line or in-line prior to filling and vacuum sealing. Compared with preprinted shrink-bag labeling, Shrink PS offers enhanced labeling flexibility and the opportunity to differentiate products at a later stage in the packaging process. As a result, food processors can reduce or eliminate multiple sets of preprinted shrink bags in inventory, cutting overall costs and increasing flexibility. Potential applications include the labeling of processed meats, fresh red meats, poultry and cheese products.

Shrink PS is a result of Avery Dennison's recently initiated 'collaborative innovation' strategy. By reaching out to key stakeholders from the meat and dairy industries, the Avery Dennison food innovation team was able to identify this unmet need and accelerate new product development.

When immersed in hot water following vacuum sealing, the Shrink PS labels conform and shrink with the bags and packaged products to deliver a smooth finish, without the wrinkling sometimes associated with labels applied by hand to packaging after it has been vacuum-packed and shrunk.

DICE GT UV INKJET LABEL PRESS
PROTOTYPE AND PRODUCTION SYSTEMS

Prototype and Production Systems, a manufacturer of industrial inkjet systems based in Plymouth, Minnesota, USA, has launched the Dice GT UV inkjet label press. The 4-color Dice GT handles web widths of up to 14in (355mm) and prints up to 13.85in (351mm). The system uses piezoelectric inkjet heads as well as the PPSI-12000 self-contained recirculating ink supply.

The company also offers the Dice module as a retrofit kit for flexo and web presses. The Dice GT retrofit system is available in widths of 6in-20in. It has four colors as standard but is also available with six colors including white and compatible UV fluids.

2 ISO-COMPLIANT COLOR MEASUREMENT
AVT

AVT has launched SpectraLabel, a spectrophotometer which allows the highest quality ISO-compliant color and density measurements on-press and on-demand. It is said to be particularly suitable to the printing of flexible packaging, especially for the flexo and gravure processes where consistent color quality in repetitive packaging images is critical.

SpectraLab is a robust device that employs the latest technology in color measurement, and is fully ISO-compliant with true spectrophotometric measurement of the printed colors on virtually all flexible substrates. AVT says it is the only spectrophotometer on the market for the on-press inline measurement of absolute color and density values of color critical packaging, and is an optional add-on module to the company's PrintVision/Jupiter and PrintVision/Argus models.

The measured colors are reported during run-time by the Jupiter system on press-side displays. SpectraLab comprises a Spectral Measurement Unit (SMU) that measures conformance with the recognized ISO standards for graphic arts color measurement devices, including ISO 13655 and ISO 5.3.

'A key benefit of SpectraLab is that it responds to today's increasing quality requirements,' said the company in a statement. 'Today's consumer product companies sell and package similar products worldwide, so they require consistent color quality from all printing plants, wherever the product is sold and packaged. This quality capability is critical for proper branding by consumer product companies, whose end users are globally mobile.

'Press operators value SpectraLab because they can "print to the numbers" supplied by the system, instead of making subjective judgments on quality. The system is completely intuitive for production personnel, and the ready access to a wealth of accurate run-time color measurements raises the bar for process and quality control.'

SpectraLab eliminates inefficient multiple press stops and starts for offline color measurements, and using its automated measurements, printers can satisfy their customers' increasing demands for more detailed and accurate color quality monitoring.

3 PAPER FOR IN-MOLD APPLICATIONS
STORA ENSO

Stora Enso has developed a specialty paper for in-mold label applications that allows brand owners to reduce the percentage of non-renewable materials required for packaging.

The in-mold process involves placing a printed film label in the mold before injecting plastic melt to create a finished pot. With the new InnoMould paper produced at Stora Enso's Uetersen mill in Germany, the film label can now be replaced by a paper label, reducing the amount of material of fossil origin. The paper combines with the plastic melt to an integral unit that is stiffer than packaging and made using a conventional film label. The higher bearing pressure of the pot permits higher stacking and the walls of the pots can be produced with up to 50 percent less material, says the company. InnoMould supports the use of high-resolution visuals and any desired number of different colors, including gold and silver. It is said to be suited to injection-molding processes used to produce everything from pots for yoghurt and dairy products, containers for processed fish and butter and even paint buckets.

POLYESTER LABEL FILM FOR UV PROTECTION
TORAY PLASTICS

Toray Plastics (America), a manufacturer of polypropylene, polyester, and bio-based films for packaging and industrial applications, has introduced Lumirror U65V, a UV-stabilized polyester film for use as an overlaminate to protect labels and products against the effects of UV damage.

Lumirror U65V film is said to offer excellent UV protection for outdoor label applications, prevent fading and yellowing, and maintain marking quality and film clarity. Label messages, graphics and logos remain legible, clearly defined and colorful, ensuring brand integrity and maximizing the effectiveness of the label for conveying information. In addition, U65V film's surface properties are claimed to provide outstanding handling and effective coating, improving converting efficiency. Labels made with U65V film may be applied to pumps, ladders, lawnmowers, industrial power tools, automobiles and parts, and agricultural equipment, among other outdoor consumer and industrial items.

4 TAMPER EVIDENT TAPE
SECURITY LABELS INTERNATIONAL

Security Labels International, the UK-based manufacturer of Label Lock security products, has launched a tamper evident security tape, called Tape Lock, which aimed at providing a fast and cost-effective way of confirming the integrity of scanned cargo as it travels between secure areas.

Hugo Gell, sales director, said: 'Clearly there is a need to secure screened cargo between the point of screening and its delivery to airside. Known cargo shippers need to ensure nothing can be added to or removed from the consignments before take-off. Shrink film is just not enough. Regulatory bodies have been looking very closely at this as a matter of urgency, and all forms of international cargo, freight and parcel shippers have been reviewing their procedures and updating them constantly.

Tape Lock can be wrapped around a wide range of products, from pallets to envelopes, bags, boxes and parcels, and uses a sub-surface unique coded number every 15cms (6 inches) to allow tracking and verification. If or when the tape is removed, an opened message appears on the packaging and tape, making re-use impossible.

The tape is available in perforated 50m rolls, and application possible with a standard tape gun. Every roll contains unique numbering through its length, making it traceable and removing the need for customization. Customization will be available to those who wish to increase their brand awareness or differentiate their cargo.

INTEGRA 9510 BARCODE VERIFIER
LABEL VISION SYSTEMS

Label Vision Systems (LVS) has launched the Integra 9510 barcode verifier, an upgraded version of the Integra 9505. Designed for offline verification of barcodes to ISO/IEC standards, the Integra 9510 is said to offer ease of use and the ability to verify linear (1D) and two dimensional (2D) codes without any change of equipment. The system automatically discriminates the symbology, narrows bar width and aperture to be used for evaluating the code, and highlights quality issues.

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INSTALLATIONS

L-R: Lee Willdridge, Michael McGarry and Mark Campbell of Labelone

HP INDIGO WS6600 DIGITAL PRESS
LABELONE (UK)

Labelone, a Carbon Neutral company, is the first label converter in the United Kingdom to purchase the HP Indigo WS6600, launched this week at Labelexpo Europe. Based in Northern Ireland, the converter participates mainly in food and pharmaceutical labeling and is known by its customers in the UK, France and Denmark for its quality and quick turnaround.

Michael McGarry, managing director, said: 'Digital fits our current business model and will allow us to more effectively produce the shorter volumes of orders. We pride ourselves in providing impeccable service to our clients. With the new HP machine we will be able to further improve our service while at the same time support our environmental platform by reducing overall waste in production.'

Labelone has also purchased the new inline coating unit to prepare substrates, improving the ink adhesion of the HP Indichrome technology. To finish the labels, the converter has selected an ABG Digicon Series II with a die-cutting unit and lamination capability.The company is BRC/IOP certified, has an annual turnover of six and a half million euros, employs 41 people and recently moved into a state-of-art 20,000 sq ft facility in Belfast.

EDALE FL-350 FLEXO PRESS
DOUGLAS STORRIE LABELS (UK)

Lancashire, UK-based Douglas Storrie Labels has purchased the first Edale FL-350 flexographic label, film and ticketing press. The FL-350 is a versatile flexographic press that utilizes the latest servo technology, providing pre-register, auto register and print length control features to achieve high print quality while reducing job change times and set up wastage.

Nigel Storrie, MD of Douglas Storrie Labels, said: 'Douglas Storrie Labels' customers expect top quality labels at economic rates, so choosing the right press was an important decision for us, and after careful consideration we decided to buck the trend, and opted for the Edale FL-350; in our case – an 8-color servo-driven UV flexo press, rather than going down the digital route.'

EDALE'S new FL-350 flexo press

MUMBAI-BASED Webtech Industries now runs eight Prati slitter rewinders

THREE PRATI SLITTER REWINDERS
WEBTECH INDUSTRIES (INDIA)

India-based converter Webtech Industries has invested in three Prati Sun TE330 slitter inspection rewinders, equipped with AVT camera systems, to help it continue its rapid growth in the pharmaceutical and healthcare sectors and aid its expansion plans into the cosmetics and FMCG markets.

Following its latest investment, the Mumbai company now delivers a high level of quality control with eight Prati Sun TE330 slitter inspection rewinders.

Amar Chhajed, who founded the company in 1998, said: 'We have consistently bought the Prati Sun TE330 slitter inspection rewinders for the last few years and we can easily say that the Prati machines have contributed a lot to our overall efficiency and quality.'

Webtech bought its first Prati machine through Reifenhasuer India, Prati's distributor in the area, which also represents Nuova Gidue and AVT systems, as Webtech was looking for a complete service provider including after sale support.

The Prati Sun TE330 slitter inspection rewinder detects missing labels and color discrepancies as well as a matrix waste on a wide range of pressure sensitive labels, unsupported paper, cardboard and aluminum. If equipped with inkjet printheads, it is able to overprint not only variable data such as barcodes and product codes, but also special inks. The servo technology applied on the machine allows the integration with all 100 percent camera inspection system brands. It can process web widths up to 330mm.

Webtech has grown to become one the largest manufacturers of self-adhesive labels in India. Chhajed continued: 'We purchased a Mark Andy [press] in a print exhibition almost on an impulse and the machine was just sitting around in our factory for the next six months. Then I learnt to operate the machine myself, as there were no skilled operators available. At that time Elf lubricants was screen-printing on its plastic containers. We convinced them to use sticker labels. Today many of the automotive oil companies, in addition to most of the pharmaceutical and cosmetic companies, are our clients. We have added roughly one printing machine every year since inception and have one of the largest manufacturing capacities for self-adhesive sticker labels in the sub-continent.'

KODAK and TampoMechanica arranged an open house to mark the installation of the new system

KODAK FLEXCEL NX SYSTEM
TAMPOMECHANICA (RUSSIA)

Russia-based TampoMechanica has installed a Kodak Flexcel NX digital flexographic system at its Moscow repro center. The purchase is aimed at improving the efficiency and quality of the company's flexo plate production.

TampoMechanica offers consumables and equipment for general and specialist markets: flexo, letterpress, die stamping, screen and digital. The company's portfolio includes consumables and equipment for package printing, promotional items, industrial and household products, printing plate production and ink mixing.

With several production sites across Russia, TampoMechanica is one of the largest of its kind in the country. The company's equipment includes two Kodak Thermoflex Platesetters, now supplemented by the Flexcel NX system with a Flexcel NX imager and Flexcel NX Laminator.

Kodak and TampoMechanica arranged an open house to mark the installation of the new system, which attracted a raft of packaging and label professionals.

In his welcoming speech, Vladimir Kyslitsyn, TampoMechanica's production director, emphasized the suitability of Flexcel NX technology for today's production environment. 'Frankly speaking, it seems odd that companies aren't taking advantage of the opportunities presented by the system,' he said. 'If we were thinking about expanding our production capacities now, the Flexcel NX system would become the only choice for us.'

The event continued with a seminar presented by Sergei Tomilovsky, channel manager packaging, Kodak. Attendees also had an opportunity to observe TampoMechanica operators processing plates using the Flexcel NX system. The event finished with a tour of the TampoMechanica site.

'The TampoMechanica installation is one of the first in Russia and we're very satisfied with the results,' said Tomilovsky. 'The print samples really showed how far ahead of other technologies the Flexcel NX system is. It offers unprecedented high-resolution flexo quality, and overcomes many of the problems associated with analogue printing and current digital flexo technologies.

'Printers can now create products with a much greater visual impact, make printing more consistent, and slash production costs and waste. The Flexcel NX plates require less make-ready time, while ink costs are significantly reduced. Plus the whole printing process is more consistent, which means more predictable results.'

GALLUS EM 410 S FLEXO PRESS
OTK (CZECH REPUBLIC)

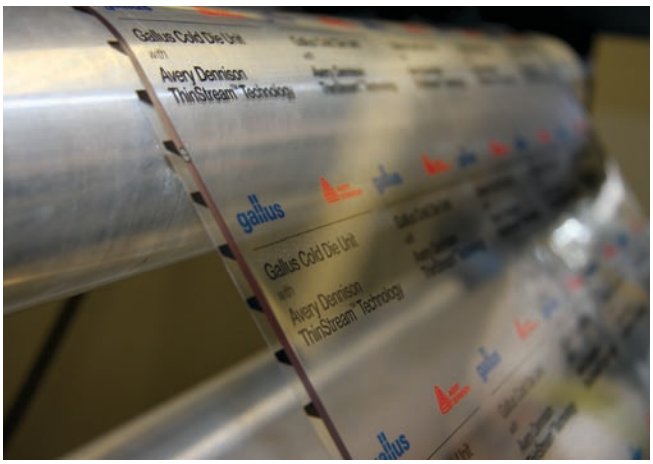
One of the leading packaging and label manufacturers in the Czech market has installed a Gallus EM 410 S to boost productivity and expand its range of applications.

Obchodní tiskárni Kolín's (OTK) product portfolio ranges from flexible packaging and forms to graphic and adhesive labels. The print shop, based 60km east of Prague, updated its production facilities for self-adhesive labels at the start of June this year. The new Gallus EM 410 S 9-color flexographic press – located next to the still fully functional narrow web Gallus R 250-F press that was installed more than 20 years ago – is the first of its kind in the Czech Republic.

The new press was installed at the print shop in May, with an official commissioning ceremony on 14 June. Guests included OTK's most important customers and representatives from the supplier company Heidelberg Praha. The event aimed to introduce customers to the varied processing and production capabilities of the new Gallus EM 410 S, which is said to greatly extend not only capacity but also the range of applications at the print shop thanks, among other things, to its optional functions.

According to Josef Squerzi, head of self-adhesive labels, investing in the Gallus press opens up new opportunities for OTK, particularly in the field of labels for the pharmaceutical industry. The company also aims to use the press extensively for high-quality and technically complex labels and special labels such as in-mold.

The press can handle a maximum printing width of 410mm, with a maximum motif length of 660mm. Its high level of modularity and versatility supports a wide range of jobs, including combining flexographic printing with further printing and finishing processes in a single pass.



AVERY DENNISON'S THINSTREAM TECHNOLOGY
EUROSTAMPA (ITALY) AND BROOKE & WHITTLE (USA)

Eurostampa Industria Grafica, based in Bene Vagienna, Italy, will be the first recipient of a Gallus Cold Die Unit with Avery Dennison ThinStream technology. Eurostampa is a family-run business focusing on wine and spirits, ready-to-drink containers, chocolate, food, beer, cosmetics, mineral waters, tubes and cartons.

In North America, Brook & Whittle, of North Branford, Connecticut, also has acquired an Avery Dennison ThinStream cold die unit, developed by custom equipment builder, Drilling Technical Services. Brook & Whittle produces labels for a variety of end use industries including the beverage, personal care, food and household sectors.

Avery Dennison ThinStream allows the die-cutting of labels with a liner as thin as 12 microns, half of the current minimum in the market.

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L-R: Maximilian Illert, head of Illert Etiketten; Gianfranco Cerutti, manager of Omet's German branch; and Jens Grosser, production manager at Illert Etiketten

THE E+L INSPECTION SYSTEM was installed on an Omet X-flex 430 press

OMET VARYFLEX-F1 FLEXO PRESS
ILLERT ETIKETTEN (GERMANY)

German label converter Illert Etiketten has installed an Omet VaryFlex-F1 press at its facility in Hanau, near Frankfurt. The new machine has an 8-color unit with a web width of 670mm.

The company credits the machine's arrival with allowing it to offer a wider range of services to its clients. Maximilian Illert, who runs the company with his mother, Monika Illert, said: 'On our VaryFlex-F1, we are able to create new types of self-adhesive labels, such as peel & seal, as well as other projects we are working on which are still secret. VaryFlex-F1 was the right choice to develop our business.'

'Omet was the first manufacturer to successfully install package printing machines with a 670mm web width,' he continued. 'We carried out strict tests on the VaryFlex-F1 and other competitive machines, which proved conclusively that the print quality of Omet's press was superior on all flexible materials, even the most difficult ones like 12 micron BOPP films.'

MARTIN AUTOMATIC SPLICER
TREBNICK SYSTEMS (USA)

Trebnick Systems, a flexo printer based in Springboro, Ohio, USA, has installed an automatic splicer from Martin Automatic. The MBSF butt splicer has been put into service on a Mark Andy P-7 flexographic press running supported and unsupported film and other products.

Gregg Trebnick reports that the splicer has reduced the company's material waste in several ways: 'Before the Martin, we'd lose at least 300 feet of web at a manual splice getting back into register; the non-stop splice doesn't affect auto registration at all,' he said. 'In terms of core waste, with the Martin, we're able to run down to nothing on the core.'

Trebnick also notes that the company has started using up partial rolls from inventory, something that could not be done efficiently before adding the splicer.

L-R: Aaron Trebnick, sales; Gregg Trebnick, R&D; Linda Trebnick, president; and Klaus Kok, consultant

E+L INSPECTION SYSTEM ON NEW OMET PRESS
RESLAN (TURKEY)

Turkish label printer Reslan has installed a Nyscan inspection system from Erhardt + Leimer on its recently purchased Omet X-flex 430 press.

The Nyscan workflow includes PDF pre-press comparison on the X-flex 430 with simultaneous full 100 percent inspection on all production. The cameras' TubeLight illumination also allows any print method to be inspected with ease and, with the additional Delta E module in place, color consistency and repeatability is also monitored.

All production files are handled and transferred by use of hand-held barcode scanners, and all defect and waste information is then transferred to the rewinder for accurate and efficient final reel editing.

The set-up includes an integrated Elscan digital web video system which maintains the press operator's ability to provide high quality at high speed.

An off-line Nyscan 100 percent inspection system was also installed on a second rewinder to facilitate inspection from the other presses on the shop floor.

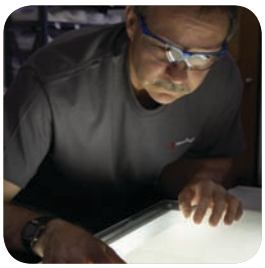
ATLAS FILM SLITTER
OPP FILM (PERU)

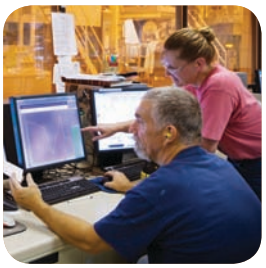
Atlas Converting Equipment is to supply a 6.3m wide Atlas CW964 primary film slitter which will be dedicated to the production of a new 6.2m wide CPP (cast polypropylene) film line at OPP Film in Lima, Peru. The new CPP film line will be commissioned early in 2012 and will be one of the two widest CPP lines in operation worldwide and the first in the Americas at this width.

OPP Film of Peru is part of Oben Holding Group and began operations in BOPP film production in 1991 with the foundation of BOPP del Ecuador. This company exported film to the neighboring countries of Colombia and Peru and then commenced production of BOPP film in Peru in 2003 with the establishment of OPP Film in Lima. Since then, continuing expansion of business has led the group to invest in additional BOPP and CPP film lines, an extrusion coating line and vacuum metalizing plant.

This latest order will eventually bring the total number of Atlas and Titan slitter rewinders installed for the Oben Group to 12 machines. Two 8.9m wide primary slitters for two new BOPP film lines were ordered last year and are currently being installed. One 6.8m wide primary film slitter was also commissioned in 2002.

Atlas has also supplied two CW800 and one CW810 film slitters up to 5m wide, with five 1650mm wide compact Titan ER610 slitters for converting narrower width films for flexible packaging applications. One of the Titan ER610 slitters is installed at the company's BOPP film production facility near Buenos Aires in Argentina.





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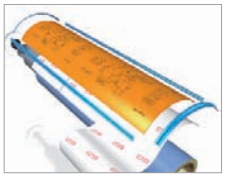
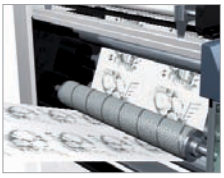
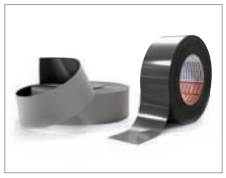
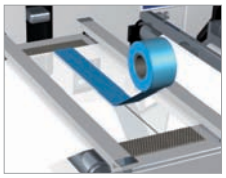


tesa® roller wrapping





tesa® splicing



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HOW CAN YOU grow your capabilities without growing your financial obligations? Bob Cronin, The Open Approach, suggests some answers

The label industry has seen a flurry of M&A activity as of late. Continuing consolidation, mega-mergers, rising investor interest… the sheer amount of M&A alone indicates its undeniable effect on the marketplace.

But for many companies, M&A is not a desirable goal. You may be perfectly content running your third-generation family business. You could still be partnering with an old college friend or simply enjoying your day-to-day routine. Your 20 employees may be like family, and you couldn't even imagine wanting to grow into another label giant.

Indeed, virtually 90 percent of our great industry is made up of players with less than 10million dollars in sales. While you probably have never lost a job because you "weren't big enough," you may have lost a few because of a service you didn't offer in-house or a type of label you couldn't produce efficiently. And as customers continue to narrow down their vendor pools, you could be losing more projects, more often.

What's behind the M&A spike is not a quest for size, it's a move to gain the essential capabilities, technologies, and skill sets the marketplace demands. So how can you grow your capabilities without growing your financial obligation?

For companies that aren't ready for M&A, the solution could be a strategic alliance. Not simply a "preferred vendor" or outsourcing arrangement, a strategic alliance is a formal agreement between two companies to bring together their equipment, technological, and human resources – without any upfront financial commitment or physical relocation. Strategic alliances can multiply a company's sales – bringing both entities greater capabilities and sales potential, along with enhanced market positioning.

But strategic alliances must be well-defined and well executed to be effective. They must also provide for real and meaningful solutions that can respond to changing market dynamics and customer needs. Too often, these arrangements get hung up in egos, selfishness, lack of forethought, or inequities. Any of these can derail the relationship, and fast.

We all need to find ways to reinvent our business. In today's fast-moving world when cash flows are scarce but needs are real, a strategic alliance may provide the needed benefit without burdensome financial requirements or challenging integrations. As you consider whether a strategic alliance may be right for you, I am available at any time to help you think through it. While I strongly recommend an advisor, many entities wish to begin the process themselves. As you start, I offer the following six critical steps/considerations. These certainly aren't an exhaustive checklist, and you should be prepared for much review. It may actually take longer to put together a strategic alliance than an acquisition – since with an acquisition, there is typically a "lead" player. Regardless, any move to transform or grow your business is worthy of the extra time and effort, and any and every move you take should be scrutinized as closely as possible.

1. SELECT THE RIGHT PARTNER

Many owners' first consideration for an alliance partner is a trusted long-time supplier. This may seem logical – you already know them and they get your business. However, nine times out of ten, these companies do not bring any real strategic alliance value. They are with you because they support your offerings, not because they extend your platform and attract new business.

What you need from a partner is growth. Who has the capabilities, means, position, vertical expertise, equipment, etc. that can best propel your sales?

While your "friends" may be able to help you adapt your value proposition, they are often unable to tell you what you really need. Some of the best strategic alliances are those with a formidable competitor. They know your gaps and weak points and have likely crafted solutions to fill them. But be careful that they represent themselves honestly and will represent your company well. Ethics and scruples are important, too. You don't want to lose your service image. In the end, you need a partner that brings about significant new power and abilities, while maintaining your brand value. Look for substance, not supplement.

2. ESTABLISH A SYSTEM FOR SHARED RISK AND REWARD

The sharing of risk and reward is central to strategic alliance success. Most alliances that fail do so because

the proper considerations for risk and reward have not been made. Like M&A, strategic alliances allow for significant variance in how the final contracts are set up. Because of this, many partners are inclined to have certain proprietary assets, copyrights, or technologies still in their favor, which may affect the alliance's ability to forge ahead.

For example, a digital and a conventional player could form a strategic alliance, but the agreement might give the digital player 70 percent of the digital sales, even though more sales are brought in by the conventional sales force. Or, a new asset is purchased and one of the partners is required to take on a greater share of the expense. If the asset proves successful, that partner benefits more than the other. If it fails, that partner could lose everything.

The lack of shared risk and reward will ultimately break down a strategic alliance. Profit sharing, loss sharing, capital expense sharing, and the like will ensure decisions are made jointly and will keep both parties aligned and directed toward mutual objectives. Of course, to do so, you must also make sure you are in agreement as to how financials are calculated, recorded, and distributed. You simply can't partner with two vastly different systems for managing money.

3. DEFINE MANAGEMENT STRUCTURE, ROLES, AND DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

One of the most difficult things to do when forming a strategic alliance is keeping management teams collaborative. As part of the strategic alliance agreement, you need to consider how leadership direction is determined, how operations will synch up, how negotiations will be conducted, how disputes will be handled, etc. Also, determine who does billing, who controls the customer, and who handles marketing. Make considerations for organizational cultures to avoid potential clashes. Set up provisions that provide acceptable influence and also sufficient protection to both parties and support a common strategy. And don't forget to determine how to synergize resources.

4. CREATE A STRATEGIC PLAN FOR MARKETING

A strategic alliance must be purposeful and meaningful to your collective audiences. It must be backed by a strong marketing plan – and buy-in from your people – so that it comes to market as a powerful solution that can extend customers' businesses and not just a distraction. Too often, companies believe a press release or word of mouth can take them through this phase. If a strategic alliance is introduced badly, it will perform just the same. While negotiating your agreement, determine how you should bring the new business to market. What new capabilities will be the most compelling? How should you be revamping your sales presentations? What's your value story? How do you start coordinating promotional email, social media, and website efforts? Can you showcase your new combined abilities with a promo/leave-behind?

5. CONSIDER YOUR SALES FORCE

Strategic alliances can be challenging – and counterproductive – if there is too much sales overlap. Certainly, this is an initial consideration before getting too far into things. If the arrangement does indeed hold value, you must accommodate the combined sales team.

Don't neglect cross-training on the respective partner's systems and capabilities. Keep the doors open for plant tours, visits, and sample sharing. Make sure each side is comfortable with the other side's offerings and equipped to sell the additional products and services. Perhaps incentivize each team at startup. Explore large discrepancies in compensation structure that can lead to resentment or refusal to sell your new combined lineup.

6. SET LIMITATIONS, ASSESSMENTS, AND EXIT OPPORTUNITIES

As with any formal agreement, you should always make provisions for periodic reviews, refinements, or dissolution. Most of the time, well-executed strategic alliances can be greatly successful, but occasionally they simply don't work out. Sometimes, they can even become buyout opportunities. Planning for options in the future will safeguard the investment of your time, resources, and efforts.

Forging a strategic alliance can be challenging. Just like the parties involved, it can be your friend or foe. It must be done with the right level of participation, effort, and commitment – and it must be established so that both parties equally share in its risk and reward. Executed properly, it can be the big move you've always needed. Who knows, your next venture might be a step into M&A.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Cronin is managing partner of The Open Approach, an investment banking/M&A firm focused exclusively on the world of print. The firm's proven results have made it the exclusive member-recommended firm of PIA/GATF and IPW. For more information, visit www.theopenapproach.net, email Bob Cronin at bobrcronin@aol.com, or call +1 630 323 9700.

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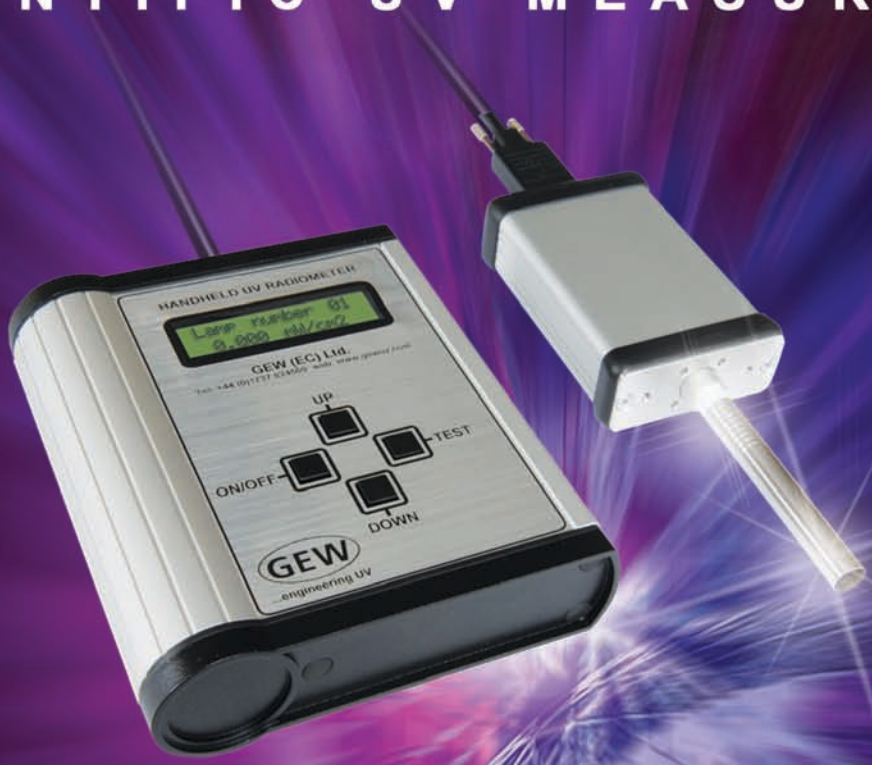

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BECOMING a more environmentally conscious label converter is a key step to an enhanced bottom line and improved profitability, argues Mike Fairley

Manage the environment: improve profitability

Over the past few years the topics of sustainability, waste, carbon emissions and the environment have been receiving every increasing exposure and attention in the media. Climate change, sustainable forests, petroleum resources, transport and distribution costs – all are beginning to have a growing impact on the world of labels. Yet, relatively few label converters to date seem to have taken these topics seriously, or have implemented measure to improve their environmental performance. So what are the challenges?

Concerns about the environment and global climate change were already beginning to be raised as far back as the 1970s. At that time it was mainly about the earth cooling. Later came concerns about aerosol gases destroying the ozone layer, with Governments around the world agreeing that damaging CFC gases had to be replaced with more environmentally friendly alternatives. Today, the whole environment, sustainability, climate change and waste debate have shifted dramatically. Rather than just being about greenhouse gases, a whole raft of legislation, guidelines, directives, and protocols have been introduced over the past 10 or 12 years, placing an ever increasing impact on the label industry and its suppliers.

Driven by Governments, environmental and consumer groups, brand owners and retail groups, the label industry has already been adopting the use of more environmentally friendly materials from managed forests, thinner materials, sourcing of alternative tree-free fiber papers, new types of films, recycled content materials, recycle compatible adhesives (RCAs) and VOC-free inks and solutions.

More and more Governments have banned (or are looking to ban) packaging and label waste going to landfill. This puts a major pressure on the label industry as around 80 per cent of label waste today (including release liners) currently goes to landfill worldwide. Waste collection and recycling of edge-trim, matrix and liner waste has started, but has many challenges to overcome before it becomes a universal solution or industry standard.

Carbon emissions and energy usage data documentation is now expected in much of the label industry and, in some regards, is being addressed. Demand for data transparency will continue to progress. The cost of energy is increasing rapidly on a global basis and the label sector needs to do much more to reduce energy consumption, to become leaner in manufacturing, to limit emissions, to design recycle compatible label constructions and to become cleaner and 'greener' in its operations.

Much is already being done to aid the converter. TLMI, FINAT and other label associations have introduced, support and encourage environmental schemes – such as LIFE - or the converter can alternatively implement ISO 14000 or tailor an EMS to suit their business needs. Many label converters already have to comply with Scorecard programs introduced by their key customers, such as Walmart and Procter & Gamble. Demand for label converters to become accredited or work with these types of programs, again, will continue.

The industry's major supplier companies, whether labelstock producers, press manufacturers, UV-curing systems suppliers, ink and platemaking companies, etc, are today all playing their part, but much more needs to be done to educate and inform the label converter and their customers about what can be done, and what needs to be done to remain successful, sustainably, moving forward.

Despite all of the above taking place, all too frequently the message from the label producer seems to be either that their customers are not demanding it, or it is too expensive to comply with the many and changing environmental performance requirements. Well, that is all now changing rapidly. The 'Environment and Sustainability' issue is now fast rising to the very top of the converter's agenda.

Read the full version of this article in the Labels & Labeling Yearbook, available later in Q4.

Hungry

THE FOOD LABELING INDUSTRY is faced with many requirements, from best before dates to nutritional information and sustainable packaging. Carol Houghton investigates

Food labeling is continually under pressure from government regulations and consumer demands. Information on the label is an essential component of the product, supplying nutritional and ingredient information, as well as packaging credentials such as recyclability.

Government legislation sets requirements for food labels, aiming to ensure labels are honest and allow consumers access to the information required to make an informed decision about the food they buy. In the US, for example, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) guidelines cover the entire production of the label, from information that must be included to the substrates and inks used to produce it.

Consumers are becoming more concerned with what they are eating, pushed by health professionals to eat a recommended amount of fruit and vegetables a day and to monitor salt, fat and sugar intake. This has resulted in calls for front of pack labels to clearly show the product's nutritional value, in addition to the more detailed, traditional nutritional grid and ingredients on the back. Legislation also covers variations on 'use by', 'sell by' and 'use within' dates. It is important that labels are clearly marked with these dates and ingredients to avoid a risk to public health, particularly in relation to food allergies.

In the UK alone £12 billion worth of food is wasted each year as consumers throw out food according to the date on the label, when it is actually still safe to eat. In September, food organizations were welcoming proposals to drop 'sell-by' dates on packaging. In future, 'use by' labels could only be used if the food could be unsafe after a particular date. 'Best before' dates will indicate when a product is at its best, although consumption after this date is safe.

Paul Johnston-Knight, director, Papico, paper agent, comments 'The trends we are seeing with labels and labeling are towards the greater legal and moral necessity for companies, especially the big brands, to carry greater

levels of information on their packaging, no matter how small their label. In fact the size of labels is becoming a “big” issue as cost increases and retail pressure mean that many brands are trying to limit these pressures by reducing the size of their labels.’ He continues: ‘The fact that they have to carry more and more nutritional and health information, including warnings for confectionery and alcohol, means that the “real estate” with which they can entice a consumer to pick up their product is reducing in size even further.’

TASTIER THAN THE REST

The trend for private label and supermarket own brands has seen more and more products appearing on the shelves, creating a competitive market place in which products must fight for attention (see building brands, issue 4). Paul Johnston-Knight, director, Papico comments ‘We are constantly explaining to customers and end users that the label is their “silent salesperson” on the shop shelf and that it is critical that they make the best use possible of this premium advertizing and promotional space.’

He emphasizes ‘it is in everyone’s interests to make sure that the best use is made of the huge variety of paper substrates available, the excellent labeling technologies and printing and finishing processes which are now commonly accessible to really make the label stand out – without really capitalizing on this space brand owners can find that their new product developments can fall flat, no matter how good the product which is hidden inside the package.’

Shelf appeal is particularly important in the food industry. Packaging and the label need to convey the taste and quality of a product but with so much information required on the label, brands can find they have little space left to create an impact at the point of purchase. Vlad Sljapic, sales director, digital printing solutions, Domino, Inkjet printer manufacturer for coding, marking and traceability applications, believes QR codes provide an opportunity that has not yet been fully realized by retailers. QR codes provide a multi-media platform through print, complying with the trend of linking print to web as well as following the golden rule of advertizing – occupying less space but with added value.

For a relatively small investment, multiple languages, competitions, additional product information and even live updates can all be accessed by the consumer via their smart phone. ‘QR codes can link the product to a story, informing customers where it came from, its sustainability, carbon footprint, farm to shelf miles, who grew it, even the name of the cow the milk in the product came from and images of the farmer’ says Sljapic. Abukama chicken farm in Japan has utilized this offering – having installed a webcam in one of its chicken coops which consumers can link to via the QR code on the label. This allows consumers to virtually meet the chickens and see the environment in which they are raised. Sljapic adds ‘The idea is to bring the consumer closer. In the competitive market, the key is to differentiate the product by providing information which the consumer bases their purchase decision around.’

SUSTAINABILITY

A major trend for 2011 has been sustainability, with consumers looking for sustainable, environmentally-friendly packaging. Nielsen’s 2011 Global Online Environment and Sustainability Survey polled more than 25,000 internet users worldwide. Findings suggested packaging waste was one of the fastest growing worries among consumers, with 83 percent of respondents saying companies need to implement environmentally friendly programs, favoring recycled packaging.

But, Dr Adrian Steele, managing director of Mercian Labels Group, notes ‘Whilst customers are increasingly well informed in some areas of labeling technology, asking for less common laminates and premium foil finishes to deliver 'market leader' shelf edge appeal, we are continually surprised by their lack of interest in environmental credentials as part of their product selection decision. Issues such as recyclability of labels just aren’t a big concern for most of our 9000 small business customers. They are far more interested in taking advantage of the very flexible 'mix and match' production capabilities offered by digital production and work flows.’

Label and pack producers are being faced with demands for more sustainable materials, reducing materials usage, eliminating landfill, reducing energy consumption and carbon footprint. A further challenge is presented with rises in material costs for paper, film and ink, making increasingly different to produce sustainable labels and packaging with good shelf appeal whilst keeping costs low.

Michael Taylor, Innovia films, agrees end users are seeking ways to reduce materials usage. He says the theme is thinner materials or materials which are not from oil-based (finite) resources. In some cases this is to reduce costs while in others it is part of a sustainability initiative. Innovia Films’ NatureFlex, made from wood pulp and other new polymers are being used as a ‘green, renewable’ alternative. The product range is certified as fully compostable in both home and industrial composting environments. NatureFlex films with the appropriate adhesives can be disposed of in compost along with other organic waste. Taylor adds ‘NatureFlex label films are finding increasing use in fruit labeling and in the labeling of food packaging where the packaging material is also either biodegradable or renewable.’

for solutions

SOLVENTS VS WATERBASED

Sabine Bühler, sales director at Francis Bühler AG, supplier of coding and track and trace equipment, says 'we have to constantly explain every day that solvent ink should not be used in the food environment if it is not really necessary. In fact the solution is simple: Choosing the correct material for tags or labels allows you to print with water based inks. But if the customer insists on glossy material just for being nicer, then they have to accept to print with solvent inks.'

TRACK AND TRACE

From the point of packaging through to distribution, retailing and the consumer's plate, quality control and safety is vital within the supply chain. Retailers have to monitor the temperature in which food is stored to ensure optimum freshness, and consumers must be able to recognize when food is at its nutritional best and safe to eat, or when it should be disposed of.

Vlad Sljapic at Domino cites unique identification as a useful traceability tool, providing the retailer with a better understanding of their stock as well as tracing the products from the source. Why would companies want to employ this technology? Supermarkets use a range of different farms, growers and suppliers, making it hard to identify a particular batch of produce. Unique identification allows each individual product in the supply chain to be traced from the source. When a virulent strain of e.coli was found in organic cucumbers in Europe earlier this year, the ability to guarantee all products from the infected source were safely removed from the supply chain would have allowed retailers to respond rapidly to consumer fears.

Sljapic says 'simple applications such as best before dates are functional and also have a high throughput as they don't slow down manufacturing process.' However, increasingly a new generation of smart labels with monitoring capabilities are being used for time and temperature monitoring in the food chain.

'Use within' dates tell consumers how long a product will remain edible for after it is first opened. However, keeping track of time is not always easy. Pete Higgins, founder and CEO of UWI Technology, has developed a unique labeling system to solve this problem.

Higgins explains: 'The UWI Label is a patent pending flexible smart label with an embedded elapsed time indicator strip which displays the elapsed time from opening. It is suitable for pharmaceutical, industrial, food and drink products which degrade or become hazardous when the recommended "use within" period has expired.

The UWI Label may be applied during routine manufacturing and packaging production, using the same label application machinery that is frequently used to secure anti-tamper labels onto jars, bottles and containers.

Active indicator panels in the label progressively turn green to show the elapsed time from opening of a product. A red panel alerts the consumer when the "use within" period has expired and the product may no longer be safe to use.

Time ranges can be set as hours, days, weeks, months up to a six month total and this desired time period is pre-set at the point of production manufacture. Periods longer than six months are subject to further UWI Technology R&D and validation.

The time display technology used in the labels is proven in R&D and repeatability testing and is reproducible in small volume prototype manufacture. During 2011 the product is being commercialized to support large volume mass production with product line manufacturing volume capability extending into millions of units.'

CHANGING MARKET NEEDS IN THE NICHE FOOD PRODUCER SECTOR

Dr Adrian Steele - managing director, Mercian Labels Group says: 'We have seen a big change in the label requirements of smaller food label producers in the past year or two" says Dr Adrian Steele of UK short run specialists Mercian Labels. "Boutique food producers are ordering smaller quantities far more often, and with many more design sorts than they were even two years ago. Today we see many hundreds of small jobs with complex sorts and volume specifications with monthly batches of 20 sorts over 10,000 labels really not uncommon nowadays. This has put a lot of pressure to develop our processes and software to handle this increased complexity and retain high levels of quality performance.

Delivery times continue to get shorter. Last year delivery in three working days from artwork approval was acceptable for almost any new job as a good service. Now we see a lot of food label producers really living 'on the edge' and looking for next day dispatch for brand new jobs at no extra charge. Gone are the days when you did a same day or next day job mostly to take business from a competitor who had let down their customer and an urgent delivery was needed to get a 'foot in the door'. Today we see customers building their business on the basis of having very quick unique batch deliveries. Holding finished goods in stock to serve this is just impossible, so you now have to make 100 percent on demand very quickly to serve the market needs, as nobody will wait for anything anymore. If I was to speculate, I can see genuinely fast deliveries and integration with customer processes being the key battleground to secure good labels business in the food industry in 2012. It is almost as if the 'Just In Time' model of the automotive industry is being expected as standard by smaller food producers.'

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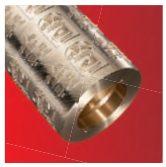

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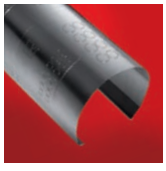

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RFID labels also have a huge potential but cost is a big issue. Electrical features will always be more expensive than print and the infrastructure needed to read the label – containing antennae which emit information about a particular unit – is another big investment. Sljapic says 'it is a good technology but is not widely being used.' He believes that given the number of years it has been in the market, the slow rate of adaption is a clear indication of the problems being experienced.

Traceability features such as RFID and QR codes allow more information to be accessed than the standard package. The use of QR codes has dramatically increased in recent months, Sljapic attributes this to the 'small space sacrifice that gives the consumer access to a whole infrastructure of targeted, personalized marketing'. The true potential of the method is that it identifies the consumer so the brand can tailor and customize future campaigns around them. 'QR codes work both ways, they allow supermarkets to efficiently manage stock as well as identify the market more accurately and allow targeted information to be brought closer to the customer in one method' says Sljapic. 'Traditional advertizements are aimed at millions, tailored to the core market segment and statistically based. Therefore they offer no guarantee that the audience will purchase the product or begin to build brand relationships. Research shows QR codes are up to seven times more effective as well as saving companies money in the long run.'

Helen Bridgett, The Co-operative Food head of strategy, insight and planning, says: 'Customers want to know what they are buying, where it's from and how it got here, as well as the health benefits and what they can do with it in the kitchen. QR codes present an opportunity to raise awareness and inform customers about the foods we sell.'

The Co-operative Group will be printing QR codes on five fresh product's packaging –dessert apples, pears, onions, Maris Piper potatoes and baking potatoes, produced by selected British growers including The Co-operative Farms – as part of a trail to enable Smartphone users to learn more about the food. The codes will direct the consumer to a mobilized website featuring information about the Group's growers, recipes and nutritional information. Customers without Smart phones will be able to text a short code to receive the URL so they are not left out.

'Consumers have a growing appetite for knowledge on all things food related and this was an opportunity to provide them with an easy way to access this information.

It is an exciting time for food labeling, with a new generation of smart labels being developed to enhance shelf life, improve or monitor freshness and indicate temperature changes or time. It is expected that additional sensing features – such as bacteria detection and moisture or odor absorption – will also be incorporated into the label.

INK MIGRATION

According Jonathan Sexton, Sun Chemical, label printers need to understand the design and construction of packaging in order to select appropriate inks and coatings.

"Printed packaging" includes all printed consumer packaging material used to protect, decorate and inform, including labels, sleeves, outer and inner packaging. It c§an be placed under three categories:

PRIMARY PACKAGING

Primary or direct packaging is defined as packaging where packaged goods are in prolonged, direct contact with the non-printed side of the printed packaging material. Examples include plastic milk bottles, juice cartons, direct fill food and confectionery items, sweet twist-wraps, crisps and peanuts.

During printing, there is potential for set off from the print surface to the reverse – food contact – side of the packaging due to stacking or re-reeling. As a result, this is always considered to be an application requiring low migration products.

PRIMARY OUTER WRAP PACKAGING

Primary outer wrap packaging, also known as indirect or secondary packaging, refers to the packaged goods retained within some form of primary inner wrap, e.g. flow wrap or a tray. The goods are not in direct contact with the printed outer packaging. Examples include cereal boxes, pizza boxes, biscuit packs and confectionery.

NON-FOOD PACKAGING

This packaging's content is not intended for human or animal consumption e.g. household cleaning products, white goods, garden products. Appropriate material selection for the packaging, such as the choice of ink and coating, therefore depends on the construction of the package and migration barrier properties of the inner wrap.

When printing labels for food packaging, the following elements should be considered in order to do a comprehensive risk assessment of potential migration:

- **Packaging end-use** – what will be packaged?
- **How will the packaging be used** – e.g. cook-in or microwave?
- **Pre-press and pack design** – what is the function of the packaging and which surfaces are being printed?
- **Selection of packaging materials** – what are their barrier properties?
- **Selection of inks and other consumables** – are they fit for purpose,
- **Printing equipment and management** – are they adapted?
- **Press room, handling, transport and storage**

Different label applications also need to be reviewed for their migration potential. Examples of factors to consider include:

Self adhesive labels – The choice of substrate can offer varying degrees of migration barrier properties from an absolute barrier such as glass or foil, to thin gauge polyethylene at the other extreme which offers very little in the way of migration barrier properties. The label's release liner can also influence migration levels.

Shrink sleeves – Usually reverse-printed so the printed ink is in direct contact with the food container. Not a problem if it is a functional barrier such as glass or metal, but plastic containers such as drinks bottles or yogurt pots offer limited migration barrier properties.

Wrap-around Labels – Similar to sleeves, but these are often surface-printed adding another layer of substrate between the ink and the food. However unless the food container is glass or aluminum, a risk of migration still exists.

In-Mold-Labels – Similar to wrap-around labels, the label is fused into the container, making it part of the primary inner wrap which being plastic is not considered a functional migration barrier. The heat of the in-mold process can accelerate or increase the level of migration. In addition, molded containers are usually nested before filling, allowing direct contact of the printed surface with the food contact surface, so there is a risk of set off migration from the label area.

Lidding – although printed on one side, the risk of set-off migration or contact migration is high. Not only due to re-reeling or stacking of the lids, but also the heatseal layer on the inside of the lid can absorb potential migrants and release them into the food during storage.

Digital print + cut drives savings in Canada

DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE explores a Toronto converter's decision to integrate Primera's digital label converting system into the business

The old adage 'Time is money' may be truer today than any other period known to capitalist mankind. Add waste into the equation, and the outcome can have an even more profound positive or negative effect on a business' profitability.

Taylor Label, located in Toronto, Canada is known as a quality producer of barcode labels, thermal transfer labels and stock laser label sheets, and is considered an environmental pioneer amongst the nation's printing community. The converter tends to produce primarily small to medium sized runs (5,000 – 20,000 feet) using two Mark Andy 910 and 830 10 inch machines at its plant, which has, until recently, worked effectively for the business' needs.

However, the converter has gained more and more traditional color label work in recent years, and has experienced an increase in demand for spot colors on barcode labels. Lloyd Taylor, president, explains, 'the long set-up times and increasing amount of solid waste was beginning to eat away at our margins.' Taylor used his environmental knowledge as a tool when more closely assessing production time and manufacturing waste against the consequences of ink mixing and waste, wash-up time and substrate waste found in short volume runs of labels with his basic conventional technology. He knew that a digital system was critical to becoming more efficient when producing these shorter runs.

PRIMERA'S THE ANSWER

Taylor Label was immediately intrigued with the Primera CX1200 laser driven print engine and off-line digital FX1200 finishing unit when introduced in 2009; and after cross-evaluating the system against other options at a number of tradeshows, purchased and installed the press and finishing units in June 2011. The converter closely evaluated its internal color work over a 12 month period and found that the work at 1000 feet left a significant hole in its production capability. As a traditional barcode printer only just moving into custom label printing, Taylor Label felt that many of the solutions available to the market were run-wise more about volumes in the 100,000s and were not able to really compete at the 1000s.

'We've been looking for the right solution for a few years now,' Taylor says. 'The problem for many larger converters can be solved with the Indigos. It's a great solution. But for our business model the price tag is high and the footprint is rather large, and does not deliver a finished product.'

Taylor adds, 'What has been available just didn't make sense for us. We wanted the digital technology in a system that operated more like a 'traditional' press.' And the converter, who has pioneered the construction of greener pressure sensitive label materials, wanted to be sure whichever system was chosen could handle a variety of substrates.

Now, the converter does have work that is 100,000 plus feet, but typical jobs are more like 5000 feet, and many are 1000 or less. Taylor says, 'For a digital machine to effectively meet our needs, we knew that it could only be great at one of the two. We understood that we wouldn't be able to get the benefits of both efficient long and short-short runs.'

PRINTING AND FINISHING

The CX1200 provides a 1200 x 1200 dpi print resolution to produce clear graphics and bar codes. It's quoted to run at 16.25 fpm (five m/min) with a laser based print engine that Taylor Label felt would be able to meet the growing customer need for more color, shorter volume work.

EXAMPLE of complex cutting possible with FX1200

SUSTAINABLE PERKS WITH PRIMERA

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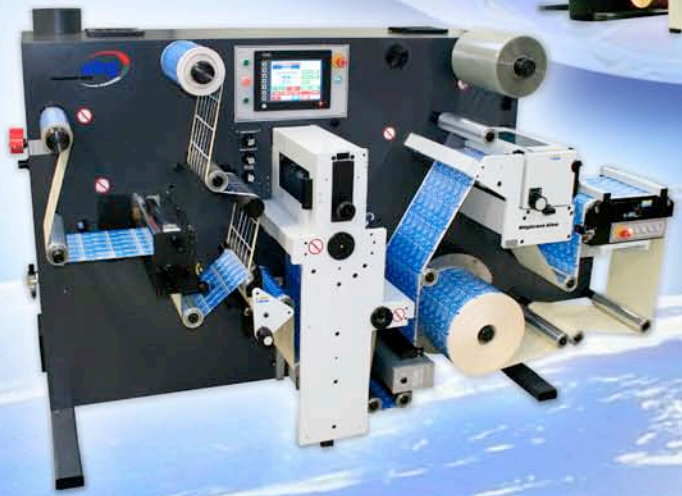

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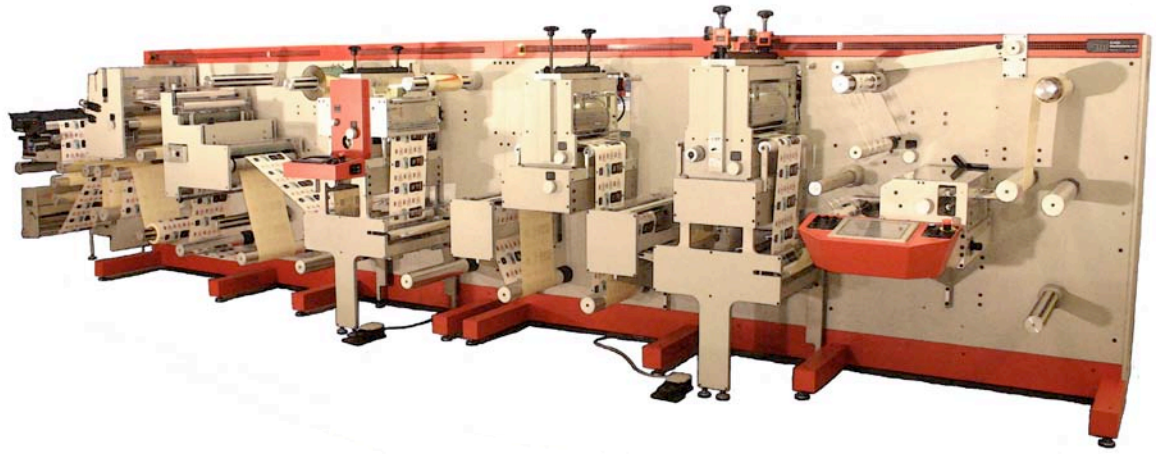

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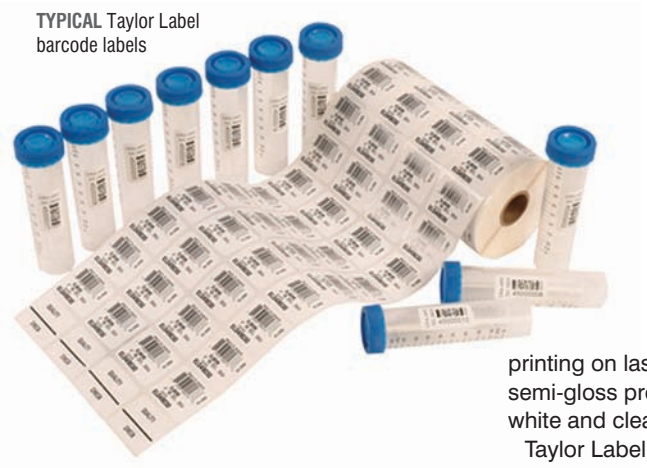

TYPICAL Taylor Label barcode labels

The machine uses Primera's PTPrint 2.0 RIP Software for Windows XP/Vista to import label designs, prepare them for printing, and apply color management. It also has a built-in electronic tensioning control system.

The FX1200 finishing system uses carbide steel knife blades that are digitally controlled providing for the ultimate flexibility in shape creation, and requires no investment in costly dies for small label lots. Additionally, the machine can laminate, remove matrix waste, slit and rewind After learning a few things about the systems, Taylor realized that there can be a bottleneck when die cutting, label shape depending, which when used in one, clean in-line system, slowed production speeds with more complex labels. Quickly the system was broken down into two pieces so as to fully reap the technologies' benefits. When quotes are made, the converter looks closely at the shape to get an accurate estimate of production speed to price accordingly.

By now most printers understand that when it comes to digital printing, no matter which technology, the ink or toner can be an expensive component to production costs and needs to be closely monitored. To help converters with this management, Primera provides users with a software system that through the retrieval of the artwork from the client, and the printing of one label, automatically tells how much toner is used for each and what cost would be expected.

LASER PRINTABLE MATERIALS

Primera's CX1200 system uses dry toner-based inks that are specially formulated to print on a variety of substrates and provide high abrasion and UV penetration resistance. It's capable of printing on laser approved matte, gloss and semi-gloss pressure sensitive papers and white and clear polyester and PVC films.

Taylor Label has been voted 'The Most Environmental Progressive Printing Company in Canada' consecutively through 2007 to 2010. In 2008 the converter was awarded 'The Most Environmentally Progressive Product' award for its FSC certified pressure sensitive label materials. Every label or sheet of labels is produced using the converter's Green Cycle Production Method that verifies its raw materials are chosen based on FSC standards, recycled content, its overall life-cycle and the proximity of the vendor to the manufacturing plant. The plant itself is supplied by 100 percent wind or hydro energy in partnership with Bullfrog Power. All packaging is made of recycle or renewable content and it offsets product delivery emissions.

Taylor Label was the first FSC certified label printer in North America and was the first to produce an FSC certified PS stock. As it has done for its conventional presses, the converter has developed FSC certified laser printable label materials with the help of a local niche market coating facility. It has a full line of 'greener' label constructions that can be used within the machine using unbleached liner, RCAs and FSC certified paper facestock.

Taylor explains, 'We've done a lot of testing to ensure that the facestocks can receive the toner properly and adhere to the fibers. In many cases the materials were not toner friendly, which required a topcoat.' There are some limitations when it comes to materials that can withstand the heat of the laser system without melting. When it comes to adhesives usability, the press requires low flow chemistries that can receive the heat, but not run out the sides. Meanwhile, a number of major material suppliers are working to be standard Primera certified including Flexcon, Fasson MacTac.

Taylor Label has transferred only about 10 percent of its flexo work to the digital machine for the time being. Taylor explains, 'There are so many new areas of business that the Primera system has opened up for us. This will certainly be a growth area moving forward.'

Overall Primera's system has helped the converter to produce low-low volume orders effectively, saving time, money, solid waste – and the environment.

TAYLOR'S DIGITAL PAST

In 2003 Taylor Label acted as a beta site for a wholly different Israeli-based digital printing machinery supplier, but was not satisfied with the quality, or that it required off-line finishing. Primera Technology has long offered a digital inkjet solution for label production, yet Taylor was concerned with the constriction of only printing pre-die cut material.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

ESKOARTWORK OPENS NEW UK OFFICES

EskoArtwork has opened its new UK offices. At the opening ceremony, CEO Carsten Knudson detailed the company's current direction following its change of ownership in January and spoke of new developments underway in the run up to drupa 2012, in a presentation to more than 30 team members and representatives from parent company Danaher. Knudson also highlighted the new training program designed to enable customers to improve their working knowledge of all EskoArtwork products and some third party software. Lasting between one and five days, the seminars will cover a host of subjects specially targeted to customer requirements.

ZELLER+GMELIN EXPANDS INK PRODUCTION

Zeller+Gmelin is expanding its ink production site at Eislingen, Germany, by 2,000 square meters. There are plans for construction of a further production hall of 7.5m in height, which will include areas for storing raw materials and binding agents with an automatic dosing system as well as an area for the pre-dispersion of printing inks. The core area of the new hall will be a new production line for low-migration inks. The completion of the new production hall is scheduled for spring 2012.

STRONG MID-YEAR RESULTS FOR XEIKON

Xeikon tripled its net profit from 1.7 million euros (USD 2.4m) in the first half of 2010 to 5.9 million euros (USD 8.2m) during the same period in 2011. The group's operational cash flow (EBITDA) rose 16 percent, from 12.2 million euros (USD 17m) in the first half of 2010 to 14.2 million euros (USD 19.9m) during the same period in 2011. The company says the results are mainly attributed to the revenue growth of its digital printing product line, especially in the USA.

DIGIFLEX APPOINTS JET EUROPE AS DISTRIBUTOR

DigiFlex, an inkjet CTP supplier based in Israel, has appointed Jet Europe as its distributor in Europe.

KunBang masters Chinese art of IML

KUNBANG, based in Shenzhen, was founded as a specialized label converter in 2002. It is now the country's leading manufacturer of in-mold labels. Kevin Liu reports

In-mold labels – where the label is placed directly into the injection mold – is a relatively new technology in China. 'We made our decision to enter the in-mold label market after careful consideration. Actually, the self-adhesive label only started to become popular in China in 2002, and many people thought that it was too early for us to produce IMLs' says CEO Jinrong Kuang. 'Nevertheless, according to our research and observation, we think that the in-mold labels have more advantages than other kinds of labels, including waterproof properties and anti-counter-feiting. The in-mold label exceeds the performance of the self-adhesive label under some conditions. We believe that the in-mold label will occupy more market in the future.'

At present in China, in-mold labels are widely used in many fields including the packaging of personal care products such as shampoo, conditioner, cosmetics and essential oils. In the food sector, the big application is ice cream, while in the industrial sector IML has been utilized mainly for lubricants. 'Our company, Kunbang has gained a lot of profits from the in-mold label market,' says Kuang. 'Because we entered the market early, and have developed excellent technology, Kunbang is now the largest company producing in-mold labels in Guangdong Province, with almost an 80 percent market share.'

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS

The in-mold label has special process requirements compared to other labels, as it is integrated into the container rather than fixed to the packaging surface. The label is put into the plastic bottle injecting mold during the injection process. The in-mold label and bottle bodies blend and integrate to become part of the bottle. As the in-mold labels and packaging bottles are integrated, very thin films have to be used in place of paper printed materials. This in turn puts new demands on the label converter. 'When we just entered this field, we knew little of the problems surrounding in-mold labels such as label adhesion problems caused by electrostatic effects, bubbles, etc,' says Kuang. 'Objectively, in-mold labels have some special requirements, and we are becoming more and more experienced with these.' Kuang also pointed out that label manufacturers and machine manufacturers need to collaborate more. 'In-mold label printing is just a small part of the entire process, so coordination between labeling and packaging manufacturers is pivotal.'

MACHINE SHOP

Kunbang now has two Japanese Kopack label printing presses, a Sun letterpress and Omet flexo press, allowing the company to print in a range of processes including flexography, letterpress, intaglio and silk screen. 'Moreover, we are now utilizing advanced digital printing equipment,' says Kuang, 'We have to utilize all equipment to meet the diverse needs of our customers.'

There are no special requirements for printing equipment to produce in-mold labels. 'Any machines which could print film labels could also print the in-mold label. However, there are special requirements in terms of ink, varnish and metallics between IML and normal self-adhesive labels.'

According to Kuang a qualified converter of in-mold labels should also be providing a wider range of services. For example, as a provider of labels to Walmart, Kunbang has won the retail giant's cost control prize and best supplier prize for 2010. 'This is because Kunbang not only produces the labels, but also designs and selects the raw materials for Walmart, which helps Walmart reduce their costs. These services are beyond the means of normal printing companies.' Other special effects now offered by Kunbang include cold foil.

CONCLUSION

Although it is becoming more popular, in-mold labeling is nowhere near as popular as self-adhesive technology in China. Even Kunbang, the country's largest in-mold label printing company, accounts just 20 to 30 percent of its gross sales to the technology, with its main sales coming from self-adhesive labels.

However, the manufacturing of in-mold Label is still at an early stage of the production cycle: it is a technology with a broad market potential and bright prospects.

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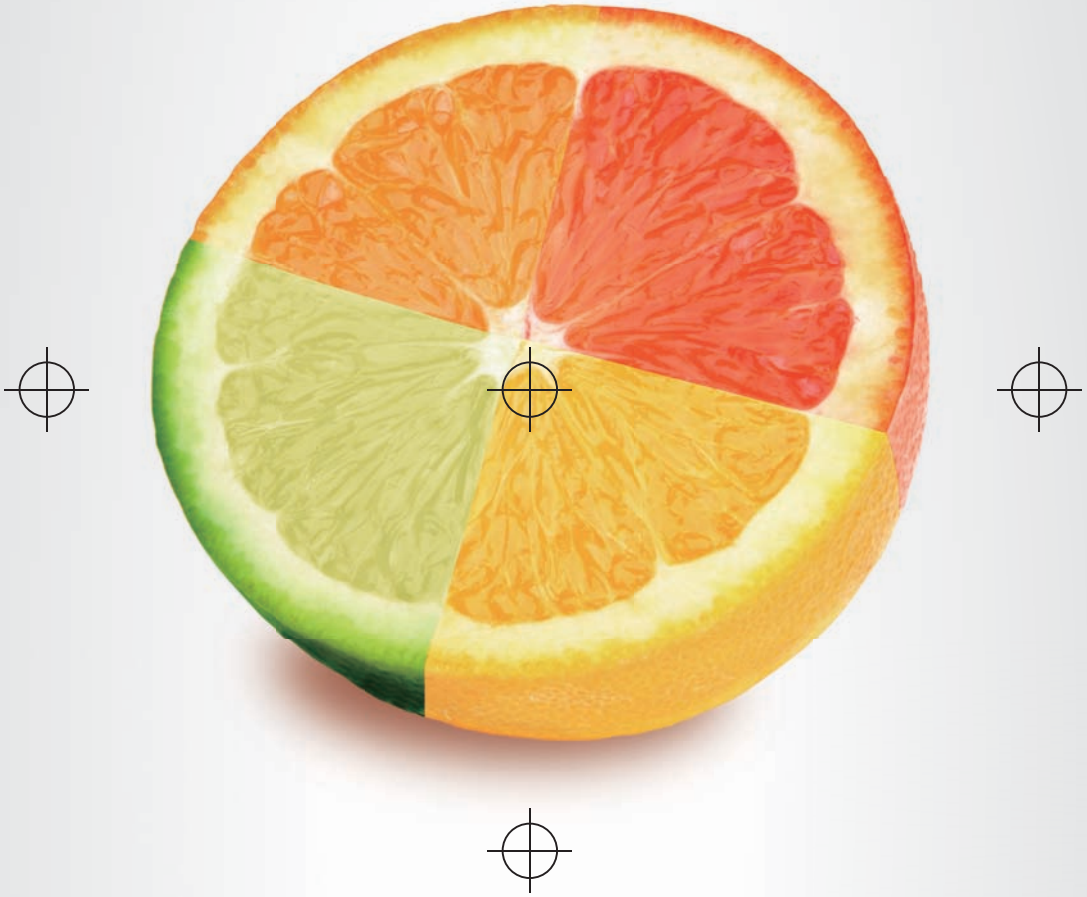

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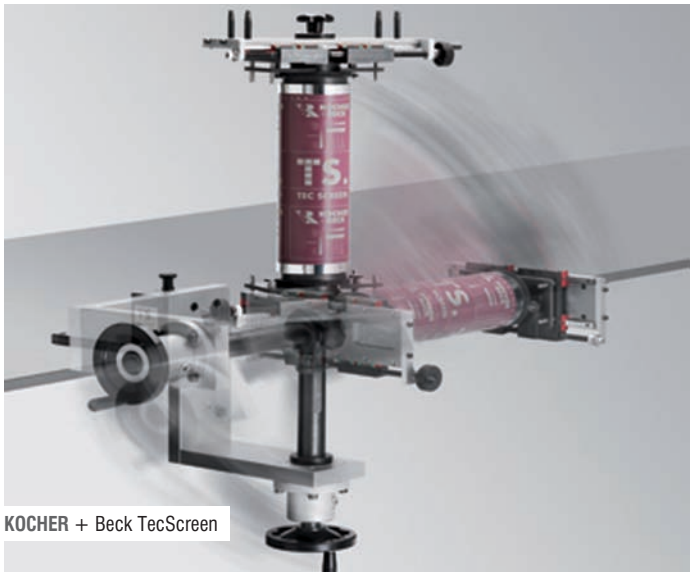


KOCHER + Beck TecScreen

Screen time

KOCHER + BECK has extended its narrow web rotary tooling range with the supply of rotary screen plates. Andy Thomas reports

Narrow web rotary tooling specialist Kocher+Beck has launched its own screen printing plate system, which it calls TecScreen.

John Fehrenbacher, TecScreen product manager at Kocher+Beck, says the company was simply extending its 'very precise knowledge' of the requirements of narrow web converters for quick availability and cost-effective purchasing of high-quality tools. 'This knowledge has been effectively implemented for the development and production of TecScreen. The large number of customers who already successfully use TecScreen confirm this,' says Fehrenbacher.

Despite the development of more opaque UV flexo whites, and the increasing use of gravure units, rotary UV screen remains the principal method of laying down an opaque white undercoat on clear filmic substrates. Virtually all label printing machines for narrow web in the market today are equipped with rotary screen printing units, irrespective of the manufacturer, or can at least be retrofitted with such units. This trend is now moving rapidly into label markets in 'developing' economies. Screen printing is particularly important in the design of cosmetics and beverage labels, but also finds applications in fields as diverse as Braille printing and hazard symbols.

'With printers under time and cost pressures, the task of effectively manufacturing the stencil for screen printing promptly and cost-effectively is becoming ever more important,' says John Fehrenbacher. 'This is where we thought we could make a big difference.'

The TecScreen screen printing plate is manufactured at Kocher+Beck's factory in Pliezhausen, Germany. Stainless steel wire cloth in widths of up to 1200mm is used as the starting material. In various stages in a high technology strip plating machine, the raw wire cloth is cleaned and degreased, surface-activated, nickel-plated and coiled in a clean room atmosphere. The nickel-plating increases the strength of the wire cloth and fastens the individual wires.

Subsequently, the nickel-plated wire cloth is coated with a liquid photopolymer in the clean room in a multi-stage process and then a transparent protective foil is laminated on. In this regard, very exacting tolerances in a range of a few microns apply in order to ensure a uniform color transfer in the printing. Once the coating has been carried out, the completed screen printing plate passes through quality control and then is packaged. In order to ensure a consistent high quality, the wire cloth is subjected to a thorough inspection prior to delivery to the customer.

TecScreen is available from stock in common widths as rolls. Special roll dimensions and sheets are cut to size upon the request of the customer. For the formatting of sheets, a special K+B processing technique is used, which is based on the high precision production of K+B flexible dies and permits tolerances of less than 1/100 mm. 'The register accuracy achieved by this is highly valued by the customers during welding of the screens and subsequent assembly,' says Fehrenbacher.

The TecScreen grades offered by Kocher + Beck cover all common printing tasks and are available for all machine types on the market.

The range of products includes wire cloth grades for the finest line and text work, found in pharmaceutical labels as well as other areas. There are several grades with differing resolution and color application quantity to choose from for the classic applications in screen printing, such as white background or also the printing of decorative elements. Spot coating and the printing of relief varnishes are enabled with the coarser wire cloth grades. TecScreen products are also available for the application of braille printing and hazard symbols.

TecScreen can be processed conventionally with films in a continuous printer, and standard digital UV imagesetters can also be used for imaging. K+B offers exposure tests to determine the exact exposure time in conventional imagesetters. In addition, it is possible to determine the amount of exposure with the aid of a UV measuring device in order to establish the exposure times under standardized conditions.

The complete set of peripheral screen equipment is available in the company's own technical center so converters can see the entire processes, starting with cutting to size of the sheets to the exposing and washing out of the wire cloth through to the assembly of the ferrules. This is an excellent training resource for pre-press operators new to the screen making process.

'In this respect, K+B regards itself as a system partner and not only a pure supplier,' says Fehrenbacher. 'Only via a joint approach is it possible to meet the high requirements of the end customers.'

Integration the easy way?

HYBRID SYSTEMS claims it has an easy route for narrow web converters to integrate their graphics and order management systems. Andy Thomas investigates&

In L&L4, L&L announced the formation in Belgium of Hybrid Software NV, the European subsidiary of the successful American company of the same name. Hybrid Software offers 'integration as you've never seen it before' according to Jan Ruysschaert, managing director of the new venture. With thirty years working in the pre-press/software arena he should know an exciting development when he sees it.

'Since its creation in 2007 Hybrid Software has built up a customer base in North America of around 150 printers for its Order Lifecycle Management concept, which turns on its head conventional thinking about how to integrate existing pre-press equipment and workflows with MIS systems and job ticketing,' says Ruysschaert. 'JDF is often not practical in these situations, while custom integration methods are generally too expensive for many printers.'

With a stand at LabelExpo Europe, Hybrid Software initially has its European sights set firmly on the label market, although its products are suitable for a wide range of print sectors, from packaging and inkjet to digital, screen and conventional offset. There are certainly users in almost every print-related field imaginable across the water. Development work will remain in America while Hybrid Software NV will concentrate on sales and service in Europe, Eastern Europe and Latin America.

'We don't make systems such as MIS, ERP, databases, etc. – there are plenty of excellent options available already. As we don't compete with these vendors they are generally keen to work with us because of the added-value we offer, particularly in the way we have turned integration into a product. Using easy to follow templates, printers can perform integration themselves, resulting in an extremely low cost of ownership and a short completion time.'

Hybrid Software's products fall into three main families, which all operate via web browser technology, providing vendor-independent solutions based on industry standards such as JDF, JMF and SQL. The first product in the portfolio is FrontDesk, which provides a seamless web-based interface between the printer and its customers.

'As well as preflighting, plus powerful upload and download facilities, FrontDesk enables comprehensive tracking of orders from multiple sources, from online ordering and file management to delivery of the completed job, as well as total interaction with the workflow for tasks such as viewing and approvals. It creates a complete Order Lifecycle Management environment that goes beyond anything currently on the market, eliminating the need for a variety of data entry points in the workflow.'

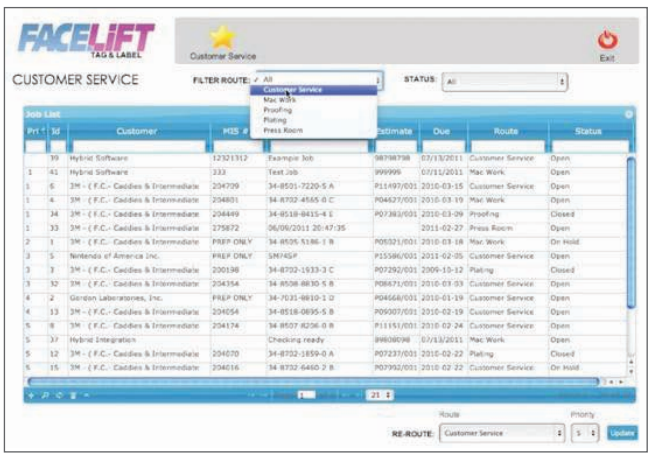
FrontDesk is compatible with many industry-leading soft proofing tools and can be enhanced with optional modules for variable data printing, retail store profiling and campaign management.

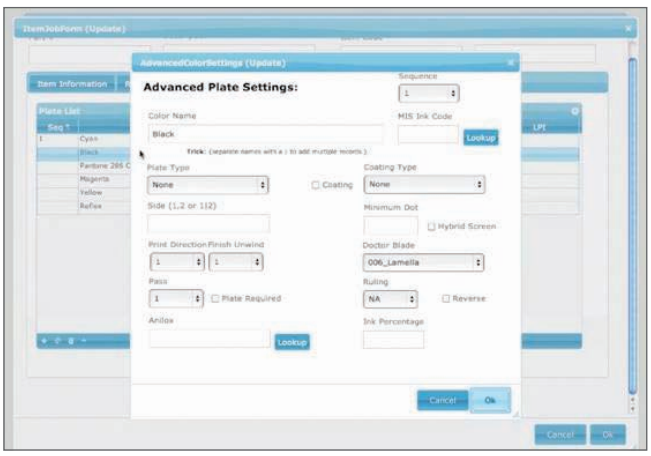
Another Hybrid Software product, FaceLift, is claimed to enable 'seamless integration between production workflows, MIS/ERP systems, third-party websites, external databases and other sources of digitally held information'. In addition to the required files, FaceLift gathers all the production-related information necessary for the order to be produced (whether or not sources are JDF, JMF or SQL enabled), allowing control of every stage of the job's lifecycle.

Hybrid Software's third product, FileForce, connects multiple production or printing sites within an enterprise environment, resulting in the ability to benefit from the enormous efficiencies that can be obtained by load balancing and file sharing between sites. FileForce does not require a centralised file server or DAM system and instead works in conjunction with local file servers at each location. File versions can be moved, copied, harvested, scrapped, archived and tracked accurately across multiple sites as revisions occur throughout the order lifecycle.

'Hybrid Software has worked with label printers of all sizes in North America, including those operating a mixture of screen, flexo, offset and digital output devices,' says Jan Ruysschaert. 'We can integrate all facets of their production process, even across multiple sites, to ensure streamlined file management control at every stage.

HYBRID SYSTEMS' Facelift integrates all the sources of digitally held information at the converter's plant





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NEWS EXTRA

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

GALLUS APPROVES RECYL WASHING KIT

Gallus has successfully tested Recyl's automated washing system for aniloxes, press parts and plates at its demo centre in St Gallen, Switzerland, and is now recommending Recyl solutions to its customers.

Three machines are installed in the Gallus demo centre. The Mediaclean 800 anilox cleaner uses plastic media blasting and is capable of cleaning both ceramic and chromium anilox at any screen count. The plastic media is recyclable and no chemistry or water is required. Some 40 machines have been installed worldwide over the last two years. The Simplex 80 is a parts washing machine using Recyl's own chemistry at 50°C. The closed loop system means the chemicals can be reused for 1 - 3 months. Parts for an 8-color machine can be completely washed in 5 - 15 minutes, depending on size of the machine and around 100 machines are installed worldwide. The compact Washing Fountain is a manual parts and plate washing station using Recyl chemicals at 40°C.

The three machines are being used in the Gallus demo centre to clean the presses on a daily basis, and a full "cleaning training" program is offered to visiting converters.

MACDERMID CLAIMS 50+ LUX

Macdermid is claiming more than 50 LUX platemaking system installations globally, including recently in Melbourne, Australia and Buenos Aires, Argentina, plus commitments for 20 more installs. The LUX flat-top dot platemaking technology was introduced in May, 2010. Paul Merkel, MacDermid's global director of product management, says LUX is making inroads into some of the less traditional flexo markets including Pakistan, Russia and Saudi Arabia,' as well as the more established flexo regions. In 2011, LUX has won both the Flexographic Technical Association's Technical Innovation Award and the Flexographic Pre-Press Platemakers Association's Technology Innovator Award.

CEM Ozturk Bilnet

DIGITAL PRESS WIDENS PSP OFFERING

IT IS NOT ONLY dedicated label converters who are installing digital label presses. One of Turkey's leading print service providers is using an HP WS6000 to extend its product offering, as Andy Thomas reports

General print specialist Bilnet, located in Istanbul, Turkey, has installed an HP Indigo WS6000 digital press to enhance its wider product offering.

Established in 2007, Bilnet has quickly become one of Turkey's leading print service providers (PSPs) with one of the biggest production capacities in the country. In addition to the recently installed HP Indigo WS6000 digital press, the 17,000 square metre facility includes an HP Indigo press 5500, as well as 50 sheetfed offset units, four web offset units, 35 flexo and 13 letterpress units. This extensive portfolio of equipment enables Bilnet to offer a wide range of products such as general commercial print, text books, magazines and labels.

'We are always looking for ways to enhance our service offering,' said Cem Ozturk, president, Bilnet. 'From our experience with the HP Indigo press 5500, we knew the creative possibilities provided by digital print technology and wanted to bring these opportunities to customers of our label products.

'In order to meet short production deadlines, deliver shorter print runs while also ensuring the same high-quality output as delivered by our existing equipment, we knew we had to install another HP Indigo press. The HP Indigo WS6000 seemed the obvious solution.'

Ozturk continued, 'We work for many large multinational companies and, in addition to providing the best possible print quality, we wanted to offer these companies a route to new, innovative labels and packaging ideas. The extensive substrate versatility of the HP Indigo WS6000 coupled with its ability to print large run lengths or just one personalized label cost-effectively, allows us to do this. Not only that, but the WS6000 enables us to produce a proof, identical to the final product, while the customer is still drinking tea in the meeting room - that really makes a good impression!'

The press was supplied and serviced through HP's Turkish distributer, Matset Co Inc

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'WE MUST DEFINE THE ENERGY of the laser exactly, which is why consistently coated adhesive material is so important for us' – Werner Hagmaier (right) talking to Herma account manager Klaus Keller against the backdrop of the Cartes laser die-cutting machine.

Digital all the way

LEADING GERMAN CONVERTER Hagmaier Etiketten is now printing and die-cutting some of its products in an entirely contactless operation. Andy Thomas reports on a joint industry project which also required adhesive coating to be applied within very small tolerances

In an unassuming industrial building in Münsingen business park in the hills of Swabia in southwest Germany, Werner and Thomas Hagmaier, the two managing directors of Hagmaier Etiketten – or Hagmaier for short – are at the forefront of the laser die-cutting revolution.

'When we started to experiment more than 10 years ago, we dreamt of introducing contactless die-cutting one day, and of a quiet, maintenance and wear-free operation,' says Werner Hagmaier. Although the brothers have long since realized the dream, 'only now are we on the threshold of a boom in laser die-cutting,' predicts Werner Hagmaier.

FIRST ALL-DIGITAL PRODUCTION LINE

Hagmaier has commissioned what it believes to be one of the first all-digital production lines, based around a Cartes 350 laser die-cutting machine and CSAT LED inkjet printer.

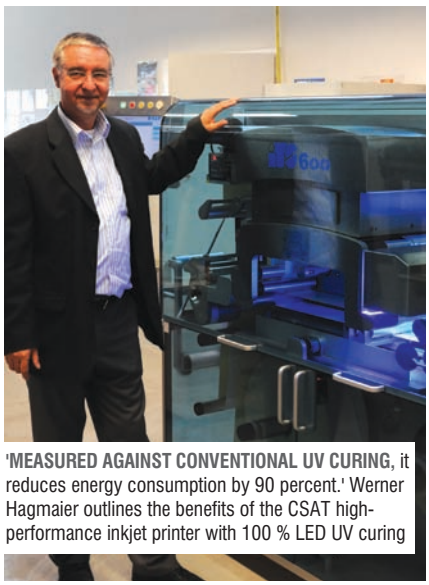
The Cartes machine is producing labels virtually indistinguishable from conventionally cut labels, according to Werner Hagmaier, and has extended the application scope of labels into completely new segments.

A label that detects magnetic influence is one such example. It can be used to protect electricity meters against tampering. Another is a patented gravity indicator label, which indicates whether a product has been exposed to severe shock or impact. 'That can be a critical factor,' explains Hagmaier, 'given that sensitive technical devices, such as computers and cameras, are being sent by parcel post these days. This label enables the addressee to refuse a parcel if he can see, without opening it, that it has already been dropped at least once.'

Such special-purpose labels consist of very delicate structures; some segments of the substrate are pierced 99.9 percent, but not cut all the way through. 'It would be extremely costly to achieve the same result reliably, and in way that can be reproduced a million times, with a conventional die-cutter,' points out Hagmaier. It is now easy to understand why the laser die-cutting machine, although originally intended for small jobs, is well established at Hagmaier in medium and large-job markets as well – especially for special-purpose labels.

MICROEXPLOSIONS

In order to operate with such precision, however, a laser die-cutting machine depends on the input materials – label materials, release liners and adhesive layers – complying with very small tolerances. Unlike a physical die-cutter, which exerts pressure on and displaces the adhesive until a defined stop point is reached, the laser generates an exactly metered amount of energy. Every second, the laser triggers as many as 50,000 microexplosions. In other words, it does not actually produce a cut, as those who are unfamiliar with the technology often assume. Instead, it blasts away or literally pulverizes the material. 'We therefore have to adjust the laser to deliver the exact amount of energy required to blast away both the substrate and the adhesive layer,' explains Hagmaier. If the explosive force is too great, the release liner is pierced, and if it is too slight, the adhesive is not entirely removed. Although the release liner and label material can generally be manufactured very precisely, with a consistent thickness, continues Hagmaier, 'The adhesive presented us with a major challenge. Guaranteed tolerances are regularly around plus/minus three grams per square meter. This may sound like a small amount but, in view



'MEASURED AGAINST CONVENTIONAL UV CURING, it reduces energy consumption by 90 percent.' Werner Hagmaier outlines the benefits of the CSAT high-performance inkjet printer with 100 % LED UV curing

IT NOT ONLY CUTS WITHOUT CONTACT, maintenance or wear, and practically silently, but the Cartes laser die-cutting machine also enables label specialist Hagmaier to extend the range of product applications.

of the quantities of adhesive that are usually applied, such tolerances can give rise to variances of as much as 15 percent, which is beyond the bounds of precision required by the laser.

A QUESTION OF TOLERANCES

Hagmaier set out to find an adhesive material that was produced with especially high precision. After undertaking extensive trials with a variety of materials, the company decided in favor of Herma's products. 'For standard adhesives, Herma guarantees tolerances of just one and a half grams per square meter, which enables us to achieve outstanding cutting results,' comments Werner Hagmaier. The low tolerances are beneficial elsewhere in the production chain too as a general rule, not only in connection with laser die-cutting. Two or three grams too little adhesive can have unpleasant consequences in the case of critical applications in particular. Labels applied to difficult, rough surfaces, for example, can fall off in some circumstances. If two to three grams too much adhesive is applied, on the other hand, difficulties can arise even with mechanical die-cutting, and with dispensing. Adhesive can escape and contaminate the tools or trigger unscheduled stops in the labeling systems. A consistent adhesive coating benefits print reliability as well. A lack of consistency can be detrimental to print quality.

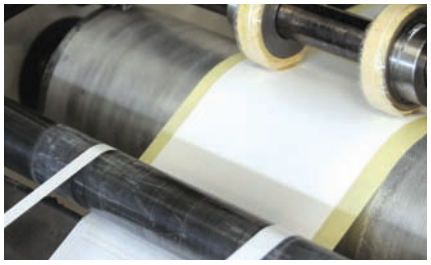
The key to delivering these tolerances is Herma's long experience in curtain coating technology, says managing director Dr. Thomas Baumgärtner: 'Curtain coating enables us to apply extremely consistent coats. A discernible transverse section, consisting of peaks and valleys of adhesive, no longer exists.' As previously reported in L&L, Herma is now capable of using the technology to apply two different layers of adhesive simultaneously on an industrial scale, typically in order to achieve specific product characteristics.

CHOOSING INKJET

The next goal was to accomplish contactless die-cutting and printing – including on heat-sensitive thermal paper. This ruled out heat-producing printing processes that rely on toner. A high-performance inkjet printer with 100 percent LED UV curing appeared to be the answer. Eventually, CSAT, a German specialist manufacturer of industrial digital print.ing machines, – now owned by Heidelberg – built a machine capable of achieving the company's goal. According to Hagmaier, it was the first time that CSAT had ventured into the labels segment. 'We reach a web speed of around 50 meters a minute,' reports Hagmaier. Measured against conventional UV curing, LED UV curing reduces energy consumption by 90 percent. It allows thermal paper to be printed cold and gives rise to brilliant color quality without requiring the application of any lacquer or other finish, according to Werner Hagmaier.

PRINT SEQUENCE

A significant factor in the success of the Hagmaier contactless operation is cutting the labels before they are printed. Explains Werner Hagmaier: 'the variation of the traditional sequence "printing - die-cutting" to "die-cutting - printing" means we can produce medium print runs of up to 10,000 meters more cost-effectively than with conventional presses. Furthermore, there is a technical reason. During the production of full surface printed labels this sequence avoids fine white edge lines. They are a consequence of the angle the laser hits the substrate. Because the laser hits the substrate at an angle the removed ink leaves a fine line at the cutting edge.'



CLEAN REMOVAL OF CUTTING WASTE: In view of guaranteed adhesive application tolerances of just plus/minus one and a half grams, Hagmaier operates the laser die-cutting machine for paper labels only with Herma adhesive material.

AND WHAT REMAINS IS A VERY PRECISE CUTOUT. To achieve this result, it is essential that the thickness of the adhesive layer fluctuates only marginally.

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THE SEVEN WASTES AND FIVE-'S' BUSINESS MODELS show automated ink logistics are vital for lean, responsive print operations. Adrian Tippetts reports

Smart ink logistics

At six percent of a printing house's consumable costs, ink expenditure is a fifth of that of substrates. The imperative to reduce waste, however, is of equal importance, not least because of a volatile market in which oil-based raw materials have seen price rises of over 30 percent in the last year. Fortunately, lean management principles can be applied to ink consumption, and help diligent printers unlock value in the process.

Two sets of tools assist in the identification and steady elimination of waste. Focusing on the process, the Seven Wastes identify the causes and consequences of poor logistics control. In addition, practical solutions for eliminating waste in the ink room are found in the Five-S Model.

THE SEVEN WASTES

Over-production: If there are no means of accurately determining the exact amount of ink for a job, a printer often plays safe by mixing in excess of requirements for the production run, to avoid short-falls. To prepare the exact volume and color quality manually is a complicated and time consuming affair, especially in an age of shorter runs and a frequent requirement to use complex unique spot colors.

With no sophisticated ink dispensing system, excess inks invariably go to waste, as it is virtually impossible to manually calculate the 'press return' leftovers into a new recipe. As a result, package printers in such situations report losing over a quarter of their stocks to overproduction. In attempting to prevent running out on the job, some printers might order excess amounts of ready-mixed inks from the supplier, at great cost.

Inventory costs: Ink inventory costs can spiral out of control easily because of unpredictable demand, a need to hold a more diverse range of colors, and the product's relatively short shelf-life. Assets are tied up in excess stock and space needed to hold them.

Ink dispensing enables the mixing of all required colors from a limited number of base colors, eliminating the inventory of ready-mixed inks. Furthermore, it allows the reuse and recycle of press-return inks.

Motion: Time is a raw material, though we have only a finite amount that we can use to add value to our business. This makes motion time another critical factor of business efficiency. In the print room, motion waste results from people or equipment moving or walking more than is required to perform the processing.

Lean companies optimize motion patterns to make stocks of substrates, inks, peripheral equipment and spare parts as small as possible. This means minimizing shipments, handling and carrying of inks. A dispensing system near the press removes the logistical delays associated with moving ready-mixed colors from the warehouse.

Waiting time: The extent to which machines and people lay idle is a key measure of inefficiency. Forty percent of the time of a typical job changeover is caused by ink changes and color adjustments. By relying on manual color preparation, the risk of delay is increased because of the lengthy process involved.

Transportation: Transportation and environmental costs are reduced by acquiring and transporting a few base ink barrels of 200 liter volume, instead of several smaller buckets with ready-mixed inks very frequently. By accurately preparing the required volume and quality of ink close to the press, the resulting waste reduction also minimizes discharges of polluted, rejected ink packaging.

Over-processing: Over-processing results from poor product, tool or process design. Dispensing the exact quantity – to an accuracy of one gram or less at the right time, means any 'press-return' leftovers can be reused and recycled, before they perish. By mixing the ink in-house, the printer retains more added value and also reduces import duties, taxes and administration.

Rework and defects Time spent fixing defects is also a waste of resources. But this is inevitable when no sophisticated ink management system is in operation. A system that guarantees quality results first time makes rejects less likely, along with the associated press downtime, substrate and manpower loss.

Controlled color consistency reduces the risk of the costliest error of all, field failures. A reliable management software system makes it possible to show full traceability of inks that have been used

and which batch they originate from, even when press return inks are applied.

FIVE 'S' PHILOSOPHY

Where the Seven Wastes help us identify the problem, the 5S philosophy helps provide a route map to greater efficiency. It helps provide a solution for a simpler working environment, reduced waste, and improved quality, efficiency and safety. The five benchmarks of this philosophy – which conveniently start with 'S' in English as well as in Japanese – are Sort, Straighten, Shine, Standardize and Sustain. This is an ideal means of implementing lean ink management in the ink room.

Seiri (Sort): The instinct to store may have given our ancestors on the savannah a survival advantage hundreds of thousands of years ago, but in a busy environment, holding on to items because they may be useful some day leads to clutter and disorganization. Seiri – to sort – teaches us to be discerning and break the hoarding habit.

Seiri requires the printer to keep necessary ink-room items in easily accessible places, keep less frequently used items in distant areas and discard unnecessary items. The idea is to ensure that everything left at the ink room is related to ink preparation. It keeps the ink room tidy, improves searching and fetching efficiency and clears the space.

Seiton (Straighten): This step is all about putting items such as clean buckets, paper for label printing and return inks in their assigned places, so they can be accessed easily and quickly. The place for each item should be clearly marked, and each item should be arranged in a manner that promotes efficient work flow. Moreover, items used most often should be the most easily accessible, without having to bend to reach them.

Seiso (Shine): After the first thorough cleaning after implementing 5S, daily follow-up cleaning is needed in order to sustain this improvement. It is an effective way of identifying damage, and equally, helps to build that vital first impression of professionalism in the mind of a visiting prospective customer. Cleaning dispense heads after each shift, and the entire ink room on a weekly basis, should be routine. Spillages should be cleared immediately.

Seiketsu (Standardize): Old, bad habits die hard. That is why the three 'S' components of sorting, straightening and shining have to be standardized to prevent participants losing momentum, and slipping into the old routine. Adherence is best achieved, if everyone knows their responsibilities, and 3S actions are built into job descriptions for example.

Shitsuke (Sustain): Once the new way to operate becomes standardized, they are engrained into the corporate culture through regular review, and the openness to new ideas and improvements in working procedure. Just as corporations are dynamic entities, the internal standards must evolve, adapting to new circumstances. Shitsuke implies that improvement is a continuous, endless process!

Automated ink dispensing technology, thanks to the resulting streamlined, organized, logistics process, is essential in answering these challenges. This fast, accurate and all-encompassing method of delivering printing ink to the press - also known as color on demand – improves quality, reduces stock levels and optimizes inventory control, enabling improved margins and a higher quality product.

Software packages are the solution for streamlined ink logistics. Since the introduction of GSE's Ink Management Software, for storing recipe formulations, a number of new packages have emerged. Standard integration and management information software, for instance, provides real-time information about recipe availability, instant color matching, detailed ink cost-analysis of each order and the ability to trace inks used on every job to the original base ink batch number.

The base element of an automated ink logistics workflow comprises a gravimetric dispensing system, featuring a user-friendly interface, linked to several barrels of base inks, ranging from eight to 20. Corrosion-resistant stainless steel valves with optimized fluid dynamic characteristics complete the picture, ensuring fast and accurate dispensing.

There are systems to suit different ink types or volume requirements. So a label printer, accustomed to mixing five kilogram batches, can gain similar investment return rates as large scale ink users, such as corrugated board converters, where doses may be up to five times greater.

Remember that the price is only one cost of ink ownership, and its significance in relation to the numerous, more expensive hidden costs – think of transport, duties, waste, warehousing, recalls and administration, to name but a few – is dangerously deceptive. Good management of your ink, from base color component to finished packaging artwork, is the key to keeping those costs in check.

In short, a gravimetric ink dispensing system with the right specification, reliability and support, will ensure print quality and fidelity, control budgets and support the growing level of lean initiatives that are appearing within printing business as the industry becomes allied more closely with manufacturing rather than manual processes.

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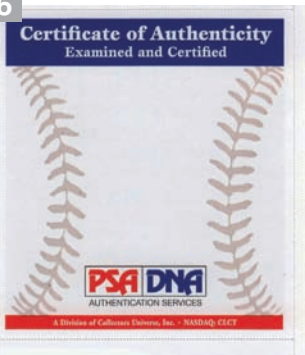

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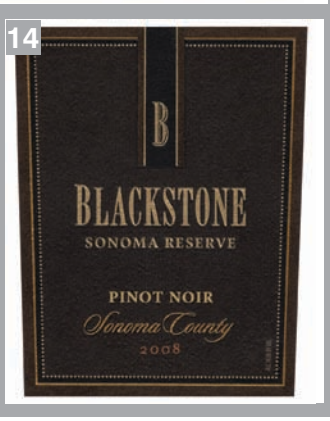

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TLMI Annual Label Award winners

LISTING of first place winners of TLMI Annual Label Award Competition

1. Schreiner Group GmbH & Co
Safety Bag
Paperboard/Rigid Packaging
Germany

2. Amherst Label
Heavenly Peace/ EDP Label
New Hampshire, USA

3. ASL Print FX – Best of Show
Red Tile Chardonnay
W&S – Flexo/Letterpress, Color Process – Prime
Ontario, Canada

4. Belmark
Freschetta Pizza Label
Flexo, Color Process - Prime
Wisconsin, USA

5. Bizerba
Butterball Promo Save $1 Tag
Tags - Merchandising
Maryland, USA

6. Bonham Label
PSA/DNA
Tags – Industrial and/or Systems
California, USA

7. Collotype Labels International
Genesis Premium Apple Cider
Flexo – Color Process – Prime
Australia

8. Collotype Labels International
Chandon Cuvee Riche
W&S, Offset – Line/Prime
Australia

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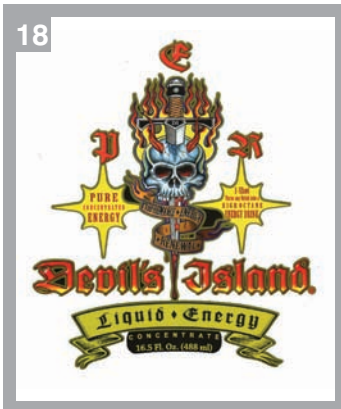

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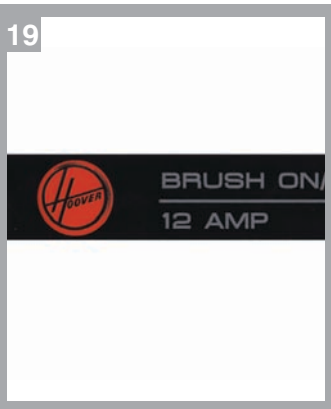

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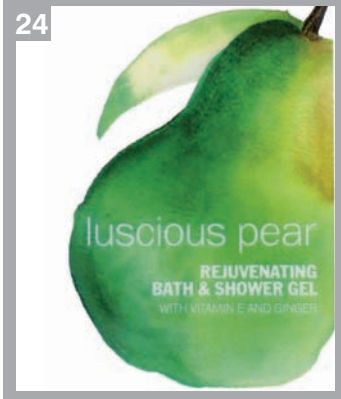

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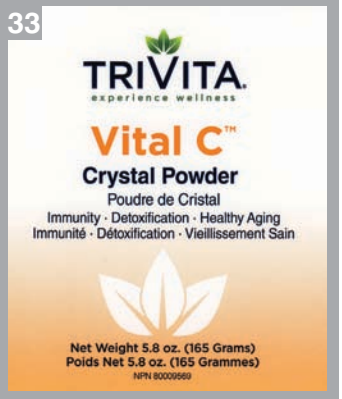

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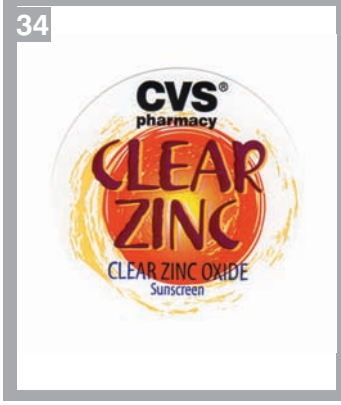

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9. Collotype Labels International
Thistle Hill
W&S Offset – Line & Screen/Tone – Prime
Australia

10. Collotype Labels International
Box Head
W&S, Offset, Color Process – Prime
Australia

13. Collotype Labels USA
Baileys Mudslide
W&S, digital
California, USA

14. Collotype Labels USA
Blackstone Sonoma
W&S, Offset, Line/Prime
California, USA

15. Collotype Labels USA
Wren Hop
W&S, Offset, Color Process, Prime
California, USA

18. Digital Label Solutions
Arrowhead Syrup & Sales – Devil's Island
F&B, Digital
California, USA

19. DRG Technologies
Hoover Triple Air
Rotary Screen, Line/Non-Prime
Arizona, USA

22. G3 Enterprises
Genesis Reisling 2010
W&S, Flexo/Letterpress, Line & Screen/Tone – Prime
California, USA

23. Germark
Anfiteatro
W&S, Digital
Spain

24. I.D. *Images*
Ulta Bath & Shower Gel
H&B, Digital
Ohio, USA

25. KimBells Pack
Skintel Anti-Age White
Tags – Merchandising
Philippines

26. KimBells Pack
Reine Forever Night Cream
Multi-Process, Line & Screen/Tone – Prime
Philippines

27. Label Impressions
Fuji Food Static Cling
Promotional
California, USA

29. Labelgraphics
Tamova Vodka
W&S, Flexo/Letterpress, Line/Prime
Scotland

30. Labelgraphics
Dewars 18 Year Old Double Aged Blend
W&S, Flexo/Letterpress, Line & Screen/Tone – Prime
Scotland

33. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
Vital C
Flexo, Line & Screen/Tone – Prime
Texas, USA

34. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
CVS Clear Zinc
Flexo, Line & Screen/Tone – Non-Prime
Texas, USA

35. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
HCG Elite
Multi-Process, Line/Prime
Texas, USA

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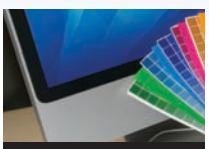

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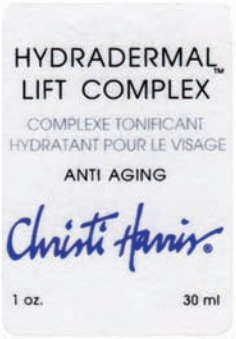

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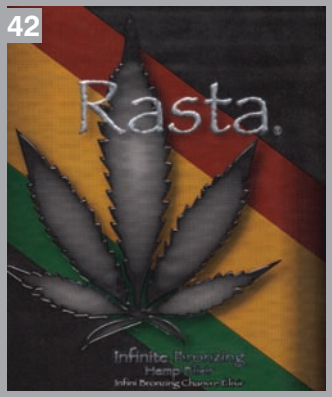

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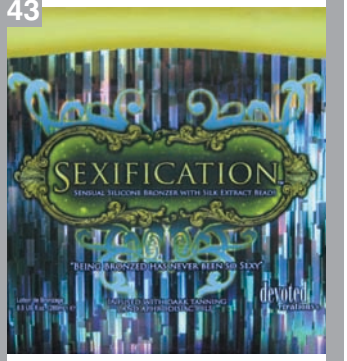

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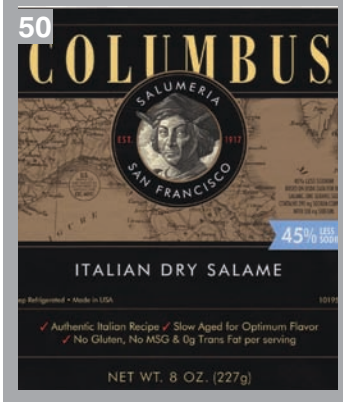

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36. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
M5 Extreme
Multi-Process, Line & Screen/Tone – Prime
Texas, USA

37. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
Lichi Super Fruit
Multi-Process, Color Process – Prime
Texas, USA

38. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
Hydradermal
Rotary Screen, Line/Prime
Texas, USA

39. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
Tequila Reposado
W&S, Flexo/Letterpress, Line/Prime
Texas, USA

40. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
Viva Rosso
W&S, Flexo/Letterpress, Color Process – Non-Prime
Texas, USA

41. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
Playboy Bronze Couture
Roll to Roll, Line/Prime
Texas, USA

42. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
Rasta
Roll to Roll, Line & Screen/Tone – Prime

43. McDowell Label & Screen Printing
Sexification
Roll to Roll, Color Process – Prime
Texas, USA

50. MPI Label Systems of California
Salumeria – Columbus
Flexo, Line/Prime
California, USA

52. Multi-Color Corporation
Colt 45 Neck Label
Gravure, Line/Non-Prime
Ohio, USA

53. Multi-Color Corporation
Blue Moon – Pale Moon Neck Label
Gravure, Line & Screen/Tone – Non-Prime
Ohio, USA

54. Multi-Color Corporation
Palmolive Caprice Especialidades Spray
Gravure, Color Process – Prime
Ohio, USA

55.Multi-Color Corporation
L'Oreal Studio Line Overworked Hair Putty
Multi-Process, Line/Non-Prime
Ohio, USA

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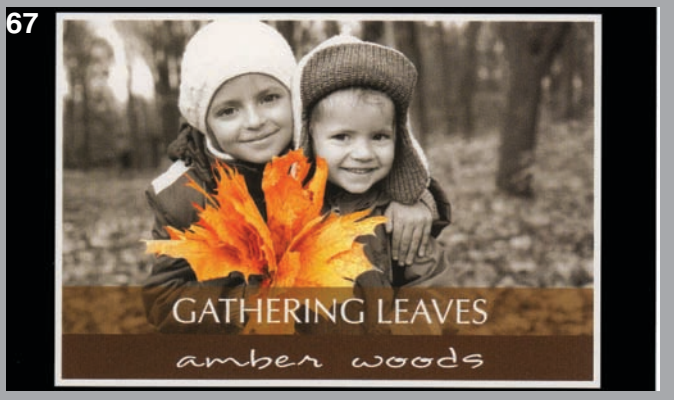

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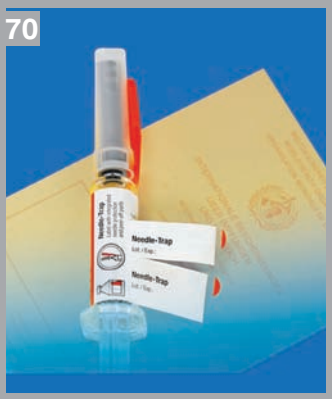

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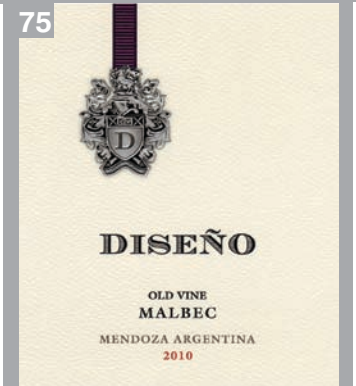

56. Multi-Color Corporation
Downy with Silk Touch
Offset, Color Process – Prime
Ohio, USA

57. Multi-Color Corporation
Zerex Extended Life Back Label
Offset, Color Process – Non-Prime
Ohio, USA

58. Multi-Color Corporation
Whisk High Efficiency
Non PS, All processes/Cut & stack, Line & Screen/Tone – Prime
Ohio, USA

62. National Label
Clear 2-Ply Label
Multi-Process, Line & Screen/Tone – Non-Prime
Pennsylvania, USA

64. Novelprint Sistemas De Etiquetagem
Balada 51 Ice
Gravure, Line & Screen/Tone – Prime
Brazil

65. Pilot Italia
Grappa Luigi Francoli 12 Anniversario
Multi-Process, Line/Prime
Italy

66. Pilot Italia
Idratante Neuro Roberts
Offset, Line & Screen/Tone – Prime
Italy

67. RR Donnelley
Gathering Leaves
All other, Digital
New York, USA

69. Schreiner Group GmbH & Co
Flag Tag
Tags – Industrial and/or Systems
Germany

70. Schreiner Group GmbH & Co – Innovator Award
Needle Trap
Flexo, Line/Non-Prime
Germany

71. Standard Register
Ames True Temper
Non PS, All processes/Cut & Stack, Line/Prime
Ohio, USA

72. Standard Register
Silgan EZ Feed
Non PS, All processes/Cut & Stack, Color Process – Prime
Ohio, USA

73. Tailored Label Products
Craftsman Flexo Label
Flexo, Line/Non-Prime
Wisconsin, USA

74. Whitlam Label Company
Walmart Gift Card Answer Printing
Coupon
Michigan, USA

75. York Label
Diseno Old Vine Malbec 2010
W&S, Offset, Line & Screen/Tone – Prime
Nebraska, USA

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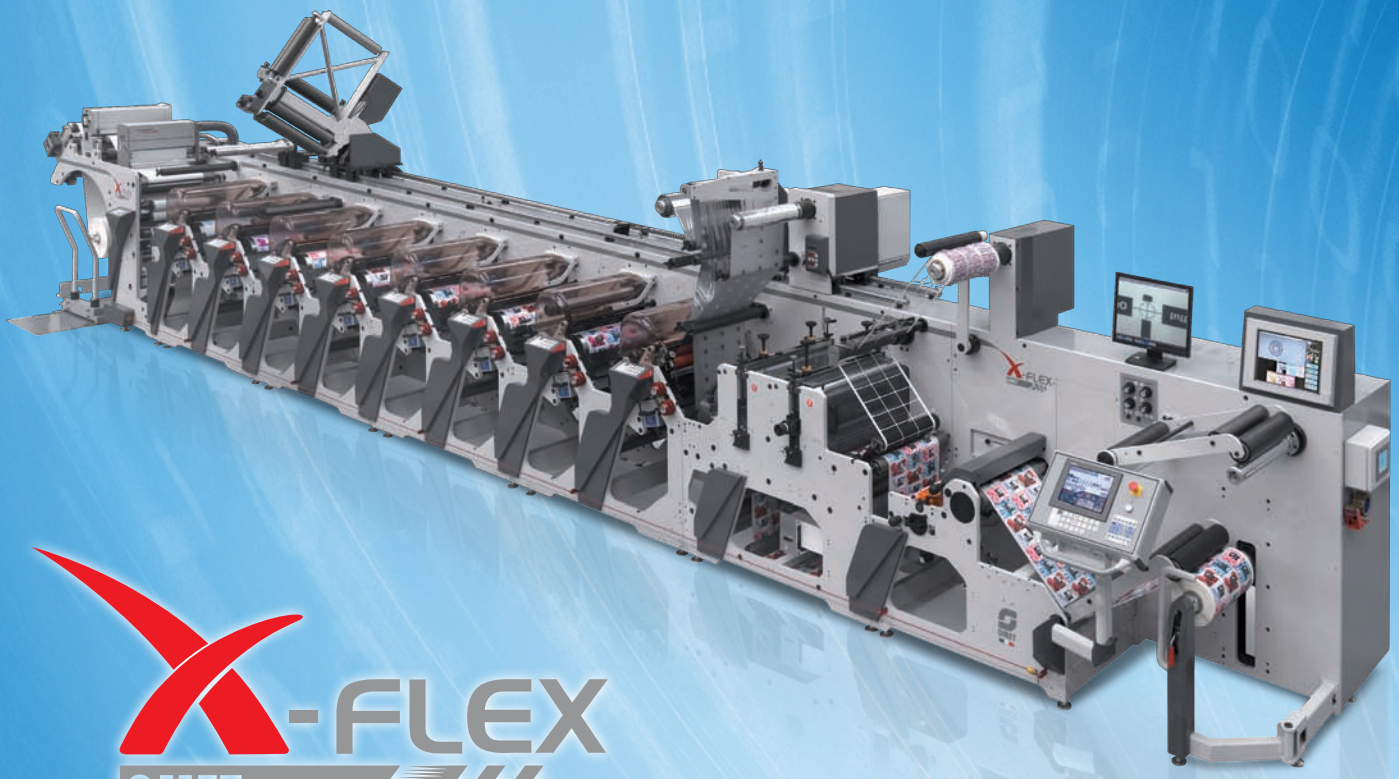

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Bridging the Technology Divide

DAVID LANSKA links the past to the future of package printing in Milwaukee for the latest FTA Great Lakes technical meeting

As machinery moaned in the background, attendees at the FTA Great Lakes Fall technical meeting were presented with a juxtaposition of eras and technologies fighting for a place in the package printing market of tomorrow. Surrounded by examples of time-tested, solidly engineered equipment including a still functional Kempsmith milling machine built in 1888, the meeting focused on the challenge of integrating the newest production technologies into the package printing workflow in order to achieve exceptional store-shelf impact and customer engagement.

Kempsmith has adapted its business by moving into carton die production, and Brett Burris, Kempsmith's president, showcased a variety of examples garnered from the grocery store shelves to demonstrate how cartons today are engineered to entice consumers to buy the products. He said, 'the carton is the billboard and the printer is the artist.' Through the addition of graphics, embossing, promotions, unusual shapes or added functionalities, the cartons grab attention and engage consumers at the point of purchase.

As packaging design features evolve to higher levels of quality and intricacy, the processes for producing them has made stellar leaps to meet the need. Flexible magnetic dies have replaced the extremely expensive die tooling of the past. Where a conventional die could cost upwards of $20,000, a magnetic die can be produced for about 1/10 the cost. Magnetic dies add precision, reducing costs, increase die life, and reduce machine downtime for replacement. Rotary die cutting equipment with mating cutters penetrate the stock from above and below, producing a cleaner cut at higher operating speed than the traditional 'crush-cut' methodology. All of this results in faster, higher-yield production of value-added packaging.

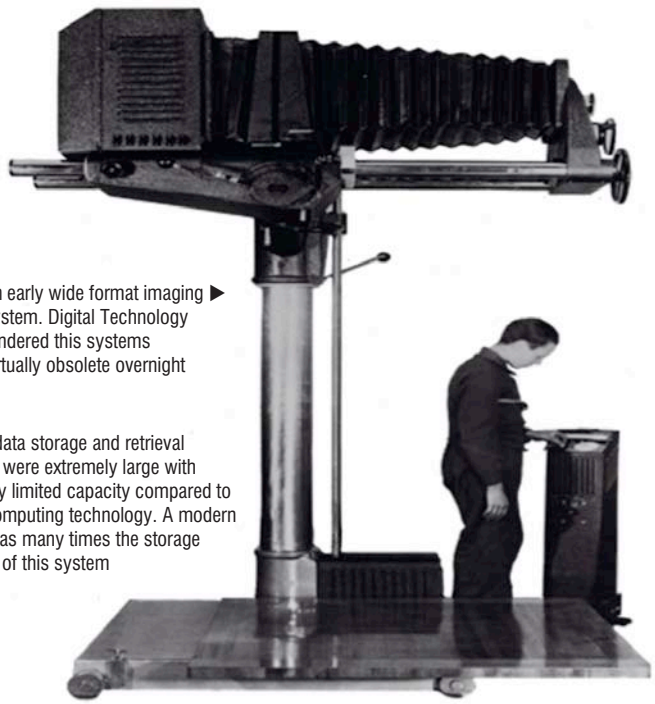
WISCONSIN LEADS DIGITAL INNOVATION?

An intriguing note to the presentation given by Victor Gomez, Durst VP of sales North and South America, was the historical tidbit that placed Wisconsin at the forefront of the digital revolution as well as the industrial revolution. He pointed out that the Wisconsin Integrally Synchronized Computer (WISC) was an early digital computer designed and built at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Digital computing technology has obviously come a long way since then, having a dramatic impact on every process it was incorporated into. In 1936, across the world from Wisconsin in a small town in the Alps, the Durst brothers formed a company to produce photo imaging equipment. The addition of digital computing into the imaging process resulted in flatbed inkjet imaging technology that overnight rendered previous versions obsolete.

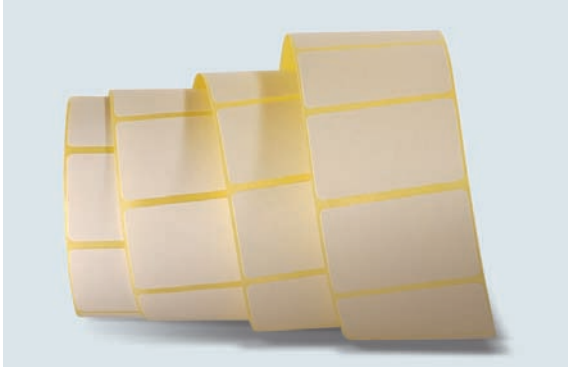
Just as Kempsmith looked to new technologies and markets to continue its growth, Durst developed a wide variety of printing and imaging technologies to serve growing specialty markets. They produced narrow and wide format systems for printing onto ceramic tiles prior to curing and devised custom ink sets to provide visibility and durability for printing traffic signs. To improve sustainability, they produced equipment that printed the surface of various flooring materials to simulate exotic and endangered wood.

Increased precision, reduced costs, enhanced features,



An early wide format imaging ▶ system. Digital Technology rendered this systems virtually obsolete overnight

◀ Early data storage and retrieval systems were extremely large with extremely limited capacity compared to digital computing technology. A modern Iphone has many times the storage capacity of this system



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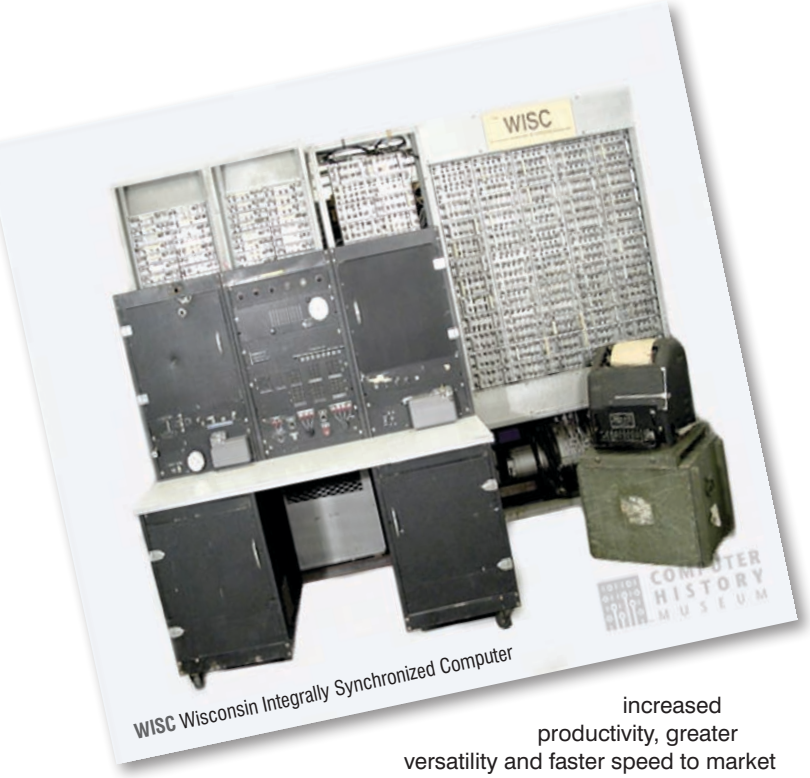

WISC Wisconsin Integrally Synchronized Computer

increased productivity, greater versatility and faster speed to market were the goals driving the evolution of digital print technology. Durst's entry into digital label printing technology was predicated on predictable, consistent and repeatable results produced from a color management methodology that replaces the artisan mentality with a scientific approach to color. Gomez describes this as 'the promise of digital'.

With a host of new features and improvements coming out at a blistering pace, digital printing is rapidly advancing in its ability to deliver the graphic and performance attributes that engage consumers and drive sales. Digital ink jet presses are capable of running eight colors for an expanded color gamut with liquid varnish. Constantly circulating ink through filters removes impurities that can plug inkjet nozzles, vastly improving operating performance. Isolated tensioning from stage to stage provides label to label registration accuracy far superior to web averaging. The digital workflow accommodates variable data such as sequential numbering and personalization, and allows for rapid job change with minimal waste. Through modular construction, label production can incorporate a variety of finishing processes in-line including hot foil, lamination, die-cutting, priming/ pre-coating, matrix removal, slitting and more.

With all of this capability, where does digital go from here? Victor sees greater adoption of UV curable ink-jet technology as a means to reduce VOC's, allow for greater versatility in substrate selection and enhance graphic and end-use properties of the labels. LED lights after each station 'pins' or stabilizes the ink to prevent spreading. UV lamps at the end complete the curing process.

With technologies changing at such a fever pitch, how do printers/converters plan for their immediate and future business needs? Label and Labeling Magazine conducted its annual North American Label Converter survey to determine the state of the industry and what forces are shaping its direction. In her presentation, Danielle Jerschefske, North America editor for L&L, said that she sees printers facing rising costs for everything from equipment, consumables and insurance to labor and energy. At the same time, they are being squeezed by downward price pressure for their products. While printers see commoditization of label pricing, label buyers continue seeking more value-added features.

In order to increase efficiencies, reduce waste and incorporate the boutique design elements print buyers seek, 57 percent of respondents indicated that they are looking to invest in capital equipment in the next 12 months. That number balloons to nearly 75 percent anticipating a capital purchase over the next 24 months. With so many converters seeking a competitive advantage through capital equipment, the key for success is in realistically evaluating press decisions against existing and projected needs.

SOME OF THE INTRIGUING TRENDS COMING FROM THE SURVEY:

- packaging reduction
- down-gauging
- reduced run lengths
- shorter product lifecycles
- environmental challenges / sustainability
- the rise of the private label
- more product variations
- end users becoming pure marketing and sales operations
- reduced time-to-market
- more mergers and acquisitions

According to Jerschefske, much will go digital. The survey indicated that printers recognize the value of digital for shorter run lengths and variable data. As a result, 15 percent of all roll label presses installed worldwide in 2009/2010 were digital. Among the 35,000-40,000 label printers worldwide, 1600 digital presses have been installed to date with 300 additional expected before the end of the year. This makes a strong case for digital as a continuing growth market moving forward. Does that mean you should run out and purchase a digital press? Not necessarily, especially when you consider that only 3 percent of label converters use digital. With technology changing so rapidly, it tends to obsolete just as rapidly, which is why it is so important to carefully evaluate press decisions against existing and projected needs

Sustainability continues its march into the world of print. Over 85 percent of respondents saw sustainability as important to their business, considering sustainability to be a means to reduce waste and waste-related costs, as well as to address growing customer demand for sustainability through the supply chain. They see lean manufacturing as complimentary to 'green' manufacturing.

Probably one of the most important trends is that of actively seeking to engage the consumer at the point of purchase. I-Phone technology combines seamlessly with social media (Facebook fan pages, Twitter, Youtube and even Linkedin) to generate buzz, gather feedback, educate consumers, and initiate dedicated marketing promotions. The application of UR codes for prize promotions and snap tags for information gathering (survey questions), fanfolded recipe inserts for consumer education, and thermo chromatic ink on a beer can are just a few examples of interactive packaging geared to attract the 21-35 age group.

EXAMPLES of die-cut folding carton applications

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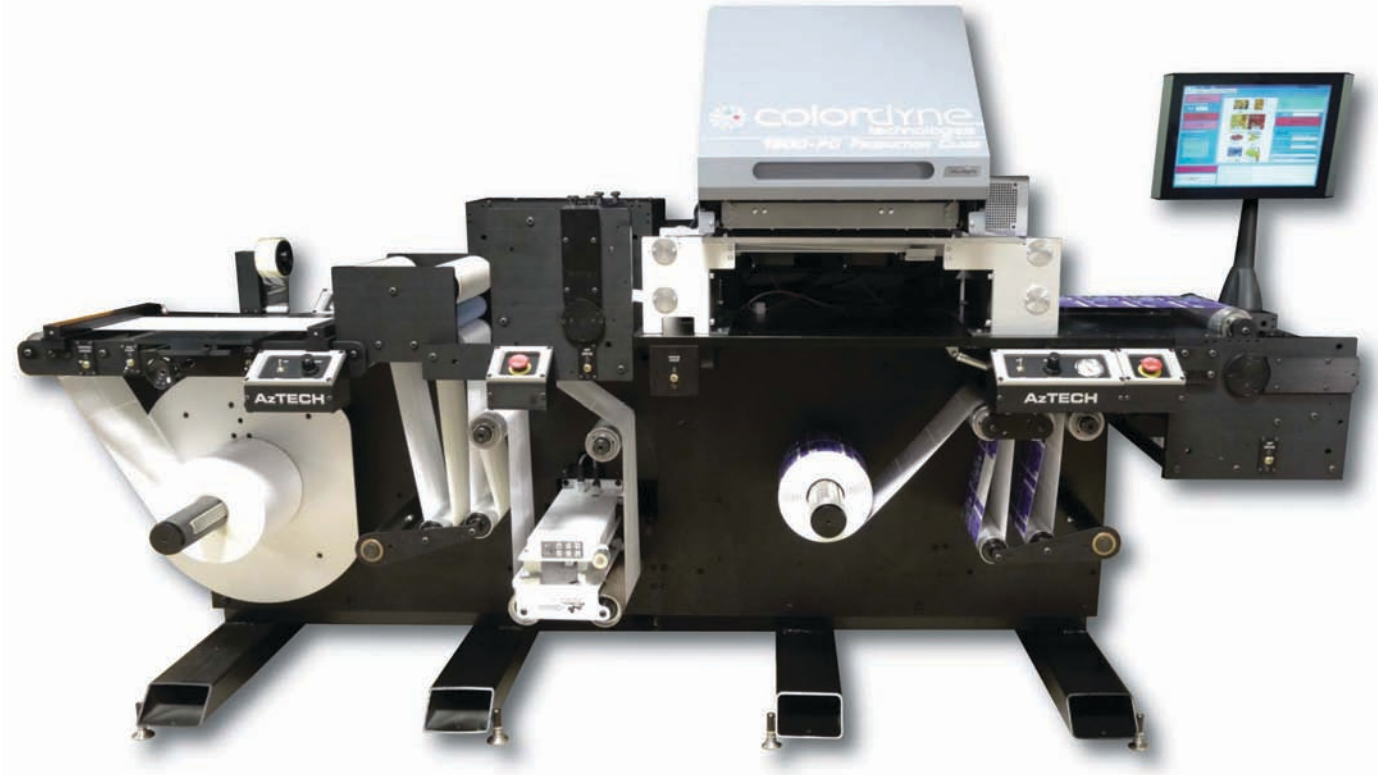


Colordyne launches Memjet-based label system

COLORDYNE TECHNOLOGIES has launched its near-line production class label machine with Memjet technology and components. Danielle Jerschefske reports

Colordyne used videos at the Own-X' booth, its European distributor, and at the AzTech converting booth, its integration and finishing partner, at Labelexpo Europe to demonstrate its new CDT-1600PC (production class) roll-to-roll press dedicated to the prime and secondary pressure sensitive label markets, narrow web packaging and tags. Show attendees saw Colordyne's inkjet system using Memjet color printing technology mounted on a specially engineered web handling system developed in cooperation with AzTech Converting.

The 1600PC is a five-color fixed head system equipped with CMYK water based dye ink, plus a water-based dye pantone spot color capable of running at 32 in/sec, or 160 ft/min on both continuous and pre-die cut materials. Memjet's printheads utilize nanotechnology that can print at 1600 x 1200 dpi on this system. Memjet-powered printers use Memjet printheads, controller chips and ink. The Memjet printhead is 8.77 inches wide and has 70,400 nozzles that can fire more than 700 million drops of ink per second. With its five printheads, the CDT-1600PC can fire more than three and a half billion drops of ink per second.

This digital inkjet system is poised to tackle two separate pieces of market share. Firstly, the Colordyne system can offer a turnkey solution to brand owners of all sizes to help improve turnover times, reduce inventories and waste and provide a production avenue for more cost-effective full color labels. Since the system is capable of printing pre-die cut materials, the complex conversion step is removed from on-demand label production, thereby streamlining the process.

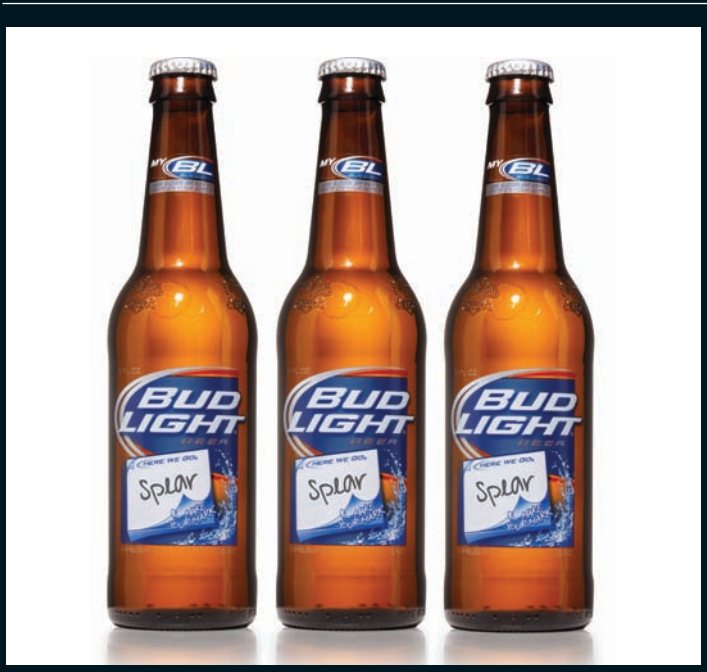
The Colordyne 1600PC has been designed with flexibility in mind and with the AzTech Converting partnership, and label converters can additionally customize the converting line by adding stations to the front and back of the digital heads with options to coat, laminate, integrate foiling, stamping and/or die stations to produce more short runs of high-value labels cost effectively.

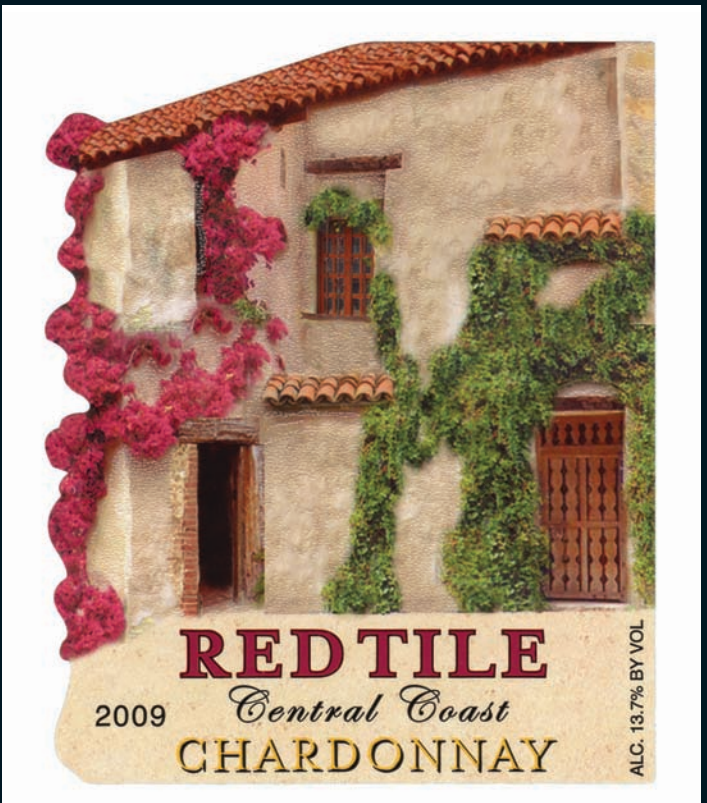
Gary Falconbridge, president of Colordyne says, 'The system can truly compete with flexo at job run lengths from 1,000 to 75,000. It provides label converters the opportunity to come into the digital market offering full color variable printing for a variety of business sectors at low costs. The 1600PC is a lower capital expenditure. There's opportunity to find profit margins with the system's consumable infrastructure and it has a smaller footprint. The Memjet heads in the production class Colordyne system can be replaced for about 500 dollars at MSRP, and with the 1.4 picoliter size of the dots, which is half the size of other industry heads, lowers the cost per print as it requires less ink to provide full coverage of the material. The total system cost is $150k.

'We believe the Colordyne printers will forge a paradigm shift,' explains Falconbridge. 'Looking at a high speed color printing system in this way and fully utilizing the Memjet technology creates a whole new way of doing business.'

Colordyne will begin shipping machines to North American and Europe in the fourth quarter of 2011. Already Colordyne has three distribution points for the Americas, Europe and Asia Pacific, and 30 or so resellers.

While Colordyne was unable to deliver machinery to Labelxpo in time for live demonstrations, it did exhibit with the 1600PC and its benchtop units at both Graph Expo and Pack Expo, receiving a vibrant response with over 150 quotes to end users and converters. It was able to sign on an additional 15 channel resellers and expects to add another 15 in Q4. It will be shipping up to 15 1600-PC models in Q4.





LABELEXPOSURE

The L&L team brings you their pick of the best labels of the month. To showcase your labels visit **www.labelsandlabeling.com/labelexposure**

SPEAR produces customizable PS label for Bud Light

Spear, a global label converting group, has joined forces with Anheuser-Busch InBev to introduce a dynamic, interactive label. Brand developers of the Bud Light beer turned to Spear to produce the new customizable pressure-sensitive label.

Printed at its Tennessee, USA, facility, Spear's technical team transformed the familiar Bud Light label to allow drinkers to add a personal touch. Incorporating metal activation technology, extensive testing was required to investigate accidental activation and abrasion problems. The end result is an exclusive area of the label on which consumers can customize their bottle by using a coin or key to write a message or draw an image. This not only allows the drinker to express their individuality, it also avoids bottle mix-ups and offers the chance for individuals to exchange messages.

TAMAR produces labels for award-winning wine

UK-based converter Tamar Labels produced the labels for Denbies English Vineyard's Chalk Ridge Rosé 2010, which was awarded gold at the International Wine Challenge.

UK vineyards are not known for their high volume production and Denbies – the UK's largest single estate vineyard – like other specialty oriented UK food and wine producers needs access to a range of product labels in bespoke short runs.

Tamar Labels, based in Devon, with its HP Indigo digital label presses can digitally print high quality process color labels in short runs with no minimum run. For example, the labels for Denbies Chalk Ridge Rosé, which were designed by PRE Creative Studios, can be printed from file onto metalized silver paper with a gloss over laminate and be turned around to meet even the tightest production lead times.

Managing director Robert Lee explained: 'One of our biggest growth areas has been with smaller regional food producers who are more specialty oriented such as delicatessens, farm shops, supermarkets, tourist attractions, restaurants, hotels, pubs and guest houses as well as a whole range of independent local producers. All of which require eye catching labels to be produced in short runs to tight deadlines.'

ASL PRINT FX won first place in the wine and spirits category (flexography/letterpress color process prime) and a Best of Show award for this Red Tile Chardonnay label. The label was printed using a 20 micron stochastic process image, hot stamp, multiple silkscreen, UVC treatment and multiple varnish coating across a total of 11 press stations on a Gallus press. The job used Kodak plates, Harper ceramic anilox rolls and Kocher & Beck dies, and was printed on Fasson labelstock with Sun Chemical inks.

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HELMUT Schreiner

Leading from the front

MIKE FAIRLEY, chairman of this year's Label Industry Global Awards judging panel, discusses the reasons why the judging panel selected Helmut Schreiner for the R Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award 2011.

The Schreiner Group, like many other founding label companies, began its life in a garage. This was in 1951 when Helmut's parents, Theodor and Margaret Schreiner, founded a small factory to print embossed seals and labels. They etched their own plates, cut material to width with a self-made roll-cutting machine, and had one single-color seal embossing press. Helmut joined the company as an apprentice at the age of 13, attending evening classes and working during the day printing anniversary labels.

It was from this background that Helmet Schreiner went on to study printing and operations technology. He also spent several years in employment with major companies in the graphics industry before returning to his parent's business. A wealth of ideas and huge enthusiasm spawned the development of new products and led to large companies being gained as customers.

By 1974 the process of changing from the first generation of the family to Helmut Schreiner as the second generation was finalized. The company was renamed 'Schreiner Labels and Self-Adhesion Technology' and the company's corporate values of Innovation, Quality, Performance and Enthusiasm were developed. Everything the company did was looked at through these values.

Great importance in Schreiner factories is attached to optimum, process-capable working conditions. All operating areas are air-conditioned; workplaces are ergonomically tested; work rooms are like living rooms; every building is designed for a happy environment, while performance is rewarded by success-orientated remuneration systems and intensive advanced training programs. The company also offer employees facilities for exercise, Pilates, etc, and provide company flats for new employees, apprentices and other personnel until they can afford to buy their own homes. All the ladies in the Schreiner Group even receive flowers on Valentine's Day. With such a working environment and facilities it is perhaps not surprising to find a very low staff turnover.

Every single employee is expected to keep learning, to develop their skills, to apply themselves accordingly and to participate in the company's further development. A comprehensive advanced training program is operated and they have their own advanced education institution – the Schreiner Academy – which offers around 150 training programs as well as more than 500 online seminars and, currently, some 43 apprentices.

Over the years since 1974, under Helmut Schreiner as executive manager and owner, the company has evolved into the Schreiner Group with activities in many countries, global sales of 120 million euros and more than 720 employees in factories in Europe and the USA. Today, under Helmut Schreiner's charismatic leadership the group has become a world leading innovator within the label industry, developing new technologies and applications in areas that include electro-luminescent labels, printronics, RFID and anti-counterfeit technologies.

But it was not only the development of his company where Helmut Schreiner has been particularly active. He was a founder member of VskE, the German label association in 1980, became deputy chairman in 1982, chairman in 1995 and honorary chairman in 2010. One of the most respected label associations in Europe, VskE has always been far-sighted and, says Helmut, 'has always looked beyond the tip of its nose' – something which has contributed to the success of German label converters for many years.

In addition, he has been an active member of FINAT and is a past chairman of the FINAT Converter Committee. Put all this together and you can see why the judging panel felt that his inexhaustible passion for his company, his pioneering innovation, his input into industry associations, and into the training and development of his employees, make him an outstanding nomination and worthy winner in 2011.

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Hybrid solution

FACED WITH DEMANDS for shorter runs, Lundens Tryckeri in Gothenburg, Sweden opted for a hybrid flexo/ inkjet solution. Andy Thomas reports

Like many label-printing companies world-wide, Lundens Tryckeri was suffering due to customer demand for smaller order-quantities, with more variation, and so ever shorter run lengths. Setup time on the company's flexo presses dominated job costs and the trend was very clear to Bosse Andersson at Lundens : 'To meet customers' demand we need to produce labels in greater variety, faster and cheaper'. Bosse was sure that Lundens needed to upgrade digital printing, but having studied the systems available he was also sure that a stand-alone digital system was going to require a very large up-front investment, and the kind of cost-per-print figures he was being quoted would make such a system viable only on very short runs of high-value labels. In short, the return on investment would be long at best.

Bosse's dream was of something different. He understood perfectly that his current flexo units deliver the low cost and high-quality that his customers demand, but only when the print run is long enough that the setup costs become affordable. His idea was that what he really needed was a hybrid system, which fused digital and flexo. Basically a system that on long runs operates as a flexo label press, on short runs becomes a pure digital system with zero setup time. In the middle somewhere it could run as a mix of flexo on some colors and digital on the rest. The decision on any particular job should become purely economic – what is the lowest cost way to produce the job. In summary, what he wanted was to add a full-color digital module to an existing flexo press.

BENEFITS

By utilising an existing press as a "base" unit Bosse foresaw he should be able to achieve good savings in the system cost. He would not need to pay for the unwind-rewind system that is usually part of a digital printer, and in addition he could use the existing pre-treatment and finishing capabilities of one of his existing presses.

In summary the expected benefits would be:-

- Low investment cost
- Hybrid system allows optimum mix of flexo and digital for lowest cost-per-print
- Little or no increase in space requirements
- Minimal retraining of staff

The next question for Bosse was simple? Could he find such a digital module and could it be adapted to one of his existing presses.

INVESTIGATION

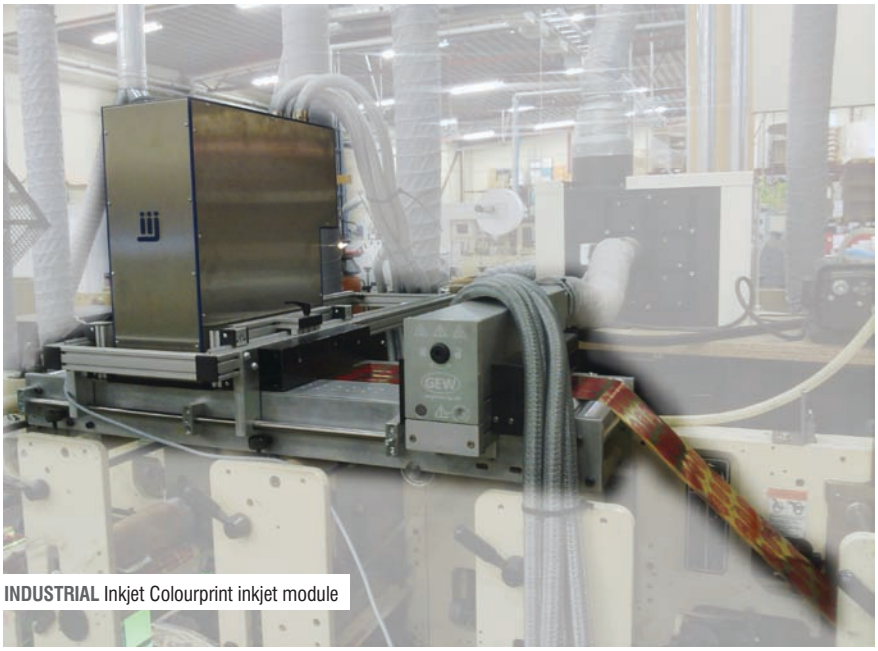
For help in finding such a digital system, Bosse turned to Print and Cut Ltd, also in Gothenburg. Print and Cut provide maintenance and upgrade services to printing companies in Scandinavia. They have a long track record of successfully customising or modifying presses to suit customers' requirements. Although up to that point Print and Cut had little experience with digital printing, they were not afraid to look into it and had been looking for a suitable project on which to build digital experience. Birger Lolk, CEO of Print and Cut, began by investigating digital systems on the market.

Print and Cut suggested a visit to Industrial Inkjet Ltd in UK to look at their 'ColourPrint' inkjet modules. Two visits followed, with print trials on IIJ's demo systems, before Lundens and Print and Cut decided that the IIJ system seemed to be the way forward.

ADAPTION ISSUES

During discussions with IIJ, Print and Cut had determined that a key issue in achieving a successful integration of the IIJ unit would be the accuracy of the media movement under the ColourPrint module. IIJ had explained that their module is built up from a number of smaller inkjet printheads, all contained in a single printhead unit. The individual printheads do not join end to end but are arranged in two rows (per color) and placed so that the print from one head merges seamlessly with that of its neighbour in the next row. The printheads used by IIJ - from Konica Minolta in Japan - are very slim, but the two rows are still on a 20mm pitch. Roughly speaking this means that if the label stock moves under the inkjet unit at an angle then the print from adjacent heads will either not join together (leaving a white line) or will double-up on the material (creating a dark line). The first challenge for Print and Cut was to ensure that the sideways movement of the label stock was controlled well enough that this would not be an issue. Note that total sideways movement of the label stock is not what is important. It is the angle of movement under the printheads that causes the "stitch" to become visible.

A second issue was the cure-delay of the inkjet ink on the media. IIJ had explained to Print and Cut that on different label media the inkjet ink would wet out at different speeds. This means that the distance between the inkjet



INDUSTRIAL Inkjet Colourprint inkjet module

module and the UV lamp will need to be adjustable to achieve the best print quality on any different media. IIJ suggested a maximum gap between the inkjet module and the UV lamp of close to 1metre would be required.

Following the discussions with IIJ, Print and Cut designed and built an 'adaptor' to go onto the Mark Andy press selected by Lundens for modification. This adaptor would hold the IIJ ColourPrint unit and the UV lamp, supplied by GEW. As well as ensuring plenty of adjustment between the UV lamp and the inkjet module, the adaptor was required not to reduce in any way the flexo capabilities of the press and must not cause any 'wander' of the label media under the inkjet module.

A visit to Lundens by IIJ staff showed that the label stock was tracking accurately over the new adaptor, so Lundens were able to order the IIJ system and the UV lamp.

The next issue to be solved was to ensure that the print from the IIJ unit would register accurately to the die-cut labels. The solution that Print and Cut came up with was very simple. A photo-sensor was mounted after both the in-line die cut and unit stripping of the waste material. The chosen sensor had no difficulties in detecting labels - even fully printed labels - against the background liner material. The result was a 100% register between die and print.

The system was finally installed in April 2011.

MEDIA ISSUES

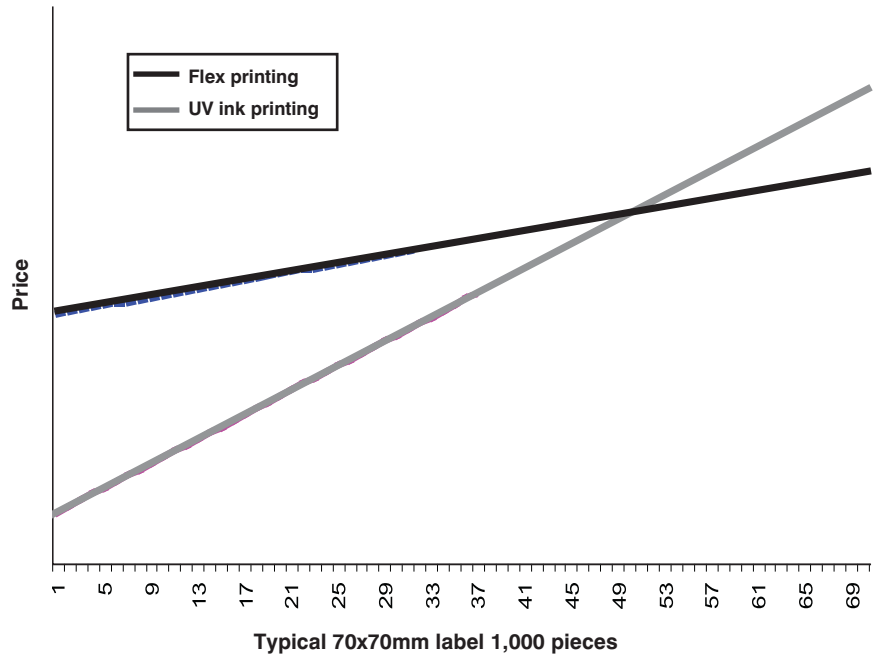
During trials of different label stocks, Lundens realised that , despite the print tests of different materials made earlier at IIJ, there were a lot of standard paper flexo label stocks on which the inkjet print just did not work. Basically the inkjet ink tended to 'reticulate' or 'bead' on the gloss label surface. Plastic films generally worked well, but many, perhaps most, paper label stocks did not work. The Mark Andy press was already fitted with a corona-treatment unit but this was found to have little effect. Finally, investigation by both Lundens and Print and Cut found a pre-treatment coating that can be applied inline by one of the existing flexo units in the press. This pre-treatment allows the inkjet to print onto almost any stock with excellent definition and 'smoothness'. At the same time the cost of the pre-treatment is sufficiently low that it doesn't significantly add to the overall cost per print of the digital system.

THE RESULT

The system has now been in use for around three months. 'It is used every day and has proven to be very reliable, easy to use and with an absolute minimum of maintenance,' commented Bosse Andersson. 'The system does the job brilliant! We are really pleased with it' .

Print and Cut's Birger Lolk believes that there is a real need for such hybrid systems in the Scandinavian label market, and he envisages fitting many more of these units to existing Gallus and Mark Andy units.

COST PER PRINT FLEXO VS UV INKJET



Typical 70x70mm label 1,000 pieces

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

BST AND X-RITE ANNOUNCE PARTNERSHIP

BST International, a manufacturer of quality assurance systems for the web processing industry, and X-Rite, a supplier of color management technology, are jointly developing a real-time inline spectral color measurement system.

The cooperation will allow both inline spectral measurement system and stationary handhelds to deliver comparable results, say the companies, meaning the system can provide an answer to the ever-growing need to provide both reliable inline and offline data on specified colors over the entire print production.

The partnership has assembled a team of engineers from both companies to solve the challenge of developing a fully automated and real time accurate spectral inline system that can deliver the precision and exact results required in the flexo, gravure and narrow web market.

'Ensuring color control is the decisive key issue for the flexo, gravure and narrow web printing industry community,' said Percy Dengler, BST International's managing director. 'We at BST International are thrilled to be working with X-Rite to bring a jointly devised concept to X-Rite's industry-leading color measurement technology.'

'Combined with our extensive experience in web quality assuring technology this will result in a system creating a new era in press color control in this field,' said Michael Wiebe, BST's CTO.

'We are very excited to partner with BST and through the association of our know-how, IP and talents, to build a solution that sets new milestones in color driven value creation in flexo and gravure workflows,' commented Dr Francis Lamy, X-Rite's CTO.

TLMI NAMES CO-CHAIRS FOR 2013 CONFERENCE

US association TLMI (Tag & Label Manufacturers Institute) has named three co-chairs for its 2013 Technical Conference, which is held bi-annually in Chicago, Illinois.

The 2013 Technical Conference co-chairs are Wade Fouts, Wilson Manufacturing; James Kissner, Harper Corporation; and Michelle Shaieb, Whitlam Label Company.

TLMI technical committee chair Paul Brauss said: 'I am delighted that Wade, James and Michelle have agreed to be co-chairs of the 2013 TLMI Technical Conference. The conference is one of the most prestigious and informative events our industry has, and being nominated as a co-chair is an honor, as well as an opportunity to grow, foster new friendships and provide a valuable service to TLMI.'

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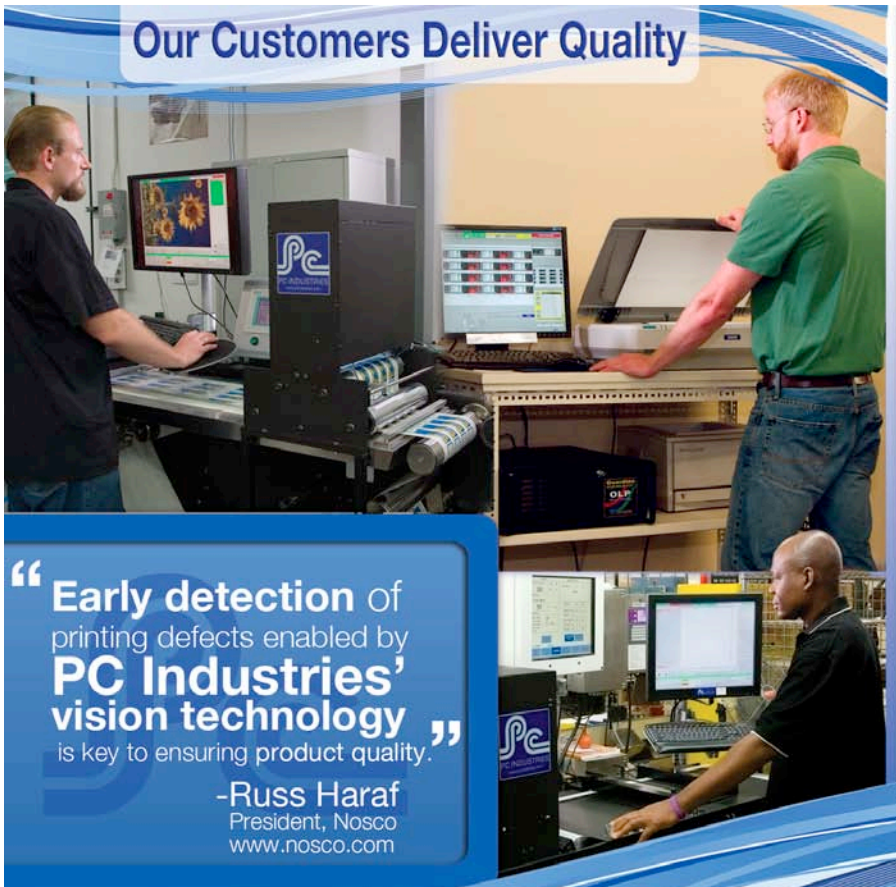

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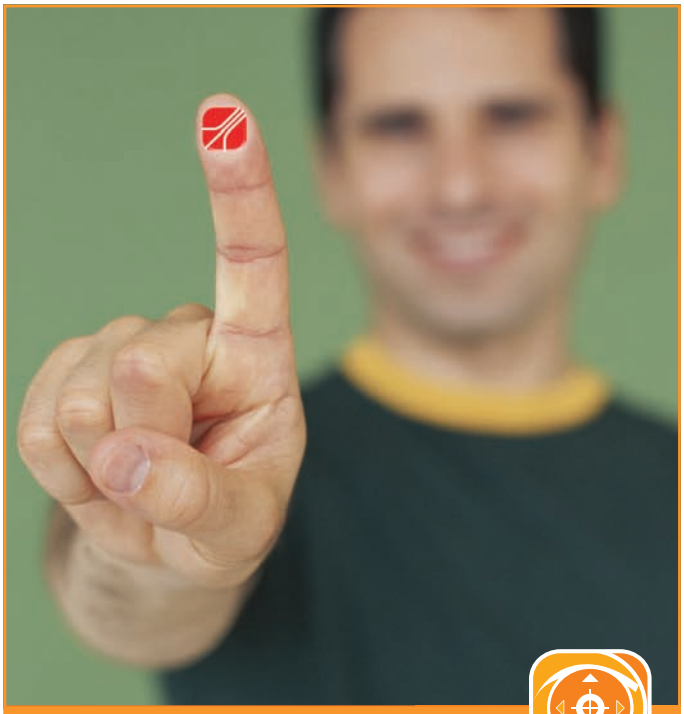

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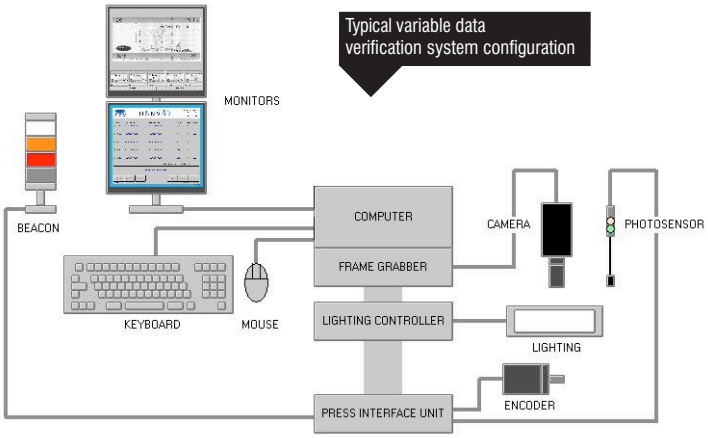
Variable data verification

VARIABLE DATA verification poses critical challenges on high speed labeling lines and can make use of techniques developed for document and banknote inspection. Mark Williamson and Derek Norridge examine the issues



Typical variable data verification system configuration

Industrial vision has an important role to play in a host of inspection applications in the paper, printing, label and labeling industries. Applications include continuous verification and/or quality inspection of numbered print and inspection of symbols and labels on web, sheet or single documents, as well as inspection of security features by checking the presence, position and integrity of applied features such as foil and hologram devices and base paper inserts like security threads. One particular application that poses critical technical challenges is that of variable data verification, where data such as serial numbers are different on each item being checked.

Variable data verification can provide100 percent checking and verification of sequences and print quality of numbered documents on high speed printing and collating machines.

VARIABLE DATA VERIFICATION

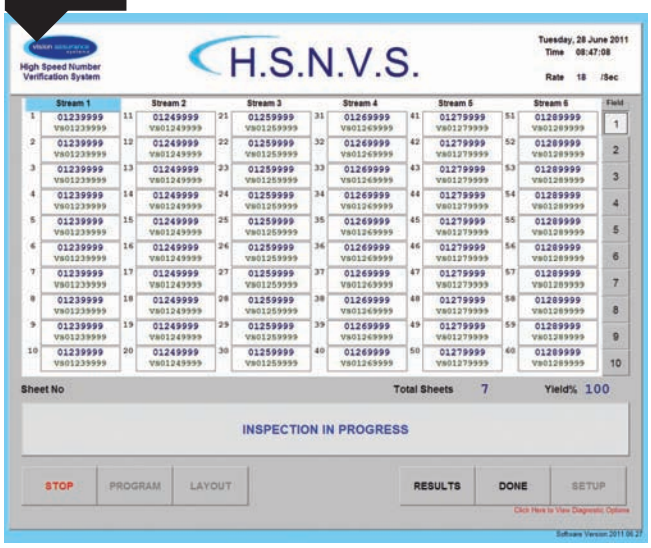
High speed image processing techniques and verification are well-established and can be used to check text, 1D barcodes, 2D datamatrix codes individually or in various combinations. In general, the data being checked on any individual batch does not change – each label, or product within the batch contains the same information. However, there are many applications, such as bank notes, cheques, lottery tickets, software security labels, mail out documents and other 'content critical' items where the data changes form label to label. Whether this is a sequential or non-sequential change, it represents a significant challenge to the image processing system. As in more traditional applications, variable data verification systems must ensure product integrity and eliminate the production of expensive waste. In order to do that, the system is required to provide 100 percent inspection by reading and verifying label numbering at web speeds in real time and provide a guarantee of print quality by rejecting incorrectly printed characters.

SYSTEM COMPONENTS

Any industrial vision system consists essentially of the same components: an appropriate light source to illuminate the

Live feed showing multiple streams – no failures

Results screen



area of interest, a camera – or cameras – and framegrabber to capture an image, a PC to process data, suitable image processing software and appropriate interfaces into the printing machine for triggering of the imaging system and for a reject mechanism. Capturing images at high speed requires a fast shutter speed to eliminate blurring, this means that there is very little time to sense the light reflected from the document, and ambient light will produce a signal from the camera, which is too small to be of any use. The camera signal can be boosted to a useable level by illuminating the target with a very intense light. To maintain registration and obtain full image access, it is necessary to install the camera and lighting assembly in the delivery section of the press. Ideally the cameras should view the image on a flat surface to minimize distortion. High resolution low distortion lenses are chosen to give the correct working height for the cameras taking into account the area available in the press.

MAKING MEASUREMENTS

A variety of calculations can be required for variable data verification. These include:

- **Serial numbers –** non-sequential serial, serial, fixed, blank, denomination or prefix/suffix characters may need to be checked.
- **Verification –** may be required between serial numbers on the same note, between adjacent notes in each stream and between sequential documents in adjacent streams.
- **Sequences –** standard increment, decrement, skip etc may be required as well as special sequences
- **Layout –** checking that the printed characters appear in the correct order and to the predetermined defined layout for each document.
- **Sheet Layout –** multiple note sheets can be calculated to check for correct rows, columns and special schemes. i.e. split sheets and makeup sequences.

Other requirements may be to check for OCR Quality, OCR / symbol print contrast (for over and under inking trends),

ABOUT THE AUTHORS:

Mark Williamson works for verification specialist Stemmer Imaging (m.williamson@stemmer-imaging.co.uk) and Derek Norridge for Verification Systems Ltd

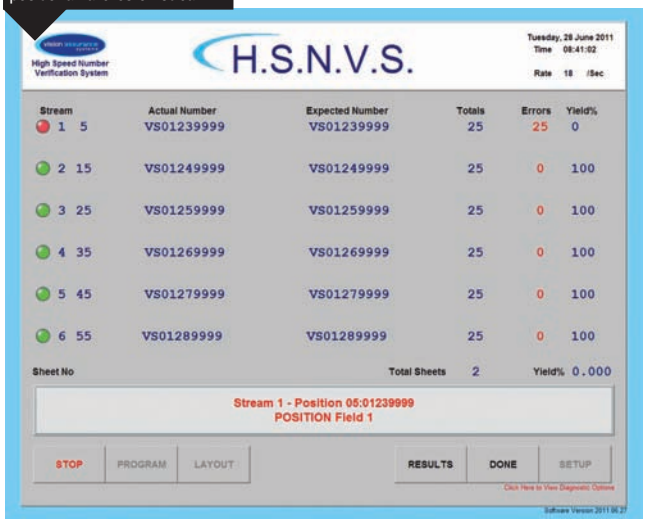
alignment and check digit. In practice, the high speed triggered camera(s) capture images and record data from multiple fields for analysis. Ideally, each field can be assigned to search for a different style font, barcode or unique symbol, pattern or logo. Figure 2 shows a screenshot from a system measuring 'banknotes' with the live image feed from the cameras. Figure 3 shows a typical report screen for this inspection, in a format representing the layout of the product. The blue text is the calculated number and the green text is the actual number extracted from the images. Figure 4 shows another live feed, but this time, one of the serial numbers is positioned incorrectly, and this is flagged red on the image, even though the number itself is correct. Figure 5 shows a results screen highlighting that the errors have occurred only on Stream 1.

INTERFACING AND REPORTING

In order to interface appropriately too many types of presses and transport systems either Web or Sheet fed, provision must be made for all the necessary timing and interface signals between the system and the customer application. Camera trigger signals are normally generated from Document sensors and/or an optical shaft encoder. These signals are used to trigger the camera at the correct place on the web/sheet. The system should also provide output signals for alarms and lamps etc. and interface with customer stop circuits and PLC's. A signal can be generated for each fault detected which can be used to reject the sheet and mark the defective document. Reports should show the time and date of all sequences inspected and details of all faults detected. By recording the data for each fault, document re-makes can be run at a later time. In the event of a serious printing error, an alarm signal should be generated, typically using an alarm beacon to warn the operator.

Live feed showing multiple streams – positional failure on stream 1

Results screen showing positional failures on stream 1



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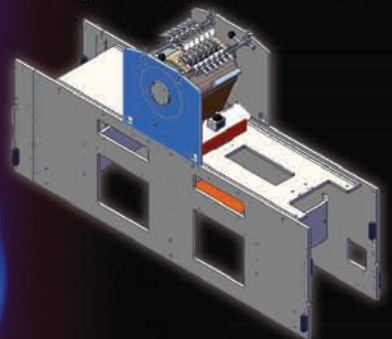

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Ink Migration

WITH LOW MIGRATION inks a significant theme at Labelexpo 2011, Siegwerk Group's Rolf Montag looks at the migration chain of custody

The potential for migration with conventional UV inks is a well-known problem. It means that packaging and labels for foodstuffs must be printed using 'low migration' ink systems. Responsibility for choosing the right UV ink lies with the printer.

Where there are UV inks with and without migration risk, various questions arise. In day-to-day operations, one has to know whether the packaging or label may be printed with conventional UV inks or whether low migration (LM) UV inks have to be used. For example, in the case of sleeves intended for glass bottles there is no risk of migration because glass represents a functional barrier. Sleeves for plastic bottles on the other hand, must be printed with LM inks. In-mold labels for tubs and trays commonly used to hold dairy products and other foodstuffs must also be printed with LM inks. Conversely, packaging with an aluminium bag does not require LM inks on account of the fact that the aluminium foil offers an adequate barrier against migration.

Migration may also occur due to the so-called set-off effect, that is to say contamination of the inside of the packaging facing the foodstuff when this side touches the printed exterior while stacked or in rolls. LM ink systems are therefore the solution to the problem of set-off in foodstuff packaging.

WHY TWO TYPES OF UV INKS?

Conventional UV inks and varnishes contain low-molecular photoinitiators, acrylate monomers or other materials with a relatively high migration potential. These are substances with short molecular chains which have a tendency to migrate. Materials of this nature may migrate through the substrate and also through the label into the foodstuff, if there is no secure barrier – such as glass or aluminium – between the packaging material and the content, or when the possibility of set-off exists. Since conventional UV inks are cheaper and technically efficient, they are employed for all applications in which migration and set-off are not an issue.

On the other hand, LM UV inks and varnishes are formulated with higher molecular weight photoinitiators and acrylates, thereby reducing the tendency to migrate to a minimum.

WHEN IS A BARRIER DEEMED TO BE ADEQUATE?

Without prior testing, only sealed aluminium bags, glass containers and thick PET bottles are deemed to be functional barriers. An interior plastic bag, plasticized paper or unsealed aluminium film does not represent an adequate barrier against migration.

Metallized plastic film which looks like aluminium, or thin PET bottles are not deemed to be reliable barriers unless proved otherwise. Where there is any doubt, the printer or packer must arrange to have a migration analysis carried out because they have a responsibility to the consumer to ensure that the packaging complies with the legal requirements. Incidentally, Siegwerk application technicians will be pleased to assist in the risk assessment.

NEW LEGAL PROVISIONS

Paragraph 26e et seq. of the new ordinance 817.023.21, in force in Switzerland since 2010, details that only those inks contained in a positive list are permissible for use on foodstuff packaging and, moreover, that specific migration threshold values to be measured on the finished packaging must be adhered to. Here UV-printed food¬stuff packaging is required to meet migration threshold values of < 10 ppb or < 50 ppb.

The competent national authorities in the Federal Republic of Germany are drawing up similar or possibly even more stringent legal provisions for the end of this year.

MORE INFORMATION

Siegwerk has produced two guides for label converters which can be downloaded from www.siegwerk.com/productsafety: The six-page "Selection of Siegwerk UV Low Migration Systems" indicates where the use of LM inks and varnishes is mandatory. This leaflet also lists the addresses of accredited analytical institutions that will test printed packaging in respect of its migration potential.

For more extensive information on the mechanism involved in migration and the risk-free use of low migration inks for food packaging, download the "Know-how: Printing Inks for Food Packaging" brochure, which also deals with the permissible limit values, test methods and validation recommendations as well as the responsibilities. In addition, the guide passes on a wealth of practical tips.

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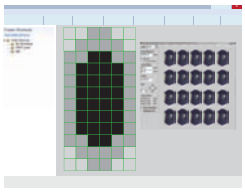

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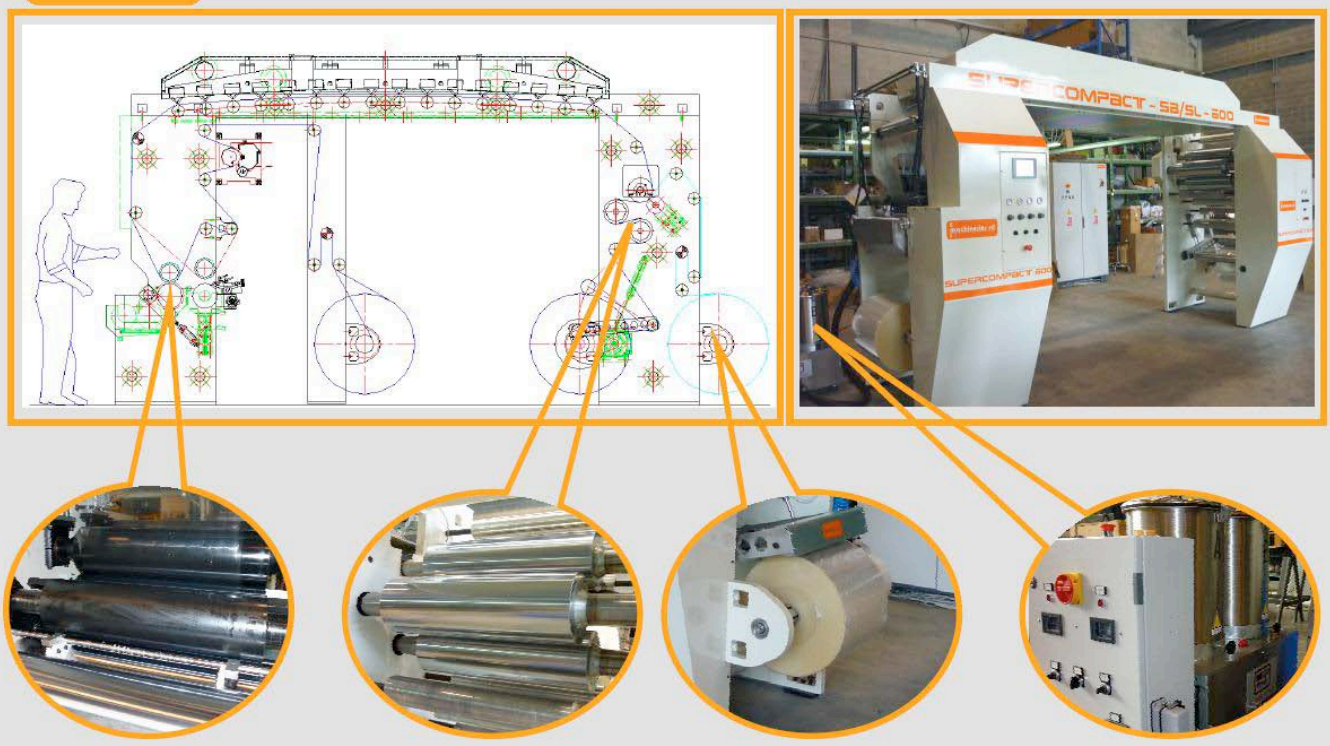

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AMETIQ Congrese converter organizers

TLMI points converters to growth opportunities

DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE reports from the TLMI's highly successful Technical Conference and Annual Meeting events, while in Mexico the national association holds its first congress

More than 350 attendees gathered together in September for TLMI's Technical Conference, an association event held biannually in Chicago. Over two days, more than 60 presenters and panelists led technical discussions and gave presentations addressing the narrow web converting industry's current trends, challenges and opportunities. This year's co-chairs were Nick Van Alstine of Macaran Printed Products, Brian Gale of I.D. Images and Michelle Garza of RBCOR who was elected to the TLMI board at its annual meeting one month later.

The conference featured technical presentations and discussions involving expert panels comprised of industry converters, suppliers and end users. Conference presentation topics included Lean manufacturing, 100 percent video web inspection, TLMI's LIFE certification program, brand protection, and aligning sales and operations through strategic planning. Throughout the two-day conference presenting converters also offered a direct glimpse into their own operations, sharing anecdotes about production strategies in addition to new technologies and services their companies have profited from.

Nick Van Alstine, president of Macaran Printed Products, said: 'One of the goals of the TLMI Technical Committee in approaching how this particular conference would be structured was to ask TLMI members what types of presentations and discussions they would be interested in. One thing that became clear as we reached out to our fellow members was that while companies were still interested in technical expertise, they also wanted a business track that addressed other components of growing and managing a business in today's marketplace. This led us to prioritizing topics such as sales, marketing, strategic planning and brand protection to further reinforce TLMI's role as the primary learning association in our industry.'

Chairman of the TLMI board of directors, Art Yerecic, president of Yerecic Label, commented: 'The 2011 Tech Conference had something for everyone. Converters and suppliers of all sizes benefited from well-conceived sessions that showed us new ways to deliver innovative solutions to our customers. We learned how to become better stewards of the environment and more skillful mentors to our peers and associates. There certainly were many top and bottom line improvement opportunities available to attendees.'

The TLMI Annual Meeting held in Phoenix Arizona October 17-19 hosted over 350 label industry supplier and converter members. North America's leading networking event was themed as Adaptation: Perspective on Change and Creating New Value. Chaired by Karen Moreland of global die manufacturer RotoMetrics, attendees listened to an award winning Harvard economics professor discuss business in a challenging economy and heard a Global 1000 Company advisor discuss innovation and the importance of leading progressive change in business.

The meeting offered a wholly new panel session titled Future Product Technology and Design: Opportunities for Converting Solutions, which included a packaging marketer, a designer and an end user. The key takeaways from the panelists was for converters to: bring innovation to its customers; understand the power of interactive packaging and social media for a brand; add-value to its products while maintaining cost increases if possible; support its customers to differentiate their brands.

The 2011 TLMI Annual Awards were announced on the final evening of the gathering. The winners are listed below. Please see pages 61-68 to review the Label Award winners.

- Converter of the Year – Ken Kidd, WS Packaging

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FABIAN Silva of Etiquetas Anro is the new president of Mexican association

NEW PRESIDENT

La Asociación Mexicana de Etiqueteros, or Ametiq (the Mexican Association of Label Companies), has appointed Fabian Silva of Mexico City-based converter Etiquetas Anro as its new president.

Silva replaces Jesus Ramirez Ruiz, general director of Eticom, a label converter based in Mexico City. Ametiq was created in April 2010 by six national label converters: Coflemex, Eticom, Etiflash de México, La Etiqueta Fina, Lobo Impresores and Etiquetas Anro.

- Supplier of the Year – Pat Hague, Water Ink Technologies
  Environmental Leadership Awards:
- Innovative Technology – Avery Dennison
- Process Improvement – Label World

Also a highlight at the awards night, Art Yerecic and Roger Pellow of Tarsus Group announced that TLMI has entered into a long term partnership with Tarsus Group, which will see the North American label association continue to co-sponsor the Labelexpo Americas exhibition from 2014 to 2022.

Yerecic said: 'The co-sponsoring of Labelexpo Americas benefits both TLMI and the Tarsus Group as we work together to serve the changing requirements of both TLMI's member companies, and the greater North American narrow web industry. As a label converter, I can say that my company finds tremendous value in attending Labelexpo Americas. We send a number of executives and operational managers to every show and have never missed one. I want to acknowledge the efforts of Frank Gerace, past TLMI chairman, and Frank Sablone, TLMI president, in renegotiating our agreement with Tarsus and keeping this synergistic partnership moving forward.'

Roger Pellow, director of Tarsus' Labels and Packaging Group, commented: 'The signing of the new agreement with TLMI is very important for the industry as both organizations have the same goals and aspirations to see the industry grow and be profitable. We have a very close relationship with the TLMI board of directors and now that we have signed a long term deal we'll continue to work together to ensure the success of the labels and packaging industry.'

FIRST AMETIQ CONGRESE

La Asociación Mexicana de Etiqueteros, or AMETIQ (The Mexican Association of Label Companies), organized its first industry conference in July in Mexico City. The event was widely popular amongst national players hosting over 100 industry participants and twelve tabletop exhibitors. Suppliers, succession specialists and trade journalists informed attendees of growing industry technologies that can help streamline business, trends to better understand the global marketplace and tactics to improve margins.

The president of the group is Jesus Ramirez Ruiz who is the general director of Eticom based in Mexico City. He says, 'The First Congress of the Mexican Association of Converters, AMETIQ, took place in Mexico City with the participation of great suppliers providing insights on topics particularly of interest to label converters.

'In Mexico it is very difficult to work in associations since the market is very jealous and competitive, but having already 16 converter members and 15 supplier members in the group shows that every day we are working for the mutual interests and behalf of national converters.

'We thank the attending suppliers and converters for their valuable participation, and now our goal is to call more converters for the year 2012 in which we will carry out our next Congress.'

Ametiq was created in April 2010 by six national label converters: Coflemex, Eticom, Etiflash de México, La Etiqueta Fina, Lobo Impresores and Etiquetas Anro. Today the young association has grown to have sixteen converter members and has gained large support from suppliers like LabelTraxx, UPM Raflatac, and Ferrostaal, the region's distributor of Mark Andy and HP Indigo machines.

Fabian Silva, general manager for Etiquetas Anro and founding partner of Ametiq explains that the association website is key for members to communicate on a united front. It tells too that the group has formed a partnership with the city's Universidad Tecnologica Fidel Valazquez to be able to provide press operators with credit courses.

He says, 'In addition to growing membership, we want to gain acknowledgement on an international scale to that the Mexican market can rise above global barriers to success and compete effectively on a global scale.'

FTA FALL MEETING IS PACKED

In October at its Annual Fall Conference Color In Focus, the FTA hosted nearly 300 flexographic professionals, around 100 more attendees than other years, in St. Louis, Missouri. The event was co-chaired by 2009 Hall of Fame inductee Mark Mazur of DuPont Packaging Graphics and Dan Collins of Berry Plastics. There were 34 supplier exhibitors who were very pleased with the number of printers in attendance.

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What's in a name?

WHETHER YOU ARE NAMING A NEW SERVICE, a new product or a new company division, make sure you obey the tried and trusted rules of brand recognition. Heather McCarthy reports

At the core of any company, product, or service identity is its name. Names are the means by which we identify and categorize the things we experience in the world, the way we tell our friends about them, the way we find them, and the way we remember them. Names are without a doubt the most enduring element of a brand, and a key tool for positioning in a competitive space.

NAMING 101

There are four things we initially look for in a good name:

1. **Impact –** you have to get noticed to be considered at all.
2. **Memorability –** people need to be able to easily recollect your offering. Pronounceability plays a key role in memorability.
3. **Association-building –** people need to understand what you're offering and why.
4. **Protectability –** you want a name that fends off the "me too's" of the world and clearly stakes out your position in the market.

At best, we find names can only achieve a few of these objectives at a time, so it's very important that we ask and understand what any particular name needs to do and select the type of name that best suits its unique goals. We group names in to three distinct categories, each with its own set of advantages and disadvantages:

1. **Descriptive names** speak directly to the heart of the offering, telling consumers exactly what you're selling them – eg. Bank of America cash rewards. These names aren't flashy or exciting, but their overt nature requirws little marketing investment to educate your audience. The downside? Descriptive names are rarely memorable, and are also difficult to own and protect – figuratively or literally.
2. **Associative names** refer to the emotional payoff of your offering, but don't come right out and say it – eg. Kellogg's SmartStart. These names work well when you're trying to identify value and build positive associations. They are also more ownable and protectable than purely descriptive names. They are not, however, a "quick get" for consumers and can require a lot of resources to make them effective.
3. **Inventive names** neither allude to nor come straight out with what the offering is, but instead are intriguing, impactful and easy to say – eg. Apple iPod. They also tend to be easier to protect/trademark. The downside? In some cases, they may hinder memorability, plus you need big marketing budgets to explain what it is you're actually selling.

Often, we see groups getting hung up as they search for a name that says it all. The truth is, no name can. Modifiers and descriptors – such as Bank of America cash rewards credit card, Kellogg's SmartStart cereals, and Apple iPod mobile digital device – can help add meaning to a name, while nomenclature systems – such as Apple iPod touch, Apple iPod nano, Apple iPod shuffle, Apple iPod classic, and now Apple iPhones and iPads – can help understanding and build associations across various segments or lines of business.

Finally, don't forget about leveraging icons, tag lines and other branding elements. These handy devices are great ways to say more about the nature of your offering and the benefits it carries.

GET SMART ON PROCESS

Naming isn't easy. In fact, it's one of the hardest things we do. One quick name storming session never delivers the best answer. It's really not until a third or fourth round of rigorous naming that the real gems reveal themselves. With over a decade of naming experience, though, we've got some things figured out.

1. **Diversity is important –** To elevate the robustness of a naming study, we assemble teams with people of varying backgrounds, personalities, strengths, mindsets, and vocabularies. If you're just starting out, be sure to ground your team in the basics of naming and define the unique attributes and benefits of your offering from your audience's perspective.
2. **Brainstorm strategically –** Organizing name candidates into strategic directions keeps studies organized and digestible. There's nothing worse than an overwhelming pile of words with no clear structure. It makes review next to impossible. Worse yet are the endless strings of clever puns and wordplays that in no way help you meet your strategic business goals, but always seem to fill the lists of brainstorming sessions we get from struggling clients.
3. **Evaluate objectively and independently –** We always suggest that names be considered and scored one at a time and individually. Tension or politics can be sidestepped or diffused when "winning" results are automatically compiled and presented further to discussion. Remember that if you're looking for a trademark name, your trademark searches will be the deciding factor for which name is the true winner. Trademark searches can be brutal, depending on the saturation of your market and how stringent your lawyers are.

Above all, don't rush. Remember: a name is the most used and enduring element of your brand. It needs to be right.

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LATIN AMERICA

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

FLINT HOLDS NYLOFLEX NEXT SEMINAR IN BRAZIL

Flint Group Flexographic Products recently hosted a technical seminar in São Paulo, Brazil. Fabio Oliveira, technical sales, Flint Group Flexographic Products Latin America, spoke to around 80 professionals from 41 different companies on the advantages of Flint's nyloflex Next exposure technology.

The system is capable of generating unique element shapes with precisely reproduced surfaces, commonly known as flat top dots. It neither involves the use of inert gases nor requires additional expensive consumables. The effect of oxygen inhibition will be eliminated; thus, it improves the repeatability of platemaking, expands the tonal range and offers the possibility for surface screening, which allows for improved ink transfer and lay-down.

HYBRID SOFTWARE ESTABLISHES NETWORK IN LATIN AMERICA

Hybrid Software, formerly known as Hybrid Integration, has set up a distribution and support network in Latin America. The move comes soon after the North American software company's formation of a European subsidiary, which is overseeing the move into Latin America from its new headquarters in Belgium.

'Since 1991, I've been involved in a range of industries throughout Latin America and this includes many years working for Artwork Systems,' said international sales manager Marc Reynaert. 'Hybrid Software's approach to integration is extremely exciting and there has already been a high level of interest from potential distributors. Regardless of the area a printer operates in – labels, packaging, screen and signage, digital or conventional offset – they inevitably end up with a mixture of pre-press equipment and workflows along with planning, accounting, administration software and databases, purchased over a period of time from different sources. These products almost certainly do not communicate with each other, leading to inefficiency, errors, reprints and wastage. JDF is not compatible with many legacy systems, and conventional integration procedures are often too expensive and lengthy to be viable. 'Order Lifecycle Management is perfect for the Latin American graphic arts industry. The recent high level of investment in the area, combined with a growing number of mergers, has resulted in a significant number of printers with a need to standardize and integrate systems within their factory and between different plants. It's exactly the scenario that OLM is designed for.'

XEIKON is increasing its focus on the Latin American market

XEIKON NAMES AGENTS IN BRAZIL AND CHILE

MACHINE dedicated to new 6.2m wide line

Xeikon has appointed Davis Graphics and PTC as distributors for its 3000 series of digital label presses in Chile and Brazil respectively. The appointments represent a significant boost for Xeikon in the region, where GSI is currently selling its systems in Colombia.

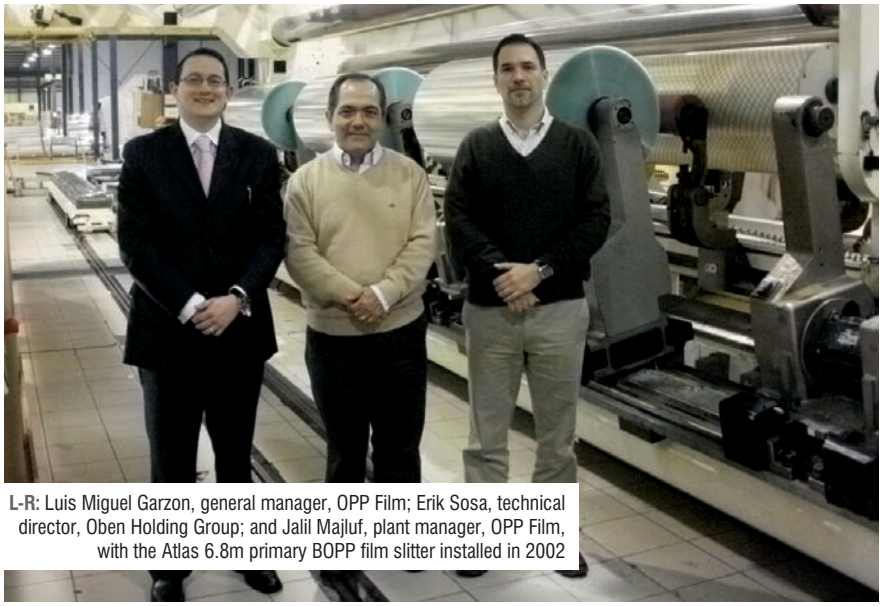
Miguel Troccoli, owner of Brazil-based PTC, said: 'We've seen strong growth in the Brazilian market, especially in the label sector. Many print service providers see digital printing as the perfect technology to service increased customer demand, from both a productivity and quality perspective. Xeikon technology has been around for more than 17 years. In signing this distribution agreement, our customers will have access to systems manufactured by a pioneer of the print industry.'

Felipe Arias, managing director at Chile-based Davis Graphics, said: 'The Chilean print market has always been open to new technologies, and the digital label printing sector is no different. Our customers are looking for cost-effective solutions that offer flexible printing techniques to handle all types of jobs.

'Also, Xeikon has an excellent record in the wine label market, which is a key area for Chilean print service providers. A variety of materials is being used for labels in this market, and not having to pre-coat them makes the production process faster and delivers cost savings.'

Filip Weymans, marketing and business development manager, labels and packaging, at Xeikon, said: 'We have a dedicated strategy for self-adhesive label production, and offer a wide range of solutions for this market, built around the Xeikon 3000 series.

'In PTC and Davis Graphics we have the ideal partners, as both companies specialize in self-adhesive label printing. They have the technical expertise and understand their local markets – they're perfectly placed to show print service providers how far digital printing technology has come, and what the Xeikon 3000 Series can help them



L-R: Luis Miguel Garzon, general manager, OPP Film; Erik Sosa, technical director, Oben Holding Group; and Jalil Majluf, plant manager, OPP Film, with the Atlas 6.8m primary BOPP film slitter installed in 2002

ATLAS TO PROVIDE PERUVIAN SUPPLIER WITH FILM SLITTER

Atlas Converting Equipment is to supply a 6.3m wide Atlas CW964 primary film slitter which will be dedicated to the production of a new 6.2m wide CPP (cast polypropylene) film line at OPP Film in Lima, Peru. The new CPP film line will be commissioned early in 2012 and will be one of the two widest CPP lines in operation worldwide and the first in the Americas, at this width.

OPP Film of Peru is part of Oben Holding Group and began operations in BOPP film production in 1991 with the foundation of BOPP del Ecuador. This company exported film to the neighboring countries of Colombia and Peru and then commenced production of BOPP film in Peru in 2003 with the establishment of OPP Film in Lima. Since then, continuing expansion of business has led the group to invest in additional BOPP and CPP film lines, an extrusion coating line and vacuum metalizing plant.

This latest order will eventually bring the total number of Atlas and Titan slitter rewinders installed for the Oben Group to 12 machines. Two 8.9m wide primary slitters for two new BOPP film lines were ordered last year and are currently being installed. One 6.8m wide primary film slitter was also commissioned in 2002.

Atlas has also supplied two CW800 and one CW810 film slitters up to 5m wide, with five 1650mm wide compact Titan ER610 slitters for converting narrower width films for flexible packaging applications. One of the Titan ER610 slitters is installed at the company's BOPP film production facility near Buenos Aires in Argentina, which began operations during 2008.

'We have been very pleased with the performance of all the Atlas and Titan film slitters we have installed over the last nine years which gave us every confidence in placing the order with Atlas for the new slitter for the 6.2m wide CPP line,' explained Jamil Zaidan Saba, president of OPP Film / Oben Holding Group.

'Without doubt, Atlas provides the most advanced slitting technologies for polypropylene film and we look forward to the new CPP film line starting up next year. We are also very pleased with the service and customer support we have received from Atlas in South America in recent years, for all their equipment we have installed.'

Addition of the operations in Argentina increased the group's production capacity to approximately 100,000 metric tonnes of BOPP film per annum. However, with the two new BOPP film lines currently being commissioned in Lima, Peru, and the new CPP line due for start-up early next year, the Oben Group will become the largest producer of polypropylene film in South America, which reflects the growth in demand for flexible packaging film in the region.

The group now has production facilities in Peru, Ecuador, Colombia and Argentina and distribution centers in Chile, Venezuela, Brazil, Central America and the United States which supply film to all countries in the Americas as well as exporting to customers in Europe and Africa.

KICKTEAM OPENS BRAZILIAN SUBSIDIARY

PRODUCTION AREA increased threefold in four years

KICTeam has opened a subsidiary in Brazil. KICTeam Brasil will supply disposables that reduce the maintenance cost of point of sale terminals and other equipment in all industries throughout the country. The new Brazilian office will offer localized support and logistics with a warehouse facility in São Paulo to better service customers.

KICTeam's cleaning cards are designed to remove paper flash, dirt, oils, adhesive build-up and other contaminates that cause thermal printer receipts or labels to appear faded and illegible.

Alberto Costa Filho, managing director of KICTeam Brasil, explained: 'The Brazilian economy is booming; in particular, within the financial markets. Banks are exchanging check and financial document images, while card operators are truly concerned about the quality and response time of processing transactions. These companies will begin to focus more on the cleanliness of devices that are being used to guarantee quality of images generated from scanning devices and efficiency from terminal devices.'

Jimmy Timmins, marketing communications, said: 'The best means of reducing the cost of ownership for any equipment is to keep it operating at peak efficiency. Our disposables are meant to maintain that efficiency through scheduled cleaning. The support and endorsements we have earned from our OEM partners provides KICTeam Brasil with instant credibility among people who use the equipment daily.'

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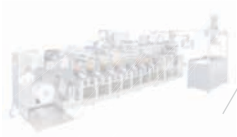

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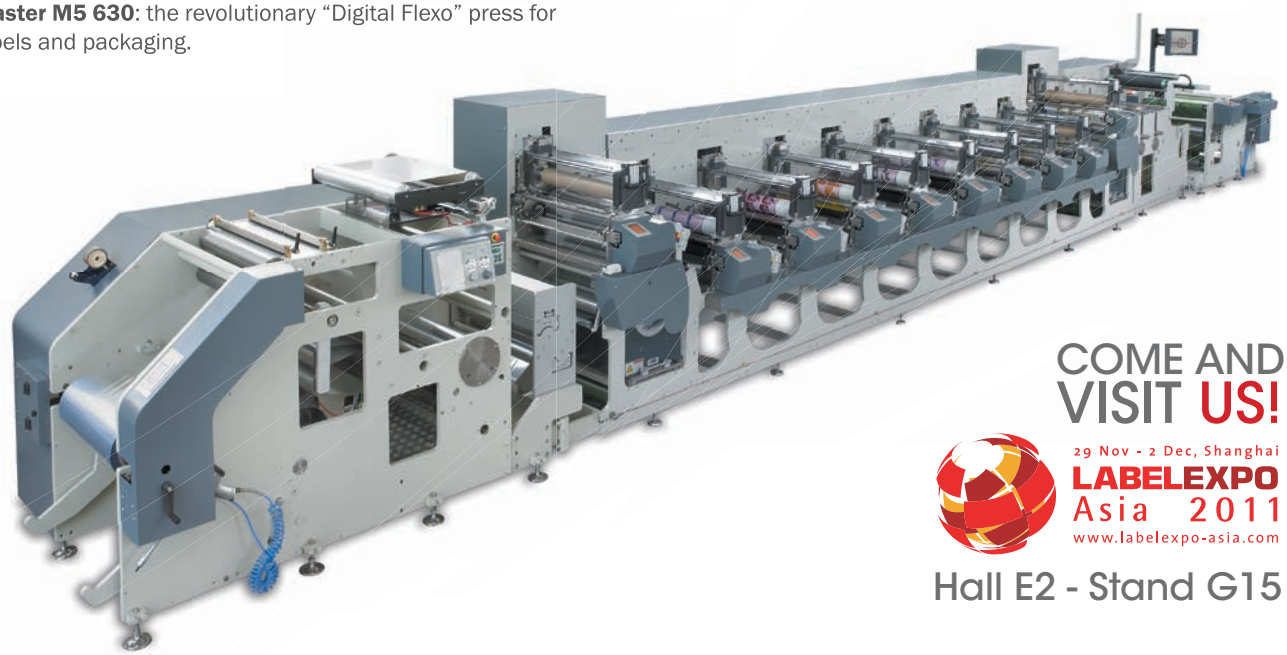

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Labelexpo Europe breaks all records

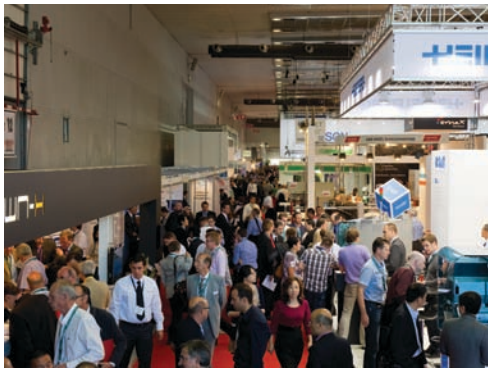
L&L'S GLOBAL TEAM OF REPORTERS and industry experts take an in-depth look at the technology trends and equipment launches at this year's Labelexpo Europe exhibition. Report by Andy Thomas, Mike Fairley, Barry Hunt, Danielle Jerschefske, James Quirk, Carol Houghton and Nick Coombes

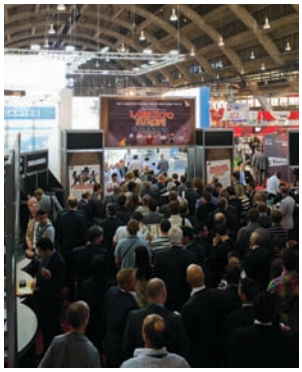
Labelexpo Europe 2011 broke all previous records in terms of visitors, exhibitors and equipment sales. Over 28,000 visitors from 118 countries attended the show – an increase of 18.6 percent over the 2009 edition. Exhibitors had been nervous about how many converters would visit the show – and whether they would be in a buying mood – given the poor state of the Eurozone economy. But they reported buoyant trade with a high level of machinery and material sales confirmed.

Roger Pellow, Labelexpo managing director said: 'Despite the economic climate, Labelexpo Europe is still the major platform for doing business, networking and seeing new technology and product launches. This year's show has clearly demonstrated that our industry is continuing to innovate and that the people within it have a "can-do" attitude. Likewise, printers/converters and manufacturers are still investing in their equipment and services.'

This is the first part of an extended review of the new technology on show at Labelexpo Europe 2011. Barry Hunt reports on flexo press launches and trends, and will cover web offset developments in LL6. Hunt then takes a close look at digital developments at Labelexpo. Finishing technology developments for both conventional and digital workflows will also be covered in the next edition of L&L, along with technology trends and developments in pre-press.

This gives us the space to talk about the extensive developments in new materials which we saw at this Labelexpo and to consider steps the ink manufacturers are making towards low migration products to meet ever more stringent end user regulations in Europe. Look out also for our report on the winners of the Global Label Awards in a ceremony which also honored the original joint founder of Labels & Labeling and the founder of the Labelexpo series of events





A well attended press demo on the Gallus stand

Meeting the short-run challenge

BARRY HUNT examines how some of the latest flexo press developments are heading off any challenge from the digital sector

Several important rotary and semi-rotary offset developments were shown for some key label and packaging sectors. These will be examined in depth in a feature on offset technology in Issue 6.

Everybody was unsure about what to expect ahead of the opening of Labelexpo Europe, not least the press manufacturers. They need not have worried. The majority reported satisfactory sales levels and well-attended press demonstrations at an event just buzzing with optimism. A record-breaking attendance with visitors from all over the world helped to boost this overall impression. Many of them will remember Labelexpo as the point when many facets of digital printing came of age (see separate review).

As noted later, more digital vendors are overtly taking the fight to flexo. HP Indigo already claims to have installed more presses in the past two years than any other manufacturer. Like others, it has moved into flexible packaging and carton printing, aided by their OEM partners. Back in the analog world, single layer packaging has become more of a realistic proposition for global converters using high performance flexo or offset combination presses. As was evident in the Package Printing Zone, many growth opportunities have opened up in the markets for wrap-arounds and shrink sleeves, sachets, decorated tube laminates, also small folding cartons. Ironically, their growth mirrors end-users' demands to reduce inventories and order smaller quantities, which of course underpins the growth of digital printing within the wider printing scene.

OMET X-Flex X4 flexo press

Analog press makers have met the short-run challenge by building presses with higher levels of performance and quality compared with the types offered just a short time ago. Equipped with servo-driven functions, modern presses offer faster substrate changes, with plate and ink cylinder changeovers measured in minutes. Press demonstrations, for example, showed how certain models could quickly achieve perfect color register from idling to speeds of 150-200 m/minute.

More manufacturers have introduced shorter web paths, although not necessarily always straight ones. It is also possible with some models to print using plate cylinders with diameters of just 140mm to increase repeat sizes. A greater stress on ease of operation not only saves time, but also recognizes global variations in operator skills. All good reasons, says Mark Andy for one, why converters should wherever possible adopt modern technology because of its ability to handle a wider range of short-run jobs that once were considered as uneconomic.

The company gave the European debut of its servo-driven P5 flexo press, the more conventional P3 flexo press with direct drive train, plus the automated Genesis control system. As Performance Series presses they join the P7 introduced in Europe two years ago. It has dual servo controls and a fully-automated registration system. From high end to entry level, the three

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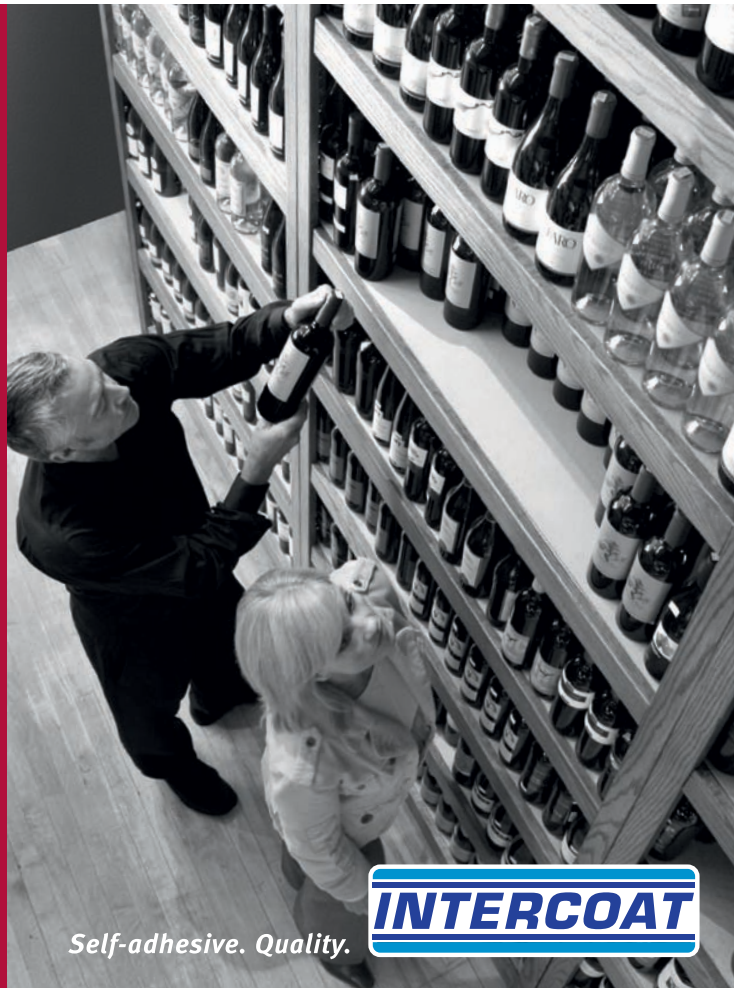

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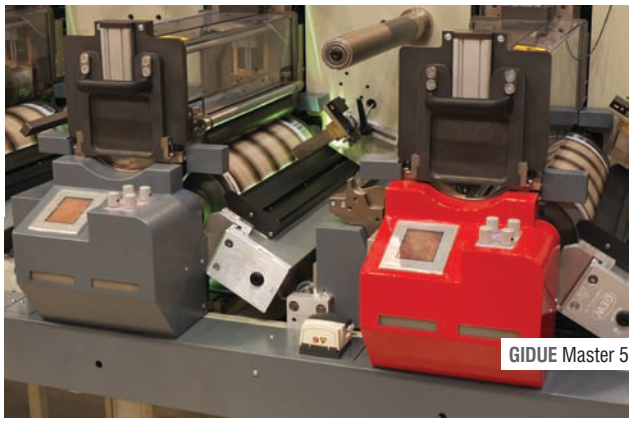
EDALE FL-350

presses are designed to economically handle short runs to high quality standards. As such, the plate cylinders give repeat sizes down to 140mm to help reduce plate and ink costs. The web path design, plus advanced registration capabilities, in the series can reduce set-up waste by around 60 percent over conventional in-line flexo technologies. Set-up of a four-color job takes just under two minutes and a single station sets up in less than 30 seconds. A load-and-lock inking system, self-positioning doctor blades, easy-to-operate controls and open access are said to contribute to simple operation, regardless of skill level.

Gallus's take on the subject includes a redesigned version of the EM 430 S with an enhanced control center. The web path between print nips is halved to 2.2m to achieve faster response times when adjusting register, as well as reducing wastage. It introduced a multiweb EM 280 running with a Longford booklet insetter. As a modular press, users can replace print units with a feeder for inline booklet production, perhaps with the latest pharmaceutical directives in mind. Gallus has also boosted productivity-linked features for the two-year-old ECS 340 'granite' press for commodity labels. This rock-hard concept is at the heart of the new ECS C digital converting system. It provided the platform for the Gallus Cold Die Unit, developed with Avery Dennison for its ThinStream-Technology. The delamination/relamination process features a PET liner as thin as 12 microns (0.48 mils), which is half the normal caliper for conventional kiss-cutting.

Nilpeter introduced some interesting productivity features for the servo-driven FB-3300S modular UV-flexo press. An eight-color version ran with the CLEANINKING anilox system with an open/close doctor blade chamber to obtain clean and easy job changes. Also fitted was Nilpeter's Revolver Die System. The 'Single Minute Exchange of Die' concept allows operators to load successive solid tooling, or magnetic flexible die plate cylinders, into the module and index them within seconds. It is also available for MO-Line offset and FA-Line flexo presses. The 570-mm wide FA-6 received its European debut, fitted with UV-curing units and hot air driers for producing film packaging, labels and carton board products. The company's hybrid approach to digital printing is described elsewhere.

New features for MPS's servo-driven EC series of flexo presses include driven chill drums and a shorter web path, backed by MPS's Crisp.Dot and a converting rail system for free positioning of units. The EC machines are built in three web widths and employ Automated Print Control (APC) which automatically sets print pressures, settings for the UV curing, corona treatment and web tension for storage in a job repeat memory. An extended APC system is integral to the latest series of EF flexo presses for producing labels, thin film packaging and small cartons in various



GIDUE Master 5

MARK Andy P5 Performance Series press

web widths up to 508mm. They now use plate sleeves mounted on a lightweight aluminium carrier.

Short-run markets with fast changes between paper, film or foil substrates inform Omet's new XFlex X4 flexo press. Derived from the established XFlex X6, it uses similar electronic set-up and register control features with conventional plate cylinders. UV lamps mounted on the chilled impression cylinders provide short and straight web paths (145cm between units). Inline finishing includes an interchangeable hot foil module and waste-extraction unit.

ETI Cohesio

LONGFORD INTERNATIONAL demonstrates its latest products exclusively for Label TV at www.labelsandlabeling.com/label-tv

NILPETER Revolver automatic die loading system

MPS EXL Packaging unit with LEANinking

Also shown was a Varyflex V2 shown with an upgraded Vision-2 register control system. It now employs PC-controlled high-resolution color cameras on all print units instead of a single end-of-line head.

A highlight of Nuova Gidue's display was the new Master M5 flexo combination series, in four web widths up to 620mm. Aimed at multi-substrate production, Gidue offers a choice of print cylinders or sleeves. With an established stress on 'innovazioni', the company offers interactive links with users' MIS/JDF systems, while its so-called Digital Flexo technologies include a HD digital camera for controlling register deviation and dot gain. Another version controls print pressure and register according to the PDF/TIFF file, supported by seven servo units for each print unit. Gidue showed a new QN Coupon module producing a three-layer coupon label. Also featured was the Xpannd M7 platform press with interchangeable flexo and offset cassettes, plus hot foil and screen printing modules, using a press-side cart system.

Other interesting exhibits included Edale's new FL-350, aimed at the expanding market for fast, multi-substrate UV flexo presses. With a maximum web width of 350mm, it converts film or paper labels, tickets and packaging in a caliper range from 30 to 450 microns at up to 200 m/min. The servo-driven press incorporates Edale's Pit Stop Colour Change for achieving changes in under two minutes per print unit. Also present was the FDC-510 flatbed die cutting machine which runs inline with existing web-fed presses for converting carton board. Edale also promoted its Lamda series of off-line converting platforms with multi-process technology.

As a dedictated packaging press, KPG's Euroflex One Press is aimed at label printers seeking to produce shrink films, small cartons, tube barrier laminates, polybags and polyamide food casings. Manufactured in Japan by ToyoKoki, it recalls the days when Ko-Pack was an influential force in press manufacturing. The Euroflex is configured with single or dual temperature-controlled central impressions drums, each with six or eight colors, and available in widths of 270mm and 400mm. It is available with UV, IR or hot air drying systems and with open or closed ink chambers.

Finally, Focus Machinery is another firm that has retained the central impression drum concept with satellite print units. Its redesigned Centraflex press now includes water-cooled UV curing lamps at each print station and a cooled CI drum for handling heat-sensitive films. It uses similar print cylinders and anilox rolls to those found on the original Centraflex presses. Focus also displayed a modular Proflex S servo-assisted flexo press equipped with an integral variable data inkjet printer from Digital Print. It uses twin Kyocera inkjet printheads with native 600 x 600dpi resolution and overlapped stitching.

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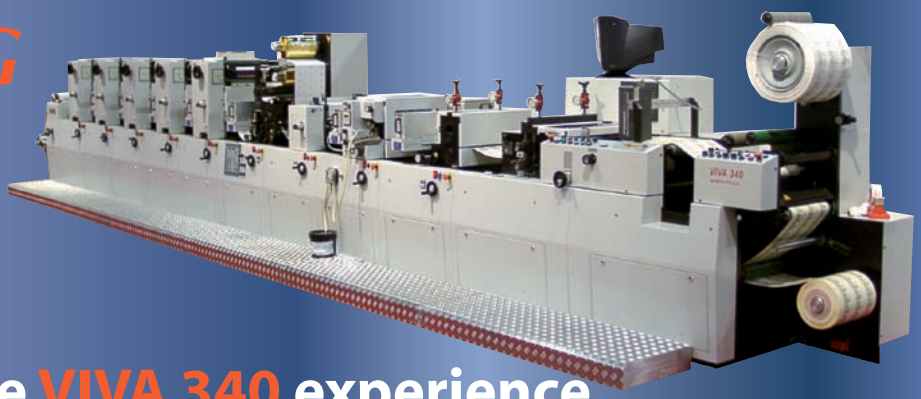

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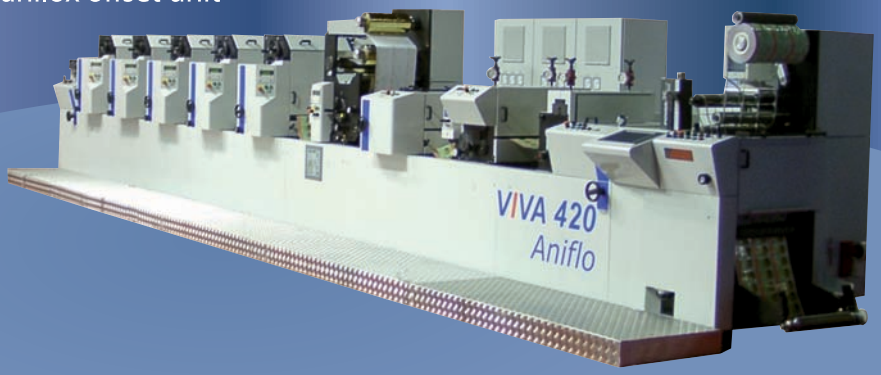

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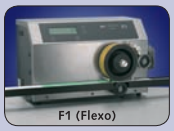
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EPSON L-4033A press with finishing unit

Digital presses and ancillaries at Labelexpo

BARRY HUNT examines some of the key developments in digital printing

The constant buzz that surrounded the digital technology hall, plus the busy series of Digital Print Workshops, proved beyond doubt that digital printing has stepped up a gear. Building upon their various characteristics, the different digital technologies have become more widely spread beyond just being short-run processes with some added versioning. Market demands have taken digital printing further into the packaging arena, while it has carved out niche applications in such disparate segments as pharmaceuticals, health care, wines and spirits, and security printing.

For many converters, digital printing will continue to complement conventional methods. However, it appears to be at a stage whereby head-to-head confrontation with the lower end of flexo is set to increase, despite flexo's fight back. This was made clear at the launch of the seven-color WS6600 press. HP Indigo confidently expects it will extend the economic break-even point between digital and flexo. That means a narrower gap with mid-level flexo could allow users to improve their margins over conventional methods when handling print jobs of 50,000 labels or more.

The new model is derived from the established WS6000 with its wide color gamut and can print at 40 m/min for full-color products including Pantone spot colors. It has an enhanced capability to produce film-based packaging, including wraparound/shrink sleeves. A new in-line priming unit allows the use of standard, untreated paper substrates. HP also launched the WS4600 as an entry-level version derived from the popular WS4500. It also includes HP's Enhanced Productivity Mode, which in this case gives effective press speed of over 21 m/min.

Xeikon featured its flagship 3500 press, with a wider-than-normal width of 500mm and top speed of19.2m/min. This is not affected by label lengths or number of colors (up to five). It ran with the new DCoat500 finishing line. Narrower version serve other 3000 Series models in either in-line or off-line mode to offer UV varnishing, lamination, rotary or semi-rotary die cutting, as well as slitting/rewinding. The firm's latest VOC-free QA-1 dry toners offer single-pass white and can print on 'difficult' PE film. Xeikon's new two-step heat transfer process offers an alternative to direct printing or in-mold labeling for decorating containers, flexible seamless tubes, aluminum closures and similar articles. The process feeds rolls of printed labels into a dedicated Moss-built applicator with a turret mechanism for application by heat and/or pressure. Also new was VariLane plug-in for the X-800 Digital Front End allowing the creation of flexible imposition schemes for end-users' product variants to optimize print time, materials used and also gain improved productivity.

The bulk of digital vendors offered single-pass inkjet presses. They varied from larger industrial-level types aimed at flexo printers, to the more basic bench-top models for an entry level into short run color printing for converters and in-house use. Backing them are the OEM suppliers of drop-on-demand CMYK printheads, principally Xaar, Kyocera, Memjet, Epson, Iwatsu and Konica/Minolta. Some printheads achieve single-pass printing at speeds of 50 m/min or higher, depending on resolutions and grayscale levels.

EFI Jetrion unveiled its Jetrion 4900 UV inkjet press. It prints CMYK plus opaque White using Xaar 1001 grayscale printheads and the company's own inks. Like the established 4830 model it takes webs up to 228mm (nine inches), but the full resolution speed is slower at 24 m/min (80 ft/min) compared with 37 m/min (120 ft/min). This reflects Jetrion's end-to-end approach: buy the 4900 package and you get dual laser cutters, a festoon system, web slitting and automatic turret rewinding. It is supported by EFI's Fiery XF RIP within a

LABELtv

STORK showed its DSI inkjet press with positions for up to ten inkjet heads. See the press in action at www.labelsandlabeling.com/label-tv

front-end workflow that can include Radius MIS. Incidentally, the OEM laser cutters are made in Italy by SEI Laser Converting, which showed its own Label Master web-fed finishing line for packaging and labels. Again, EFI has flexo printers in its sights by offering short-run capability with versioning and flexo-like quality, but with lower set-up costs and no expensive plate or die costs.

The Tau 150-8C UV inkjet label press from Durst Phototechnik is an eight-color version (CMYK, plus White, Orange and Violet) of the original Tau 150. It prints at up to 48 m/min (157 ft/min) and offers optional digital spot varnishing with different gloss levels. More ambitious UV-cured varnishing for applying different gloss levels, including textured and tactile effects, is achieved on the stand-alone DIVA digital varnishing module. It is also fully integrated with the 330mm wide Rotoworx 330 off-line finishing module with semi-rotary die cutting of all short-run labels. Durst also offers the high speed Tau 150 VDP option with insetter functionality to print on pre-die cut or preprinted labels to give label-to-label variability on a Tau press.

Domino Printing Sciences also pitches the N600i inkjet press at flexo printers. It operates reel-to-reel or in-line with a digital finishing station using a dancer roller web infeed. The 333-mm wide (13 inches) press uses Kyocera KJ4 piezo printheads to print paper or filmic labelstocks up to 50 m/min (164 ft/min) with four grayscale levels or 75 m/min (246 ft/min) with three grayscale levels. Although a CMYK press, its modular design allows for the addition of White and other colors as they become available. The N600i is driven by an EskoArtwork RIP and color management front-end.

Nilpeter showed its hybrid approach in a 340mm-wide (13.5 inches) press line comprising the Caslon CMYK inkjet module and three conventional FA-3 flexo towers to apply UV-cured varnishes, solid colors, and/or white opaque inks for filmic labels. Rotary die cutting and other converting processes for labels and packaging are also present in the line. The Caslon module uses Xaar's 1001 grayscale printheads for variable data printing on the fly, or printing single copies of full-color labels. It prints from up to 50.7 m/min at 180 x 360 dpi to

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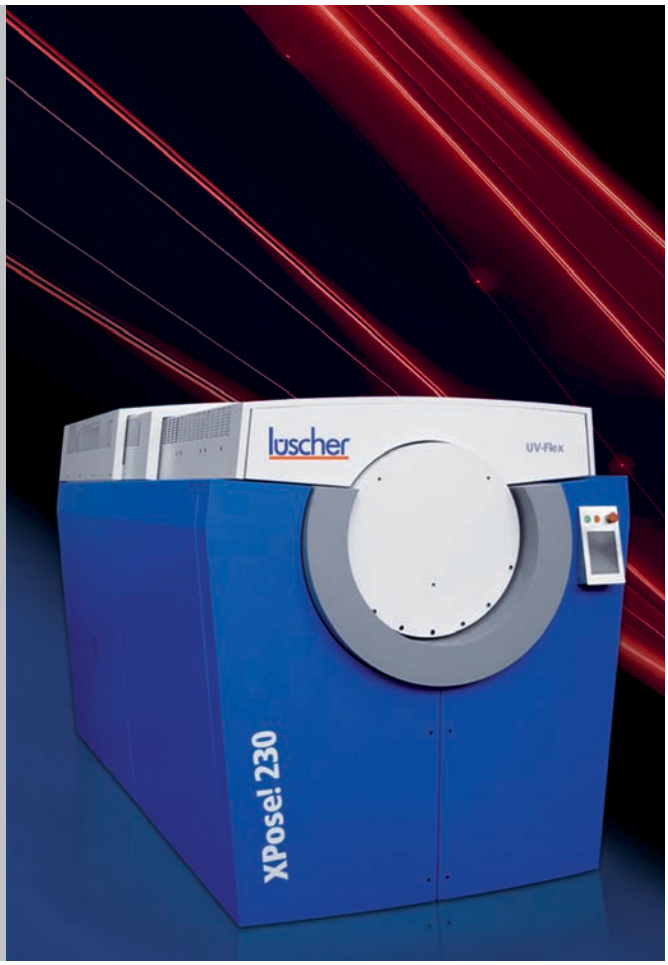

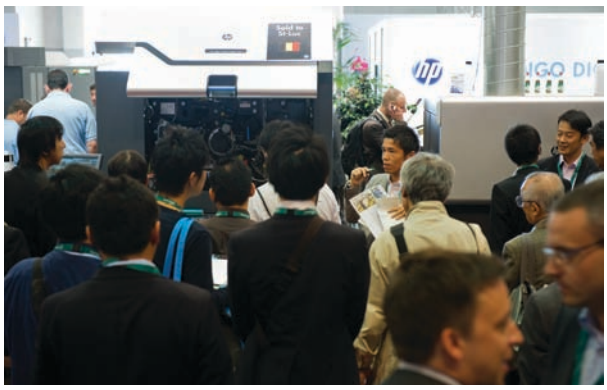

HP Indigo launched its WS6600 press

12.6 m/min at 720 x 360 dpi resolution. Caslon modules can also run as a stand-alone unit equipped with unwind/rewind units. Agfa promoted the Dotrix Modular industrial inkjet press, located adjacent to the Package Printing Zone. Configurations of the platform-based press can include in-line varnishing, slitting, die cutting and sheeting modules. The Dotrix uses the single-pass SPICE print engine with integral UV curing units for printing over 1,200 sq/meters per hour at full speed on substrates ranging from 25-micron foils to 450gsm board.

Another industrial-strength model is Stork Prints' DSI, shown combined with its Rotary Screen Integration (RSI) technology. Printing at up to 720 sq/m hour it delivers resolutions of up to 1,000dpi, as well as 3D effects that resemble screen printing. The modular DSI prints on various film and paper substrates. In standard mode it has CMYK printheads, but users can add an additional six to enable options such as digital white, digital primer to enable printing on machine-coated paper, and an extended color gamut.

ETI JETRION discusses its latest digital press exclusively on Label TV at www.labelsandlabeling.com/label-tv

Epson's SurePress L-4033A typifed the variety in inkjet technology. It can print up to six colors (CMYK, Orange and Green, with an overprint coating; White is under development) in widths from 80mm to 330mm. The multi-pass operation restricts speeds to five m/min, but Epson's Micro Piezo variable-size droplet technology delivers a native resolution of 720 x 720dpi to give smooth vignettes and sharp text on textured and coated grades, with no surface priming required. Using Epson's water-based SurePress AQ inks, the SurePress is aimed more at premium-quality applications, such as wine and cosmetics labels.

Heidelberg's topical arrival on the digital label scene was evident in the digital hall. The newly-acquired CSAT from Germany showed the iTS 6oo digital UV inkjet press for either in-line or off-line printing of commodity film or paper labels, also blister foil printing. It includes variable data and anti-counterfeiting features. Xaar's 1001 four-level grayscale printheads deliver a 600dpi x 600dpi resolution with four

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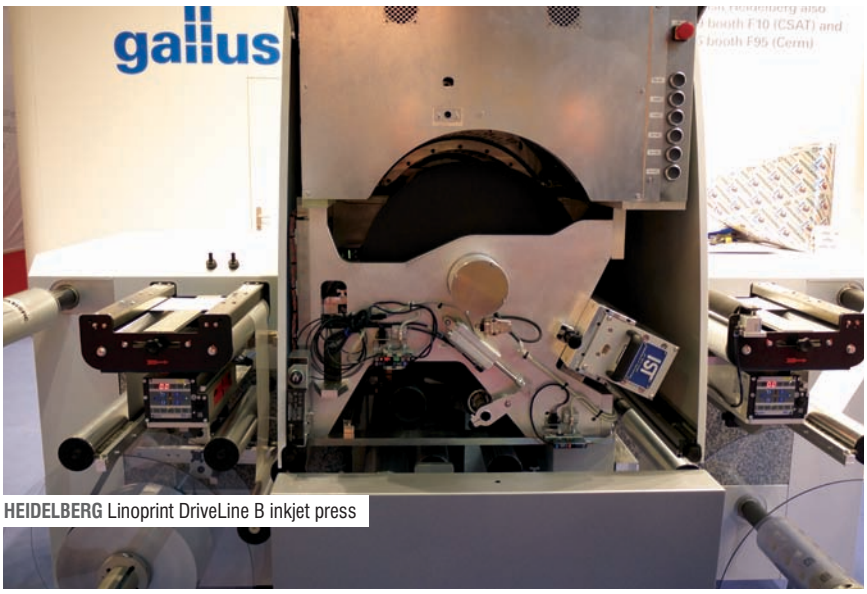
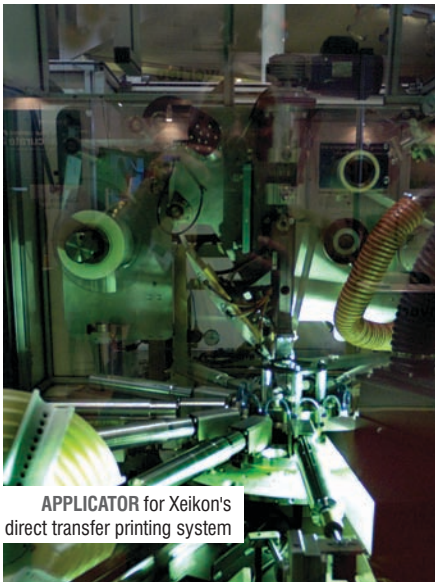


HEIDELBERG Linoprint DriveLine B inkjet press



APPLICATOR for Xeikon's direct transfer printing system

print widths up to 420 mm at speeds of up to 48 m/min. It ran with a LED curing system from Phoseon.

Over on the Gallus stand, Heidelberg introduced the reel-to-reel Linoprint DriveLine B. It handles film and paper labelstocks, foils, blister materials, and film laminates and features a cooled central impression cylinder. A vibration proof chassis made from granite – first used by Gallus on the ECS 340 flexo press – ensures rigidity and precise web transport in widths of 150 and 340mm. The press prints UV-cured CMYK or spot colors at up to 24 m/minute using Konica/Minolta piezoelectric printheads.

With a long pedigree in alphanumeric, sequential numbering and encoding technology, Atlantic Zeiser has applied this knowledge towards digitized printing and finishing applications, especially for the security, pharmaceutical, industrial and logistical sectors. It majored on the Digiline Web 300 which can incorporate the Delta 105i grayscale printer. It was shown producing industrial labels using a liquid repellent plastic material made by 3M for the chemical industry. Also shown was the 70 P CMYK inkjet module and the Vericam for real-time zero-defect inspection. AZ makes its own inks for the Delta and Gamma ranges, backed by the Smartcure UV LED curing system.

DOMINO N600 series four-color inkjet press

ISYS LABEL President Mark Hopkins gives a product demonstration for Label TV at www.labelsandlabeling.com/label-tv

THE MID-RANGE TYPES

Most single-pass inkjet technology is derived from reel-fed platforms, with software and control systems providing the main point of differentiation. Some vendors also offer their own off-line finishing lines, sometimes as OEM equipment. An example is Allen Datagraph Systems Inc (ADSI) which launched the iTech CENTRA HS digital finishing system for converting short-run label rolls from digital and analog applications in lengths up to 381m (1,250 ft) and widths up to 356mm. Instead of conventional dies it uses a computerized cutting technology developed by ADSI that can cut multiple depths within the same cut file allowing for perforations or multi-layer applications. The machine also laminates, removes waste matrix and slits custom labels in a single pass. It complements the new iTech AXXIS SR, which uses an Epson B-500DN inkjet print engine that gives a resolution of 720 x 720dpi.

Primera's new FX1200e finishing line includes another approach to digital cutting. The QuadraCut cutter works with up to four tungsten carbide knife blades across the web. The cutter creates almost any shape or size from various filmic labelstocks, including vinyl. The line offers optional laminating, slitting and rewinding to finished rolls at up to 6.1 m/min. Also shown was Primers's new stand-alone CX1200e Color Label Press for short-run, full-color label printing. It uses a toner-based laser cartridge to deliver a 2,400 dpi print resolution at up to five m/min. The unit includes Primera's PTPrint 8.0 RIP software for Windows XP/Vista with Pantone-approved color support.

INX International chose laser cutting technology for its stand-alone NW140 color inkjet press. It incorporates a Spartanics X140 cutter that offers a laser spot size of 210 microns from a single head, which it claims gives good quality cuts with enhanced software control. Printing is via 14 Xaar 1001 printheads with seven ink channels, including base white, printing up to 24 m/min (80 ft/min) on any label stock. Other equipment includes a Phoseon FireLine 225 water-cooled UV LED curing system used with the NW140's substrate

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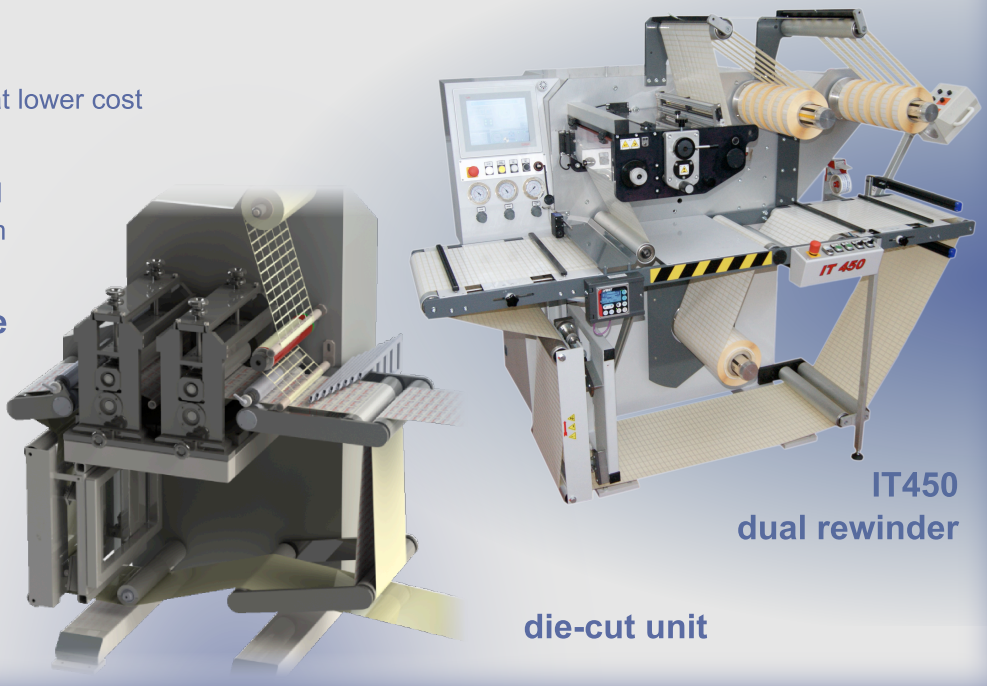

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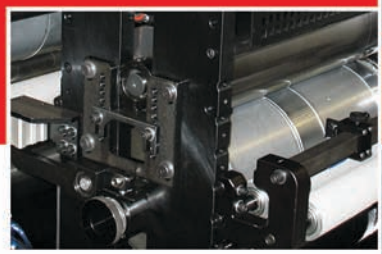

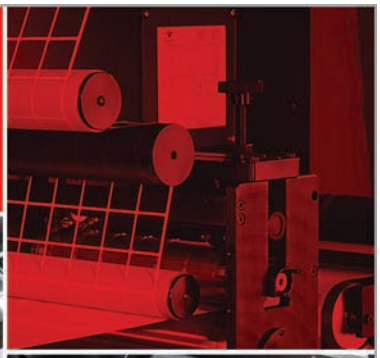

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CSAT ITS 600 inkjet press

pre-treatment unit, and applying white backgrounds and varnish. Air-cooled UV LED lamps from Integration Technology supply the full cure, and any pinning, prior to laser cutting.

Collaboration between US-based iSys Label and Kompac Technologies includes the new APEX 1290 CMYK inkjet label press and a Kompac EZ Koat Web 15 roll-to-roll coating system. The stand-alone press runs at up to 14 m/min with a print width of 320mm. Users can apply UV-cured or water-based coatings to the printed labels to enhance their color hues and make them appear brighter, as well as protect the surface.

UK-based J F Machines promoted the five-color PicoColour press available in three web sizes. A dedicated RIP creates the four bitmapped CMYK files with on-screen previewing. It is another user of Xaar 1001 printheads, giving a top speed of 25 m/min at 360dpi resolution, or 50 m/min at 180dpi. An optional in-line rotary die cutter and waste rewinder can keep pace with the faster speed. Variable data printing and encoding with a dedicated RIP from Global Inkjet Systems is another option.

Other offerings included KG Digital Solutions' EM-250A label printer. Its Iwatsu printheads give resolutions of 600dpi and 1,200 dpi for a top speed of 50 m/min. Labelmate's new P-300 label printer uses standard HP inkjet cartridges for printing fixed and variable data at 300dpi or 150dpi. Shiki's new CMYK Pico Jet digital inkjet presses for short-to-medium runs use 4.25 inch wide Kyocera piezoelectric printheads with variable-size droplets with a native 600 x 600dpi resolution for fine gradations and sharp text. Staggered printhead layouts allow a choice of print widths: 108mm, 216mm and 324mm with fewer printheads. The presses print at up to 50 m/min using Kyocera's UV-LED

NILPETER Caslon flexo-Inkjet hybrid

technology, with a pinning cure option. The system can operate with existing in-line or off-line finishing systems.

Impression Technology Europe introduced the Rapid X1 table-top X1 and the floor-standing Rapid X2 developed in Australia by Rapid Label Printing Systems. Both machines offer CMYK, plus extra Black from 'hot-swappable' Memjet inkjet printheads. Uniquely, they are fixed and do not traverse the web. With over 70,000 nozzles, the heads on the Rapid X2 can print on webs up to 200mm wide at up to 18m/min, driven by a standard PC. Bar code software allows the printing of variable data. The Rapid X2 can run with in-line finishing equipment, including the iRapid line with varnishing and a semi-rotary re-registering system.

Memjet's drop-on-demand thermal technology appeared on the Wide Star, a roll-fed wide-format inkjet printer using dye-based inks from OEM manufacturer Own-X from Hungary. Using five 222-mm wide printheads (CMYK, plus Black), the machine can produce labels, cartons, indoor signage and posters in a single pass on materials up to 106.7cm wide (42 inches) at 18m/min. The Wide Star has a MS Windows-based touchscreen and Own-X printer control software. It handles continuous rolls or sheets prepared on an integral cutter. It joins the SpeedStar 3000 desktop printer, also powered by Memjet technology.

The wide-format printer/cutter machines show just how varied the world of digital printing has become. Roland DG, for example, showed the VersaUV line which prints both paper and heat-sensitive label materials in up to six colors: CMYK, White and transparent for matte, glossy and relief effects including Braille. Applications include proofing, prototype printing and printing small label runs using LED-UV technology. Mimaki Europe also uses this method of curing inks on the UJF-3042 flatbed printer, and the CJV30 series of inkjet printer/cutters. One was shown producing labels with solvent-based inks for silver and other metallic effects. It is available in four sizes up to 160 cm. Mimaki announced its cooperation with ColorGATE, a software developer for short-run digital labels and RIP software with variable data and bar coding capabilities.

MIKE Fairley, Tarsus; Helmut Schreiner, Schreiner Etiketten, Dean Scarborough, Avery Dennison

Awards honor industry founders and innovators

SOME OF THE LABEL INDUSTRY'S leading companies and individuals were recognized for their outstanding contribution to the sector as the winners of this year's Label Industry Global Awards were unveiled.

Helmut Schreiner, executive manager/owner of the Schreiner Group, collected the R. Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award, sponsored by Avery Dennison. A global provider of functional and smart label solutions, the Schreiner Group, under Helmut Schreiner's charismatic leadership, has become a world-leading innovator by developing new applications in areas including electro-luminescent labels, printronics, RFID and anti-counterfeit technologies.

Introducing the award, Mike Fairley noted how Helmut Schreiner has developed an employee-centered approach which emphasizes reward of initiative, an extensive apprenticeship program, and making each individual feel a valued part of the team.

Dean Scarborough, CEO of Avery Dennison, said the personal qualities of Helmut Schreiner as a business leader closely matched those of the award's first winner, R Stanton Avery, both in his determination to follow his dreams, and in his focus on the individual and the wider community in which the company operates.

The Lifetime Achievement award also honored the pivotal

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L-R Filip Weymans, Xeikon; winner of the Green award, David Jones, Alphasonics; Roger Pellow, Tarsus

L-R: Jack Kenny, Label & Narrow Web; Andy Thomas, Labels & Labeling; Jeffery Arripol, Novelprint, winner of the Continuous Innovation award; Wolfgang Klos-Geiger,

role played by Schreiner in the development of the German label association, the VskE.

In his acceptance speech, Helmut Schreiner recalled how he had started out as an apprentice in his father's firm, and how his father had built that firm from nothing, through sheer determination, from among the ruins of post-war Germany. His own son will now carry on the business and Schreiner noted the challenge for the older generation to know when to let go, and let their successors make their own decisions about the company's future direction.

INNOVATION AWARDS

For the first time, the Label Industry Award for Continuous Innovation – sponsored by Labels & Labeling, NarrowWebTech and Label & Narrow Web – was presented to a converter, Brazil's Novelprint. Honoring 'a long-established supplier or converter which has demonstrated innovation over a period', the award singled out Novelprint for its exemplary customer service and long-standing track record in pioneering the science and technology behind label manufacturing, both in terms of machinery and materials. The award was accepted by company CEO Jeffery Arripol.

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L-R: Niklas Olsson, Flint Group Narrow Web; Kurt Walker, FINAT; Jan Frederik Vink, Kolibri Labels, winner of the European Converter of the Year award; Art Yerecic, TLMI

EskoArtwork triumphed in the Label Industry Award for New Innovation category, which is designed to recognize technological advances made in the previous year. The Belgium-based winner's HD Flexo version 2 was judged to represent a major advance in the quality of the flexo print process, allowing converters to match the quality of offset and gravure printing.

Highly commended by the judging panel was Nilpeter's Revolver automatic die loading system, which represents a quantum leap forward in the efficiency of what up to now has been a labor and time intensive manual operation.

The European Converter of the Year Award – sponsored by Flint Group Narrow Web – was awarded to Kolibri Labels and its CEO, former FINAT president Jan Frederik Vink. The company's reputation for innovation and excellence in sales and product development has established it as one of the Netherland's leading self-adhesive label printers.

Alphasonics scooped the Global Green Award for its AS1000 Trojan parts washer. Judged to be the most environmentally-friendly product on show at Labelexpo Europe 2011, the accolade was given to the UK firm by Mike Fairley, chair of the judges, and Danielle Jerschefske, North

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OUR EXPERIENCE...YOUR ADVANTAGE

RON SPRING (L), co-founder. of Labels & Labeling, receiving a special recognition award from Mike Fairley

American editor of Labels & Labeling. The award was sponsored by Xeikon.

Mike Fairley commented: 'Congratulations to all of the winners of this year's program. All entries are scrutinized against rigorous criteria and the quality of this year's entries was the highest yet and made judging particularly difficult. Each of our winners demonstrated enormous best practice and outstanding innovation in their particular field. Congratulations too to all of the finalists who also showed genuinely high standards and a real inspiration for what is possible in the industry.'

CLIVE SMITH (R) is honored for his pivotal industry role as founder of Labelexpo

SPECIAL AWARDS

Two highly significant special awards were given out at start of the evening.

The first went to Ron Spring, who was the co-founder with Mike Fairley of Labels & Labeling magazine back in 1978. At that time he was managing director of Gerhardt Engraving (UK) Ltd - a company producing ruled-dies for self-adhesive label production - and it was his industry contacts, label knowledge and business expertise that complemented Fairley's more general printing, packaging and industrial training research and writing background.

Between them over the next six years, they created a global magazine and industry resource for the label industry which was already being read in some 80 countries.

Complementing and working closely with Clive Smith in the launch and development of Labelexpo shows in the early 1980s, Mike Fairley and Ron Spring developed the first conference programmes alongside the shows, created the first industry Directory in 1982, introduced the initial Yearbooks and started to develop industry training workshops. These workshops were responsible for helping to introduce and develop many of today's industry leaders, as well as educating many label buyers and packaging technologists over many years.

Said Mike Fairley: 'Without Ron's involvement, commitment and foresight in the early years of both the magazine and show, the label industry may not have had the global forum and resource that it now has. For that we owe him our gratitude and recognition today.'

At this, the most successful ever Labelexpo, it was entirely appropriate that the second special award should go to Clive Smith, founder of the Labelexpo series of events. Smith launched his first show for the labels market in London in 1980, but truly transformed the event when he moved the show to Brussels in 1985. Smith further developed the Labelexpo brand, merging with Labels & Labeling publishers and expanding the shows to North America in 1989 and Singapore in 1992. After the merged Labelex/Cowise group was acquired by Tarsus in 1998, Smith became chairman of the labels division. Today he remains a mentor and key consultant as the Labelexpo brand has grown its events across five continents.

'Clive's drive and initiative created helped create and define an industry , and we honor that achievement with this award,' said Roger Pellow, md of Tarsus Labels Group.

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Migration watch

DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE explains how ink manufacturers at Labelexpo Europe were launching inks to meet the continent's strict migration standards

Ink suppliers presented in unison low migration solutions for the food packaging market, which has especially felt legislative pressures in Europe regarding contamination of products packaged with volatile inks that can infiltrate food and harm consumers. Most suppliers complete internal R&D and migration testing, but also support their findings through third-party evaluations.

Current legislation for migratory inks & food packaging in Europe include:

- Commission Directive 97/48/EC
- EuPIA Photoinitiatior Suitability List 1A
- Swiss Ordinance on Materials and Articles in contact with food (SR 817.023.21)

Flint Group introduced its Flexocure Ancora low migration UV flexo line of inks that offer high performance while in compliance with the Swiss Ordinance on Materials and Articles (SR 817.023.21). The Flexocure Ancora line additionally provides good adhesion and scratch resistance on synthetic materials.

Christina Eriksson, R&D manager of Flint Group Narrow Web, explains the migration studies conducted on Flint Group's new Flexocure Ancora line: 'For this new ink series we have conducted migration tests at several independent institutes, as well as in our own analytical laboratories. The migration measurements have indicated, that when correctly applied on suitable packaging structures migration levels with Flexocure Ancora are below currently accepted limits. This was verified based on the standard migration test method using the food stimulants 95 percent ethanol and Tenax as set out in Commission Directive 97/48/EC. Furthermore we have the confirmation of leading end users that the ingredients used in Flexocure Ancora are meeting their company guidelines.'

Ruco launched its new UVFX/MA line of low-migration and silicone-free ink systems that complies with Nestle standards, EuPIA Photoinitiatior Suitability List 1A and too with SR 817.023.21. The UVFX/MA line offers high opacity, printability at effective printing speeds and good chemical resistance properties.

SunChemical promoted its various lines of low-migration inks: SunCure FLM for UV offset, SolarFlex LM for UV flexo and SunBeam ELM for EB offset printing. The supplier issued a 'Best Practice Guide to Food Packaging Printing' to help converters better understand the complex issue gaining strength, particularly in Europe. The guide was fortified by a presentation on the first day of the show in the new Package Printing Zone 'Safe printed food packaging – how safe am I?'. Also, the company enlisted the support of Muller Martini on its stand to demonstrate the benefits of using SunChemical EB curable offset inks for food packaging.

Pulse's SLM line of low migration compliant inks offers also offer good shrink characteristics of more than 70 percent, with good adhesion on filmic materials and with metallic options available.

Siegwerk exhibited for the first time at the show since its acquisition of Environmental Inks and Coatings in December 2010. The company has full lines of low migration inks, varnishes and coatings for UV flexo, UV offset and waterless UV offset printing and for all substrates including paper, plastic and carton board. The various Sicura lines – 39-10 LM, 39-20 LM, LM 361, Plast LM and Plast 41 WL LM – are supported by low-migration gloss and matte varnishes and a metallic ink series, providing label converters and package printers with myriad options for effectively servicing the food packaging market.

Zeller + Gmelin too has lines of low migration products for UV flexo and UV offset printing and coating systems. UVAflex Y71 for UV flexo has a high opacity white ink for standard materials and also a high opacity white ink specially designed for shrink sleeve applications. The UVAlux series U41 is designed for UV offset and screen printing on papers and films while the U71 series is especially for UV offset printing on thin film materials.

Marabu promoted its rotary screen printing opaque white UltraRotaScreen UVSF 174 low migration ink for combined UV screen and UV flexo printing.

SUSTAINABILITY

FINAT featured a Sustainability and Recycling Desk at its both to provide converters with information on the growing number of liner recycling programs now available in Europe. The global association has joined the European Recovered Paper Council (ERPC) and used this desk to educate attendees on its support of the European Declaration for Paper Recycling, which sets out measures aimed at optimizing the management of recovered paper throughout the value chain

With the support of Channeled Resources Group (CRG) as the facilitator of the association's liner recycling program, the interest in the opportunities was high as converters continue to search for options beyond liner land-filling and incineration. CRG, winner of the Global Green Award in 2010, educated attendees on the waste-to-energy programs for matrix waste in the United States. The company works with a number of firms to recovery matrix waste from converters to be reprocessed into pellets that can be used to produce energy to replace coal. The pellets can be used in existing coal burning infrastructures and burn at a higher BTU.

The Flint Group announced the global availability of its BioCure F UV flexo inks made up of 10 percent renewable linseed oil acrylate in replace of traditional resin. Siegwerk too promoted its Sicura ECO series of UV flexo ink consisting of, it says, 50 percent renewable raw

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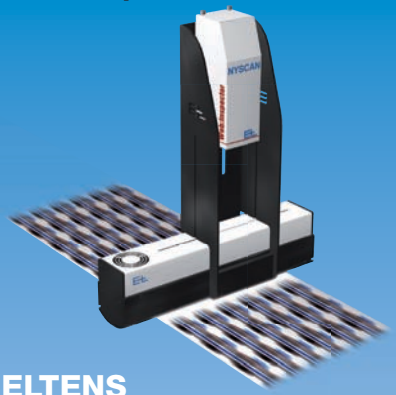

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LABELEXPO is as much about networking as technology

materials. Siegwerk also educated customers on the ink waste reduction and reduced downtime possibilities using its Fast Match color management systems that automatically calculate the amount of ink required for a given job and can provide formulas to create the necessary color from left over ink.

A number of ink suppliers touted UV LED curable inks, including Marabu, which promoted its inkjet and new screen printing lines. UV LED curing technology is mercury free and therefore does not generate ozone-harming emissions. Newly developed ink systems make it possible to run at more regular production speeds. Sun Chemical is also working on systems for UV LED inkjet systems.

The quest to increase the opacity of UV flexo white as a replacement for rotary screen continues, with FujiFilm Sericol promoting its UVivid Flexo JD Supernova white. The company also claims its JD flexo inks series can produce opaque prints on clear filmic materials without the need for a backing white.

Linerless was another key them at Labelexpo Europe. Pulse showed its linerless varnish products, while ETI Converting promoted the capability to produce linerless label material with its Cohesio system. Aero and Avery Dennison promoted linerless self-adhesive material lines and Prati demonstrated its new Saturn linerless label rewinding system with two interchangeable rewinding shafts to avoid labels sticking together.

Nearly every material supplier touted thinner constructions to reduce waste from the onset.

MIS/ERP SYSTEMS DEVELOPMENT

As label converters look to streamline their production and more effectively manage the myriad variations now found in shortened product life-cycles, industry leaders are beginning to better understand the value that can be found in dedicated software solutions.

Tailored Solutions introduced its Version 6.1 of Label Traxx, a print business management software for narrow web label converters. Now in beta testing and scheduled for full release following the Brussels exhibition, the Label Traxx Version 6.1 includes:

- Expanded JDF integration and communication between Label Traxx and digital partners HP Indigo and EskoArtwork
- Upgraded database engine technology, for increased speed and functionality
- An entirely new E-Traxx module, providing a web portal through which brand owners can access and manage their label orders and quotations online
- A new report writer, offering expanded capability and a simple user interface

Label Traxx demonstrated a new Visual Scheduling module set to be released in a subsequent version update. It was featured in the popular Digital Print Workshops and provided kiosks for attendees to navigate its systems while visiting its partner HP Indigo.

Shuttleworth, a UK-based MIS system supplier, demonstrated its new user interface based on Microsoft Outlook for familiarity and ease of use by customers interested in obtaining real-time information pertaining to their label order. It also introduced its new web-based Supply Chain Management software for converters to receive immediate price quotes on varies supplies.

EFI Radius - an MIS supplier specializing in software development for larger label and packaging companies utilizing multiple print processes and having multiple locations - promoted its integration into the Esko Automation engine, which allows order details to be sent with a one-up PDF file via JDF messaging for proofing. Once approved the order is stepped and repeated while sending status messages back to Radius.

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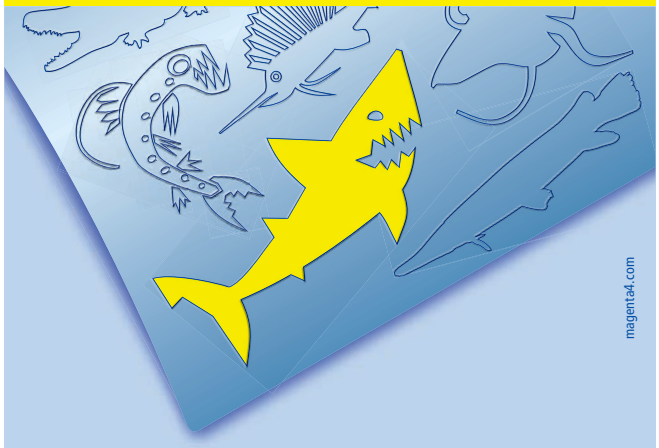

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Material world, A-Z

WITH CONVERTERS looking to add value and move away from low cost commodity labels, Carol Houghton looks at what the materials supplier community delivered at Labelexpo

Ahlstrom launched Acti-V, a new release paper which allows improved silicone anchorage. This reduces the adjustment necessary on the coating machine, increasing coating speeds by up to 30 percent. As well as improving productivity, the manufacturer says costs are lower as the catalyst can be reduced by 60 percent. In addition, temperature requirements are not so high, saving on energy.

French company Armor announced a 12 million euro investment on a new production site and focused on the environmental sustainability of its thermal transfer ribbons.

Avery Dennison was promoting a range of innovative products apart from its ThinStream program (see news section). The Curvy/Curve Appeal system was introduced to European converters for the first time, combining a machine and PS label material which allows complex curved containers to be labeled – and delivering up to 30 percent more space for primary labeling. Another new product is Shrink PS, a pressure sensitive film engineered to survive the vacuum-shrink process without wrinkling. This allows food processors to eliminate preprinted shrink bag inventory, and means products can be differentiated at a later stage in the packaging process.

What Avery claims is the thinnest conformable PE film available for the premium food market was launched. Fasson PE-LG has a 70 micron face stock matched with a new high tack adhesive. 'Despite the ongoing pressure on costs, with Fasson PE-LG, we believe we can convince premium chilled food brand owners to use filmic pressure-sensitive materials,' said Joanna Wolska-Kinnening, senior product manager, films for Avery Dennison Label and Packaging Materials Europe.

Other new products included a global MDO film laminate for the high volume home and personal care market, plasma bag labels, and self-adhesive medallions for the premier wine sector.

Bluestar Silicones introduced the latest additions to its Silolease Optima Concept product range, The new system allows faster coating speeds and lower temperature curing across a wider range of substrates and machine conditions. Pascal Chavlon Demersay, CEO, says the company sees a growth in narrow web converters siliconizing their own materials, and increasing use of UV-cured silicones.

Boise announced it is branching out from release liners into facestock for prime labeling. The product still meets strength requirements and prevents tear on the matrix whilst lighter weight means more labels on the roll.

The Channeled Resources Group announced it is adding hotmelt adhesives to the second use PS components it already offers. They will be sourced directly from adhesive manufacturers or from pressure-sensitive laminators. Comments CEO Calvin Frost: 'It makes sense to close the pressure-sensitive components loop. We already recover and reuse surplus facestocks and release liners. Adding hotmelt adhesives to the equation enables us to offer the market the chance to create economical pressure-sensitive laminates. Hotmelts have a long shelf life, and deliver low-cost, general-purpose performance; and with little or no solvent content, they are safe to handle and transport.'

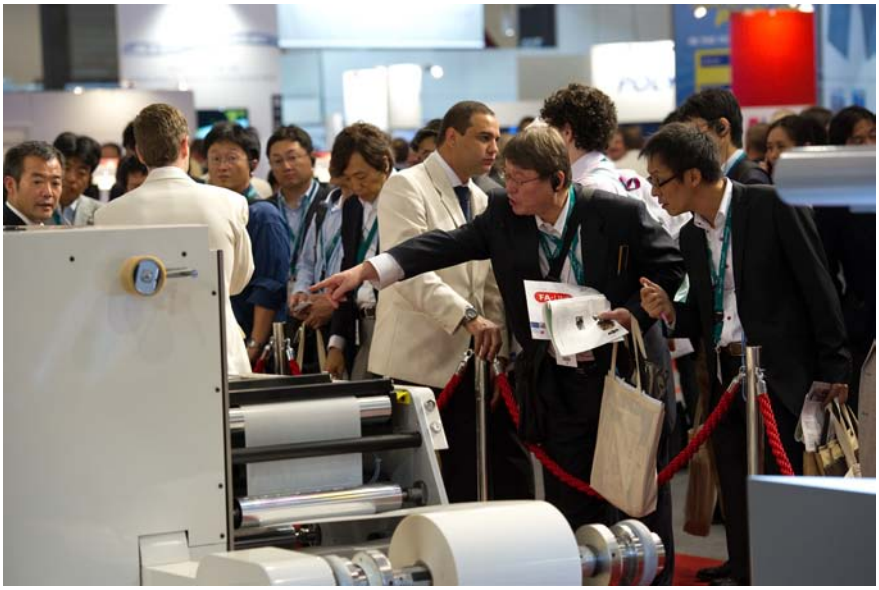
Collano showed new adhesive product lines for transparent film labels and tapes, a printable pressure-sensitive adhesive, the latest generation of deep-freeze adhesives and a specialty adhesive made from renewable sources.

Dow Corning launched its Syl-Off solvent-free silicone release coating system for filmic liners, offering long term anchorage on both primed and un-primed polyester films. The manufacturer says the thermal-cure system displays excellent release stability against both acrylic solvent and water-based adhesives, and low release force values at low peel speed.

Christian Velasquez, global market director at Dow Corning, estimates that film release liner, mostly PET, is growing in Europe at rates over 10 percent, and now accounts for some 15 percent of the market. 'It is exciting that now we can emulsion coat these films at a low coat weight,' he said. The new silicone system is used primarily for filmic face stocks, but Dow Corning is looking their use on filmic release liners for paper labels.

Christian Velasquez said the move towards emulsion coatings is the big trend at the show. 'They are easier to handle and the coating equipment is cheaper, opening up new market opportunities. We have already reduced the amount of platinum in our Advantage series and this has been extended to the emulsion products, enhancing their sustainability.'

The company also added new anti-mist additives to its Syl-Off Advantage series of silicone release coatings to prevent misting at high line speeds and allow for optimal use of fast-curing paper and



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filmic release coating systems.

ETI converting equipment introduced its emulsion acrylic Cohesio technology, which brings label printers the flexibility of using both emulsion and solvent acrylic adhesives, as well as hot melt and UV hot melt adhesives, in one Cohesio multi-functional inline coating and printing system. The company also showed its new Miniliner, an ultra-thin clear PET or BOPP liner of 12 microns which is said to substantially reduce waste and increase productivity for end users. The Miniliner can be die-cut at speeds up to 150 meters a minute and is adaptable to ETI`s Cohesio technologies.

ExxonMobil announced a program of new technology development targeting several decorating technologies, including pressure sensitive labels (PSL), cut & stack labels and shrink label substrates. L&L will bring more news on these developments as they come on line.

Hanita Coatings introduced a variety of specialty products, including a novel water-indicative PET label face film which reveals a clear color change from blue to white on immersion or dampening, without reacting to humidity. The company also showed a 23 micron UV stabilized clear polyester overlaminate film with a proprietary anti-grafitti/scratch resistant dry-erase coating that retains gloss, clarity and dimensional stability in hostile environments. Also on the stand were new tamper indicative and high security films and new films optimized for

RISING SUNS

A delegation of more than 60 of Japan's top label converters and suppliers visited Labelexpo, in a party organized by Japanese label printing magazine Label Shimbun. They were joined by another 40 on individual visits. Notes Label Shimbun editor Yukiko Suzuki: 'They found the show very interesting. Especially, the Thinstream of Avery Dennison, Nilpeter Revolver and digital equipment like the EFI (Jetrion 4900) and so on.'

Yukiko says linerless labels are far more widely used in Japan in the food, cosmetics and big retailer brand owners. 'Top label converters produce it by themselves, companies like Yukosya, Sato and OSP.'

She notes as well that LED-UV is far more widely used on conventional presses in Japan. 'Many Japanese letterpress press suppliers have already put on LED-UV. These are on display at the IGAS printing exhibition and is a major trend.'

L&L will be attending the Japan Label Forum Japan 2012 in July for a more in depth report on the Japanese market.

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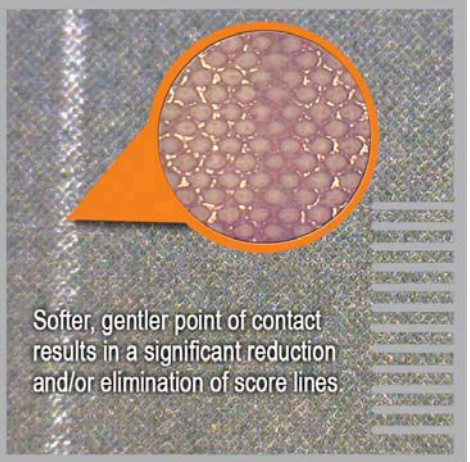

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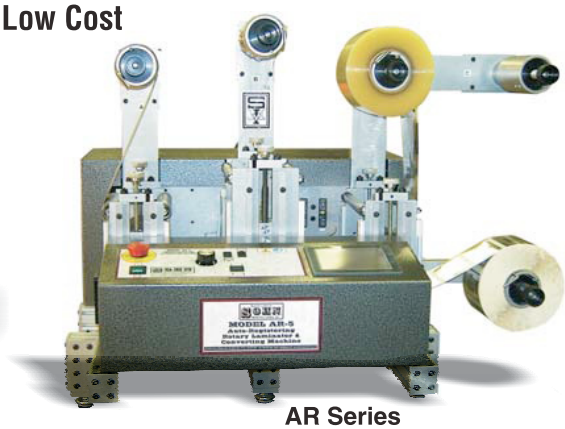

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MIKE FAIRLEY CONSIDERS THE IMPACT OF LABELEXPO EUROPE

Labelexpo Europe once again emphasised and enhanced the trends towards digital label printing, added-value solutions, and a continuing move by narrow-web converters into areas of package printing.

Over the past eight years, well over 1500 digital presses have been installed in the label industry and, today, are estimated to make up nearly one-in-five of all new narrow web press installations worldwide. Indeed, at a rough calculation at the end of Labelexpo, digital press orders and confirmations at the show, probably exceeded one-third of total show label press sales. This trend towards digital is expected to continue as the UV inkjet performance and quality seen at the show also continues to make inroads in the market, and run lengths that can be met by digital continue to decrease.

Interestingly, conventional label press sales and orders during the four days of Labelexpo also held-up well when compared with previous years – perhaps upwards of 90 or so machines – and very much evidenced by new analogue presses that aim to compete with digital by incorporating quick changeover, short-run capabilities, or by enhanced added-value solutions.

Both conventional and digital narrow-web presses are also continuing to make inroads into the shorter-run and added value areas of package printing, especially smaller-size folding cartons, flexible packaging and the decoration of tube laminate materials. Maybe 15 percent of new narrow-web presses are now being used for some level of package printing. This trend is also evidenced by die-cutter manufacturers seeing good growth opportunities in cutters for applications such as sandwich packs and in carton sleeves.

Many converter visitors to Labelexpo certainly seemed to see these same trends and opportunities, as evidenced by their spending patterns at the show – all of which should give much comfort to the industry in these times of global financial turmoil and threatened recession.

digital print.

Herma, highlighted its new ISEGA certified HermaperfectTack 62Gpt adhesive for direct food contact with. The company's multi-layer coating technology is used to apply a second layer which enhances the initial tack of labels applied in hostile conditions, such as low temperature and moisture. The second layer influences the flow behaviour of the adhesive, ensuring it bonds faster and better with the surface to which the label is being attached. The adhesive is suitable for direct contact with dry, moist and fatty foodstuffs (reduction factor 4).

Herma also exhibited Lam, a label paper for contactless printing with a low maintenance CO2 laser (black color change). The method allows labels to be individually inscribed anywhere in the production process and the material's coating makes it ideal for applications requiring non-smudge, scratchproof label papers resistant to oil and grease.

Belgium-based Idempapers presented a new range of specialty papers. The C1S Papers for self-adhesive laminates have been expanded from the original SA 80 gsm to 90 and 100 gsm grades. The company also launched Label SA 70 gsm, a more 'sustainable' product with physical and mechanical characteristics close to the standard 80 gsm.

Innovia launched a BOPP film targeted at reusable glass bottles in the beverage market, typically dominated by paper. 'It has been a long and challenging process to find a workable solution based entirely on biaxially oriented polypropylene,' said Mike Taylor, product manager. A key feature of the new film is its caustic resistant top coat which ensures the ink remains on the film during the wash process and does not contaminate the wash solution. The film's low density means it floats in the caustic wash, where it can be easily separated. Innovia also extended its IML range with a low distortion BOPP film. Steve Langstaff, product manager, OPP said, 'this is a real breakthrough. It takes BOPP into areas where only cast previously worked. An almost clear 'no label' look can be achieved.' The company is also working with manufacturers to develop thermal IML technology. Intercoat launched a comprehensive range of 14 premium wet strength papers with an anti-fungicidal treatment for wine labeling. Mathias von Bargen, division manager sales and marketing, said the market is still in the process of changing from wet-glue labels to PSA labelling and there is a huge potential for premium wine papers. Intercoat's WP5 adhesive is a permanent water-based acrylic dispersion with strong initial tack to cope with high speed labelling lines. It also performs well with slightly cold and wet bottles, as well as in ice bucket conditions.

Jujo Thermal added a fluorescent option for promotional thermal transfer labels and launched the thermal top coated ML-series for high definition printing. As reported in issue 4, the company has been working on a range of non-phenol products. The company's Jens Remmer sees little threat from inkjet for demanding industrial environments.

Lintec launched the Venti Label, an adhesive film applied to molded plastics which allows the gas generated from the plastic molding process to be released after over-lamination. The company also showed its new tire label adhesive technology and a new adhesive for siliconized and other low energy surfaces.

Mactac launched its U Coex55 line of thin film synthetic face materials, jointly developed with its parent Bemis group, a specialist in flexible packaging. MP318N and MP318N UV, meanwhile, are new pharma-approved adhesives, now also available with a 30 μm PET liner. To serve the food industry, FA103 is a special adhesive for direct contact with fatty food, available with several paper and filmic face materials.

Manter showed for the first time a self-adhesive paper fused with film, giving them a high wet strength and allowing wet glue labels to be replaced in a number of applications. The company was also promoting its recently launched Sommelier & Gourmet range of high quality label papers for the luxury wine and food label segments.

NewPage Specialty Papers demonstrated its extensive portfolio including the expanded OptiPrime Family of pressure sensitive face stocks, which now includes OptiPrime Matte and OptiPrime Digital Matte. OptiPrime Digital Matte is certified for printing on HP Indigo

FIRST TIME IN EUROPE

Three US companies made their first appearance at a European Labelexpo, writes Danielle Jerschefske. This is the first time that Appleton exhibited at Labelexpo Europe 'to show its commitment to the European market', which accounts for about one-third of its international business. Appleton promoted its wide range of label products, especially its BPA-free thermal papers.

Acpo, a supplier of printable overlaminates, was looking for a European distributor. Since overlam is a process used predominantly in the US market, there is much opportunity to grow in the European market, the company believes. Wilson Manufacturing promoted its lines of rotary and flexible dies, anvil rolls and magnetic cylinders.

presses.

Polinas Plastik focued on its BOPP wrap-around, pressure sensitive and IML label films, while Polyonics promoted its high temperature overlaminate products with new clear and amber options for thermal and flexo printing. It also showed its new high temperature clear label materials with resistance to shrink up to 220 degrees Celsius.

Ritrama showcased a wide range of new self-adhesive products materials in its wine and digital roll ranges. For the pharma sector these included AP 912, an acrylic permanent high tack adhesive suitable for small diameter substrates. Soft Touch is a thin (17μ) printable laminating polypropylene film, providing a velvet feel for personal care products.

SMI Coated Products a new range of products into the European market, including clear on clear, filmic liner-based labelstocks, and low migration products for the pharma industry. Ajay Mehta, managing director, agreed the label sector is experiencing a shift from paper to filmic liners in response to a push for more environmentally friendly products. He added; 'it is an exciting time. The transition is a challenge for the whole industry and suppliers must move ahead. Companies must be proactive to defend self-adhesive technology and keep on being flexible.'

Super Film launched a BOPP film for patch labeling matched with a water-based adhesive, in response to demands from high quality beer and wine producers wanting a better performance than paper labels but without the cost of clear-on-clear PS . The company has developed a water receptive layer on the back of the label.

Torraspapel showed new developments in its one-side coated, metalized, cast-coated and thermal label papers as well as its self-adhesive label materials. It also announced a new machine will be brought on line in Spain, doubling its self-adhesive production capacity and allowing the company to move into new segments such as cosmetics and security and provide better service for its central and Eastern European customers. Another investment is the installation of a new metallizer at the Leitza mill, Spain to increase production capacity of Metalvac – a line of 100 percent recyclable high-vacuum metalized papers - by 70 percent. This will allow the company to improve its presence in the high end, premium beer and spirits segment. Carmen Burgo Pena said label papers is a growing market with plenty of opportunities.

UPM Raflatac launched a range of special products. First up is a new range of security solutions using optical brightening agents (OBAs) printed as text or graphics on the underside of the face label, followed by adhesive coating to provide a secure traceability/authenticity solution. A migration safe pharma adhesive, Purus, suitable for labeling small diameter glass, PE and PP containers, was also announced. The company introduced a new website called Pro Label Studio which helps designers select the right label materials for different end-uses and renders textured previews on various kinds of product packaging. By rotating the previews, users get a feel for how the selected combinations work in real life. UPM Raflatac also announced important cooperation agreements with 3M to improve adhesive development capabilities, and Spanish label stock manufacturer Gombau to speed up UPM's product development in UV hot melt technology for the wine market. In response to continued environmental pressures, the company will continue to support its Rafcycle waste management project.

The fluctuating price of platinum catalysts was raised by Nikolaus Miesbach, marketing manager at Wacker Chemie. 'Customers want catalysts containing platinum but prices keep fluctuating, and we need to keep helping them reduce waste and lower the use of platinum.'

EXPO EXPANDS INTO PACK PRINTING

This year's Labelexpo in Brussels introduced visitors to a brand new feature, a Package Print Zone, writes Nick Coombes.

This dedicated area of the exhibition witnessed live demonstrations of a Xeikon digital press running four completely different package print jobs, and hosted a lively series of seminars, given by leading manufacturers and suppliers to the package print market. Highlighting how important this sector is becoming was the fact that the Heidelberg Group, which had never before attended a Labelexpo, gave three of the presentations!

Labelexpo also saw the publication of the first Package Print Worldwide hard copy journal. Launched on the success of the twice-monthly Package Print Worldwide E-newsletter, it reports on the issues facing the industry and the technology under development to meet new challenges. You can register to receive both by logging on to: www.packprintworld.com

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INSPECTION

AMONG THE TRENDS in inspection technology on display at Labelexpo Europe were increased integration into digital workflows, the addition of Braille inspection capabilities, and remote monitoring from outside the plant. James Quirk rounds up some of the technology on display at the show

AVT reported enjoying one of its best Labelexpo events for many years, securing numerous sales for its inspection technology and making inroads into new market areas.

'We welcomed hundreds of printers to the AVT stand during the four-day expo, and were delighted with the positive feedback we received on the company's new solutions and wide range of vision- and color-based products,' said Amir Dekel, AVT's corporate VP of marketing. 'We negotiated sales of 25 systems during the show, which equates to some $2m worth of business, and have received a welter of enquiries since the doors closed, which we intend to convert into more business.'

AVT presented its full range of quality assurance, process control and color control systems for presses and rewinders at the event, with additional exhibits on working demonstration around the exhibition on the stands of business partners including Prati, Rotocontrol, HP, Smag, Nilpeter, Iwasaki, Spilker and Smooth Machinery.

The company demonstrated its PrintVision/Helios II 100 percent inspection platform with a complete workflow. The latest developments included Braille automatic inline detection, which works in parallel with print inspection, detecting every fault in the Braille dots on pharmaceutical labels.

Color measurement and control systems were demonstrated with the Microcolor/Mercury remote ink control for narrow web offset and the I-eal inline DeltaE color measurement ensuring color consistency throughout the print run. Other highlights included job verification to the original PDF, and 100 percent verification of barcodes and variable data codes and numbers.

Capitalizing on the growing use of personal pocket communications, AVT showed ProMIS communication to MIS systems and iPrint connectivity to iPhone/iPad mobile devices, both of which have recently been added as connectivity options to AVT inspection systems.

BST International ran live demonstrations of its quality assurance systems for the web processing industry during Labelexpo Europe at its Quality Competence Center stand.

'We saw a strong demand especially for web guiding and inspection systems,' said Kristian Jünke, BST's sales director, 'but there was also a large interest for color measurement and register control systems. Customers came from all over the world, with a focus on Eastern Europe and Turkey.'

The company showed its ranges of quality insurance systems for the web processing industry, running live demonstrations of products like Shark4000 LEX and Shark1000LEX (100 percent print defect detection), CompactGuide, CLSPro600 (web guiding), PowerScope4000, SuperHandyScan4000 (video web inspection), AR 4000 (register control) and IDM4000 (color measurement).

Drello showed its Drelloscop V5000 video-web inspection system, alongside Drelloscop 5118, a universally applicable stroboscope suited to visualizing fast mechanical processes on production and printing machines. Also on display will be the Drelloscop 5125 compact stroboscope for homogeneous light sensitive illumination, designed for label inspection slitter rewinders.

Erhardt + Leimer showed its improved TubeLight illumination system which can operate on web widths of up to 1.5m. Due to the new LED light, homogenous illumination is possible even in the wide web sector. TubeLight features have been improved for better inspection of difficult printing and web conditions like embossing, screen printing, metalized

materials and holograms.

The company also showed its Nyscan range of inspection systems. During pre-press the Image:Inspector checks the press proof from a production process against the customer's PDF file to make sure there are no deviations. During the printing process the 100 percent inspection system Web:Inspector detects defects, and the Roll:Scheduler allows accurate positioning of the detected defects on the finishing machine.

The company's Elscan range features a new dual flash system for packaging applications using metallic films.

Eye-C showed its ProofRunner and Proofiler systems. ProofRunner, an inline system, was demonstrated on a rewinder from Ashe Converting Equipment. It uses a high speed line camera to continuously acquire a high resolution image of the entire web. A computer system then identifies all printed items on the web and tracks them through the entire print or converting run. The same computer performs an intelligent comparison of each printed item against the customer proof. The advanced pattern analysis of the ProofRunner can distinguish between the different types of defects, so every significant deviation will get caught and displayed while permissable fluctuations caused by the printing process itself – such as minor registration errors of small squeeze marks around the individual letters – can be automatically passed. The system also allows inspection of hot and cold stamping elements.

Proofiler is an offline system which digitally compares the first samples from the printing machine or the samples of incoming materials against the signed-off proof. Every item printed across the web or sheet is processed in one pass. An integrated scanner accommodates all print formats up to 60in x 43in (1600mm x 1100mm).

Isra Vision introduced the new ProofStar inspection system. Everything that matters in packaging printing can be inspected – the print, hot foil or varnish, matt or glossy or combined. The customer´s PDF file from the pre-press stage is used as master for the comparison to the first printed sheets. At the same time immediate feedback and visualization of damage to the printing plate or cylinder is provided. The company also showed the PrintStar inspection system for premium printing products, which offers 100 percent monitoring and documentation of the print quality, in-line or off-line, for each repeat, for the entire web or for a production batch. PrintStar may be installed directly on a narrow web press and used in conjunction with the Rewind Manager system to remove the waste at the slitter. For off-line inspection, PrintStar can be installed on the slitter or doctor machine.

Lake Image Systems showed its Discovery PQ inspection system. Featuring high resolution line scan cameras, Discovery PQ can acquire large format images of a continuous web for multiple, simultaneous print quality and integrity inspection. The system can be used on all narrow web presses and rewinders.

Discovery Multiscan was also displayed, which pulls together the images and data from a wide variety of camera and scanner based technologies of any number of Discovery software tools to read, control, inspect, verify, log and report – providing 100 percent quality inspection and print data integrity.

Nikka Research showed its product line for print quality control, pre-press verification, process automation, variable and security printing and data collection.

A new member of the Alis automatic label inspection family is the compact L1 model. This wedge shaped camera is designed for inspection on printing presses and rewinders.

The established Alis L2 line of print quality inspection now covers all popular web widths: 330, 420, 520, 600 and 760 mm. Many combinations of camera resolutions, B/W or color cameras are available to match any application.

PDF-to-Print verification technology has become even more accessible and easy to use, says the company. The ODRI offline scanner inspection system adds support for A1 scanners, thin leaflet paper and reflective surfaces. Other options are ISO-conform barcode grading, color measurement as well as multiple artwork inspection.

For all products, Nikka Research introduced its new 'applet' concept. Applets are modular functions, which can be easily added to existing systems in order to extend their functionality. Applets for barcodes, Datamatrix, Delta E color monitoring, in-image measurement, OCR and variable data are ready to mix into a system exactly matching customer requirements.

In addition to inspection products for pre-press, press and finishing, Nikka presented its integrated products for inter-process optimization, including electronic job tickets, 'inspect on press then repair on rewinder' workflow, offline review and edit capability for roll maps and a job tracking and analysis reporting system.

PC Industries showed the Guardian PQV 100 percent print defect detection system and the Guardian OLP offline PDF proofing system. The combination of Guardian technologies provides complete print quality process control from conceptualization to shipment. Graphic-Vision RX Series web viewers were also on display, now standard with ultra high-resolution digital cameras and flat panel LCD monitors. Additionally, ANSI/ISO 1D and 2D barcode verification, register controls, repeat length monitors and strobe lights were shown.

Tectonic launched the K3digital, which expands its flexible print inspection system range. K3digital has an icon-based, intuitive menu system and touch screen navigation which facilitates quick set up including one-touch camera controls and repeat length position control. The color monitoring tool found on the K2colour-check system is expanded on K3digital and provides an even higher level of color monitoring of regions of interest – analysis based on CIELab color model – and includes alarms for color monitor error notification. K2's image transfer feature is enhanced, providing the print manager with immediate live access to current activity on the press. K1, K2colour-check, Jaguar and the Flexico V5 range of plate mounting machines were also on show.

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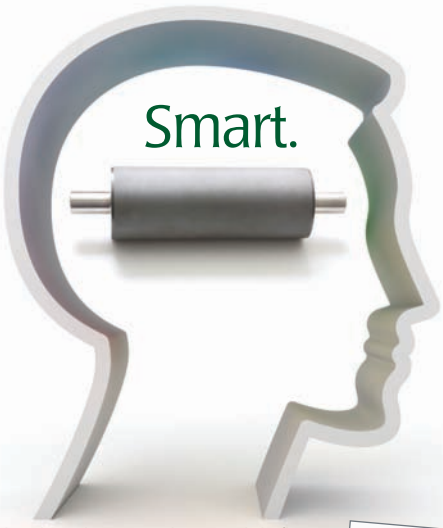

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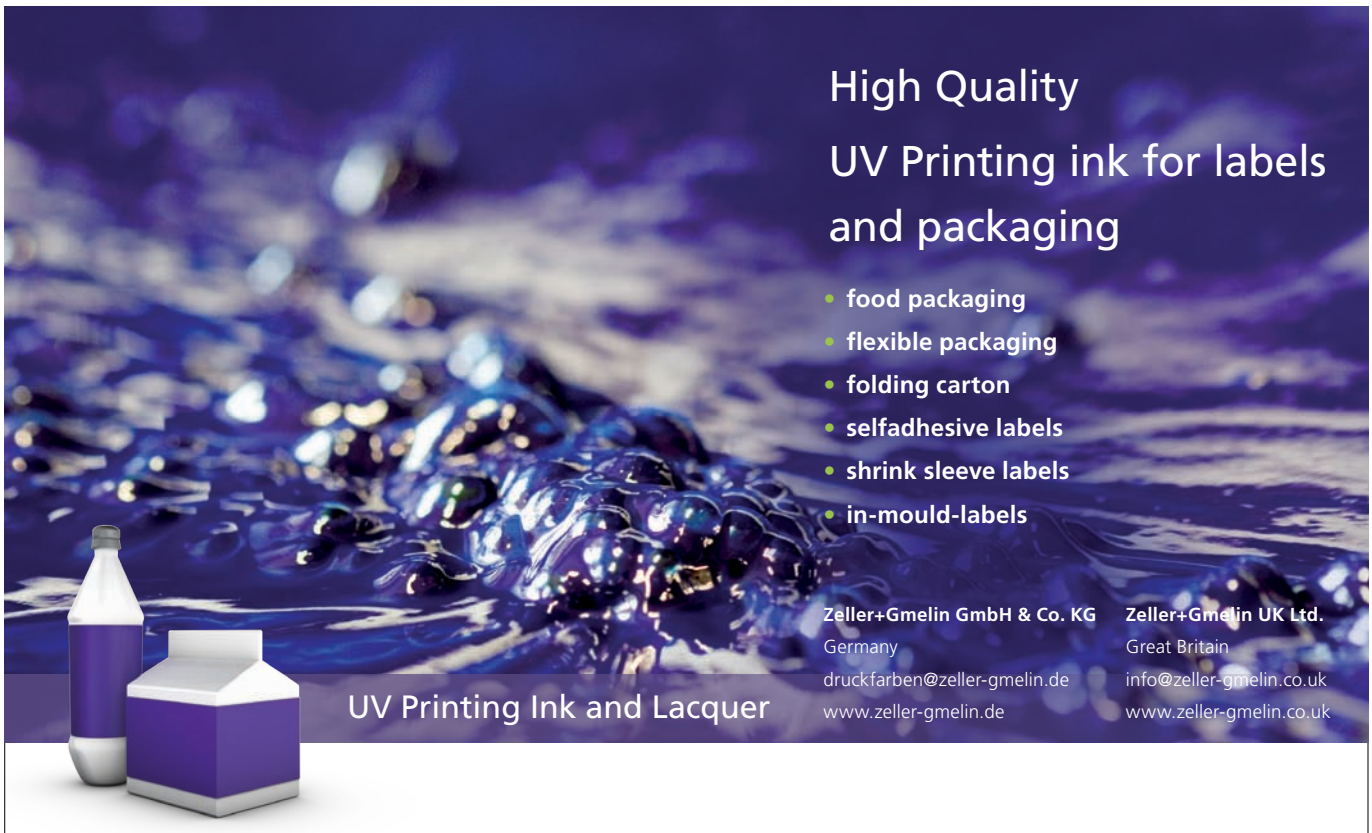

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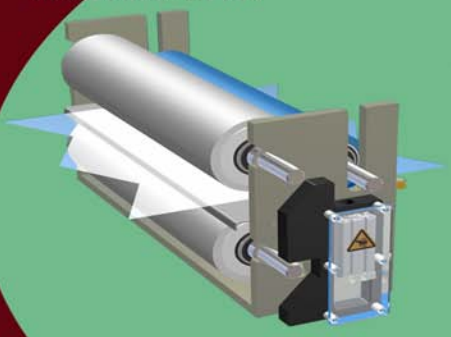

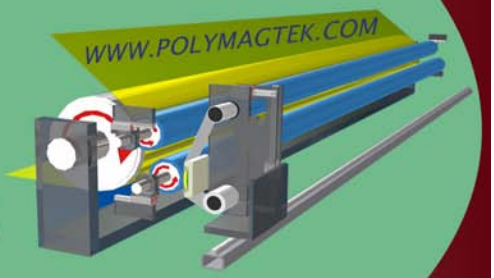

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RFID

A HIGHLIGHT among the RFID technology on display at Labelexpo Europe was Melzer's new application for monitoring cars from greater distances. James Quirk rounds up some of the technology from the show

Melzer's SL-600 RFID converting line operates at up to 60,000 products/h, and is designed for industrial production of small RFID labels, such as those required for alcohol brand protection, pharmaceutical fraud protection, vehicle identification and other high quality mass applications. The testing and selection of UHF transponders can be performed reliably in a 6-track stop and go process.

The company also showed an interesting new application for RFID – the digital scanning of a car's vignette (required for using the motorway in Switzerland and Austria). To allow scanning from greater distances (eg 10 meters), a UHF label is needed as well as an international vehicle identification number (VIN). Such a VIN is standardized and consists of 17 digits. It is known as FIN in Europe, VIN in America and worldwide as WMI.

The system also allows the identification of vehicles for checking their registration or giving access to parking lots or high security areas.

Melzer, of course, cannot issue a FIN, VIN or WMI, but the company showed at Labelexpo how the serial number of the KSW/NXP transponders, after being converted into smart labels by the SL-600, can be read with the 3M readers of its TAGIDU series and displayed on a monitor.

The material required for this demonstration was sponsored by 3M and Lohmann while KSW sponsored the UHF transponders.

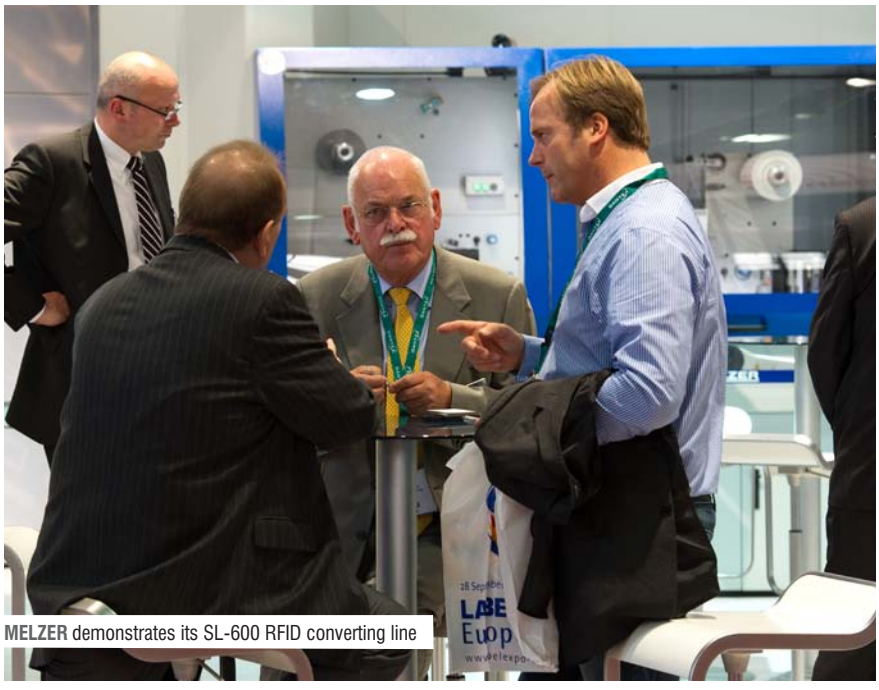
Mühlbauer showed its new TAL 9000, a flexible start-up machine for direct chip attachment which is suitable for small to mid-volume inlay production. This mid web system facilitates throughput of up to 5,500 UPH while achieving assembly yields of = 99.7 percent. The key technologies featured in TAL 9000 have already proven successful in Mühlbauer's TAL 15000, a machine for high volume inlay production with up to 15,000 UPH.

The company also showed its CL 60000 RFID label and ticket converting machine, which covers a wide range of applications in one modular system. Mühlbauer is also in the process of developing an RFID label and ticket personalization platform. This modular line will feature leading edge chip encoding as well as digital printing capabilities.

bielomatik provided RFID consulting resources for visitors at the show. Highlights included a live demonstration of the smart label laminating and testing machine – Qualifier T-165 – for production of smart labels from low-cost die-cut aluminum antennas, UHF chip modules via the company's RF-LoopTag, and pre-printed labels.

Consulting resources for the entire process chain through bielomatik partners included RFID application specialists, read/write technologies for RFID, RFID antenna design and simulation, application related RFID performance measurement, and RFID for challenging environments (metals, liquids etc).

Ubique.Tag showed its ranges of RFID antennae and tags. The China-based company owns nearly 150 national RFID patents and provides a one-stop shop for RFID products and services.



MELZER demonstrates its SL-600 RFID converting line

EXPO DIE IS CAST

Spanish tooling manufacturer Lartec designed and engraved this special commemorative die which shows the entire layout of Labelexpo Europe, and now has a special place on the wall of the Labels & Labeling London office. Here Raúl Silvestre, Lartec's product manager, presents the die to Labelexpo's Jade Grace and Roger Pellow.

Labelexpo

Asia 2011

ASIA-PACIFIC'S biggest label and package decorating event takes place in Shanghai in November against the backdrop of growth rates over 10 percent in China's print packaging sector. L&L China editor Kevin Liu reports

Asia's largest event dedicated to the label, product decoration, web printing and converting industry, Labelexpo Asia, is again being held at Shanghai New International Expo Centre (SNIEC) between 29 November and 2 December.

With over 250 exhibitors, this is once again a show driven by live machinery demonstrations, and the show aims to beat 2009's record number of over 16,000 visitors. Complementing the exhibition, Labelexpo Asia 2011 also features a comprehensive, educational conference program where visitors will hear from high profile speakers, key suppliers and learn from a series of illustrated customer case studies.

The keynote presentation, including an overview of the latest developments and market forecasts, will be made by Jouko Lähepelto, senior vice president, Americas and Asia Pacific at UPM Raflatac. The opening session on day two will see Dean Scarborough, chairman of Avery Dennison Corporation, look at next generation materials, as well as sustainability issues.

Other key speakers include Christian Menegon, business development manager at Hewlett-Packard, will highlight the value of digital technology; Dr Zhangshui Gong, chief engineer at Hangzhou Toka Ink Chemical Co, who looks at the ink uses and applications, including security inks; and Federico d'Annunzio, managing director, Gidue, who will explore the opportunities for label printers in package printing. Peter Wang at DuPont discusses how to develop long-term anti-counterfeiting solutions.

Roger Pellow, Labelexpo managing director comments: 'As the third biggest player in the global market, the Chinese label industry is continuing to go from strength to strength. As the region's largest event, we're certain we can build on the success of 2009's exhibition with even higher visitor and exhibitor figures. With the Asian industry experiencing such vigorous growth and diversification, it is pivotal that we again provide printers and manufacturers with the perfect platform to do business, learn about the latest advances in technology and applications and hear about ways in which they can maximize profits while driving down costs.'

The annual growth rate of the label industry in China is from 15- 20 percent, and the label industry is the fastest-growing package print segment. At present, there are more than 5,000 label printers in China. In 2010, the overall output of the Chinese label market reached 16 billion RMB, and the volume output production is 2.1 billion sqm. Compared with last year, production increased almost 20 percent.

As far as label printing technology goes, letterpress is still the mainstream label processing technology in China. But recently, investment in label printing equipment has focused on narrow web flexo printing machines, and more color units and combination printing is popular. Moreover, digital technology has become the 'hot spot'. Production of digital printing equipment is increasing year by year in China. Nevertheless, the use of digital technology by Chinese printing companies is still at an early stage.

If we widen out to the package printing market, this has also grown rapidly. According to the China packaging federation statistics, the total value output of this sector has crossed 1.2 trillion RMB, making it the second biggest national industry in the world.

Driven by the booming Chinese market, the Chinese package printing industry has grown by over 10 percent year on year. According to figures from the Printing and Printing Equipment Industries Association of China, the total output of the Chinese package printing industry was 1,715 billion RMB in 2009, compared with the 1,550 billion RMB in 2008, representing an increase in total output of 10.6 percent. Package printing now accounts for 33.8 percent of total Chinese printing industry output.

Labelexpo Asia 2011 is supported by the industry trade body Printing and Printing Equipment Industries Association of China (PEIAC) and forms part of the Labelexpo Global Series.

EXHIBITOR LIST

COMPANY	STAND NO
3M China Ltd	C5
AB Graphic International	F3,F4,F5
Advanced Vision Technology	G20
AEBO Science Technology	E45
Asia Pacific Printing	G105
AKO Printech Shanghai Ltd	G52
Alpha Cure Shanghai	E46
Alphasonics	F28
Amber Light International Trade (Shanghai)	A52
A-POS (Shanghai)	A40
Arjobex	I45
Armor (China) Ltd	I49
Atlantic Zeiser (Beijing) Tech	F55
Avery Dennison	B48
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Baoding Special Light Source Electrical Equipment Factory	H106
BASF (China)	C31
Beijing Basch	H33
Beijing Bo Da Green High Technologies	E28
Beijing Dugao Photo Digital Technology Co Ltd	H26
Beijing Luster Light Vision	K10
Bluestar Silicones	B37
Boise Inc	G8
Bonset America Corporation	G50
BST International (Shanghai)	C9
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Changzhou Zhonghong Machine	D96
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Dalian Fujisan Office Equipment	E3
Dewei (Shanghai) Mechanical & Electrical Technology Co Ltd	J43

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Dewei (Shanghai) Mechanical & Electrical Technology J43
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DNP & SHPNC K29
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CORPORATE CULTURE

living corporate values

THE career of Helmut Schreiner – who was presented with the R Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award at Labelexpo Europe this year – holds valuable management lessons for family business owners.

Perhaps the most important management lesson to learn from Helmut Schreiner is to embody the values you wish the company to project. In his case this always meant innovation, quality, performance and enthusiasm. Everything the company did was looked at through these values.

Great importance in Schreiner factories is attached to optimum, process-capable working conditions. All operating areas are air-conditioned; workplaces are ergonomically tested; work rooms are like living rooms; every building is designed for a happy environment, while performance is rewarded by success-orientated remuneration systems and intensive advanced training programs.

The company also offers employees facilities for exercise, Pilates, etc, and provides company flats for new employees, apprentices and other personnel until they can afford to buy their own homes. All the ladies in the Schreiner Group even receive flowers on Valentine's Day. With such a working environment and facilities it is perhaps not surprising to find a very low staff turnover.

Every single employee is expected to keep learning, to develop their skills, to apply themselves accordingly and to participate in the company's further development. A comprehensive advanced training program is operated and they have their own advanced education institution – the Schreiner Academy – which offers around 150 training programs as well as more than 500 online seminars and, currently, some 43 apprentices.

The final lesson is about knowing when to relinquish control. This is particularly difficult if you have worked in the business your whole life, but made easier if you had a good experience in the handover from your own parents.

When Schreiner assumed the reins of his father's company in 1974, he changed the name to 'Schreiner Labels and Self-Adhesion Technology', making the company truly his own and setting it out on a new strategic direction. Now Helmut is retiring, he aims to leave his son as the maximum possible freedom to choose his own future direction. Remaining as a source of advice without interfering in the day to day running of the company is the most difficult of acts for a retiring family business owner to pull off.

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