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Longest-ever digital print run achieved by breakthrough alliance with HP Indigo and Europe-wide converter network

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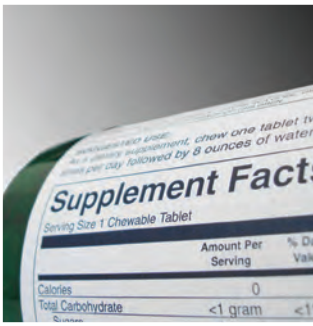

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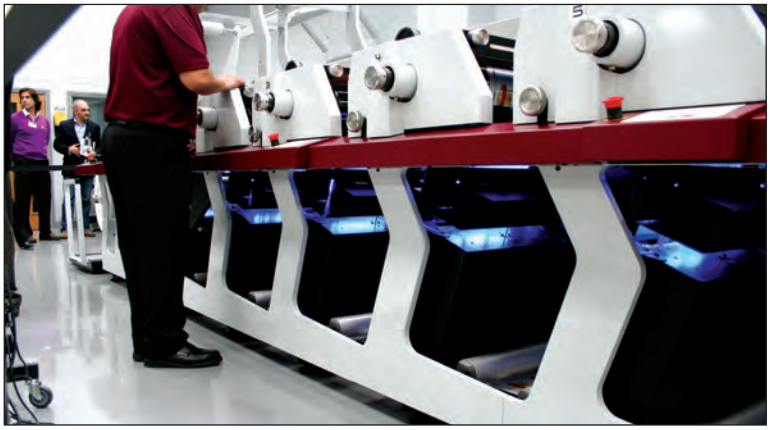

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LESSONS IN SHARING
FROM COCA-COLA

The Coca-Cola customization story which leads this issue of Labels & Labeling is a supreme example of the possibilities of networked collaboration on the widest scale.

The ability to bring together a network of eight digital label converters and 10 conventional label converters across Europe to participate in a complex project under conditions of total secrecy shows a very useful model for future brand projects. The result was a highly impactful promotional campaign where consumers could choose bottles with their own or their friends and families' names in 30 countries across the continent.

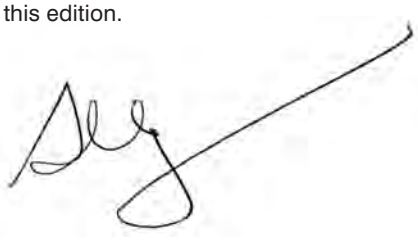
Significant challenges had to be overcome.

Firstly, a workflow had to be developed whereby Coca-Cola's existing label converters – using wide web CI flexo and gravure presses – could leave a panel on the labels which would be overprinted by HP WS6600 digital presses. Labels would have to be slit down to the correct widths for the narrow web press, then sent back to the wide web converters for final inspection, slitting and delivery to the Coca-Cola bottlers dotted around Europe.

This in itself introduced issues of timing, since the digital print would take months longer to produce than the conventional print. All these logistics were managed by Peter Overbeek, managing director at Eshuis, using a specially developed web tool which tracked everything from the delivery of files for platemaking and the digital press RIP, to the final point of delivery, and all to a punishing schedule.

The second major networking challenge was to co-ordinate the key Coca-Cola red color between conventional and digital presses and to ensure the digital presses in eight countries remained properly calibrated across three shifts. This was achieved by making the HP-delivered special color the reference point for the whole project and by developing on-line calibration and maintenance protocols for the digital presses – a first for HP in the industrial print market on this scale.

All this was achieved due to the vision and hard work of the Coca-Cola Company marketing team, under Marit Kroon, and technical team led by Gregory Bentley, whose stories you can read in this edition.



ANDY THOMAS
GROUP MANAGING EDITOR
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L&L EDITORIAL

EDITORIAL [+44 (0)208 846 2835]
editorial@labelsandlabeling.com

ANDY THOMAS GROUP MANAGING EDITOR
DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE NORTH AMERICA EDITOR
JAMES QUIRK LATIN AMERICA EDITOR
DAVID PITTMAN GROUP NEWS EDITOR
KEVIN LIU CHINA EDITOR
MIKE FAIRLEY DIRECTOR OF STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT
BARRY HUNT TECHNICAL EDITOR
CAROL HOUGHTON EDITORIAL & PRODUCTION EXECUTIVE

ADVERTISING [+44 (0)208 846 2818]
sales@labelsandlabeling.com

TIM GORDON PUBLISHING DIRECTOR
RANDY KESSLER ADVERTISING MANAGER
JOERG SINGER ADVERTISING MANAGER – EUORPE
RICHARD QUIRK ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE – EMEA
JERRY LEE ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE – CHINA
TINA WANG ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE – CHINA
PRADEEP SAROHA ACCOUNT EXECUTIVE INDIA

SUBSCRIPTIONS
subs@labelsandlabeling.com

DESIGN [+44 (0)208 846 2709]
design@labelsandlabeling.com

BEN WALTON DESIGNER
ADAM EVANS DESIGNER

PRODUCTION [+44 (0)208 846 2841]
production@labelsandlabeling.com

JAMES WENMAN, DESIGN & PRODUCTION MANAGER

MARKETING
MICHAEL HATTON MARKETING DIRECTOR
STEPHANIE CRONK MARKETING MANAGER

MANAGEMENT
LISA MILBURN LABELS GROUP MANAGING DIRECTOR
TIM GORDON PUBLISHING DIRECTOR

PUBLISHERS
Tarsus Publishing Ltd, Metro Building,
1 Butterwick, Hammersmith, London W6 8DL, UK
T: +44 (0)208 846 2700 | **F:** +44 (0)20 8846 2801
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US OFFICE
Tarsus Exhibitions and Publishing Ltd,
175 N. Patrick Blvd. Suite 180, Brookfield,
WI 53045, USA
T: +1 262 782 1900 | **F:** +1 262 782 8474

CHINA OFFICE
Room G , Floor 29 ,SIIC ,No.18 North Caoxi Road
Xuhui District, shanghai
T: +86-21-64686801 | **F:** +86-21-64279169

INDIA OFFICE
O4U CENTRE, 649 | Office M-03, Phase-5,
Udyog Vihar, Gurgaon , India **T:** +911244234434

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L&L PUBLISHING TEAM

ANDY THOMAS
Group managing editor
athomas@labelsandlabeling.com
t: +44 (0)208 846 2835
Languages: English, French, German

MIKE FAIRLEY
Director of strategic development
mfairley@labelsandlabeling.com

DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE
North America editor
danielle@labelsandlabeling.com
t: +1 262 754 6926
Languages: English, German

KEVIN LIU
China editor
ltao@labelsandlabeling.com
t: +86 (21) 64484892
Languages: English, Mandarin

JAMES QUIRK
Latin America editor
jquirk@labelsandlabeling.com
t: +54 11 4961 1316
Languages: English, Spanish, Portuguese

DAVID PITTMAN
Group news editor
dpittman@labelsandlabeling.com
t: +44 (0)208 8846 2836

BARRY HUNT
Technical editor
Having worked for over 30 years on printing trade journals in the UK, Barry Hunt has written for magazines around the world. He has contributed to L&L since 1990.

LISA MILBURN
Managing director
lmilburn@labelsandlabeling.com
t: +44 (0)208 846 2740

TIM GORDON
Publishing director
tgordon@labelsandlabeling.com
t: +44 (0)208 846 2818

ROGER PELLOW
Labels group chairman
rpellow@labelsandlabeling.com
t: +44 (0)208 846 2700

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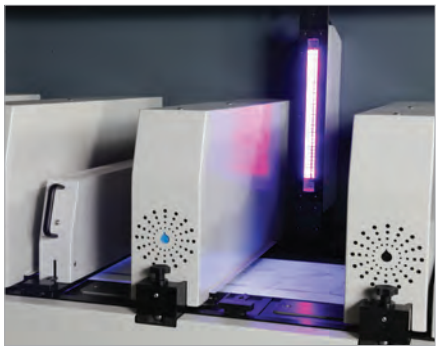

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INBOX

APPOINTMENTS & AGENCIES

ROTATEK APPOINTS NEW INDIAN AGENT

Rotatek has named Provin Technos PVT Ltd as its new agent for the Indian market. Provin Technos has many years of experience in the printing and engineering industry, and is currently the distributor of Mitsubishi sheet-fed offset presses in the Indian territory. It has a footprint across India, with a presence in New Delhi, Mumbai, Chennai, Bangalore and Hyderabad. Its New Delhi warehouse handles spare parts, and will help reinforce the presence of Rotatek in the Indian market.

STORK EXTENDS JET PARTNERSHIP TO INDONESIA

Stork Prints has appointed Jet Technologies Indonesia as distributing partner for the company's graphics printing portfolio in the region.

Wilfried Koopman, managing director of graphics at Stork Prints, said: 'We are very enthusiastic about extending our partnership with Jet Technologies to Indonesia. We have been working with Jet Technologies for several years now and the company has proven to be a solid name in the label printing market in Australia and New Zealand.'

Jack Malki, director at Jet Technologies, added: 'Our partnership with Stork Prints has been successful for many years due largely to the technical support and abilities of our local team. We look forward to extending the same model to Indonesia, where clients can benefit from local expertise.'

Image above (l-r): David Reece, Arman Mampuk, Yanuar Emilius and Jack Malki from Jet Technologies and Jet Technologies Indonesia

EDALE SIGNS NEW REPRESENTATION FOR GERMANY

Edale has announced an exclusive partnership with family run Porter Pac, based in Eichen, Germany. Porter Pac is a specialist in the label and packaging markets with a proven background in selling US brand flexographic printing presses as well as slitter rewinder machinery.

Edale's export sales director, Bernhard Grob, commented: 'I feel Porter Pac will be a great company to represent the Edale brand. Both Jerry and Sean Porter are very hands-on with a great reputation alongside a wealth of technical knowledge, which will be invaluable in re-introducing Edale products to the German market.'

Jerry Porter MD of Porter Pac, concluded: 'Edale's capability to provide customers with both high quality workhorses as well as specialized equipment for a particular customers needs, is a key factor in today's market. Combined with Edale's excellent reputation, we see this as the future for machinery requirements in Germany.'

MPS APPOINTS NEW DISTRIBUTOR IN CEE

MPS has appointed ISM GmbH as its distributor in Central and Eastern Europe (CEE). ISM is an Austrian-based company specializing in machinery, materials and consumables that serve the paper and packaging industry. ISM will represent MPS printing and converting machines in the following countries: Albania, Austria, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Hungary, Kosovo, Macedonia, Moldavia, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and Slovenia.

TARSUS LABELS DIVISION APPOINTS NEW MD

Tarsus Group, organizer of the Labelexpo Global Series and publisher of L&L, has promoted Lisa Milburn to managing director of the company's label division.

Milburn will be responsible for direct management of the event and publishing business, as well as spearheading growth into new regions and sectors. She has been managing all the Labelexpo department heads since 2004 in her capacity as events and publishing director.

Roger Pellow will become chairman of the label division, while taking on increased responsibilities for Tarsus's expanding emerging market portfolio as group commercial director.

Douglas Emslie, group managing director at Tarsus Group, said: 'Roger has played a pivotal role in developing Labelexpo into a strong global brand and has assembled a fantastic team around him. His experience will serve him well in his new role.

'Lisa has worked closely with Roger since 2003 and has been the driving force behind our successful sales and marketing initiatives. She will ensure that we continue to deliver high-quality events and publications while creating new opportunities for our clients.

TARSUS TACKLES THE THREE PEAKS

A team at Tarsus, the international media group behind Labels & Labeling and the Labelexpo Global Series, will be taking on the National Three Peaks challenge in aid of Events for Namuwongo in August 2013.

The grueling challenge involves climbing the three highest peaks in England, Wales and Scotland within 24 hours. It will be a physically and mentally demanding day of exhaustion, sleep deprivation, hunger and, no doubt, blisters.

The chosen charity, Events for Namuwongo, works with the community in Kampala, Uganda to facilitate real change.

Please show your support by donating at http://uk.virginmoneygiving.com/team/tarsus3peaks

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NEWS

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

ALEXANDER VAN´T RIET, executive board member for labels at Constantia Flexibles

CONSTANTIA COMPLETES SPEAR ACQUISITION IN GROWTH DRIVE

The completion of the Constantia Flexibles purchase of Spear has placed the flexible packaging group in the top five global label producers.

Constantia Flexibles supplies international customers in the food, pet food, pharmaceutical and beverage industries with more than 7,000 employees in over 50 group companies in more than 20 countries.

Spear produces pressure-sensitive labels for the beverage market. The company has sales of 150 million euros and 650 employees at four locations in the USA, one in Wales/UK and one in South Africa.

The deal for Constantia to purchase Spear was announced in mid-February, but was closed in May.

Alexander van´t Riet, executive board member for labels at Constantia Flexibles, said: 'Spear constitutes an excellent addition to our existing labels business. It will open new roads to attractive markets in the Americas and Africa and especially to the fast growing premium beer markets around the world, where pressure-sensitive labels are key to success. We welcome our new colleagues from Spear to our group and look forward to jointly serving our customers globally in a remarkable way.'

The purchase of Spear is one of a series of acquisitions made by Constantia this year. In January Globalpack, a market leader in flexible packaging and folding cartons in Mexico was bought. At the end of March an agreement was signed on the purchase of 60 percent of Parikh Packaging in India. Parikh Packaging is among the top ten suppliers of flexible packaging in India .

Commented Thomas Unger, CEO of Constantia Flexibles, 'With these acquisitions we make an important step towards globalization of our Group. This will also open new growth potentials in attractive markets.'

An example of Paragon's label work

NEW GLOBAL PACKAGING GIANT CREATED

FIVE COMPANIES from across the packaging supply chain are to be merged to create a global business operating as Exopack Holdings

Exopack, a US-based producer of flexible paper and plastic packaging, and advanced coatings, is to be merged with Europe's Britton Group, PACCOR, Kobusch and Paragon Print & Packaging.

Britton Group is a flexible plastic packaging manufacturer, while PACCOR is the second-largest rigid plastic packaging company in Europe. Kobusch is a producer of tailor-made flexible and rigid packaging systems and Paragon Print & Packaging is a private label packaging systems provider in the UK.

Exopack Holdings will be based in Luxembourg and operate 63 plants, employ 8,650 and generate aggregate revenues of more than two and a half billion US dollars.

All five component companies are affiliates of Sun Capital Partners, Inc. Together, they will form the sixth-largest plastics packaging company in the world. The brand names of the five businesses will remain in use.

Sun Capital Partners is a private investment firm that has invested in 320 companies worldwide with combined sales in excess of 45 billion US dollars.

It invested in Paragon Print & Packaging in December 2012, PACCOR in December 2010, Kobusch in December 2011, Britton Group in April 2011 and Exopack in July 2005.

Sun Capital Partners states that the expanded footprint of the combined company means it will be well positioned to supply diverse end-use markets, and unlock additional growth opportunities, supported by a more robust, diverse and complementary product portfolio.

Jack Knott will serve in the capacity of chief executive officer (CEO) of Exopack Holdings, with Mike Alger named as chief financial officer. Dieter Bergner will be CEO of PACCOR (global rigid business); and Michael Cronin joins the team as CEO of the global flexibles business.

Marc Leder, co-CEO of Sun Capital Partners, said: 'This combination represents a natural next step in a process that began eight years ago to create a global packaging company with a solid foundation for future growth.

'Building on past collaborations between the companies, the combination will immediately achieve synergies and allow the combined company to more effectively pursue global business.'

Knott said: 'By joining together to form this new entity, we will be better able to serve the needs of our global customers through a manufacturing base spanning North America, Europe, the Middle East and China that enhances our ability to deliver outstanding service.

'The larger scale will enable us to accelerate the development and commercialization of new and differentiated products that offer our customers a competitive advantage.'

'All five companies have achieved success by introducing market led innovations,' said Cronin.

JACK KNOTT, CEO Exopack Holdings Sarl

Mark Andy ProLED system in action on P3 press

MARK ANDY DEMONSTRATES UV LED ON PERFORMANCE PRESS

Partnership with Flint brings system of LED lamps and inks to market

Mark Andy has demonstrated a fully commercial UV LED curing system on a Performance press at a recent UK Open House. Introducing the Mark Andy ProLED curing system on the 6-color Performance Series P3 press, Greg Palm, vice president new business development, said that compared to a conventional UV Hg system, LED offers 'more press uptime with fewer equipment failures, a faster and deeper cure for higher productivity, and is more energy efficient with longer life bulbs and lower maintenance requirements. And because it's a solid state system, it offers instant 'on-off' switching.'

Lack of heat and ozone also improve the safety and comfort of the working environment, added Palm.

According to Palm, LED bulb life is at least 20,000 hours, which compares to 500-2000 for Hg bulbs. UV LED consumes around 50 percent less power, operates at 60 degrees Celsius (as opposed to 350degC) , and with no shutters or mirrors, has low maintenance requirements. There is no requirement for blowers or for ducting, decreasing ambient noise levels.

The first ProLED pilot system has been running 24/7 at a converter since October 2012 with no downtime for system or bulb failure, said Palm. Early jobs produced include paper labels, shrink sleeves and unsupported film labels, direct thermal printing and pouches – with no additional heat management on the press. There was a five percent increase in production speed.

For full story see p.94

EXPO DIGITAL WORKSHOP

CONVERTERS can compare jobs on multiple inkjet and toner presses at Labelexpo Europe

A series of Labelexpo Digital Technology Workshops will take place each show day in Brussels this September. Six of the leading inkjet press manufacturers will all produce a selection of food, pharmacy and industrial labels using the same sets of origination, on the same range of substrates, during daily set-up and demonstration workshop sessions.

Press manufacturers participating in these inkjet benchmarking workshop sessions are Durst, Domino, EFI Jetrion, Epson, Heidelberg Linoprint and Stork Prints. Origination, color and die-cutter files for the different jobs are being prepared by Esko, while UPM Raflatac, Flexcon and Herma will provide common paper, film and foil substrates for the range of printed labels being produced. For comparison with toner technologies, Xeikon will be producing the same label designs.

'A first for any print-related show, the Digital Technology Workshops are aiming to raise the understanding of inkjet quality, performance, head technology, dpi resolution, color gamut, potential applications and investment opportunities amongst the show's global visitors,' said Mike Fairley, strategic development director at Tarsus Labels group.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

FIRST DIGITAL LABEL TROPHIES AWARDED IN PARIS

The third Digital Label Forum organized by French label magazine Etiq & Pack in Paris was the occasion for the inaugural Digital Label Trophy awards. Judged by a panel of experts – Christophe Perrot of the French label association UNFEA, Wolfgang Klos-Geiger, publisher of Etiketten Labels, Andy Thomas, managing editor of Labels & Labeling, Jean Poncet chief editor of Etiq & Pack, and John Penhallow of Label Press International – the trophies were to reward the finest labels printed digitally and using the full potential of this printing process.

Provetiq took top prize in the industrial labels category for the marine detergent Clin Azur, Cogetiq in the category Cosmetics-Beauty for a Deodorant Stick label, and Stork Prints in the category 'wine' for a Dutch wine label. Stratus Packaging gained two awards: in the food category for an olive oil label and in the category Best Use of Variable Data for the wine label 'Clos de la Bonneterie'.

For each winning label, the jury praised the print quality, visual impact and relevance between the label and its product.

The next digital label Trophies will take place in March 2014 in Paris.

ALLIANCE SEEKS COST-EFFECTIVE RFID ANTENNA PRINT TECHNOLOGY

Mühlbauer and NovaCentrix have collaborated to develop new advanced RFID antenna manufacturing technology. Under the agreement, Mühlbauer will develop, produce and market scalable antenna production systems 'APS' for RFID inlay/label manufacturers incorporating NovaCentrix' PulseForge photonic curing tools and optimized for use with NovaCentrix' Metalon ICI copper oxide reduction inks.

Thomas Betz, member of the management board for Mühlbauer, said: 'Based on our careful evaluation of the PulseForge tools and Metalon ICI inks, we believe partnering with the NovaCentrix team is in the long-term best interests of Mühlbauer and our customers for realizing the most efficient RFID antenna manufacturing – directly before attaching the chip.'

The first version of the APS 20000 reel to reel antenna manufacturing line will be designed to provide a capacity of 100 million antennas per year. Bigger versions will be available upon request.

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

AWA RELEASES PRODUCT DECORATION REVIEW

The 2013 edition of AWA Alexander Watson Associates' annual review of the global labeling and product decoration markets is now available. Labeling & Product Decoration Markets Global Review 2013 provides an accessible 'quick scan' of this specialist area, combining a printed report and an accompanying CD-ROM containing the report's exhibits, charts, and graphs for downloading and use in presentations.

The report documents the current status of key aspects of the industry, including world label volumes and demand; market structure; market characteristics by region and by substrate; and current and future growth rates. It also assesses raw material trends and pinpoints M&A activity.

Labeling & Product Decoration Markets Global Review 2013 may be ordered online via the L&L bookshop or from www.awa-bv.com.

THIRTEEN MEMBERS of the GMG Professional Services Team are Fogra certified Digital Print Experts

GMG COMMITS TO DIGITAL PRINT STANDARDS

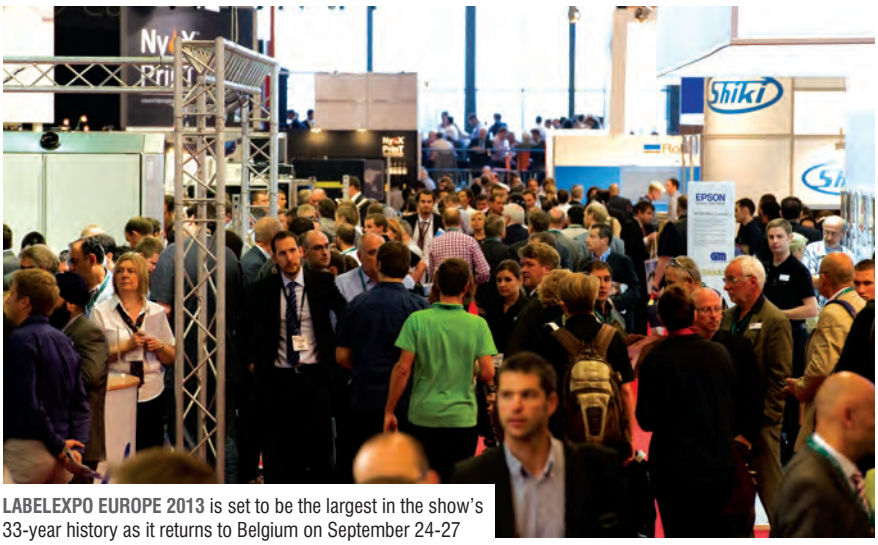
FOGRA provides benchmark for team training

GMG is supporting the move towards digital print standardization by qualifying key team members with DPE (digital print expert) status from graphic technology research association Fogra e.V.

All certified members of GMG's Professional Service team are now authorized to prepare and conduct Process Standard Digital (PSD) audits with their customers.

'GMG has long held the belief that an industrially-orientated, standardized process for digital print production is a crucial component for the continued growth of all areas of digital print production,' said Volker Wechselberger, operations director at GMG.

GMG's ProductionSuite already produces results complying with the Fogra PSD standard. File preparation including file preflight as well as color management and job submission, according to the PSD handbook, is performed with just a few mouse clicks. 'The tight interface between the pre-press application editor and the RIP reduces errors and speeds up the entire process in a standardized way,' said Wechselberger.



LABELEXPO EUROPE 2013 is set to be the largest in the show's 33-year history as it returns to Belgium on September 24-27

LABELEXPO EUROPE SET TO BE LARGEST EVER SHOW'

HP to promote B2 format digital presses

This year's Labelexpo Europe will occupy seven halls at Brussels Expo and is on course to cover over 31,000sq m – the biggest stand space in the show's history.

Among highlights of the show already announced, HP Indigo will showcase its new B2 packaging presses for the first time. Lisa Milburn, managing director of the Labelexpo Global Series, said: 'We're delighted to announce strong stand sales which includes over 90 new exhibitors at this year's exhibition. We continue to experience strong growth year on year which is a firm indicator of how buoyant the label and package printing industry is and how much innovation is going on in the marketplace.'

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

LUESCHER FILES FOR BANKRUPTCY

Imaging specialist Luescher AG Maschinenbau, based in Gretzenbach, Switzerland, has filed for bankrupcy.

In a statement the company said the 'massive downturn in the graphics industry on top of the financial crisis, the continuing disappearance of printing shops combined with an expensive Swiss franc and, over the last nine months, a significant fall in incoming orders, make it impossible to continue trading.'

BUNTING DISCONTINUES FLEXIBLE DIE PRODUCT LINE

Bunting Magnetics has discontinued its flexible die product line. Announcing the change, Bunting Magnetics president Robert J. Bunting said: 'Although Bunting flex dies were well accepted in the worldwide digital converting market, we have decided to focus our attention on the Bunting Xtreme line of magnetic cylinders for the printing and die-cutting industry, and magnetic decorating cylinders for the dry offset printing industry. Most employees in the flexible die division have been reassigned to other positions in the company.'

NEWS

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

AHLSTROM has completed a seven million euro investment at its plant in Stenay, France

AHLSTROM COMPLETES PLANT INVESTMENT

Ahlstrom has completed a seven million euro investment at its plant in Stenay, France, expanding its product portfolio of one-side coated papers for metalized labels and flexible packaging.

The grades produced on Stenay's Paper Machine 3 now span from 50 to 160 g/m^2. These coated papers can be used for metalized beer labels and flexible packaging applications such as biscuits, sweets, coffee bags, pharmacy, pet food bag outer liners, tea envelopes, tobacco pouches, as well as bundle wraps for yoghurt pots.

'By lowering the weight of a paper used for metalized labels, flexible packaging and other graphics and industrial applications, Ahlstrom responds to the need for lighter papers to reduce the weight of packaging and labels and consequently lower their environmental footprint,' said Daniele Borlatto, EVP, Label and Processing.

Stenay's main brands for flexible packaging papers include Gerbier HDS, Gerstar HDS, Gerstar 404, Gerstar 604, Gersan, Gervalux as well as Metalkote for metalized labels.

The Stenay plant is part of Ahlstrom's Label and Processing Business Area, which operates a total of six production sites in France, Germany, Italy and Brazil.

CRITERIA for judging follows standard guidelines set by industry associations

FLINT GROUP ANNOUNCES LABELEXPO COMPETITION

WINNERS to be announced at Brussels show

For the ninth consecutive year, Flint Group will be organizing a print competition with winners to be announced on the Flint Group stand at Labelexpo Europe – Brussels, September 2013.

The criteria for judging follows standard guidelines set by the industry associations FINAT and TLMI and include registration, smoothness of dot/vignette, overall print quality, and degree of difficulty. The judges also review each label for creative use of inks and color, rewarding prints that exhibit 'extraordinary use of ink'.

Flint Group will highlight a special category for web packaging applications, which encourages printers to demonstrate the enriched palette of applications possible using narrow/mid web presses.

'Flint Group has paid tribute to more than 45 companies around the world with this award,' said Deanna Whelan, marketing manager, Flint Group Packaging and Narrow Web. 'Year after year, we are amazed by the excellence, quality, and depth of design. Narrow web printing is truly an art and we're proud to play a part in these masterpiece designs.'

Niklas Olsson, global brand manager, Flint Group Narrow Web, added: 'Our Narrow Web Print Awards prove that narrow web printers continue to excel in the noble art of label printing – finding a way to produce high quality, innovative labels that keep our industry strong and growing. We are extremely proud, as an ink supplier, to be a part of this effort. We urge all printers to use this opportunity to benchmark their own quality standards in this format of "friendly" competition.'

The deadline for entries, which must be printed with Flint Group inks, is August 15, 2013. For more information contact Niklas Olsson in Europe at niklas.olsson@flintgrp.com, or Deanna Whelan in the United States at deanna.whelan@flintgrp.com.

HERMA SUPPORTS REGIONAL CUSTOMERS

Herma has expanded its regional sales organization across Europe. Jens Glatz has been named account manager for customers in Austria, Scandinavia and South America – with the support of local partners in some cases. He will be based at the company headquarters in Filderstadt, Germany. In Girona near Barcelona, Alberto Pons has been appointed commercial agent for Spain.

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Coca-Cola leads custom label revolution

A BREAKTHROUGH PROJECT involving eight HP Indigo label converters across Europe and mixing both conventional and digital print technologies has allowed Coca-Cola to rewrite the rules on promotional marketing. Andy Thomas reports

Coca-Cola has revolutionized the world of promotional marketing with the launch of a project which saw many millions of labels printed with customized data by a network of digital and conventional printers across Europe.

The project saw Coca-Cola marketing departments in more than 30 European countries supplying the 150 most popular local names, together with a range of slogans based around sharing Coca-Cola with friends and family. The names were printed randomly on labels for 0.5L and 375ml bottles of Coca-Cola® regular, Coca-Cola zero® and Coca-Cola light™.

Consumers will be encouraged to seek out bottles with their own or friends' names in-store, sharing and swapping bottles with friends and family. The roll-out was supported by a huge marketing push on social media sites.

'We wanted consumers to share both the physical bottles, and also share the experience on social networks,' says Coca-Cola marketing manager Marit Kroon. 'You can share a virtual Coca-Cola with friends and family. You can play with the virtual bottle then go and find the real bottle. You can trade bottles if you can't find what you're looking for. What can be more personal than a name?'

Close to 30 languages and five different alphabets are involved, ranging from Bulgaria and the Balkan states up to Scandinavia and Iceland and across to Greece and Western Europe apart from Spain and Portugal. The project would end up generating over 10,000 distinct pieces of artwork across Europe.

PROJECT GENESIS

The idea originated in Australia two years ago, where inkjet printed labels carried the country's most popular first names in a highly successful campaign.

When the marketing team suggested extending the project to central Europe, the Australian volumes were used as the estimated requirement. But as more country marketers joined, it became clear that Coca-Cola would not be able to handle the scale of the project through its existing network of printers.

Guided by this brief, Gregory Bentley, from The Coca-Cola Company's packaging innovations group, started looking at the project from a technical angle in January 2012.

'We had to be realistic about the limitations imposed by technology and the supply chain,' says Bentley. 'For example we have seven different bottle sizes across Europe, so we immediately suggested concentrating on immediate consumption packs.'

COMBINATION PRINT

It was decided that the labels would be printed with a combination of conventional and digital print processes. Using inkjet for the variable text was ruled out because the thickness of the ink film changed the handling characteristics of the 38 micron BOPP

PRINTER NETWORK

DIGITAL

Rodata (Romania); Carini (Austria), Rako (Germany); Amberley (UK); Auraprint (Finland); ForLabel (Greece); Eshuis (Netherlands); Robos (Germany).

CONVENTIONAL

Rodata (Romania), Printpack (UK), Constantia (Germany); Constantia Sim'Edit (France); Webtech (Ireland); GPS (Italy); Suominen (Poland); Nordic Label (Finland); Aluprint (Slovakia). Hatzopoulos (Greece).

CAN DO

Along with the customized bottle labels will come customized Coca-Cola cans, for which Ball Corporation bought its Dynamark decorating system to Europe. Up to 24 different pieces of artwork can be delivered on each pallet, though these will be 'sharing' phrases and not individual names.

Gregory Bentley says Coca-Cola will also have the ability to add personalized thermal transfer print onto cans at major events.

'We are using a special thermal transfer ribbon to get the opacity we require,' says Bentley. 'I would like a cut down version of the HP Indigo press which I could put in the back of a lorry to produce personalized labels on location!'

wraparound labels.

'This was not an issue in Australia because the labels are laminated, so the surface characteristics stay the same whatever print process is used,' says Gregory Bentley. 'In Europe our labels are varnished, not laminated. The difference in surface smoothness, COF and ink film weight with inkjet printing would prevent the applicators working to full efficiency.'

After extensive research, Bentley chose the HP Indigo printing process, primarily because it lays down the same weight of ink as flexo or gravure, and for its color consistency. The presses were also thought capable of handling the delicate cavitated BOPP films without damage.

'We knew that big volumes were involved – much bigger than the normal run through a digital press – which meant we had to optimize the workflow onto the HP presses,' says Bentley. 'This meant using the minimum number of clicks, so we decided to only print Coca-Cola Red digitally. A special mix was delivered by HP and we specified a double hit to deliver the required color match. '

Correct color management also required the use of a single source film supplier, in this case ExxonMobil. Two types of 38 micron BOPP were used: an opaque white (also printed with metallic silver ink) and a metalized.

'ExxonMobil films are not necessarily better than the other films on the market, but they are excellent and we needed a standard reference for color measurement and performance consistency,' says Bentley. 'Up to and following this project we use five or six different film suppliers in Europe.'

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The project team cut down the company's 40 conventional label converters in Europe to a more manageable 10 for this project, spread geographically to match the nearest bottling plants.

The labels were first conventionally printed, either CI flexo or gravure, leaving a blank panel and a re-registration mark for overprinting by the HP Indigo presses. This panel had to be coated in-line with a water-based HP compatible primer, which presented its own challenges.

The conventional press widths ranged from 740mm to 1.4m, so the reels needed to be slit down to the 330mm width of the HP Indigo press. This in turn required careful planning to minimize wastage on the unused part of the web.

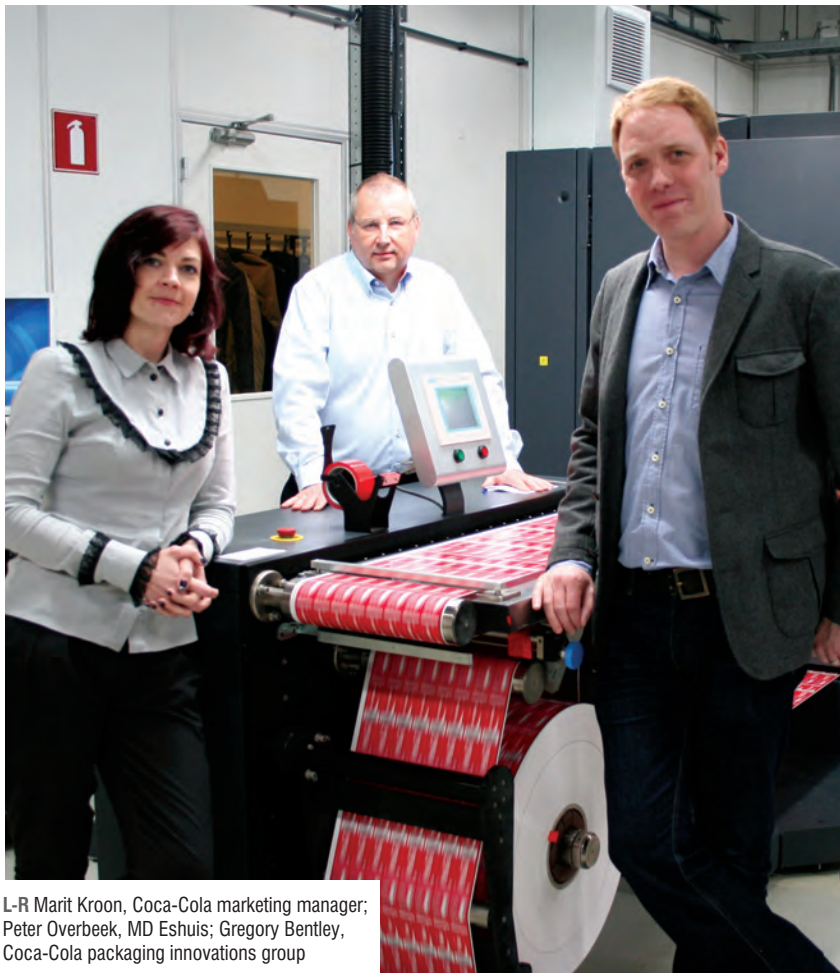
After the panels were overprinted on the digital press, the webs would be returned to the conventional printers for final inspection, varnishing, slitting and delivery to one of the multiple Coca-Cola bottling plants involved in the project.

DIGITAL NETWORK

Given the complexity of these workflows, Peter Overbeek, managing director at leading Dutch digital label converter Eshuis, offered to handle the entire digital printing side of the project. Eshuis already handled personalized shrink sleeve label production on behalf of Heineken, but this was to be on an altogether different scale.

It was a radical departure for Coca-Cola to outsource print management on this scale, but given the unique situation, Overbeek's offer was accepted.

Overbeek quickly realized that only the latest HP Indigo WS6600 press had the required technical



L-R Marit Kroon, Coca-Cola marketing manager; Peter Overbeek, MD Eshuis; Gregory Bentley, Coca-Cola packaging innovations group

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SOCIAL NETWORKING

The Coca-Cola label personalization project comes as the company launches a new ad strategy which emphasizes digitized content on mobile screens, as well as some crowdsourcing, as a way of engaging younger consumers in a myriad of ways in the experience of what it's like to drink a Coke.

capability for the job in terms of color management, web handling and the availability of a re-insertion module.

He identified a network of eight European digital converters with HP Indigo WS6600 presses whom he believed could handle the work and were in the correct geographical location.

These converters were required to dedicate machinery and operators exclusively for three months to the Coca-Cola work, and to have disaster recovery plans in place.

Machine reliability was a big unknown. Although a handful of HP Indigo WS6600 presses had worked 24/7 for a limited time, no-one really knew if they were robust enough for such a punishing print schedule.

Under Peter Overbeek's direction, HP set up full time engineering teams across Europe to support the eight digital printers with spare parts and round the clock maintenance and callout. The extensive remote monitoring network used for HP's commercial inkjet presses was adapted to the industrial market for the first time.

The participating printers sent their HP Indigo press crews to HP's technical demo center in Barcelona where a special training program, supervised by Overbeek, was developed to cover standardized working practices and to troubleshoot potential problems.

Workshops were held with the whole print network at Eshuis, where Overbeek ran through quality control and workflow procedures. 'If there were quality issues we had to be able to see quickly where and how the mistake had been made, since accuracy was absolutely key,' recalls Overbeek.

Eshuis developed a web tool which allowed constant monitoring of this complex workflow.

Eshuis sent only RIPped files to each converter, so there was no chance of introducing errors. 'The files were kept here and we decided who would print what label and in what volume,' says Overbeek. 'We organized and scheduled all the logistics and worked closely with the bottling partners to make sure that the bottles and labels were in the right place at the right time, and to make sure the printers knew what had to be delivered, where and when. There was a single route of information.'

'Peter had to ensure there was always sufficient digital capacity and we could shift volume from one plant to the other as necessary,' says Gregory Bentley.

The final result was a triumph of technology, organization and sheer determination. Multiple millions of labels were printed, applied and sent to warehouses in preparation for the launch of the campaign in May. 'Eshuis has delivered the project perfectly. We could not have done that on our own,' says Gregory Bentley.

LESSONS LEARNED

'This campaign has changed the way we at Coca-Cola are looking at packaging,' says Marit Kroon, Coca-Cola marketing manager. 'It opens up new opportunities to use the strengths of conventional printing and digital printing together. We had done some customized labels in Germany, but that was on mixed sheet fed paper labels. For reel fed labels digital printing was the only way.

'In addition, the company's regional system has modified itself and become more flexible through this experience. Eighteen months ago the system could not have allowed this project to happen. In particular we have had to drive standardization across Europe. All our European printers now have the HP color swatch which defines "Coca-Cola Red".'

Gregory Bentley agrees that the project has changed the culture of all the companies involved: 'Everybody had to let go some of the control they normally exercised over their own operations, and this involved challenges for all parties. We invited the 10 conventional printers to a joint meeting asking them to be completely open about sharing best practices and experiences. Likewise the digital converters had to learn to accept orders from Peter.

'At Coca-Cola we had to accept that full control of the digital printing part of the operation would be handled by Eshuis and not by us. My role was to back Peter fully in the decisions he made.'

Coca-Cola also had to let go its standard lead times. 'We added three to four months to the supply chain to allow us to focus on the digital printing bottleneck,' recalls Bentley. 'The conventional printing started in December and the digital in January and the job was completed in April.'

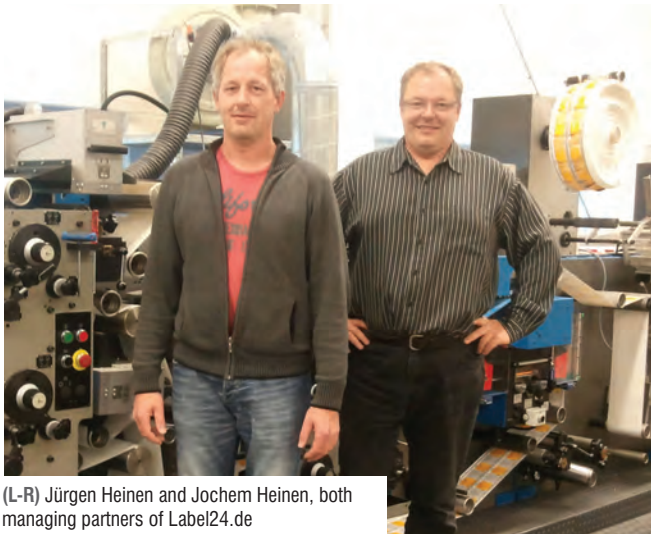
François Martin, worldwide marketing manager at HP's international graphic solutions business, sums up the corporation's experience: 'Although each of the elements of this astonishing project had been achieved separately, they had never all been achieved together, at the same time, and over such an extended period of time.

'We learned that digital is not just a short run process. We achieved 86 percent uptime on the presses, including all stops for maintenance, calibration and changing consumables, which comes close to matching the output efficiency of a conventional press.

'We started with something we thought was impossible, but if you break it down you can build bridges and find people willing to work together.'

It seems clear that this Coca-Cola customization project has changed completely the landscape of promotional product labeling. As HP Indigo's Christian Menegon correctly says, 'There are no longer any excuses for brand managers not being creative on the most ambitious scale. Through this project we have proven HP Indigo has the execution capabilities they need.'

INSTALLATIONS



(L-R) Jürgen Heinen and Jochem Heinen, both managing partners of Label24.de

(L-R) Khalid Shah of Raqam International, Shyam Babu of Nilpeter ME and Matthew Burton of AB Graphic

LABEL24.DE, GERMANY

ESKO CDI SPARK 2420

Esko has installed the first CDI Spark 2420 flexo plate imager in Europe at Germany's Label24.de, a division of Druckerei Heinen GmbH in Bad Münstereifel.

The unit was installed in mid-February 2013 by Esko, its distribution partner Dantex Deutschland GmbH and Hartmann Polymer, replacing a film-based production system.

Dantex worked with Hartmann Polymer on the installation at Label24.de, as well as staff training.

Label24.de is using 635 x 762mm Torelief DWF 80 NM polymer plates, also supplied by Dantex Deutschland. The plates are cut to size prior to imaging based on the required format.

Jochem Heinen, managing partner of Label24.de, said: 'We tested both the CDI Spark and an inkjet film imager. In our opinion, Esko is the only manufacturer that could meet our challenging requirements for digital imaging.

'This is an investment in the future. We needed to make a change since it is certainly not clear how much longer film imaging will be a viable technology in the manufacture of labels and tags.'

Heinen added: 'With the CDI, we have been able to boost our label quality significantly. Our imaging operation is also now much safer, and we can deliver a standardized image quality that delights our customers.

'Possible errors can been seen during preview before incurring the expense of plate imaging. And we no longer have issues with deterioration of screens with gradation.'

Label24.de was also attracted by the modular structure of the Esko software suite. 'We were able to invest in exactly the elements that we needed today,' said Heinen. 'If we need more capability in the future, upgrades are easy. For example, we might consider adding HD Flexo or optimizing our prepress workflow with automation tools from the Esko suite as we gain more experience with the system.'

RAQAM INTERNATIONAL, DUBAI

AB GRAPHIC OMEGA HSR SLITTER REWINDER

Dubai-based Raqam International has purchased an Omega HSR slitter rewinder from AB Graphic, sold through the finishing and converting specialist's Middle East distributor, Nilpeter ME.

The HSR is a high-speed slitter inspection rewinder that benefits from larger unwind/rewind diameters and runs at speeds up to 300mt/min. The sale of the 430mm-wide model to Raqam International also includes a 330mm-wide Vectra ECTR turret rewinder.

Shyam Babu, managing director of Nilpeter ME, said: 'We are delighted with this first sale in the Middle East. AB Graphic International offers a wide range of finishing equipment that is a perfect combination with ours. We wish Raqam International every success.'

AB Graphic's Matthew Burton said: 'We are delighted with this kick-start sale under our new cooperation with Nilpeter ME. The HSR on order will be equipped with our Fleyevision 100 percent print face inspection system. This comprises an intelligent camera that replaces traditional missing label detection while also picking up matrix errors and major registration shifts.

'The Vectra 330 is equipped with core loader, bowl feeder and core and tail gluing and is suitable for running 76mm and 25mm mandrels.'

Kalid Shah of Raqam International added: 'I am looking forward to the new installation. The new slitter rewinder with camera system will give me greater quality control and the Vectra turret rewinder will allow me to convert non-stop at the end of press, effectively by-passing the finishing department on some jobs.'

ABBEY LABELS, UK

XEIKON 3300

The UK's Abbey Labels has made its first move into digital production with the installation of a Xeikon 3300 press.

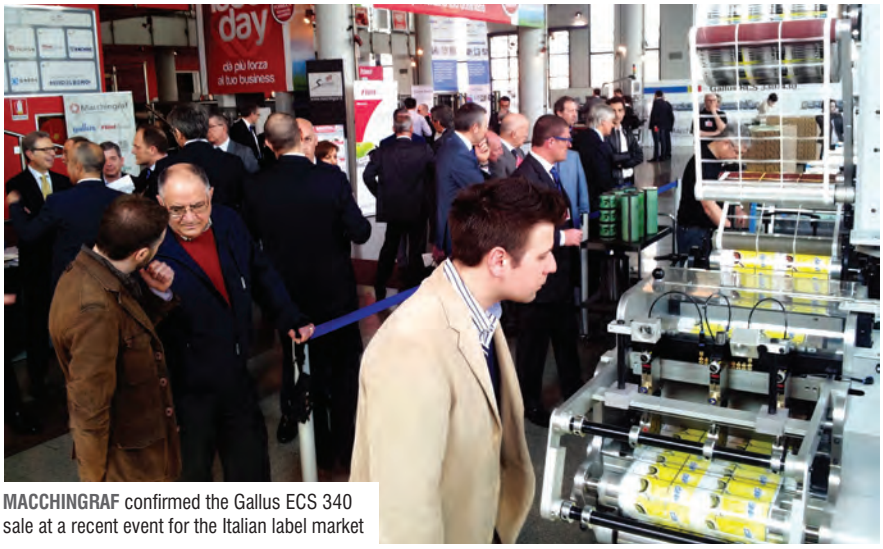
The company has previously operated UV flexo presses, and has spent a lengthy time researching its move into digital. Having narrowed down the equipment choice, visits were made to both Labelexpo and Drupa 2012 to finalize the decision.

Tom Allum, chairman of Abbey Labels, said: 'We had been examining the potential for digital and the equipment available for some two or three years. Question marks about speed of digital devices, print quality, and the space required to set up a digital operation were constantly on our minds.

'The latest range of equipment from Xeikon did seem to solve our speed queries, and the dramatic improvements in print quality in recent years ticked all of the boxes in that area of concern.'

The addition of a digital press has

TOM ALLUM, chairman of Abbey Labels



MACCHINGRAF confirmed the Gallus ECS 340 sale at a recent event for the Italian label market

enabled the company to create new business opportunities and carry out new work. 'I would say that 90 percent of the work is new work – some from existing customers, but most of it from new customers,' said Allum.

'The new work is being mainly generated from our new updated website. The ability to produce short runs or multiple sorts of color labels without the associated cost of plates has allowed the company to compete for many orders that were just out of reach with flexo pricing.'

Local food producers are one such market that Abbey Labels said has benefitted from digital printing. Abbey Labels is British Retail Consortium-registered for food production work, and Allum said: 'This has been a tremendous help to us in generating business from the food sector. Local food producers have been especially keen to use our services: they don't need millions of labels in most cases – more often they might need a few hundred labels of several different sorts. This makes them ideal customers for digital label printing.'

The Xeikon 3300 is supported by an AB Graphic Digicon 2 converting line. 'It is a great addition to the Xeikon. The new finishing line has allowed us to provide a wide range of embellishment options such as lamination, foiling, varnishes, and spot colors to the labels. Due to the special die-cutting system on the Digicon we can use our existing stock of over 5,000 cutters which we have stored for our flexo work. This has made us very flexible for both new and existing customers.'

TIPOLITOGRAGFIA ZARDINI, ITALY

GALLUS ECS 340

Macchingraf, the Gallus sales and service partner in Italy, has sold a Gallus ECS 340 to Tipolitogragfia Zardini following its purchase of a TCS 250 in November last year.

The Verona-based company prints and converts labels and carton packaging, as well as business cards, folders, brochures and other printed products. Macchingraf said the latest order signals its trust in both Gallus and its Italian partner, which was signed up at Drupa 2012.

The sale was confirmed at a recent three-day event staged by Macchingraf to promote Gallus technology to the Italian label printing market.

Over the three days, around 150 representatives of 80 companies in Italy attended the event, which included live demonstrations of a Gallus ECS 340 flexo printing machine with seven printing units, foiling and die-cutting, and a Heidelberg Linoprint L digital press.

In addition Gallus Screeny plates, Cerm software and supporting products of all other business partners of Macchingraf were on display.

Customers had the chance to meet and network with all the partners who exhibited during the event.

Macchingraf chief executive officer Alberto Mazzoleni said: 'We are really satisfied with the event's results, and the number of attendees confirmed the interest in this business. Macchingraf's commitment to new technologies is a step forward to complete our offer to the Italian market.'

CENTRAL DE EMPAQUES SA, MEXICO

OMET VARYFLEX 2

Central de Empaques SA (Cemsa), part of Grupo Industrial EEC and founded in Guatemala City in 1981, has installed an Omet VaryFlex 2 line at Cemspack, its new paper cup production facility near Mexico City.

The 670mm-wide Omet press, which has five UV-flexo printing units, a single rotary die-cutting station and a delivery conveyor, has been specified with a Martin Automatic MBX butt splicer to allow continuous running.

According to Carlos Alfredo Rivera, who provides technical assistance for both the Guatemala and Mexico plants: 'The Omet was chosen after a series of production tests in which it produced the best combination of quality and speed for the type of work we produce at Cemspack.' The decision to fit Martin Automatic ancillary equipment was made following good experience with similar technology from the American manufacturer on an earlier Omet press.

Rivera continued: 'The Omet/Martin combination fulfills our requirements for reduced waste levels and minimized maintenance costs. Running cartons at high speed requires a well-built machine because the working environment is very tough. We customarily operate the line at 200m/min, without any loss of quality, and our carton waste has fallen by five percent since installation.'

The specification includes a corona treater, contactless web cleaner, a decurler, a de-nesting delivery, and a waste extraction system.

The Martin Automatic MBX butt splicer was supplied as an OEM fitment. As specified, it has a maximum splicing

INSTALLATIONS

(L-R) Edgar Sohm; Alon Bar-Shany, VP and general manager, HP Indigo Division; Thomas Sohm

speed of 213m/min, so is comfortable with Cemspack's working speed of 200m/min (although top speed of the MBX is 243m/min). The maximum web width of this particular MBX model is 670mm (minimum 335mm), and it can handle 1,828mm diameter rolls that weigh up to 1,135kg. The system uses an inertia-compensated festoon, a patented splice unit that gives a diagonal butt splice, and a two-position cantilevered unwind that uses Martin's own lift and load system. Controls, which are integrated, include those for automatic roll unwinding, splicing, and – importantly – web tension control.

Speaking for Martin Automatic, Ed Pittman said: 'We are delighted to have supplied another splicer to Cemsa, and know that it is already making a contribution to waste reduction and improved productivity. There are quite a number of Martin/Omet combinations running carton board and they are all valued as a cost-effective alternative to traditional sheet-fed offset with offline converting. The installation at the company's new plant in Mexico City is another good showcase for inline flexo carton production.'

ETIKETTEN CARINI, ITALY
HP INDIGO WS6600

Leading Austrian converter Etiketten Carini has installed an HP Indigo WS6600 digital press, its third WS6000-series press supplied by HP preferred partner Chromos AG, of Dielsdorf, Switzerland.

'Even though we doubled our digital capacity with the WS6000 digital presses, we needed more,' said Edgar Sohm, managing director, Etiketten Carini. 'We've seen digital print runs getting longer, and there are more jobs, too; the WS6600 press will enable us to meet these new demands.'

Carini's digital presses account for 24 percent of jobs, with the remainder generated by the company's eight conventional presses. Two near-line finishing machines from HP finishing partner AB Graphic International handle the output from the three HP Indigo presses.

'We print to a high-quality on a wide variety of substrates,' Edgar Sohm continued. 'Coated and uncoated papers, films, transparent stock, mono-films and more recently metallic and silver films are among the stocks we regularly print. In a supermarket, all the jobs – conventional and digital – are on the shelf next to each other and it's important that the customer notices no difference between them. With our HP Indigo presses, we are able to achieve this.'

Sohm notes the difficulty in defining an 'average' digital run length. 'We are seeing increasing variations in what would have been long runs in the past. It is possible to have a job of 50,000 meters that comprises 200 variations to accommodate different scents, flavors, languages and so on.' Jobs that the company used to print as a long run once a year are now shorter runs produced several times a year. Handling more jobs – but not necessarily more labels – can create challenges for a company.

'The expense for data-handling, clearance, customer care and such is the same whether the job is worth 300 euros or 5000 euros,' said Sohm. 'The administrative costs and the speed are crucial because the customer wants the delivery very fast.'

Carini has a highly automated workflow. The HP SmartStream Labels and Packaging Print Server Powered by Esko plays an important role linking prepress with the presses and integrating with the overall management information system.

AVVO LABELS, SOUTH AFRICA
ROTOCONTROL RSC SLITTER REWINDER

South Africa's Avvo Labels has placed an order for a Rotocontrol RSC slitter rewinder.

The order was led by Rotocon, the local agent for Rotocontrol and marks the 25th Rotocontrol finishing machine sold in South Africa. Vishnu Lalbeharie, owner of Avvo Labels, said that both the technology and local after-sales service were the compelling features that led to the order.

In operation since 1985 out of Durban, Avvo Labels specializes in up to eight color self-adhesive labels, barcode labeling, multi-colored garment labels, computer labels, blank labels, wrap-around and shrink sleeve labels, and are suppliers of thermal transfer printers and ribbons.

The RSC features a cartridge slitting system, vertical inspection zone, automatic tension control and job save.

PRESSON LABELS, NEW ZEALAND
NUOVA GIDUE COMBAT M1

New Zealand self-adhesive label specialist Presson Labels has installed a Gidue Combat M1 press. The 8-color UV, 370mm-wide press features chill drums, a servo-motor in-feed, pre-register and the SnowBall waste matrix rewinder.

It is able to run a range of different substrates including self-adhesive labels, sleeves and wrap-around labels.

Kevin Aisher, Presson Labels director, said: 'Our market is extremely demanding, therefore we needed a quick change press to be flexible on delivery time as well as quality.'

K-1 PACKAGING GROUP
EFI RADIUS MIS

K-1 Packaging Group is to replace two MIS/ERP systems with EFI Radius software for its packaging and label operations in City of Industry, California.

Many K-1 customers purchase some combination of folding cartons, labels and flexible packaging and the mix of products creates a number of repetitive, manual processes that come with running multiple, disparate systems. K-1 Packaging president Mike said: 'EFI Radius is designed specifically for packaging workflows and will make our entire management process cleaner and more streamlined. It's going to allow us to capitalize on the huge opportunity we have to become a tighter, more knowledgeable organization.'

Some decisions are easier than you think

Label producers around the world rely on the productivity, quality and reliability of HP Indigo presses day after day. No wonder 7 out of 10 digital presses bought for label production are **HP Indigo**. Choosing digital has never been simpler.

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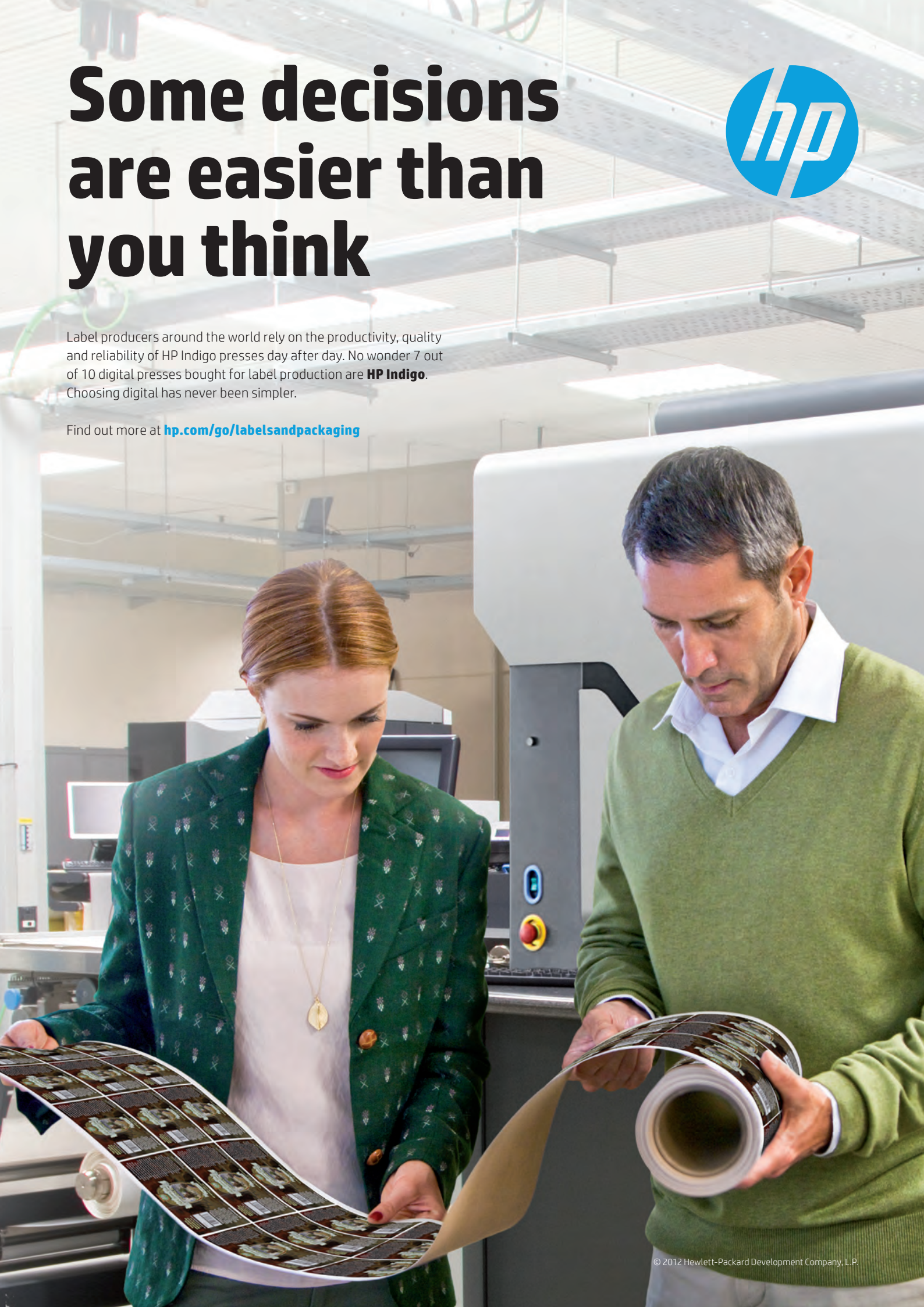

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ENVIROMENT NEWS

INDUSTRY TAKES STEPS TO HANDLE RELEASE LINER WASTE

UPM RAFLATAC, AVERY DENNISON AND HERMA have made strides to help the label industry deal with release liner waste, reports David Pittman

There are encouraging signs that the label industry is taking the question of liner recycling more seriously, with UPM Raflatac recently signing a cooperation agreement with the French subsidiary of Aliplast for release liner recovery.

Aliplast is an Italian company specializing in the collection and treatment of recovered plastic films. This partnership expands Aliplast's recycling services to polypropylene (PP) and paper-based release liners through UPM Raflatac's RafCycle waste management concept.

Aliplast now collects, sorts and distributes all types of release liner to different recycling processes, avoiding landfill or incineration.

Large collection bags are installed by Aliplast for use by self-adhesive label end users like drinks bottlers and companies from the food, cosmetics and pharmaceutical industries. Aliplast collects the bags regularly and directs them to its two sorting centers near Strasbourg and Lyon. After sorting, the waste is transported to its final place of re-use.

PP, including UPM Raflatac's ProLiner PP30, is re-used as a raw material in the manufacture of wood-plastic composite products at the UPM ProFi factory in Bruchsal, Germany. Other wrapping films are recycled into various packaging products by Aliplast Italy.

Aliplast also collects paper-based release liners for fiber re-use. The recovered paper liners are re-pulped and de-siliconized, and the pulp is used for papermaking at UPM's paper mills.

The RafCycle concept therefore makes use of labelstock by-products from all stages of the labelstock lifecycle: process waste from coating and slitting operations, matrix and start-up waste from printing and die-cutting, and liner waste from label dispensing at the end of the cycle.

Also in Europe, self-adhesive label specialist Herma has recycled some 185 tonnes of surplus release liner from its material production process through a Europe-wide recycling initiative, helping it offset the carbon emissions from its 74-strong fleet of cars in 2012.

Silicone-coated release liner is encountered wherever labels are applied, and in large quantities in the consumer goods, food and logistics industries. It is conventionally discarded as general refuse.

Thanks to the cooperation of European release liner recycling organization Cycle4Green (C4G) and Austrian paper manufacturer Lenzing Papier, waste raw materials are recovered and used to produce new label paper and release liner, both of which are used by Herma.

A certificate from C4G shows that Herma committed around 185 tonnes of surplus liner from its self-adhesive material production to the silicon-coated release liner recycling initiative in 2012.

Compared with recycling, manufacturing the same quantity from virgin fiber would have increased carbon dioxide emissions by 428 tonnes.

Dr Thomas Baumgärtner, managing director of Herma, and head of its self-adhesive materials division, said: 'Last year, Herma's entire fleet generated about 410 tonnes of carbon dioxide, based on the vehicles' imputed mileage and realistic average consumption figures.

'We can therefore claim a carbon-neutral footprint for the 74 Herma cars. Given that we produce only a fairly small quantity of waste liner – because it is a constituent of our self-adhesive materials – achieving carbon neutrality is an impressive achievement.

'It illustrates that even relatively small-scale recycling can make a big impact.'

In 2010, Herma became the first self-adhesive material specialist in the industry to participate in the C4G initiative, which was established specifically for this type of recycling. The quantity of release liner collected by C4G throughout Europe in 2012 reduced carbon dioxide emissions by round 7,000 tonnes.

Across the EU, the annual consumption of silicone-coated release liner stands at about 360,000 tonnes. The largest portion is attributable to companies that apply labels.

'The potential carbon dioxide savings are therefore enormous,' adds Baumgärtner.

'That's why we take every opportunity to encourage our self-adhesive material customers, namely the label printers, to point their own customers towards the C4G recycling initiative. It makes good sense for both the climate and the participating companies, which would otherwise have to bear the cost of disposing of the release liner.'

As L&L went to press, Avery Dennison launched a matrix recycling tool on its website to help its converter customers divert and process scrap. The tool is located at: label.averydennison.com/en/home/solutions/sustainability.html.

'Many of our customers are actively improving their sustainability footprint,' said Rosalyn Bandy, sustainability manager, Avery Dennison Materials Group. 'We have created this matrix recycling tool as a response to those looking to reduce their impact by sending less waste to landfills.'

The interactive map features a directory that indicates locations of non-landfill operations or energy-from-waste facilities. Most of these operations process discarded pressure-sensitive scrap materials generated by label presses into clean, renewable energy sources. One such method is fuel pellets, which can be a direct substitute for coal but with a lower carbon and overall emissions footprint.

The interactive tool is based on Avery Dennison's own information and was developed in collaboration with key converters, recyclers and key channel partners. Recycling may not be available in all areas.

AVERY Dennison FSC-certfied paper materials

AVERY DENNISON ADDS FSC-CERTIFIED COLLECTION

Avery Dennison Label and Packaging Materials has introduced a new collection of paper label materials certified to Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) standards.

The new products' prices are comparable with those of non-certified alternatives to drive the use of FSC-certified materials throughout the value chain, Avery Dennison said.

Avery Dennison is one of more than 3,500 US companies certified with an FSC-approved chain of custody (CoC). FSC's CoC certification process traces the path of products from forests through the supply chain, verifying that FSC-certified material is identified or separated from non-certified material throughout the supply chain.

The FSC-certified product collection contains 22 specifications featuring three paper facestocks – Fasson 54# Semi-Gloss FSC, Fasson Lightweight Dairy FSC and Fasson Estate Label No. 8 FSC.

AVERY DENNISON LAUNCHES MATRIX RECYCLING TOOL

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ENVIROMENT NEWS IN BRIEF

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

JASON GROSSMAN, Paragon Label president, picks up the FTA Environmental Excellence Award

FTA PRAISES INDUSTRY FOR ENVIRONMENTAL WORK

The Flexographic Technical Association (FTA) has recognized two printers for their work to make environmental improvements.

California's Paragon Label claimed the top prize in the 13th annual FTA Environmental Excellence Award program, while Global Packaging, of Pennsylvania, earned an honorable mention.

Paragon Label, a 20-year-old FTA member, specializes in printing fine quality pressure-sensitive labels, and operates a number of programs that save energy, reduce waste, cut water use and minimize solvent air emissions.

The facility has energy-saving compressors, more efficient lighting, low flow water fixtures, in-house waste water treatment, digital platemaking equipment, drought tolerant landscaping and a variety of recycling areas. It has also created the "Green Team", and brought in assistance to help them find ways to further reduce the company's environmental footprint.

The 2013 award is the second time Paragon has claimed the top FTA's Environmental Excellence Award.

Competition judge Pat Nienhaus, of the Lauterback Group, said: 'Paragon stood out because of its very positive influence to the community and surrounding area via tours and outreach.'

Fellow judge Allen Marquardt of industry giant Kimberly Clark said: 'Paragon Label went over and above the normal scope of a printer.'

'This is a great honor,' said Jason Grossman, Paragon Label president. 'For more than a decade we have been very environmentally active. Our goal has been to influence our employees, customers, visitors and the community to get involved and committed to their own sustainable practices. It's good for the planet and it's good for business.'

Global Packaging specializes in printed roll stock and converted bags for the consumer product, food, bakery, confectionary and pet food markets. It earned an honorable mention thanks to pollution prevention, waste reduction and lean manufacturing initiatives it has undertaken in recent years. In 2009, Global Packaging was the first flexographic facility certified by the Sustainable Green Printing Partnership. It is also the second time it has received an award in the FTA Environmental Excellence competition, having been awarded an honorable mention in 2005.

Watch the case study: www.primeralabel.com/Taylor_Label

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When Lloyd at Taylor Label in Toronto, Canada, was looking for a way to get into digital label production, he turned to Primera’s CX1200 Color Label Press and FX1200 Digital Finishing System.

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Small, big, or Bigger

HOW SIZE AFFECTS YOUR SUCCESS in the label business. By Bob Cronin, The Open Approach

The majors appear to be on a feeding frenzy. Over the last few months, we've seen notable purchases by the 'big guys,' which have granted them even more expansive footprints. Brady, Fort Dearborn, and Constantia Flexible, for example, all made newsworthy additions, and many others are following suit. As expected, these acquisitions have drawn much anxiety, analysis, critique –and perhaps envy – by small and mid-sized players who are wary of being muscled out.

But one company's growth does not necessarily result in another company's demise. It is natural to fear the Goliaths' greater girth and purchasing prowess. But a larger company is not necessarily more competitive. All due respect to the majors. There will never be a label enterprise that can capture 100 percent market share. And some find themselves quickly divesting even larger portions of their business than they acquire. Wal-Mart didn't eradicate opportunities for boutique players. And they didn't destroy the ability to capture solid margins.

That said, however, the majors' transactions do give them traction. They do affect the industry – in good ways and bad – and they do affect what is out there for your clients as competitive options. But it's first important to understand the dynamics behind what they are doing. Stay on top of their initiatives, but keep your concerns in check. For one, their moves can help you understand what big marketing departments (which you don't have) think are the biggest customer and industry drivers (which you need to know).

The above-noted acquisitions were made not simply to get bigger, but also to become more strategic. Brady Corporation's purchase of PDC brings the company into healthcare labeling and services – one of the fastest growing markets. Fort Dearborn buying Fetter's label business helps it build out further into an area where it is already present and profitable. And Constantia Flexible's Spear Label buy provides entrée into the thriving label beverage segment. In my humble opinion, all three of these were exceptional moves by three very wise players.

Today's market makers are inspired by gaining new capabilities, assets, and books of business that will help them flourish. Large entities' success hinges on large ongoing initiatives. To see real

"It is natural to fear the Goliaths' greater girth and purchasing prowess. But a larger company is not necessarily more competitive"

I bought a Rotatek machine four years ago.
I have been amazed by its high quality offset, its advanced mechanical construction and its ink stability - from the beginning of the print job right through to the end.
There's no doubt that Rotatek aims to be the best in the market by constantly innovating and by putting the printer in pole position.

M. JEAN-JACQUES FOUCHÉ
Deputy Director of Imprimerie GIP
Libourne Cedex - France

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percentage growth, they cannot rely simply on steady organic development. So they continue to strategically target and fold in their smaller counterparts.

So where does that leave middle-market and small label entrepreneurs? Can you really compete against the big pockets and big positions? Is there hope to stay independent, or are you all destined to be acquired? Stop thinking of size as an impediment to your success, and start thinking of it as a strength you can use to your advantage. These days, every characteristic of every company needs to be deployed as an asset. Use what you have to cultivate new opportunities.

Let's consider what's happening in the market. Labels is still a fragmented business and the need to make acquisitions for growth, position, and geography has never been stronger. Small or large, most transactions in the label space are a reflection of a number of different drivers:

- Customers are looking to reduce costs.
- Customers want to buy more products and services from fewer suppliers.
- Customers have zero tolerance for product quality, integrity, or delivery issues.
- Customers need their suppliers to handle more (due to loss of internal resources, layoffs, cost-containment strategies, etc.).
- Customers want partners that are innovative and can swiftly respond to change.
- Customers want lower pricing (or greater value).
- Customers want more control and more measurable ROI.

At first glance, these dynamics might seem to tip the scales in the majors' favor. But, as you think through this list, note that all of these drivers are being led by the customer. Regardless of economic pressures, regardless of employment pressures, regardless of ROI pressures, at the end of the day, the 'customer' is still king. Their influence – and their decision – is the ultimate driver for the business. Your ability to land their work is not a factor of your size, but of how well you respond to current and upcoming drivers.

For small and mid-sized companies, then, staying ahead of the game is all about staying close to the customer. Printed labels is still very much a relationship business, and product is still very important. Those companies that respond quickly and correctly to customers' needs will fare best – regardless of their size. To this effect, small, nimble businesses can craft an advantage by owning a niche, having greater flexibility, or simply providing superior service.

Many label buyers today still prefer to buy their product from suppliers with whom they feel the most valued. Your ability to make clients feel important is a very real and tangible opportunity. It is certainly an asset you should be leveraging when attempting to go after any new business.

Mid-sized and small companies have other unique advantages. These could be in-depth vertical specialization; proprietary solutions; novel online tools, web ordering, or apps; or simply more meaningful physical presence. While majors may focus on landing the big sale, your company can appreciate the smaller orders. You may be able to provide programs, such as digital asset management, database warehousing, or other functions, as complimentary services to lock down customers' business.

Mid-sized companies might also have the budget for internal R&D resources and/or additional staff who serve as area experts. Because of fewer organizational layers, customers can access these resources easier than they can with the majors. Additionally, since gains often come by 'growing alongside the customer,' mid-sized players can be more in sync with clients. But be careful. You may be able to function with fewer investments than the big guys make, but you still need to stay at least one step ahead of customers' issues to thrive. Customers need to see you as proactive – instead of reactive – even if they don't expect you to be able to offer the massive product/service lineup of the majors.

Small players, too, need to embrace the distinct attributes and advantages that their size provides. I've seen many different solutions here. This could be owner involvement, specially designed press forms, equipment configurations, special web portals, and more. Many label customers simply want partners who are dedicated to the industry, and delivering the best service possible in the continually evolving marketplace.

Small to mid-sized players also have a significant advantage over the majors when it comes to switching gears to pursue better market opportunities. These enterprises can change their look quickly by merging with another entity or becoming part of a bigger system. As long as you have created a strong business, the choice for any significant new direction is up to you. If you want to stay independent, you can. Just stay on top of what is happening around you and be willing to make the changes and adjustments to keep you on pace.

So is it better to be small, big, or bigger? Not one is the guaranteed answer. Your size is not the determining factor for whether you will survive and thrive; it's an asset you can leverage to your advantage.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bob Cronin is managing partner of The Open Approach, 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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CAROL HOUGHTON rounds up the latest news in smart and intelligent labeling

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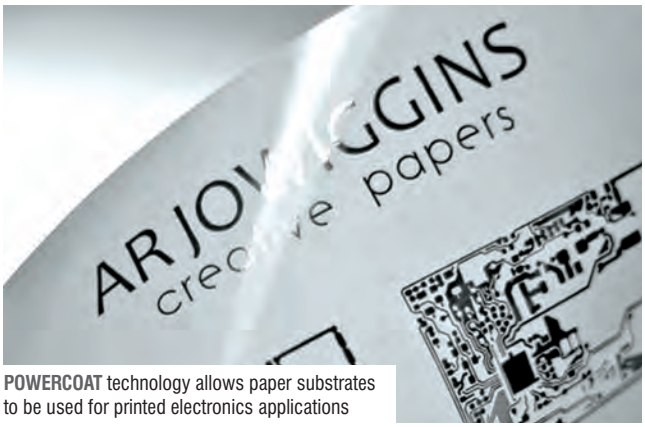

POWERCOAT technology allows paper substrates to be used for printed electronics applications

SMART FIGHT AGAINST COUNTERFEITS

Increased smartphone usage has led AlpVision to enable consumer-level product verification

AlpVision has updated its product authentication app for the iPhone, which allows users to detect the company's Cryptoglyph 'invisible' mark printed on a label or pack using regular visible ink or varnish and standard printing processes. Enhanced algorithms now allow for better detection of labels on curved surfaces, such as vial labels and labels on wine and spirit bottles.

The invisible Cryptoglyph image contains encrypted information which originally required an off-the-shelf scanner, along with an authentication application installed on a computer, to decrypt it. Since 2012, consumers have been able to scan the safety feature using an iPhone and receive positive authentication within three seconds.

The iPhone app was originally introduced for AlpVision's Fingerprint technology, which tracks and authenticates mass moulded products. It is currently available for the iPhone 4/4S/5 and other mobile operating platforms on request.

AlpVision recently demonstrated the app at IP Protect Expo 2013 in London. Dr Fred Jordan, AlpVision co-founder and CEO, commented: 'Conference participants were surprised that a tool so deceptively simple could be used to perform product authentications and perform well.

'Brand owners are searching for ways to multiply the number of authentications throughout the supply chain. Smartphones are therefore becoming the tool of choice for product authentication and counterfeit protection.'

PAPER, THE NEW PLASTIC

Arjowiggins recognized for its PowerCoat formulation for printed electronics

Arjowiggins Creative Papers has received an IDTechEx award for its PowerCoat technology, which allows paper substrates to be used for printed electronics applications.

The judges commented: 'Powercoat from Arjowiggins Creative Papers was selected by the judges because it addresses the challenges of using paper as a substrate – turning it into a smooth flexible surface while still being 100 percent paper and recyclable. This now makes paper a viable substrate for many printed electronics devices where it may not have been suitable before.'

Powercoat is a cellulosic paper formulation and coating process which enables passive and interactive circuitry to be integrated with existing printed products. This facilitates electronic functions – from embedded RFID tags to condition-sensitive sell-by dates on fresh produce – to be incorporated in graphics.

It is said to offer excellent printability and ink adhesion properties whilst the surface reduces the consumption of expensive silver inks and supports high-resolution fine patterning (down to five μm) of any solution-based electronic layer.

Powercoat is also said to eliminate other issues encountered when printing with conductive inks on conventional papers, such as yellowing/color fading and alterations to the physical characteristics of a substrate during sintering – the process which fuses conductive inks to the substrate.

Due to its thermal stability, it can withstand the sintering cycle at 200 deg. C for five minutes, as well as photonic sintering. This allows for higher printing speeds, therefore decreasing production costs whilst improving productivity and efficiency.

It is suitable for roll-to-roll processing and has already been used in disposable labeling and packaging, amongst many other applications. According to Arjowiggins, the applications are limited 'only by the imagination and existing interactive technologies.'

The company added: 'PowerCoat proves paper is just as reliable [as plastic] for printed electronic applications. It outperforms even the best plastics and is recyclable and sustainable. This novel paper has excellent smoothness [as low as 10 nanometers], and higher thermal stability than most PET/PEN plastics'.

METAIO OPENS NEW R&D OFFICE

Hardware supplier invests in future of Augmented Reality

Metaio is to open a new office in Dallas, Texas, as part of a company-wide initiative to invest resources into research and development of Augmented Reality (AR) core technologies.

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NEW PRODUCTS

1

2

1 LP130E LASER MARKING SYSTEM
PRIMERA TECHNOLOGY

Primera Technology has launched its new LP130e laser marking system, an optimized version of the company's previous DL500e durable label printer, but now offering 25 percent faster print speeds.

It is designed to enable fast in-house production of labels and tags for use in a wide range of severe and harsh-duty applications, including the US Department of Defense's IUID program labels, UDI labels for medical devices and healthcare equipment, automobile VIN and under-hood part number plates, warning and instruction labels, aerospace and solar panel labels, serial tags for outdoor equipment, automobile parts, building materials and others.

Text, graphics and linear or 2D barcodes can be marked onto special laser-ablateable substrates that can be up to 130mm (5.1in) wide.

It uses a high-powered laser for marking instead of inkjet or thermal transfer inks, which generally have less durability than laser-marked materials, Primera said. The base for the marking system is a specially-designed laser diode along with high-precision, matched optics.

Labels and tags produced with this technology are typically used to replace metal plates or labels produced by resin thermal transfer that are laminated in a secondary process but are still not durable enough for many applications.

As such, finished labels and tags are extremely robust and do not require lamination to withstand extended exposure to UV light, chemicals, liquids and temperatures of up to 300 deg C.

2 QCANYWHERE
GLOBAL VISION

Global Vision has launched the QCanywhere suite of cloud-based quality control apps, aimed at addressing the need for company-wide access to quality control systems to help protect brand integrity.

QCanywhere can be accessed from any device and allows brand owners and stakeholders across multiple industries to inspect documents regardless of geographic location. Reports can be generated and shared by e-mail to collaborate on quality and dramatically reduce approval cycles and time-to-market. Global Vision says the cost of each inspection is just one USD.

'The introduction of QCanywhere has revolutionized the way companies can inspect documents, artwork and print,' said Reuben Malz, president of Global Vision. 'QCanywhere enables deeper collaboration between different internal teams as well as third party suppliers. By sharing QCanywhere reports through e-mail, you can bring key decision makers into the process, which translates into a more secure and faster way to bring your product to market. Since it is cloud-based, it is truly mobile, allowing users to review reports anywhere using a laptop, tablet or smart phone.'

Applications (QCapps) in the suite include QCtext to compare documents; QCartwork to compare artwork files; QCspell to spell check PDFs; QCbraille to translate Braille; QCprint to inspect printed materials; and QCbarcode to both inspect and grade barcodes.

Global Vision is offering Labels & Labeling readers a free seven-day trial by visiting QCanywhere.com and using the promo code QC7day.

BGM ELITE DIGIFLEX
BAR GRAPHIC MACHINERY

Bar Graphic Machinery is launching two new slitter rewinders in order to provide improved productivity in digital converting and flexible packaging finishing.

The 160m/min BGM Elite Digiflex full servo flexo die-cut to re-register slitter rewinder has been developed to convert and finish pre-printed digital, inkjet, or flexo media. This highly flexible system can print, apply additional coating, semi rotary or full rotary die cut, slit and rewind all in register in one or multiple passes.

Features on the BGM Elite Digiflex include fast changeover for maximum productivity and flexibility, automatic print positioning (APP) system for highly accurate plate registration and automatic die registration (ADR) to reduce set-up waste for a more cost-efficient re-register print and die-cutting production process. A digital servo drive also provides constant communication between all the servo axes for high performance and functionality including advanced diagnostic features.

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NEW PRODUCTS

3 LP4 DIGITAL PRINTER
IMPRESSION TECHNOLOGY EUROPE

Impression Technology Europe has launched the compact and economically priced Compress LP4 digital press for short run label production. The LP4 will print at nine m/min onto standard uncoated blank stock, either pre-cut or in continuous rolls.

While the machine is aimed at the small-order sector of the market, it can also be used for the more traditional bulk order as well, says ITE.

The LP4 uses LED dry toner print engine technology in a roll to roll unit with a 300mm (OD) unwind and rewind capacity and a 210mm wide 4-color straight print path. It boasts an optical sensor for pre-cut and stripped labels and a maximum print resolution of 600 x 1200 dpi. The Micro Fine dry toners are highly durable, scratch and water resistant, says ITE.

The LP4 has a compact footprint, 1600mm long x 540mm high x 660mm deep. The flat print path allows heavy-duty materials to be handled from up to 320gsm. The unit includes an integrated page cutter and user-replaceable quick change consumables.

The LP4 can be combined with the equally compact Eclipse LF3 digital label cutter and finisher.

PELLICUT THIN LINER DIE CUTTER
ETI CONVERTING

ETI Converting has launched a high-speed rotary die-cutting machine for liners of 12, 18 and 23 microns.

Called the Pellicut, this equipment can die-cut PS material at a speed of 750ft/min (225m/min) on a 26in(660mm) web width. It uses a standard flexible magnetic die.

ETI Converting says a patent-pending W anti-deflection system avoids pressure cutting variation and reduces risks of die marks on the liner. An equalizer system corrects any thickness inconsistency on the magnetic plates.

This system will be available as an option on the Cohesio, but will also be sold separately with unwind and rewind to die-cut any thin liner PS material. The unit can be retrofitted on any printing machine with web widths from 13-26in (330-660mm).

'We have sold the first unit to a big US converter to die-cut one of the largest label orders in North America,' said Maxime Bayzelon, vice-president of ETI Converting.

RUBBER REPLACEMENT FOR SLEEVE END RINGS
HARPER CORPORATION OF AMERICA

Harper Corporation of America has introduced synthetic rubber to seal and protect the numerous layers within its anilox sleeves.

The basic function of the synthetic rubber feature is to seal the expansion foam layer to prevent it from deteriorating. The synthetic rubber replaces the aluminium end rings that are currently found on most anilox sleeves.

To ensure maximum performance, the Harper team investigated various industrial fields, including microelectronics, aerospace, consumer electronics and aviation, when choosing the right synthetic rubber. The grade of this material is capable of withstanding the severe stresses, temperatures and chemicals that are involved in the flexographic printing process.

The synthetic rubber has allowed the cladding to cover the full thickness and length of the sleeve, eliminating the counter bore and increasing the number of reconditions that a sleeve can undergo in its lifecycle.

The inner liner is also extended and installation has been streamlined, as the mandrel air holes are covered more easily than when using a traditional end ring sleeve. The ability to seal the mandrel also allows the synthetic rubber to keep ink from seeping in. This new feature is currently only available on OEM sleeve designs that do not encompass drilled and tapped holes.

OPAQUE WHITE INK
RUCO

Ink manufacturer Ruco has launched a new opaque white product intended for use in combination printing processes. The 900UV1437 opaque white that Ruco has added to its portfolio comes in a low-viscosity and silicone-free formulation.

It is highly reactive to permit give curing and adhesion properties, with 'outstanding' flow characteristics. It is suited for overprinting with UV flexographic, offset and letterpress inks.

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Digital press buyer's guide

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN SUCH A WIDE CHOICE of color digital press technologies available to label converters. Andy Thomas presents a buyer's guide

Today there is an astonishingly wide choice of digital presses designed to produce short to medium runs of labels in full color. Potential buyers need to understand the difference between the technologies on offer and to match these with the intended end use application.

The longest established and most widely installed digital label press technologies are the toner-based systems manufactured by HP Indigo (liquid toner) and Xeikon (dry toner), and these have matured into robust industrial-scale solutions each with their own strengths and pricing models.

But in recent years, single-pass full color inkjet has mounted an increasingly strong challenge, and appeared in a variety of configurations from stand-alone to modular systems fully integrated into conventional presses.

In addition to these 'industrial' scale presses designed to fit directly into narrow web workflows, are what we might call the 'benchtop' units, usually with integrated finishing, which are particularly suitable for bureau-type in-house print service operations. Wide format digital printers are more typically used for proofing/prototyping applications and will be considered in a future edition of L&L.

So what are the key considerations to take account of when deciding upon a digital press?

1. IMAGING TECHNOLOGY

The most obvious is the imaging technology itself, which brings unique advantages and limitations. This might rule out particular applications from the start. So, for example, dry toner systems require heat to bond toner to the substrate, so are generally not suitable for heat-sensitive materials. On the other hand dry toner systems do not require the substrate to have any special surface treatment and are extremely resilient without a protective varnish or over-laminate.

UV inkjet likewise does not require any special treatment of the substrate – although such treatment is often recommended for color management and consistency – but delivers a heavier film weight, leaving a slightly 'raised' effect similar to UV screen. This effect may or may not be desired for a particular application (but does suggest the process can attack applications currently dominated by direct screen printing).

2. RESOLUTION

Imaging resolution has become a source of confusion for some potential digital press buyers. I would highly recommend the article by Mike Fairley in the last edition of L&L looking at the difference between 'binary' and 'grayscale' models. In this buyers guide we give 'native' applications, as opposed to the much higher 'apparent' resolutions often quoted for grayscale imaging systems.

In some inkjet systems resolution can also be affected by print speed – higher resolutions are achievable but at lower speeds. So buyers should always check what speeds a quoted resolution refers to. Similarly, the highest quoted print speed may only be achievable at a reduced resolution.

There are a number of variables which affect actual print quality. These include the surface tension and absorbency characteristics of the substrate, as well as the screening algorithms used in the digital front end.

3. INKJET HEADS

Although there are a large number of Inkjet press manufacturers, there are only a handful of printhead manufacturers. Presses which use the same printheads will share the same print resolution and speed, so how do you choose between them?

In fact there are a range of variables which impact the actual performance of the press, even if it uses a similar imaging unit. These include accuracy of web handling, software integration, the use of additional ink 'pinning' systems, and the interaction of ink with curing system. Clearly these characteristics require extensive print testing and cannot be ascertained from a specification sheet.

4. INK SYSTEM

The characteristics of different ink/toner systems have a major impact on the choice of digital press. In inkjet, for example, there are water-based as well as UV ink chemistries, each with their own qualities of adhesion, migration, light fastness and rub resistance – dictating, for example, whether a varnish or over-lamination is required for a particular application.

In addition, the availability of extended ink sets may be an important consideration. For most standard label applications simple CMYK will be sufficient. But if clear films or metallic substrates are going to be used, a sufficiently opaque white will certainly be required. If Pantone matching is particularly important, 6- or 7-color ink systems should be considered. In 5-color digital presses the fifth station will usually contain the white ink, but could also contain a special color.

This type of work could also be ideal for a hybrid digital/conventional press such as the Nilpeter Caslon, where UV flexo is used to lay down the white and special colors in-line with a CMYK digital module.

5. VARIABLE PRINT CAPABILITY

All the manufacturers contacted for this survey said they supplied variable print software either bundled with the press, or as an option. Generally this will handle variable codes, serial coding and variable text and picture elements from frame to frame.

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A-Z BUYERS GUIDE: PRESS DESCRIPTIONS

ALLEN DATAGRAPH SYSTEMS (ADSI)

ADSI manufacturers two models. The iTech Centra HS is a complete digital label production system which allows labels to be printed then cut to any shape without dies, along with lamination, strip, slit and re-wind to finished rolls. It is targeted to run lengths up to 3,300 feet / 1,000 meters.
The iTech Axxis brings these capabilities to a desktop-sized digital label production system, retaining the wide range of substrate flexibility achieved by the Centra HS.

BEIJING FOUNDER

The EagleJet 5-color UV inkjet digital label press is available in two models, the 1400 and 2800, both of which come bundled with variable data layout software. Imaging resolution is 360dpi on a print width up to 420mm up to a speed of 25m/min. The press is 4-color plus white.

COLORDYNE

The Colordyne CDT-1600 C – available in roll or fan fold – is a high speed label and tag printer with throughput speeds up to 12 inches/second. Colordyne printers are powered by Memjet technologies. Capable of printing two inches to eight and a half inches wide, the CDT- 1600 C meets industrial label demands and is designed for in-house label production and private labeling.

DOMINO

The Domino N600i UV inkjet press prints up to 75m/min (246ft/min) at 600dpi print resolution onto a range of standard paper and plastic label stocks. The grayscale printhead uses a six pl drop size to achieve fine detail.

The N600i uses piezo drop on demand ink jet technology with durable UV curable inks. Automated functions include the Domino CleanCap automated print head cleaning and capping station; the Domino Actiflow, continuous ink circulation system; and Domino Stitchlink, automated print head alignment system.

BEIJING Founder's EagleJet 5-color UV inkjet digital label press

DURST

The Durst Tau 330 is a digital UV inkjet label press designed for short and medium runs covering web widths from 16.5 cm (six and a half in) to a maximum 33 cm (13 in), with printing speeds of 48 m (157 ft.) per minute. Tau 330 is available for print widths up to 200 mm and 330 mm. Its standard color configuration CMYK can be completed with full opaque white and optional orange and violet color, thus offering up to 90 percent coverage of the Pantone color gamut.

EFI

The EFI Jetrion inkjet press range now consist of three basic models. The 4900M and 4900M-330 are both modular stand-alone UV inkjet presses, differing only in web width – 8.3in and 13in respectively. Both run at up to 70 ft/min driven by a Fiery XF front end. The 4900ML additionally includes in-line laser die cutting and matrix stripping – an upgrade option on the 'M' modular presses.

EPSON

The 6-color Epson SurePress L-4033 inkjet digital label press uses Epson's proprietary micro-piezo inkjet head technology. To deliver a wide color gamut for accurate reproduction of spot colors, Epson's SurePress AQ ink-set includes green and orange. SurePress AQ Ink offers excellent adhesion to standard label substrates without the need for pre-treatments or coatings. The ink is water based. The press prints at five m/min at resolutions up to 720 x 1440dpi on a maximum web width of 330mm.

The Domino N600i UV inkjet press

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EPSON SurePress L-4033 inkjet digital label press

HEIDELBERG/LINOPRINT

The Linoprint L UV inkjet digital printing system is designed for short to medium run work. It is driven by Heidelberg's Prinect Prepress Manager Label software which incorporates variable data management capabilities. Print speed is up to 48m/min at 600 x 600 dpi across a 420mm print width. Features include automatic print head cleaning.

HP INDIGO

The HP Indigo WS4600 and WS6600 digital presses are both 7-color liquid toner-based digital presses, the first printing up to 15m/min in full color and the latter up to 30 m/min. An enhanced productivity mode dispenses with black and increases the speed to 12m/min and 40m/min respectively by printing out of CMY. The WS6600 has a wider print width – 317mm compared to 308mm for the WS4600 and can print thicker substrates up to 450 microns. Both machines can handle substrates down to 12 microns, including unsupported film.

INDUSTRIAL INKJET

ColourPrint 'I' series are new high speed color digital modules. Basic models run at 80m/min. They are designed to fit to existing conventional narrow web presses to provide 'Hybrid' capability. A recent project saw a CMYK ColourPrint unit placed on a Focus print/inspection/rewind unit.

ISYS

Two toner-based models are available from Isys. The Edge 850 is designed as a low-cost solution for in-house printing on demand, for example water bottle labels or stickers for a special event. Users can print a custom design on die-cut substrates and labels are durable, lightfast, water resistant and scratch proof.

The Apex 1290 is a digital production press for short-mid run label production. Quick changeover technology is coupled with workflow management software which allows operations to stage jobs in minutes. The Apex 1290 comes equipped with a 305mm (12 in) O.D. rewinder that is adjustable to match the continuous media output while winding labels, making the rolls ready for the finisher or applicator.

IWATSU/LINTEC

The EM-250W supports variable data printing in both black and full color. A second pass sensor allows additional printing to be performed on pre-printed/pre-die cut labels. The color management profile system allows optimum color reproduction when selecting paper or film. The EM-250W is capable of handling short to medium run production at 25-50 m/min.

OKI

The OKI pro511DW digital web press is a compact toner-based web printer that produces full color digital labels. It includes custom label management software from Hybrid as well as a Harlequin RIP supplied on an industry-standard Proactive server. The pro511DW includes a heavy duty rewinder which incorporates a pre-assembled slitter.

MATAN

The SprinG3 is an industrial digital thermal transfer printer, delivering short runs of durable full color graphics at a high speed. Ideal for labels, decals, membranes, license plates, traffic and other signs. Up to five years outdoor durability and printing up to 6-colors in single pass.

MONOTECH INKJET SYSTEMS

The Jetsci-Y series is a modular digital print system for variable data inkjet printing at high speed using drop-on-demand Kyocera inkjet printhead technology. The printing system is available with a minimum print width of 108 mm and multiple print modules can be stitched for wider print widths. The Jetsci-YAQ system can be integrated on any existing web press, sheetfed press and/or any finishing equipment giving the maximum resolution of up to 600 x 600 dpi and top speed of 150 m/min.

NILPETER/FFEI

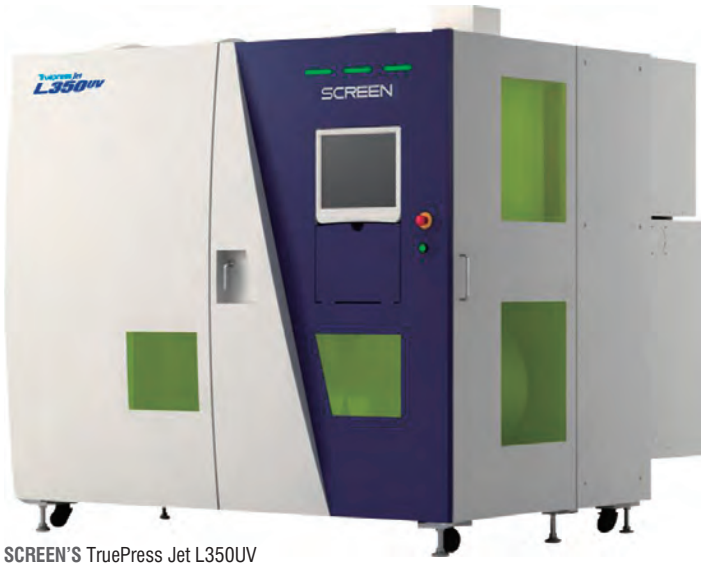
The Caslon print system can be configured as a stand-alone digital print engine, or incorporated as a module within a given Nilpeter FA- flexo press configuration.

Features include an inkjet-based, digital white/spot color unit that prints UV-curable ink on a wide range of substrates. A dedicated workflow system specialized for labels and packaging, offers seamless integration of all job parameters to any printing process – Caslon digital UV inkjet as well as conventional printing processes.

PRIMERA

Primera's CX1200 Digital Color Label Press is designed to produce short- to medium-runs of full-color, high-quality labels using a fast, high-resolution color laser technology. It is matched with Primera's FX1200 Digital Finishing System is an all-in-one device that laminates, die-cuts, removes waste matrix, slits and rewinds in a single, integrated and automated process.

STORK Prints' DSI stand-alone digital printing unit



SCREEN'S TruePress Jet L350UV

RAPID

The RapidX2 is a free standing commercial printer which takes pre-die cut or raw roll stock, prints at up to 1600 dpi and feeds to rewind or in-line finishing equipment. It can be mated with Rapid's modular D2 semi rotary die cutter, ROP hot foil over-printer and RS slitter-rewind.

D2 comes standard with re-register, semi-rotary actuation, lamination, coreless matrix waste removal and production speeds to mate with most digital printing technologies. Rapid's F2 semi-rotary spot flexo printer/ varnisher further enhances the line.

SCREEN

The Truepress Jet L350UV is a single-pass UV inkjet printing system which can accommodate a printing width of up to 322 mm and media widths from 100 mm to 350 mm at a printing speed up to 50m per minute featuring grayscale printheads with a minimum droplet size of three picoliters and resolution of 600 dpi. It also incorporates Screen's color management and screening technology. This functionality enables extremely smooth gradations.

The system is designed to use Screen' s proprietary Truepress ink, providing coverage of a wider gamut than previous process color inks.

Cleaning of the head area can be executed automatically after processing is finished. This enables an immediate start to printing work the next time the system is started up.

SHANGHAI TAIYO MACHINE COMPANY

The Taiyo IJP inkjet press uses the Kodak Stream imaging unit and prints in CMYK with waterbase inks. Imaging resolution is 600 x 600dpi at speeds up to 152m/min. The press uses Kodak's CS410 Stream operating system and workflow.

STORK PRINTS

The Stork Prints DSI is modular in design offering configurations from stand-alone digital printing to complete lines with in-line semi-rotary converting. There is also modularity in print positions, allowing up to 10, and in printing width, ranging from 135mm to 530mm. Stork Prints develops its own brand inks in-house, delivering high resistance to light and impressive scratch-proofing.

SWIFTCOLOR

The Swiftcolor SCL4000D desktop printer is designed for high speed and print quality on applications such as short run shipping case marks, address stickers, baggage tags, barcode, cosmetic, health care product, prescription medicine package, gourmet foods and bottle labels.

VIPCOLOR

The VIPCoor P485 is designed to generate in-house custom labels for SKUs, bar coding, localization and targeted marketing promotions. Targeted at small to medium enterprises.

WEIFANG DONGHANG

The Donghang UV 4-color digital label press uses piezoelectric drop on demand inkjet technology. Its core RIP software, developed by the company, supports a wide range of file formats. Also features a self-developed cyclic ink supply system made up of ink-pump and print control systems.

XANTE

The Xante Excelagraphix L850 Digital Narrow Web Press is a complete digital inkjet print system using Memjet printhead technology.

It also features an easy-to-use interface with seven in color LCD touchscreen display, an aerosol extraction system and automatic feed/cut.

The System is driven by the iQueue Multi-User Workflow that makes it easy to manage complex digital files, match critical spot colors, select linescreens, dot shapes, and screening angles for CMYK and spot color elements.

Users can also apply imposition, track ink usage, estimate job cost and run variable data/bar codes at full speed.

XEIKON

Xeikon 3000 Series architecture is based upon a full rotary press with a variable repeat length. That delivers productivity which does not depend on the number of colors nor the dimensions of the labels. The QA-I dry toner, specifically developed for labels and packaging, allows the use of standard substrates, provides high light fastness and is compliant with FDA standards for indirect and direct dry food applications.

The press comes in a number of models: Xeikon 3030 is an entry level digital printing press; Xeikon 3030Plus offers higher productivity; Xeikon 3300 is the flagship press and claimed the fastest digital press printing CMYK and one-pass opaque white.

The Xeikon 3050 is an entry level press for printers that require a wider web width, while the Xeikon 3500 combines width and speed to make this press the most productive and widest of Xeikon's digital labels press series.

THE TAIYO IJP inkjet press

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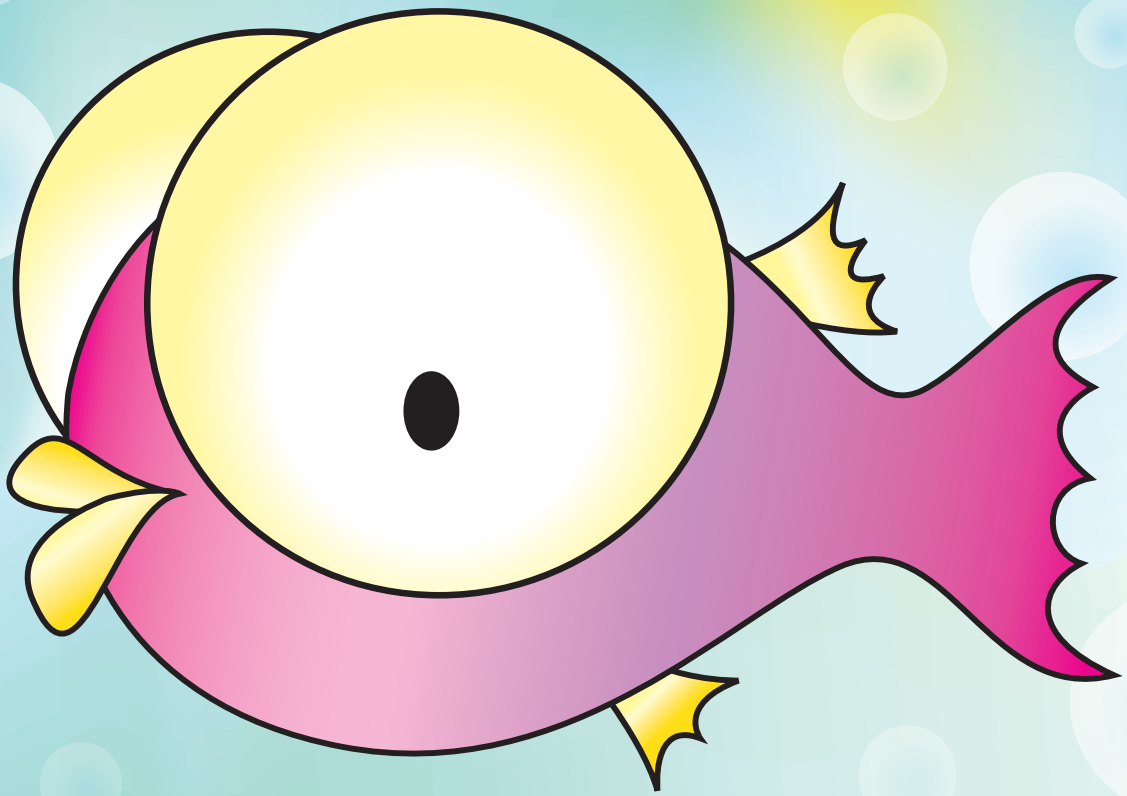

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A-Z PRESS SPECIFICATIONS

THE FOLLOWING IS A GUIDE TO THE SPECIFICATIONS OF DIGITAL PRESSES featured in this article. After publication, this list will move on-line, since press specifications are constantly changing and new manufacturers entering the field. At Labelexpo Europe in September many of these presses will be in action, and an Inkjet Workshop will allow comparisons to be made between leading models.

Name of company:
Allen Datagraph Systems, Inc

Name/model of digital press iTech AXXIS Digital Label Printer
Print head technology used: Epson Piezo
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: NA
Other ink options: NA

Image quality/resolution: 720 x 720 dpi

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 4 in to 8.5 in (100 mm to 216 mm)
Print width: Up to maximum
Press running speed: 4 ft/min (1.1m/min)

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: Not supplied
Substrate thickness, maximum: Not supplied
Types of printable substrates: Any aqueous inkjet top coated.
Any substrates that are unsuitable:

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Off line - iTech AXXIS Digital Label Finisher.

Name of company:
Beijing Founder Electronics Co. Ltd.

Name/model of digital press EagleJet 1400 and 2800
Print head technology used: Drop on demand
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: None

Image quality/resolution: 360dpi

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 210 - 450mm
Print width: 70 - 420mm
Press running speed: 25m/min

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: 55 gsm
Substrate thickness, maximum: 135 gsm
Types of printable substrates: Paper, Sticker, Metallic Foil, PET, PVC, PE, PP etc. All standard label stocks.
Any substrates that are unsuitable: No polypropylenes

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Both options available
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Die-cutting
Press options: Corona Web Inspectrion

Name of company:
Allen Datagraph Systems, Inc

Name/model of digital press iTech Centra HS Digital Label Printer
Print head technology used: LED Toner
Digital print process: Toner

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: NA
Other ink options: NA

Image quality/resolution: 600 x 1200 dpi

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 8.5 in to 12.9 in (216 mm to 327 mm)
Print width: Up to maximum
Press running speed: 4 ft/min (1.1m/min)

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: Not supplied
Substrate thickness, maximum: Not supplied
Types of printable substrates: Almost all standard label stocks
Any substrates that are unsuitable: No polypropylene's

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Off line - iTech Centra HS Digital Label Finisher

Name of company:
Colordyne

Name/model of digital press CDT-1600 C
Print head technology used: Memjet
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: N/A
Other ink options: No

Image quality/resolution: 1600 x 800 dpi

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 9in (228mm)
Print width: 8.5in (216mm)
Press running speed: 60ft/min (18m/min)

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: 0.003 in (76 microns)
Substrate thickness, maximum: 0.012 in (304 microns)
Types of printable substrates: All standard label stocks
Any substrates that are unsuitable: None known, but quality dependent

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Off-line

There are label printers that are just as good as these. They just happen to cost ten times more.

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Name of company:
Domino Printing Sciences

Name/model of digital press N600i color digital label press
Print head technology used: Kyocera KJ4 printheads
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: No (future)
Other ink options: No

Image quality/resolution: 600dpi native

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 200 - 340mm
Print width: 333mm
Press running speed: Up to 75m/min (246ft/min)

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: 100 micron
Substrate thickness, maximum: 200 micron
Types of printable substrates: Standard paper, PE and PP
Any substrates that are unsuitable: None known

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Yes, both
Finisher: Grafisk Maskinfabrik and AB Graphic International
Press options: Corona, AVT vision web inspection, full color variable data printing

Name of company:
EFI

Name/model of digital press Jetrion 4900ML
Print head technology used: Drop on demand piezo inkjet
Digital print process: UV inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options:

Image quality/resolution: 360dpi native

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 13 in (330mm)
Print width: 8.3 in (210mm)
Press running speed: 80 fpm (25m/min) (120 fpm in draft mode)

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: 0.003 in (76 microns)
Substrate thickness, maximum: 0.012 in (304 microns)
Types of substrates that can be printed: Paper, films, foil, specialty media. All standard label stocks.
Any substrates that are unsuitable: None

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: In-line
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Die-cutting, slitting, backscoring and more
Press options: EFI Digital StoreFront web-to-print, EFI Radius ERP systems

Name of company:
Durst Phototechnik AG

Name/model of digital press Tau 330 UV Inkjet Label Press
Print head technology used: Xaar 1001
Digital print process: High Speed Single Pass UV Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:** + OV
Availability of white: Yes, full opaque white
Other ink options: Metallic silver inks

Image quality/resolution: 720 x 360 dpi

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 350 mm / 13.7 in
Print width: 330 mm / 13 in
Press running speed: 48 linear meters / 157,4 feet per minute

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: 100 micron
Substrate thickness, maximum: 300 micron
Types of substrates that can be printed: Coated & uncoated paper, white or transparent film PP, PE, PVC, POPP, Aluminum foil

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Off-line
Press options: Corona Treatment, Web Cleaner, Nikka Web Inspection System, Insetter for pre-diecut or pre-printed material

Name of company:
EFI

Name/model of digital press Jetrion 4900M and 4900M-330
Print head technology used: Drop on demand piezo inkjet
Digital print process: UV inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: No

Image quality/resolution: 360dpi native

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 4900M: 9 in, 4900M-330: 13.7 in
Print width: 4900M: 8.3 in, 400M-330: 13 in
Press running speed: 80 fpm (25m/min) (120 fpm in draft mode)

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: 0.003 in (76 microns)
Substrate thickness, maximum: 0.012in (304 microns)
Types of substrates that can be printed: Paper, films, foil, specialty media. All standard label stocks.

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Off-line (in-line finishing w/upgrade to ML model)
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Die-cutting, slitting, backscoring and more
Press options: EFI Digital StoreFront web-to-print, EFI Radius ERP systems

New – Durst Tau 330 UV Inkjet Label Press

The most versatile high speed fully digital label printing system, a recipe for success.

The Durst Tau 330 is a Digital UV Inkjet Label Press designed for short and medium run narrow web applications covering web widths up to a max. of 33 cm (13 in.), running at a printing speed of up to 48 m (157 ft.) per minute. With this, the system offers very high size flexibility as well as highest productivity. Tau 330 is particularly suitable for applications such as:

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Name of company:
Epson

Name/model of digital press SurePress L-4033A, SurePress L-4033AW
Print head technology used: Epson Micro Piezo Print Heads
Digital print process: Aqueous Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:** +2
Availability of white: Yes (on AW version)
Other ink options:

Image quality/resolution: Up to 720 x 1440 dpi

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 80 - 330mm
Print width: Up to 315mm
Press running speed: Up to 5 m/min

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: 100 micron
Substrate thickness, maximum: 320 micron
Types of substrates that can be printed: All standard label stocks
Any substrates that are unsuitable:

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Off-line finishing

Name of company:
Hewlett Packard Indigo

Name/model of digital press WS 4600
Print head technology used: Laser
Digital print process: Electrophotography liquid ink

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:** Seven ink channels.
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: Security inks (UV visible)

Image quality/resolution: 812dpi, addressability 2438, screen ruling 144, 160, 175, 180, 230

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 200 to 330 mm
Print width: 308 mm
Press running speed: Up to 15 m/min in full color, up to 21 m/min in Enhance Productivity Mode full color

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: 12 microns
Substrate thickness, maximum: 350 microns
Types of substrates that can be printed: Any type of substrate

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Both available.
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Partnership with ABGraphics, offering all label finishing types

Name of company:
Heidelberg CSAT GmbH

Name/model of digital press Linoprint L
Print head technology used: Kyocera
Digital print process: UV Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: No
Other ink options: No

Image quality/resolution: 600 x 600 dpi

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 430mm
Print width: 420mm
Press running speed: up to 48m/min

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: depends on tensile strength
Substrate thickness, maximum: depends to the bending strength, maximum 0,6mm
Types of substrates that can be printed: Self Adhesive Labels, Laminates, Aluminum foils, Flexible films based on PVC, PET, PE, corona-pre-treated PP, non-porous paper...
Any substrates that are unsuitable: Untreated PP, LLD-PE, Silicone surface-treated material, PTFE-films

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Both options available
Press options: Corona, Pinning, web inspection...

Name of company:
Hewlett Packard Indigo

Name/model of digital press WS 6600
Print head technology used: Laser
Digital print process: Electrophotography liquid ink

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:** Seven ink channels.
Availability of white: Yes

Image quality/resolution: 812dpi, addressability 2438, screen ruling 144, 175, 180

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 220 to 330 mm
Print width: 317 mm
Press running speed: Up to 30 m/min in full color, up to 40 m/min in Enhance Productivity Mode full color

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: 12 microns
Substrate thickness, maximum: 350 microns
Types of substrates that can be printed: Any type of substrate
Any substrates that are unsuitable: None

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Both available.
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Partnership with ABGraphics, offering all label finishing types

THINK BEFORE YOU INK

You want to feel confident about choosing your digital label press.

Selecting the right digital press is a difficult process – which one will be right for your business both now and in the future? You need to be able to rely on the experience, know-how and excellence of Xeikon equipment.

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XEIKON

Name of company:
Industrial Inkjet Ltd

Name/model of digital press ColorPrint 'i' series
Print head technology used: Konica Minolta 'i' series
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:** + 2 and Spot
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: Varnish, IR, UV Flourescent

Image quality/resolution: 360x720 or 720x720

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: Upto 702mm as standard, Larger is possible
Print width: 702mm as standard, Larger is possible
Press running speed: 80m/min, 160 possible (Extra cost)

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: N/A. Unit fits to flexo press
Substrate thickness, maximum: N/A. Unit fits to flexo press
Types of printable substrates: Paper, Plastics, Metallic
Any substrates that are unsuitable: No, but pre-treatment may be needed

FINISHING

In-line or off-line finishing: Unit fits to existing press to use in-line
Press options: Unit fits to existing press

Name of company:
iSys Label

Name/model of digital press Apex 1290
Print head technology used: Single Pass 4- Color LED
Digital print process: Dry Toner

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: None
Other ink options: None

Image quality/resolution: 1200x600dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: 3in - 12.9in (76mm - 327mm)
Print width: 3in - 12.6in (76mm - 320mm)
Press running speed: Up to 9.14 m/min

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: 0.006 in (152 microns)
Substrate thickness, maximum: 0.013 in (350 microns)
Types of printable substrates: Papers (Matte, Semigloss, High Gloss, tag stock, textured), PET's, vinyls, foils, teslins
Any substrates that are unsuitable: Thermal transfer materials, PE, Shrink Wrap

FINISHING

In-line or off-line finishing: Off-line
If in-line, what finishing is available?: None
Press options: None

Name of company:
iSys Label

Name/model of digital press Edge 850
Print head technology used: Single Pass 4- Color LED
Digital print process: Dry Toner Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: None
Other ink options: None

Image quality/resolution: 1200x600dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: 6.0in- 8.5in wide (152mm - 216mm)
Print width: 6.0in- 8.24in wide (152mm - 209mm)
Press running speed: Up to 9.14 m/min

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: 0.006 in (152 microns)
Substrate thickness, maximum: 0.010 in (254 microns)
Types of substrates that can be printed: Papers (Matte, Semigloss, High Gloss, tag stock, textured), PET's, vinyls, foils, teslins
Any substrates that are unsuitable: Thermal transfer materials, PE, Shrink Wrap

FINISHING

In-line or off-line finishing: Off-line

Name of company:
Iwatsu Electric Co. LTD

Name/model of digital press Label Meister EM-250W
Print head technology used: On demand piezoelectric head
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: No

Image quality/resolution: 600x1200 dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: 250mm
Print width: 220mm
Press running speed: 25 m/min (600 1200 dpi)
50 m/min (600 dpi)

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum:
Substrate thickness, maximum: 0.6mm
Types of printable substrates: Self-adhesive paper/film and non self-adhesive Paper/film
Any substrates that are unsuitable: Testing is available

FINISHING

In-line or off-line finishing: Both
Press options: ERP Systems

Name of company:
Matan

Name/model of digital press SprinG3
Print head technology used: Thermal Transfer
Digital print process: Thermal Transfer

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:** + 2
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: Spots and metallics

Image quality/resolution: Up to 1600 x 400dpi

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 320mm (12.6in)
Print width: 307mm (12.08in)
Press running speed: Up to 270m/hour (885ft/hour) depending on media, resolution, energy level

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum:
Substrate thickness, maximum:
Types of printable substrates: Tnermal transfer materials

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Roll to roll

Name of company:
Nilpeter/FFEI

Name/model of digital press Caslon
Print head technology used: Xaar 1001
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options:

Image quality/resolution: 360 x 360dpi

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: 340mm (13.5in) / 420mm
Print width: 330mm (13in) / 410mm
Press running speed: 25-50m/min resolution dependent

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: 25 microns
Substrate thickness, maximum: 250 microns
Types of printable substrates: All standard label substrates

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Available both as standalone (FFEI) and in-line with flexo press
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Flexo press finishing line
Press options: Corona, web cleaner

Name of company:
Monotech

Name/model of digital press Jetsci-Y series
Print head technology used: Kyocera
Digital print process: Aqueous Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: Spot colors, invisible ink

Image quality/resolution: 600 x 600dpi native

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: Up to 432mm
Print width:
Press running speed: Resolution dependent

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum:
Substrate thickness, maximum:
Types of printable substrates: Paper - coated, uncoated
Any substrates that are unsuitable: Thermal transfer materials, PE, Shrink Wrap

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Sheeter/fanfold options

Name of company:
OKI Data Americas

Name/model of digital press OKI pro511DW label printer
Print head technology used: LED
Digital print process: Toner

COLOR OPTIONS
Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: No
Other ink options: No

Image quality/resolution: HD Color Technology; 600 x 600 dpi or 1200 x 600 dpi

DIMENSIONS
Roll/web width: Continuous: Plot Width 8.0in–12.6in (203 mm–320 mm)
Print width: Plot Width 8.0in–12.6in (203 mm–320 mm)
Press running speed: Continuous: 30 ft./min. (9.14 m/min.); Cut Sheet: Letter – Color 36 ppm, Mono 40 ppm; A3 – Color 19 ppm, Mono 21 ppm

SUBSTRATES
Substrate thickness, minimum: Continuous: 64 gsm to 216 gsm; Cut Sheet: Media Tray – 64 gsm to 216 gsm
Substrate thickness, maximum: Continuous: 64 gsm to 216 gsm; Cut Sheet: Media Tray – 64 gsm to 216 gsm
Types of printable substrates: Paper, PET, Polyester, Vinyl, Teslin
Any substrates that are unsuitable: BOPP, Tyvek

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Off-line
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Rewinder with built-in slitting functionality

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Name of company:
Omet

Name/model of digital press JetPlus
Print head technology used: DOD inkjet
Digital print process: UV Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: No
Other ink options: No
Image quality/resolution: 600x600dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: up to 650mm
Print width: depends on press width
Press running speed: Up to 60 m/min

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: Information not supplied
Substrate thickness, maximum: Information not supplied
Types of printable substrates: All standard label stocks

FINISHING

In-line or off-line finishing: Fits on existing press

Name of company:
Rapid Packaging Services Pty Ltd

Name/model of digital press Rapid 2 digital label press
Print head technology used: Memjet
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: No
Other ink options: No

Image quality/resolution: 1600 dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: 230 mm
Print width: 220 mm
Press running speed: 18 m/min

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: 0.13 mm
Substrate thickness, maximum: 0.33 mm
Types of printable substrates: Aqueous inkjet receptive paper, synthetic, film etc.

FINISHING

In-line or off-line finishing: Both
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Lamination, Semi-rotary die-cutting, flexo coating/varnish, Spot flexo print, hot foil stamping, hologram/kinegram application, RFID

Name of company:
Primera Technology

Name/model of digital press CX1200 Color Label Press
Print head technology used: Laser
Digital print process: Toner

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: N/A
Other ink options: N/A

Image quality/resolution: 2400 dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: 8.5in (216mm)
Print width: 8in (203mm)
Press running speed: 16.25 fpm (4.9m/min)

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum:
Substrate thickness, maximum: 9 pt.
Types of substrates that can be printed: PVC, PET, paper, wovens, magnetic material
Any substrates that are unsuitable: BOPP

FINISHING

In-line or off-line finishing: Offline - FX1200 Digital Label Finishing System -- produces any size and shape without dies
If in-line, what finishing is available?:
Press options: FX1200 Digital Label Finishing System

Name of company:
Screen Europe

Name/model of digital press Truepress Jet L350UV
Print head technology used: Piezo drop on demand
Digital print process: UV Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: CMYK Extended Gamut inks

Image quality/resolution: 600 x 600dpi, 600 x 1200dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: 350mm
Print width: 322mm
Press running speed: 50m/min

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: 0.09mm (3.6mil)
Substrate thickness, maximum: 0.35mm (13.7mil)
Types of printable substrates: Paper and film type self adhesive

FINISHING

In-line or off-line finishing: Roll to roll and Roll to inline
If in-line, what finishing is available?:
Press options: Corona and web inspection later options

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Name of company:
Stork Prints

Name/model of digital press DSI
Print head technology used: Xaar 1001
Digital print process: UV inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:** + Orange and Violet
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: Digital primer, Digital varnish, spot color on request

Image quality/resolution: 360 dpi native

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width:
Print width: 330 mm
Press running speed: 24, 35 m/min

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum:
Substrate thickness, maximum: labelstock up to 400 micron
Types of printable substrates: All standard label stocks
Any substrates that are unsuitable: None

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: In-line
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Semi-rotary die-cutting, slitting
Press options: Standard: webcleaning, corona, LED pinning stations and chilled cylinder on final curing

Name of company:
Shanghai Taiyo Machinery Co.,Ltd

Name/model of digital press IJP inkjet digital machine
Print head technology used: Kodak Stream technoligy
Digital print process: Inkjet water-based ink

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: No
Other ink options: No

Image quality/resolution: 600 x 600dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: Client request
Print width: 10.56cm/printhead
Press running speed: 152m/min;305m/min

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: Not supplied
Substrate thickness, maximum: Not supplied
Types of printable substrates: Non-permeation substrates
Any substrates that are unsuitable: Permeable

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Both options
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Modular

Name of company:
Swiftcolor

Name/model of digital press SCL-4000D
Print head technology used:
Digital print process: Dye-based Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: N/A
Other ink options: No

Image quality/resolution: 1200 x 1200dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width:
Print width: 4.26in (108.35mm)
Press running speed: Up to 7.9in (200mm)/sec

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: 155 micron
Substrate thickness, maximum: 255 micron
Types of substrates that can be printed: Exclusive roll/fanfold paper

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing:
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Optional auto-cutter

Name of company:
VIPColor

Name/model of digital press VIPColor P485
Print head technology used: Inkjet
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: N/A
Other ink options: N/A

Image quality/resolution: 2400 x 1200 dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width:
Print width: Up to 8.5in (215mm)
Press running speed: Up to 25ft/min (7.62m/min)

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: Not supplied
Substrate thickness, maximum: Not supplied
Types of printable substrates: Paper, tag amd synthetics roll or fan fed
Any substrates that are unsuitable:

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing:
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Manual media ciutter

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Name of company:

Donghang Precision Machinery

Name/model of digital press
Print head technology used: Xaar
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: UV ink and oil-based ink

Image quality/resolution: 360dpi x 360dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: Max 450mm
Print width: 70mm-420mm
Press running speed: 25m/min

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: Not supplied
Substrate thickness, maximum: Not supplied
Types of printable substrates: Paper/ps label/PET/BOPP/PVC
Any substrates that are unsuitable: No

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Both
If in-line, what finishing is available?: Stamping/die-cuting/laminating
Press options: Corona/web inspection

Name of company:

Xante

Name/model of digital press Excelagraphix L850
Print head technology used: Memjet
Digital print process: Inkjet

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: No
Other ink options: No

Image quality/resolution: 1600 x 1600 & 1600 x 800 dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: From 2in up to 8.5in
Print width: Up to 8.5in
Press running speed: 60ft/min (18m/min) at 1600x800
30ft/min (9m/min) at 1600x1600

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: 0.003in (76 microns)
Substrate thickness, maximum: 0.012in (305 microns)
Types of printable substrates: Water based inkjet media of various types and uncoated papers
Any substrates that are unsuitable: Non-inkjet coated medias

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Off-line
If in-line, what finishing is available?:
Press options: Rewinder

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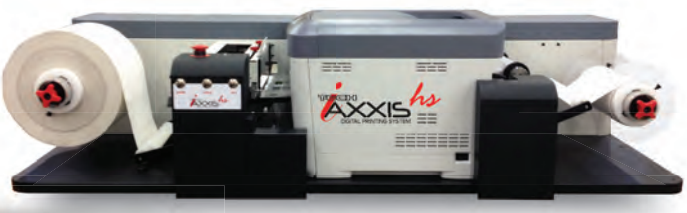

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1-603-216-6344

email: info@allendatagraph.com
website: www.itechlabel.com

Name of company:
Xeikon

Name/model of digital press Narrow web version
Xeikon 3030; Xeikon 3030Plus; Xeikon 3300
Print head technology used: 1200 dpi LED array
Digital print process: Xeikon dry toner

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: Spot colors, security taggant toner, durable and UV light reflecting toner

Image quality/resolution: 1200 x 3600 dpi

DIMENSIONS

Roll/web width: 200 mm upto 330 mm (7.9in - 13in)
Print width: Min 200mm (7.9in); max 322mm (12.7in)
Press running speed:
Xeikon 3030: 9.6 m/min - 31.5 ft/min (@ 1200 dpi, 5-color)
Xeikon 3030Plus: 15 m/min - 45ft/min (@ 1200 dpi , 5-color)
Xeikon 3300: 19.2 m/min - 63 ft/min (@ 1200 dpi, 5-color)

SUBSTRATES

Substrate thickness, minimum: 23μ - 1 mill
Substrate thickness, maximum: 550μ - 22 mill
Any substrates that are unsuitable: Unsupported film PET 12μ ; 20μ BoPP; Shrink sleeve material

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Both options are available
If in-line, what finishing is available?: UV varnish, lamination, semi- and full rotary diecut, slit and rewind/stacker.
Press options: Sheeter, measuring drum, Alpine Fuser drum, spot color pack

Name of company:
Xeikon

Name/model of digital press Wide web version
Xeikon 3050; Xeikon 3500
Print head technology used: 1200 dpi LED array
Digital print process: Xeikon dry toner

COLOR OPTIONS

Color (excluding white)**:**
Availability of white: Yes
Other ink options: Spot colors, security taggant toner, durable and UV light reflecting toner

Image quality/resolution: 1200 x 3600 dpi

DIMENSIONS

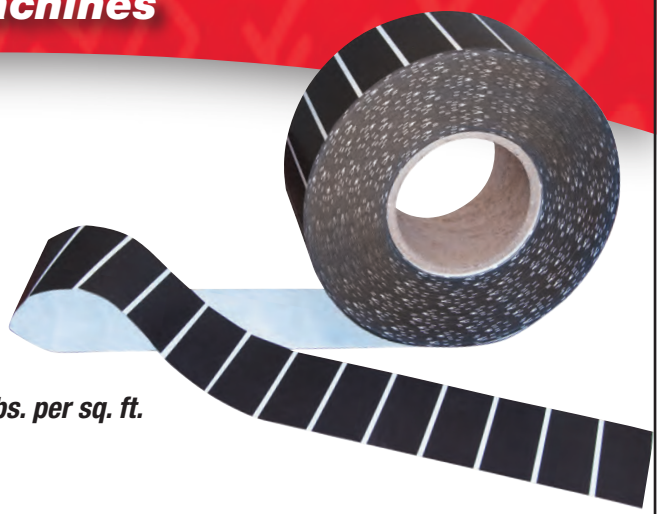
Roll/web width: 250 mm upto 516 mm (8.9in - 20.3in)
Print width: Min 250mm (8.9in); max 508mm (20in)
Press running speed:
Xeikon 3050: 9.6 m/min - 31.5 ft/min (@ 1200 dpi, 5-color)
Xeikon 3500: 19.2 m/min - 63 ft/min (@ 1200 dpi , 5-color)

SUBSTRATES

Any substrates that are unsuitable: Unsupported film PET 12μ ; 20μ BoPP; Shrink sleeve material

FINISHING
In-line or off-line finishing: Both options are available
If in-line, what finishing is available?: UV varnish, lamination, semi- and full rotary diecut, slit and rewind/stacker.
Press options: Sheeter, measuring drum, Alpine Fuser drum, spot color pack

High Speed Application of Magnets
for Automatic Labeling Machines



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Sticky

BARRY HUNT examines the latest developments in adhesives and coatings

The main role of a label adhesive is to bond the label to the glass, plastic or metal container, or some other surface. Both must be compatible, which given the numerous permutations of adhesive types, substrates and applications often give manufacturers some technical challenges. Much the same applies to the labelstock coatings and primer sectors. Besides performance criteria, other issues have come to the fore, such as environmental concerns. Here, we have seen a shift away from solvent-based adhesives and increased emphasis on the migration behavior of adhesive substances in food packaging.

In respect of adhesives, water-based non-pressure types remain dominant because of the high volumes used for wet-glue (glue-applied) labeling on high-speed filling lines for cans and bottles. Remoistenable types are used for producing gummed paper labels, which recall the beginnings of labeling. These adhesive are usually formulated from compounds of natural polymers, such as casein, starch and dextrine. They become tacky when dissolved or dispersed in water, which then evaporates or penetrates the absorbent label paper to produce a strong bond. They cope well with condensation, fluctuating temperatures, refrigeration and other end-use considerations.

Increased global emphasis on recycling has led bottling plants to develop water-wash techniques capable of completely removing the adhesive and label from returnable glass bottles. Current developments include finding substitutes for the natural casein polymer adhesives. For example, Henkel recently introduced Optal XP, a largely casein-free adhesive made with more 'robust' polymers. The company claims an absence of insoluble components or excessive foaming improves compatibility with the latest water-wash techniques. It is said to have a lengthy shelf life, combined with good tack, or stickiness, and fast setting and drying.

The popularity of the 'no-label look' – often combined with complex label shapes – for premium beers has led laminator/coaters to develop proprietary wash-off adhesives. A new one from Avery Dennison allows the easy removal of labels when washed in industrial brewery washers at the lower temperature of around 65 deg. C. It is used with a range of Fasson Wash-off laminates with a transparent dual-layer PE film with PET liner. It is also used for PET bottle-to-bottle recycling involving shredding both the bottles and PE labels and soaking the resulting mixture in a hot alkaline solution. A difference in their densities separates the label material from the PET chips. During the recycling process the high-performance washable

HERMA to show new adhesives at Labelexpo

AVERY DENNISON launches Fasson Wash-off labels

Industrially manufactured screen printing plates – the basis for automation and standardisation in the label print shop

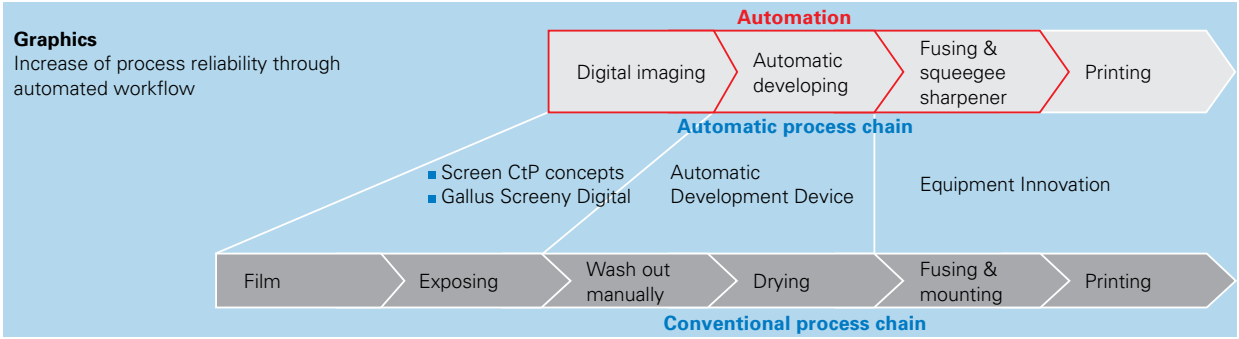
Using high-quality work materials with minimal tolerance fluctuation and consistent properties forms the basis for all standardisation and automation. Alongside hot/cold-foil embossing, screen printing is one of the finishing options in label printing, and screen printing plates of reliably high quality are key to producing first-class labels. Put simply, a press can ultimately only deliver quality if top quality tools and consumables are also used. With screen printing plates it is important that the screen fabric and photopolymer layer are always of the same standard, as fluctuations in quality in one of these two areas inevitably lead to printing problems.

But why are standardisation and automation an issue for a label print shop? As a result of ever shorter delivery deadlines and last-minute changes in the production sequence, a label print shop today must always be able to manufacture screen printing formes as quickly as possible using automated processes.
Standardisation and automation mean:

- Fewer process steps
- Greater production reliability
- Higher productivity

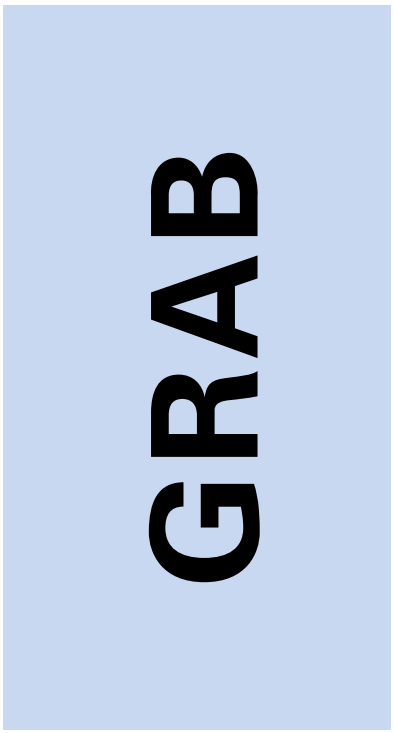
These factors enable a print shop to supply more labels by the promised dates, even where deadlines are tight or are changed at short notice.

With the Process Efficiency Package (PEP), Gallus Screeny offers a concept with an unbeatable advantage – the possibility of manufacturing a finished screen printing forme within 30 minutes. Processing is the same as for other photopolymer printing plates as used for letterpress and flexographic printing. All the work stages are clearly defined and can be carried out quickly with just a few simple accessories. With PEP, the imaging, exposure, washing out and printing accessory maintenance stages are automated. All product lines of Gallus Screeny screen printing plates can be used for manufacturing the rotary screen printing forme with PEP.



Look, grab and feel – it's Gallus Screeny

▲ Gallus Screeny effect I **Neon**



▲ Gallus Screeny effect I **Sparkle**

▲ Gallus Screeny effect I **Grip**

Better business prospects with rotary screen printing? For sure!

Screen printing is ideal wherever a high degree of coverage, precise detail and colour intensity are required to obtain brilliant, high-quality print products. Of all printing processes, screen printing is still the one that can apply the thickest ink layers and coarsest pigments to the substrate. This is because the ink is applied directly to the substrate through the mesh openings in the screen printing plate (such as Gallus Screeny).

Other attractive surface effects using specific material/coating combinations appeal to customers' sense of touch and sense of play with surfaces ranging from velvety to rough. Touch-and-feel is the magic word.

Rotary screen printing and combination printing offer decorative labels a wide range of different special effects to capture the attention of end users.

Screen printing is used first and foremost for decorative and functional labels. End users' attention has to be attracted and their curiosity stimulated when they are making their first purchase. Success is only assured by using an attractively designed label that appeals to as many of the senses as possible (look, feel). For consumers making a repeat purchase, labels must come with striking, easily recognised features, such as tactile relief work, to quickly confirm to end users that they have purchased the desired product. Screen and combination printing succeed in attracting the attention of end customers by using outstanding effects. Screen printing enables unique design features that grab consumers' attention when making an initial or repeat purchase.
One particular feature of screen printing is its ability to produce what is known as the no-label look, in which transparent labels are applied to the packaging. This creates the impression that the print image has been printed directly onto the packaging, thus producing an elegant and extremely high-quality feel. The greater colour contrast and higher colour intensity achieved on the transparent self-adhesive material also grabs buyers' attention at the point of sale.

The following effects can be applied to the substrate using Gallus Screeny screen printing plates:

- No-label look
- Tactile reliefs
- Grip feel
- Sparkle
- Rough sandimation
- Rubber imitation
- Frozen foam
- Tactile wood structure
- Matt metal
- Velvety material
- Pearly lustre (Iriodin)
- Fluorescent inks
- Luminescent inks
- Scented coatings
- Scratch ink
- Thermochromatic inks

As well as purely decorative applications, screen printing is also used to achieve what are sometimes essential technical functions. In many countries, only labels that have been printed with the legally required information in Braille can be sold to the pharmaceuticals sector. Braille symbols can be applied to labels by means of screen printing.

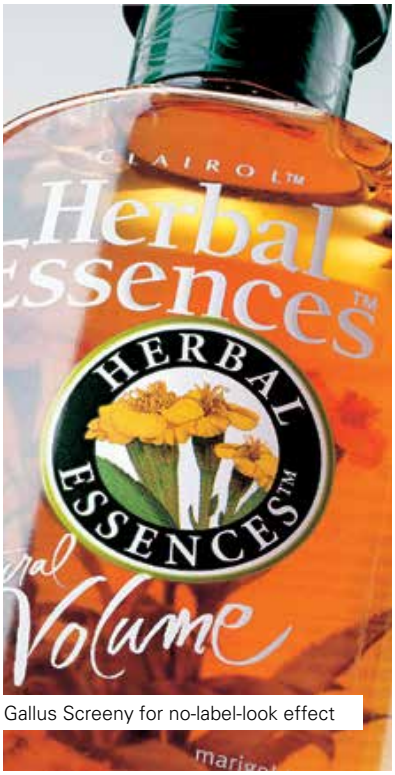
When a label is exposed to climatic influences (such as UV light, rain), screen printing is currently the printing process that gives the print product the most reliable resistance to weathering.

Food that has gone bad is dangerous, but thermochromatic inks can prevent it from being consumed. Under the influence of heat, the visual appearance of these special inks changes. This effect can be used, for example, to check whether the storage temperature of frozen food has always been maintained correctly. Just by looking, consumers can identify whether a frozen product is still fit for consumption.

Applying coarse pigments using screen printing makes labels more difficult to forge. Rotary screen printing ensures maximum security and protection against counterfeiting for high-value products due to screeny, inks and coarse pigments.

Only screen printing can currently perform the following technical functions:

- Weathering resistance
- Food monitoring
- Protection against counterfeiting
- Confidentiality



Gallus Screeny for no-label-look effect

To produce all these decorative and functional effects requires high-quality screen printing formes, as a print image can only be as good as the printing forme used for it. Whether ultra-fine line motifs or relief printing, Gallus Screeny offers the market's most comprehensive range of rotary screen printing plates in this sector.

trends

adhesive stays with the shredded label flakes to give 100 percent recycling of the PET material.

UPM Raflatac offers RC 7W, a temperature-sensitive, clear acrylic adhesive for wash-off film labels in PET bottle-to-bottle recycling. The clear or white PP facestocks are washed off in a hot caustic solution and separated from ground-up PET bottles by gravity to leave pure, food-grade polyester suitable for bottle-to-bottle use. The non-bleed adhesive is said to provide excellent performance in high-speed dispensing and retains its high and lasting clarity even in wet conditions.

"Solvent-based PSAs, especially those based on acrylics and vinyl acrylic polymers, now tend to be identified with speciality applications where there are no suitable alternatives without a loss in performance"

PUTTING ON THE PRESSURE

Pressure-sensitive adhesives (PSAs) are always tacky and comprise three main types: permanent, semi-permanent with post-application repositioning, and removable. The main technologies are based on acrylic polymers and solvent-coated rubber/resin solutions. They in turn result in solvent-based adhesives, water-based acrylic adhesives (also named dispersion/emulsion adhesives), and permanent hot-melt adhesives. Their formulations and properties embrace everything from deep-freeze labels applications to PSAs that are compatible with repulping or compostable processes.

Adhesives made from organic solvents are noted for their fast bond strength, good heat, chemical and UV resistance, as well as a tolerance to challenging conditions. At one time the excellent initial tack and final adhesion of solvent-based adhesives, plus their heat resistance, were unmatched by water-based acrylic adhesives or normal rubber and hot-melt adhesives. A major drawback is that, like rubber/resin solutions, solvents require recovery and/or incineration to meet today's stricter environmental legislation.

'Solvent-based PSAs, especially those based on acrylics and vinyl acrylic polymers, now tend to be identified with speciality applications where there are no suitable alternatives without a loss in performance,' says Michelle Tettamani of ICAP-SIRA, an Italian coatings manufacturer.

HENKEL'S LIOFOL LA 7777 adhesives family is suitable for high barrier films

MICHELMAN unveils HP-approved primer

'Some of these applications include graphic arts, industrial durable labeling and specialty tapes for automotive and aerospace, as well as medical applications.'

Water-based acrylic adhesives offer a good compromise for most mainstream applications. They may lack the peel strength and tack properties of solvent types, but they offer superior die-cutting properties and resistance to UV radiation. Their shear strength is also good through a wide temperature range. This property defines an adhesive's inner cohesive strength, or load-bearing characteristics over a given time. Additionally, with low levels of adhesive bleed or migration, water-based acrylics can reduce the risk of contamination with direct food and package labeling applications, as discussed elsewhere in this feature.

UV-acrylics that include photoinitiators in their formulations offer a solvent-free alternative for durable labeling and industrial tapes. The radiation curing, or crosslinking, improves their resistance to high temperatures and chemicals. It also gives enhanced peel and shear strength. Radiation curing offers near-instant 'drying', which permits faster coating speeds, while reducing damage to heat-sensitive substrates to a minimum.

Hot-melt PSAs are formulated from thermoplastic compounds applied in a molten state that bond as quickly as they cool down to become solid. They are noted for good peel strength and high tack levels, while shear strength at room temperatures is high. They are suitable for deep-freeze food labels and other moist chilled environments where water-based acrylics would be unsatisfactory. Hot-melts perform well on high-speed applicators. The near-absence of visible adhesive lines also makes them suitable for labeling glass containers.

UV-cured hot-melts are especially good for difficult applications requiring a permanent adhesive and offer an alternative to solvent-based adhesives.

With their good anti-migratory properties, hot-melt adhesives

COATINGS IN BRIEF

NEW ADHESIVES PRODUCT ROUND-UP

FOOD LABELING ADHESIVES

UPM Raflatac's new Foodgloss RP 36 FG and RP 36 ML permanent acrylic adhesives offer advanced migration safeguards. RP36 ML can be used for the direct labeling of carcasses to track meat products to the abattoir. Improved UV resistance gives the laminate and converted labels a long shelf-life for efficient and convenient stock management. The company's 149 DF permanent adhesive for film and paper facestocks offers good adhesion to non-polar surfaces at low temperatures, such as deep-freeze labels. It also has excellent clarity and UV resistance with clear films, and is approved for direct contact with dry, moist and certain fatty foods. The company supplies information on regulatory compliance with EU 10/2011 for converters and end-users. For markets outside Europe, UPM Raflatac offers products and advice that comply with the US Food and Drug Administration regulation 21 CFR 175.105 – Adhesives.

SOLVENT-BASED PSAS FOR SPECIAL NEEDS

ICAP-SIRA Chemicals & Polymers has formulated several solvent-based PSAs to fulfill individual requirements, including pharmaceutical packaging and other customized industrial applications. The ACRIS series is described as a highly cross-linkable adhesive. Its proven advantages include fast drying time, good wet-out, and a high initial tack. These offer good adhesion to cold or moist surfaces, such as PE films and glass, with resistance to plasticizers and aging. ACRIS series 415, 453 and 460 are approved for medical and skin contact (according to UNI EN ISO10993), while ACRIS 415 and 663 are suitable for food contact use. The recently developed ACRIS 700 series contains specialties for tapes and labels applications.

PSA FOR FILMIC WINE LABELS

Herma has extended the application of its multi-layer adhesive coating technology to the HERMAexquisite range of transparent and white PP films for wine labels. The adhesive, named HERMAperfectCut 62Xpc, uses dual coating technology to enhance die-cutting results and reduce cutter wear. The second layer reinforces the adhesive's cohesion (inner strength) and effectively prevents bleeding over the die-cut edges.

BIO-BASED HOT-MELTS

To meet environmental concerns, some hot-melt formulations are beginning to figure in sustainability initiatives prompted by the consumer packaging market. This development prompted Henkel to form an alliance with DaniMer Scientific to develop a family of hot-melt formulations that use bio-based raw materials. Global distribution is planned for the first half of this year.

COMPOSTABLE FACESTOCKS AND ADHESIVES

UPM Raflatac's compostable range includes clear, white and silver RafBio films made from cellulose and have a topcoat for optimal printability. Cellulose films are sustainably sourced and home-compostable. Clear and white RafBio PLA films are derived from corn starch. They are suitable for direct food contact. Industrially compostable PLA film has naturally good printing properties, excellent scratch resistance and higher levels of transparency and gloss. The RP 55 Bio adhesive includes a high content of renewable (non-fossil derived) materials, and like the RafBio films is certified to EN 13432, the European standard for compostable packaging. The RafBio films are also supplied with RP 37, an adhesive that offers biodegradability over a more extensive range of end-uses.

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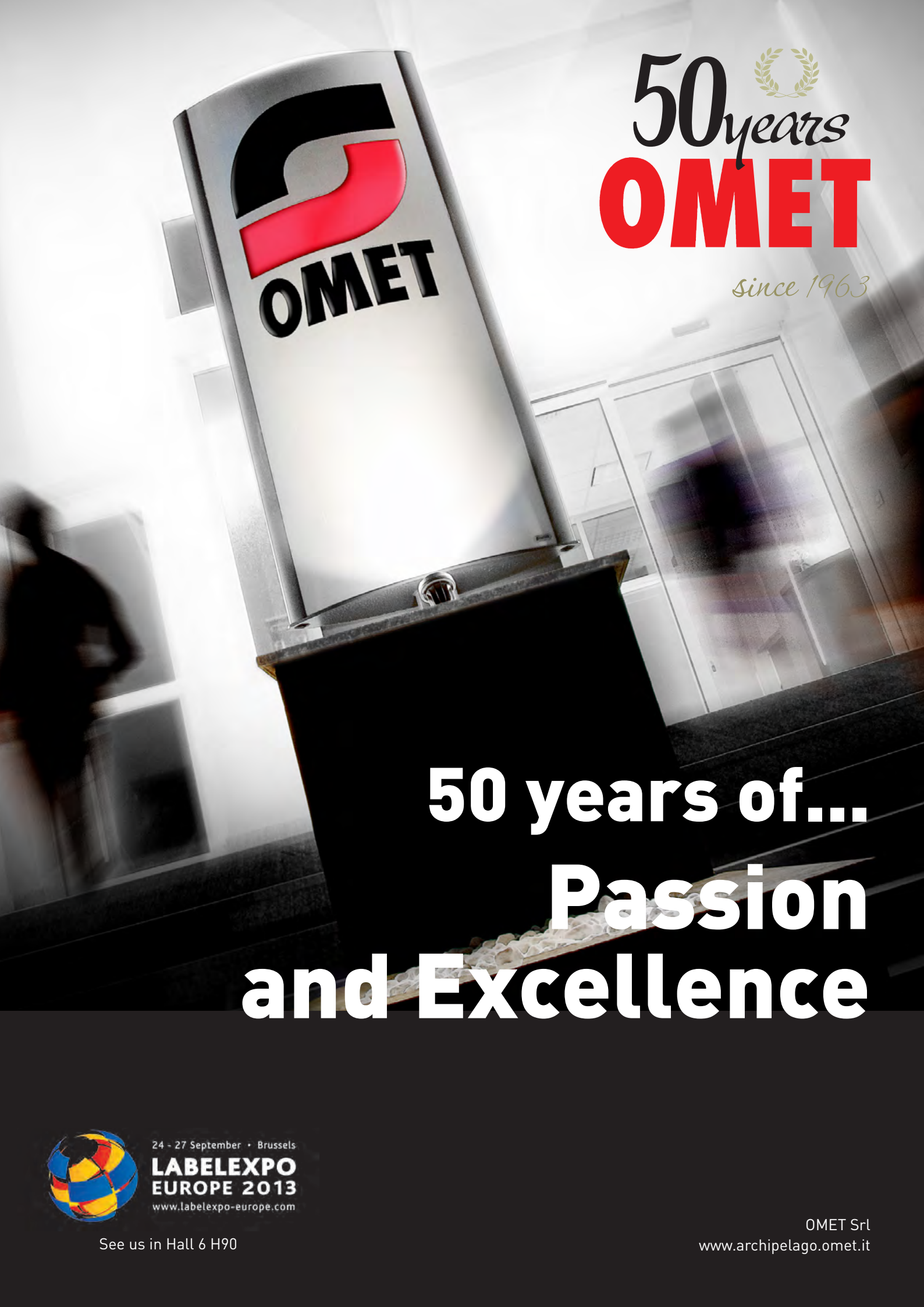

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ADPR047 New multi-purpose Fasson adhesive for Durable goods labeling

"While certain applications benefit from the coverage and flow benefits of solvent-based release coatings, the emulsion-based coatings, such as Syl-Off, can achieve similar ultra-smooth surfaces and enhanced aesthetics for many more applications."

are commonly used for wrap-around, roll-fed label films for PET bottles, also some beverage cans. Here, mechanically-driven rollers on the film-labeling machine apply the adhesive to the leading and trailing (overlap) edges of the pre-cut film to form a complete wrap. This type of hot-melt adhesive is formulated to adhere to coated or uncoated oriented polypropylene (OPP) or biaxially-oriented polypropylene (BOPP). It is therefore compatible with cut-and-stack film labels, as well as sealing Roll-On, Shrink-On labels for decorating soft drinks, aerosols, and certain dairy products.

SILICONE COATING TRENDS

Minimizing costs and environmental impact, while improving performance are prime objectives of the entire adhesives and coatings industry. As we have seen, they have helped drive the ascendency of environmentally-friendly water-based (emulsion) systems over costlier solvent-based systems. Similar issues apply to silicone release coatings, with the added incentive to reduce costly platinum usage levels.

Examples of a new generation of silicone coatings include Dow Corning's Syl-Off Advantage Series. 'By modifying the chemistry of our base polymers, crosslinkers and additives, we have been able, over time, to reduce the amount of platinum required to cure these systems from 100-150 ppm (parts-per-million) five years ago to as low as 10-20 ppm today,' says Chris Velasquez, global packaging market manager for Dow Corning Performance Industries. 'But you can only lower platinum levels so far. The next step will be to develop alternative cure chemistries that can deliver comparable performance.'

This resonates with the trend towards thinner filmic facestocks and liners. While certain applications benefit from the coverage and flow benefits of solvent-based release coatings, the emulsion-based coatings, such as Syl-Off, can achieve similar ultra-smooth surfaces and enhanced aesthetics for many more applications. They also allow in-house converters to reduce the cost of siliconizing their polyolefin and polyester release films.

Solvent-based, platinum-cured silicones are expected to remain around for some time to come. 'Their usage currently remains high in the Asian markets and they are still the standard silicone coating in China,' says Sean Duffy, global business manager for Bluestar Silicones' Silcolease coating.

COATINGS IN BRIEF

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST ADHESIVE AND COATING STORIES

NEW UV-CURED HOT-MELT

A collaboration between Collano, a Swiss adhesives specialist, and Heraeus has led to new types of UV-curable hot-melt adhesives. Their formulation is said to offer 85 percent energy savings over conventional UV curing methods using Heraeus Soluva UV curing lamp modules, which have a service life of 10,000 hours.

PSA FOR SHEETED DIGITAL FACESTOCKS

A permanent or removable patented non-ooze adhesive forms part of Starliner Digital, a pressure-sensitive sheet stock for digital printing introduced by MACtac. Available with paper, film and foil facestocks, it is available in over 25 different stocks designed for such applications as retail signage, exhibit and point-of-purchase displays, as well as address labels and prime labels. Starliner also includes Encore facestock which contains up to 70 percent post-consumer waste fiber.

COST-SAVING LINERLESS PRIMER

Pulse Roll Label Products' latest primers include EL165 for linerless labels. 'It has minimal noise levels and extensive blocking and ageing tests have shown the long-term release is the same, and in some cases better, than the standard cationic product,' says Darren Hallett, export sales manager. He adds that EL165 gives a cost saving of 20 percent over cationic varnishes and eliminates the danger of free-radical contamination while significantly reducing waste.

SEAL & RESEAL

Ritrama's AR827 acrylic removable adhesive is designed for a wide range of seal and reseal applications on all common types of packaging film substrates. This adhesive is inert to contact with a wide range of substances used in the personal and home care industries, retaining its seal/reseal behavior throughout the life cycle of the pack. Ritrama has secured through the ISEGA research center certification for direct contact with dry and moist, non-fatty foodstuffs for AR827, meaning it may be used safely on packages containing dry food in the retail market, like pasta, coffee and cookies. Standard materials in the seal & reseal range with AR827 includes a series of top coated polypropylenes with clear 60/120μ face materials or white 60/90μ face material. This AR827 adhesive is also in compliance with REACH Directive and is APEO free.

UV-CURED HOT-MELTS FOR TOUGH CONDITIONS

As an alternative to its solvent-based adhesives, Ashland Performance Materials has introduced Arocure, a thicker UV-curable hot-melt PSA. 'By controlling the design of the polymer, PSAs with different balances of adhesion and cohesion can be developed for various applications. For example, Arocure RPS-9100S combines balanced tack, peel and shear properties with adhesion to low surface-energy surfaces, such as industrial tapes applications where this property is desirable.'

'Here their excellent performance at low coat-weights suits the commonly-used PE-K filmic substrate.' Duffy believes that environmental pressure and safety concerns will eventually lead to a gradual phasing out of solvent-based systems in many Asian markets. 'Regardless of this in the most developed markets, such as Europe and USA, they have actually been growing in recent years. Such systems still offer a number of technical advantages for certain applications linked in particular to their excellent slip properties, and anchorage on a wide variety of films and papers,' he adds.

PULSE launches adhesive for linerless labels

IN-HOUSE COATING

Over the years, label converters have shown fluctuating interest in using siliconizing and adhesive coating techniques to produce all or part of their labelstock needs. A combination of economic uncertainties and some key technical advances have helped boost more in-house label production. While attempts to reduce bought-in labelstock costs remains a major reason, other factors may include overcoming supply-chain limitations, as well as the opportunity to develop customized pressure-sensitive products. In each case the trick is to keep equipment busy, while tightly controlling waste costs.

'By coating your own stock, you can create a specialty label that gives you a competitive edge. Even better, in many cases you can add a hot-melt coating station directly in-line to the printing press,' says Mike Budai, coatings and laminations manager at ITW Dynatec. 'The options include controlled continuous or intermittent patterns, which can be in strips, bars, rectangle or even window patterns.' He adds that non-contact curtain technology allows users to make clear adhesive coatings without streaks or imperfections. Slot dies offer another coating option, handling coating weights from one to 150 gsm for small to large volumes.

In-house coating has long been a speciality of Montreal-based ETI Converting Equipment. It recently introduced a pattern unit for applying hot-melt adhesives with clean edges at high speeds. It follows a similar pattern coater for acrylic adhesive, which is also retrofittable to ETI's Cohesio dual-unwind coating modules. The new unit allows variable repeats from 16 to 24 inches (406mm to 609mm) with automatic register and accurate pre-register to minimize waste. It also allows full web coating at 400 f/min (121 m/min) with accurate coat weight control. Other in-house coating products include the Miniliner retrofit module for producing 12-micron die-cut PET release liner; a linerless system based on the Cohesio with inline die-cutting; and the higher-volume Labeline with UV flexo printing, facestock and liner coaters, laminator and die-cutters.

With their simple formulations, water-based acrylic adhesives are a firm favorite among many small-to-medium sized in-house coaters. The operators can prepare their own ready-to-use adhesives. Hot-melt PSAs are more complex so are usually supplied by specialist adhesive suppliers. However, they do not require high-energy drying ovens and recent advances – combined with today's high performance UV-cured silicones for use with paper or filmic liners – have widened their usage.

In terms of quality control, in-house coaters can readily access standardized bench-top units to measure a label's peel adhesion to a surface, tack levels, and shear resistance.

When considered in the round, it becomes clear that the science and chemistry required to place one very thin coating on top of another very thin coating – whether to adhere or not – involves a great deal of skill. We can see it as an enabling technology that, for example, allows label converters to just as easily choose laminates for labeling frozen chickens as they can to label an automotive component. All this from a technology that largely lurks unseen in the background.

"With their simple formulations, water-based acrylic adhesives are a firm favorite among many small-to-medium sized in-house coaters. The operators can prepare their own ready-to-use adhesives. Hot-melt PSAs are more complex so are usually supplied by specialist adhesive suppliers."

UPM Raflatac unveils UV hotmelt adhesive for beverage and food labeling

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Trini Labels

LABEL HOUSE GROUP has led flexography's development in Trinidad, influencing label production in the Caribbean by managing challenges unique to island business. Danielle Jerschefske reports

The Republic of Trinidad & Tobago (T&T) is comprised of two larger islands and a few small ones within an archipelago a few miles north of Venezuela. Its industrial-focused economy, which stems from a lucrative export infrastructure for oil and natural gas reserves, distinguishes the nation from its more service-oriented Caribbean neighbors.

To cultivate the petroleum business, the T&T government has invested in public education, so the island has a skilled and eager workforce. The 'Trini' people are a healthy rainbow of Indian, African, White and others of varying heritage.

David Lewis, founder and CEO of the Label House Group, says, 'A Trini label can be used as a passport to the whole diverse community of the Caribbean. From island to island, there are wholly different business principles influenced by French, English, Spanish, Dutch and indigenous people. This makes local suppliers unique, the customers different, and the employees special. Successful island business requires acute knowledge of the client's culture and a strong balance in managing expectations and maintaining credibility.'

Lewis established Label House Limited outside Trinidad's capital city Port of Spain in 1978. Today the Trini converter produces labels for a great number of international, regional and local brands in a wide variety of market sectors – water, juice, carbonated beverages, motor oil, beer, personal care and food, gourmet and liqor.

The business is trusted to produce labels and other promotional products for such fierce rival brands as Coca-Cola and Pepsi. It's a Trini thing: isolated development, talented people and manufacturing to an international standard.

GLOBAL NETWORKING

There were no phone lines outside Port of Spain when Lewis opened for business 35 years ago, and local farm goats regularly visited the building with intermittent electrical power and two small Mark Andy presses. As the island matured through the 1980s, Lewis joined leading Americas trade groups TLMI and FTA to expand his industry network and gain technical knowledge.

He says, 'I joined TLMI in order to connect with the suppliers that could help develop flexography in Trinidad & Tobago and the region. At the time, there weren't any PS labels on the island. Beer labels were printed litho. The technology network had much to offer us.'

Lewis lured associates to Trinidad with a promise for new business, to witness the annual Carnival and the opportunity to conduct research and development in secluded confidentiality. This benefit was valued by potential customers then, and is a key reason Label House has such a broad and prominent customer base today.

Quickly a global network including expert partners at Mobil, Sun, Flint and SKC gave Lewis and his team real guidance. Steve Lee of RotoMetrics, the 2012 R. Stanton Avery Lifetime

NEW Nilpeter FA press at Label House

Achievement Award winner, has been a trusted technical ally and is a close Lewis family friend.

Lewis met L&L founder Mike Fairley for the first time in London when the magazine launched in the same year as Label House. The budding entrepreneur returned to Trinidad with one of the author's label encyclopedias as a resource for training and research. These basic investments in developing alliances and cultivating resources have kept Label House on the cutting edge.

UNDERSTANDING THE ISLANDS

Managing a business based on an island requires shrewd maneuvering in international trade. And while there's a 20 percent import cost on printed materials brought into Trinidad, meticulous purchasing, efficient manufacturing and tactful distribution remain paramount to stave off international competition.

Explains Lewis: 'We understand the push and pull of currencies in the Caribbean and are able to earn dollars when exporting product so we can put dollars into our own account.'

Materials delivery takes an average of six to eight weeks, and 12 weeks for special orders. About a year ago the company invested in a slitting machine for wide web logs that slits double structure cut & stack film into any needed roll size. This has greatly improved flexibility in inventory control.

End users in the islands typically stock labels for two months of product sales. The converter delivers labels monthly or every two months, while operations schedules a five day lead on material prepped for daily production.

Gary Legge, director of sales and a cousin of Lewis, says: 'We try to understand a customer's production for the entire year and create a schedule for them. Orders are reviewed three times annually and pricing is quoted based on the total annual volume of labels purchased.'

Increasingly Label House is encountering quotes coming into the Caribbean from European and US-based converters preying on volume orders and international brand work. Despite whatever assumptions might be made about run lengths for a small island, Label House deals with many sizeable volumes, even by US standards, when it services 25 countries throughout the region. In the beverage market, specifically beer, fruit juice, and energy drinks, the converter produces as many as 10 million labels per job. Smaller runs are closer to 250,000 labels.

LABEL House production managers Sherril Baboolal and Gharish Maharaj

INTERNATIONAL INFLUENCE

The converter's opportunity for considerable growth came to a pinnacle in the early 1990s when Coca-Cola moved into the region opening 15 bottling plants on various islands. As the brand's operations managers found reliable value and support in working with Label House, the converter's name was referred along. And when the beverage market made the switch from glass to PET, Label House successfully

MAGIC DRUMS

T&T is the founding place of the orchestra-like steel pan drum bands. The drum is often considered the only acoustic musical instrument invented during the 20th century. It's made from a 55 gallon oil drum.

PACKAGING IS WHAT YOU MAKE OF IT

The design and printing of packaging is among the fastest growing and dynamic sectors of the printing industry, providing fantastic opportunities.

Packprint Summit Americas is the region's first event that focuses entirely on package printing. Taking place from 5 - 6 November at the JW Marriott Marquis, Miami, Packprint Summit Americas comprises of a two day conference and table-top exhibition.

The summit offers delegates an educational platform to learn about current package printing trends and technologies as well as network with the world's leading suppliers and experts. Providing specialized information on technical developments and practical advice to those wishing to enter the world of package printing, the summit will include some of the most knowledgeable and experienced industry speakers.

Delegate passes include access to all conference sessions, the table-top exhibition and lunch on both days.

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CARIBBEAN brand beer labels Presidente, Red Stripe, Carib and Kalik

LABEL House prints the shrink sleeve labels for T&T's Angostura brand bitters

assisted in shifting regional business units to the new primary packaging. The same opportunity came 10 years later when the water industry began bottling in all 25 countries

There are 10 regional breweries in the Caribbean, and the big boys can be found playing in the island sand too. Around 13 multi-national brewers work through license agreements and shared distribution channels vying for market share.

Competition is intense as islanders tend to remain loyal to the native choice. Prestige, Haiti's most popular beer, has an estimated 98 percent market share on the French-influenced island. But know that Heineken has been a majority stakeholder of Brana (Brasserie Nationale D'Haiti), the producer of Prestige, since December 2011.

Prior to that, Heineken introduced the popular Kalik brand to the Bahamas in the late 1980s, which is still brewed at its Commonwealth Brewery in Nassau. Jamaica's Red Stripe brand has been a part of Diageo since an acquisition in 1993. And last year AmBev gained majority ownership of the prominent Dominican beer Presidente.

Trinidad's Carib brew is one of the few island brands not owned by an international giant. Carib is produced by T&T's Caribbean Development Company, a part of the ANSA McAL conglomerate held on the national stock exchange.

LABEL HOUSE CULTURE

Lewis explains, 'Multinational companies have taught Label House a culture.' The culture of the multinational companies is a very disciplined process with little or no compromise for local attitudes. It is a global requirement. We have introduced ISO9001, OSHA, Food Standards and Environmental Policies. Our competitors in the island do not have to comply.

The majority of Label House product is cut & stack wrap around labels and metalized paper labels, while orders for full sleeve labels are rapidly increasing.

Gharish Maharaj and Sherril Baboolal share responsibility for core business management running the label plant as a team for both digital and flexographic label production.

There is high traceability of the labels from the moment the staging process begins and carts are stocked with inks, plated cylinders, dies and material for the next job. The staging crew meets within 30 minutes of a press going down including an ink tech to measure color before the job is on-press.

Baboolal, production manager, explains, 'There is a process for everything and we document each step of the way. Flexography is more consistent when we can repeat over and over.'

In collaboration with ExxonMobil more than 15 years ago, the converter runs 50 micron BOPP material and wet strength for cut & stack labels on a 10 inch Mark Andy 4150. The press produces a significant amount of work every day for big business brands, and therefore has a Martin Automatic splicer on the front-end to keep production up.

A 16-inch Nilpeter FB 4200 with in-line lamination serves as a workhorse converting most of the metalized paper beer labels and other high volume white and clear BOPP films. Label House converts 500 tons of metalized paper each year including Prestige labels for Haiti with no less than eight million per run.

T&T HISTORY

In 1889 the two islands of Trinidad and Tobago became a single crown British colony after many years of Spanish rule. T&T obtained independence from the British Empire in 1962, eventually becoming a Republic in 1976.

Most recently, and in celebration of its 35th anniversary, Label House installed a specially configured 22-inch Nilpeter FA-6 press. With it the converter can more efficiently produce shrink sleeve, wrap around and laminated labels, which are growing in demand. It wants to be in the top mid-web flexible packaging business.

The new machine has nine color stations, eight hot air dryers with electronic temperature setting and ramping, three UV units by IST and a Martin Automatic splicer and rewind system. It's designed to reach speeds of 150 m/min (400 ft/min).

Gharish Maharaj, production manager, explains, 'We had limited capacity to produce these products, and the demand for them is increasing. The Nilpeter FA-6 replaces two Comco 7 machines, opening up an additional 20 percent more production room.

'And the industry is down gauging; our other presses are made for thicker materials. With new technology and improved efficiency, we're better set to convert materials 12-14 microns thin.'

Three years ago Nazdar seamlessly moved Label House from solvent to water based inks. The converter's ink team manages recipes for brand colors, working closely with changeover teams to keep downtime to minimum. Before inks are even sent to press a pull down is done using a hand held bladed Harper Phantom proofer.

(L-R) Mark Lewis, Valmiki Balbirsingh (director), Gary Legge, Richard Lewis, David Lewis

Label House has three finishing lines for cut & stack labels and a full Karlville shrink sleeve inspection system with seaming and cutting units. A second sleeve finishing line was installed to support the increased production of the new Nilpeter press.

RotoMetrics supplies flexible dies and magnetic cylinders for much of the repeat work. Says Baboolal, 'It costs less for us to keep back-ups when compared to solid dies.'

Still the converter has a skilled tooling and maintenance department to keep machinery and equipment running at optimum levels. It operates with a full pre-press production and design team. It uses Dantex printing plates and an automatic plate mounter. This is a real challenge being on an island where parts and technicians have to be flown in.

DIGITAL PRINTING

Less than 10 percent of the converter's overall production is pressure sensitive labels, most of which are now printed on an HP Indigo ws4500 digital press. The digital press was purchased to move into the high-end label market and small niche areas, which has happened particularly as local brands invest more in packaging to compete with international brands.

The converter regularly produces up to 50,000 labels with multiple SKUs for one local food brand, and does some runs up to 100,000 labels. They reach 1.2 million clicks each month, higher than many converters in larger markets. Needless to say, uptime is high.

Label House is printing more flexo-digital combinations starting with a pass through a 10 inch Mark Andy press to print generic information. Gary Legge says, 'With combination printing, we're able to produce a label that completely separates a brand from the competition.'

Digitally printed labels are converted on an AB Graphic Digicon Series I complete with in-line foiling, embossing, lamination and one flexo station. The Label House team designs specifically for digital production using EskoArtwork software to compensate for a switch between the two print processes. More recently the team helped the native Angostura bitters brand re-design a shrink sleeve label for its lemon lime flavor, now printed digitally.

LABEL HOUSE GROUP

As the labels business matured, Lewis saw opportunities to prosper in other areas of printing. The family, David, Richard and Mark, opened separate businesses to create high-end and large format signage, and started Package House to distribute packaging coatings, materials, and application and filling lines to the region.

In 2003 the Label House Group was formed by bringing each business – Label House Limited, Package House and Branding (was signage) – under a single company offering a fully-fledged line of packaging and print promotion to support a brand's marketing needs in every way possible. In 2006 the group started a joint venture called Click Media TT which is designed to promote brands using new digital media and mobile. At the start of 2013 the converter launched its new website designed to better communicate all the possibilities the group holds.

The launch of Package House in 1995 alleviated some troublesome customs issues and structured a business to support label production and distribution, and to better service the entire Caribbean packaging community.

Label House leveraged the asset to drive shrink sleeve adoption within the region as early as 2004. The converter currently serves as the agent for Karlville in the Caribbean and is a key support system for brands embarking on new shrink sleeve projects. Coca-Cola is hot filling in T&T and has started a sleeving line.

Dayne Thompson serves as the business development manager for the machinery and packaging division. He says, 'We offer service and support for application systems at the right technical and price point to take new brands into automation. The business is growing to support premium work and higher volumes.'

Most of the machines sold into the market are linear, but the converter recently became an agent for PE, an Italian supplier of complex application machinery. The business also distributes digital printers for Datamax and Bluestar.

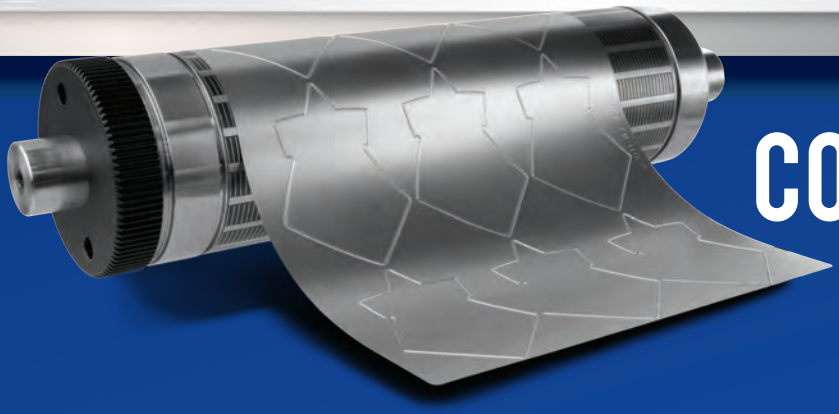
BRANDING

With its rich history and deeply embedded culture, Label House will continue to thrive. Like the island's innovation of the steel pan drum using 55 gallon oil barrels, Label House has its resources in line to continue leading the Caribbean in label service. It is in constant communication with global experts, understands international trade and invests to produce better and faster. The next step is strategizing leadership takeover by the next generation.

CARIBBEAN ISLAND POPULATIONS

Cuba	11M
Dominican Republic	10.2M
Haiti	9.9M
Puerto Rico	3.7M
Jamaica	2.9M
Trinidad & Tobago	1.3M

LABEL House main building and Trinidad & Tobago flag



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LOFTON Label flexible packaging samples

Label Brand Refresh

LOFTON LABEL is refreshing its brand promise, placing commitment at the core, writes Danielle Jerschefske

Mike Lane is the new CEO at Lofton Label located south of St. Paul, Minnesota. He brings the label converting operation 27 years of sales and marketing experience at Cargill, the huge, privately held international producer of food and agricultural products. His objective is to refresh the Lofton Label brand promise and use it as a strategic tool to drive customer satisfaction.

While CEOs and executive teams direct the intellectual vision of a company and create the framework required to fulfill the mission and values of the business, workers throughout the rest of a group perform everyday tasks that build on the company's defined purpose.

When calling on Lofton Label two and half years ago as a brand consultant, Lane uncovered that the converter had not only a brand problem, but also a business problem. At that time, there was a wavering connection on all sides of the business with annual sales of 20 million USD in decline. Lofton Label's customer-facing teams were fragmented and capital investment and overhead spend required closer attention to detail.

Enter Lane. In three years, Lofton Label has embraced a new brand promise and is reorganized to move forward stronger than ever before.

BRAND COMMITMENT

'For Lofton, the essence of our brand is commitment,' Lane says. By putting commitment at the core of its business proposition, Lofton employees are empowered to make the right decisions during critical situations throughout the label manufacturing process.

Press operators and shop floor staff are considered part of what Lanes calls 'the emotional group' involved in making labels. One example: an operator is delivered a substrate with paper facestock and polypropylene liner as specified, but believes the material has a different weight than the one typically used for the repeat order. The operator has a decision to make: run what's in hand, or not.

Lane explains: 'You could say it's an intellectual decision, but it's also emotional. The operator is likely contemplating confrontation with superiors. He is wondering if his boss will say, "Just run it" so it's out the door on time. At that point, the mission statement is the farthest thought in the mind of the employee.'

The label is a vital component in ensuring the productivity of production lines in the world of consumer-based brands. Packaging lines cannot be put in a holding pattern because a label is not performing to spec or hasn't been delivered on time.

Lane explains: 'If we're all about commitment at the very basis of what we do, then the employee knows that's what they have to understand. If the commitment is to get it right, then as an employee, I know I'm not going to run that 40-pound paper. I'm going to go to my supervisor and get the customer service rep and sales person involved. We have to stop things, but we get it right.'

The underpinnings of the Lofton Label brand promise is about commitment throughout each area of the business – from labels, to labeling equipment and service. The team's executives are actively communicating to all employees the importance of the label converting business as a 'part player' within the supply chain.

REVIEW & REORGANIZE

Lofton Label participates in 28 vertical markets – chemicals, GHS, health and beauty and food for the likes of Hormel and Deli Express to name a few. A new structure given to the sales team created a national segmentation in the department and camaraderie across the sales force. The reps were placed in teams of two – one as a hunter and the other a nurturer. Three sales teams conduct the majority of business in producing labels plus inside and equipment sales. Customer service was reorganized to align with sales reps.

Luther Galchutt, Lofton's vice president of sales, manages Lofton's long-term

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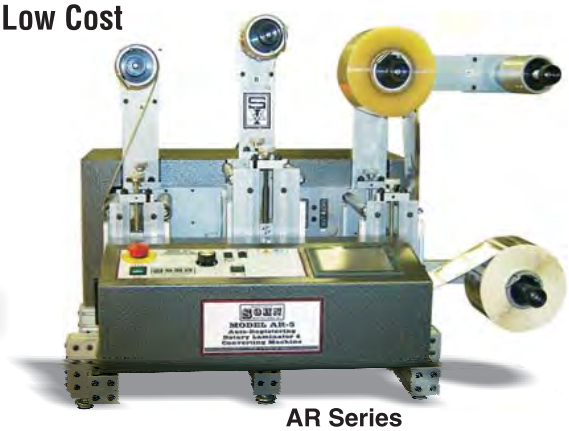

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LOFTON Label samples

relationship with 3M. The global giant has a long history of ordering custom work from the converter, which is often supported with the sale and service of Universal Labeling Systems and Quadrel Labeling equipment. Lofton Label produces thermal labels used in Zebra and Dantax high speed and fully automated print and application units.

Once the organization placed the brand focus of commitment at its core for customer-facing employees, it was time to review bottom line impacts more thoroughly and ask the question: Can the business survive with the revenue coming in against the cost?

Film converting of flexible materials and pouches is about 30 percent of Lofton Label's flexographic production volume. The company is breaking into the pharmaceutical industry (where margins are five to 10 percent higher) with complex multi-laminated foil constructions.

Lofton uses a variety of flexographic presses to manufacture flexible packaging. Mike Gaughan, vice president of production, explains: 'We have a 24-inch Aquaflex press with a configuration that is fantastic for films and flexible materials, and we compete great with it.' Flexibles are also converted on a Mark Andy XP5000, he adds.

A small percentage of Lofton's label work is run on two tried and true Webtron presses with four color stations plus a varnish. 'The Webtrons continue to offer solid performance for small runs for low-volume custom orders,' says Gaughan. The company also uses three 16-inch Mark Andy presses, including a small 4150.

The degree to which digital printing will replace flexography as a print technology in the label industry is a regular discussion. The converter first invested in HP Indigo technology in 2010, has grown the business steadily and plans to add a second HP Indigo prior to the end of the fiscal year in September.

Says Lane: 'When investing in new equipment, you must have the justification.

'Our current level of sales growth year-over-year is five times the reported GDP.'

Still, the converter is looking at what it can do to improve production while limiting the amount of additional capital required to enhance performance. Lane says: 'If we can do more things right, and not have the mistakes and the charge backs, we can keep production flowing in flexo. Operating with well maintained, depreciated equipment provides a competitive cost advantage on the flexo side of the business. It's amazing how you can compete this way.'

Lofton Label's renewed ethos is conveyed through the brand's promise of commitment, connecting the entire organization. With a shared promise, the revitalized converter team is progressively exceling and driving profitability in the right direction.

MIKE LANE is the new CEO at Lofton Label

LOFTON Label plant

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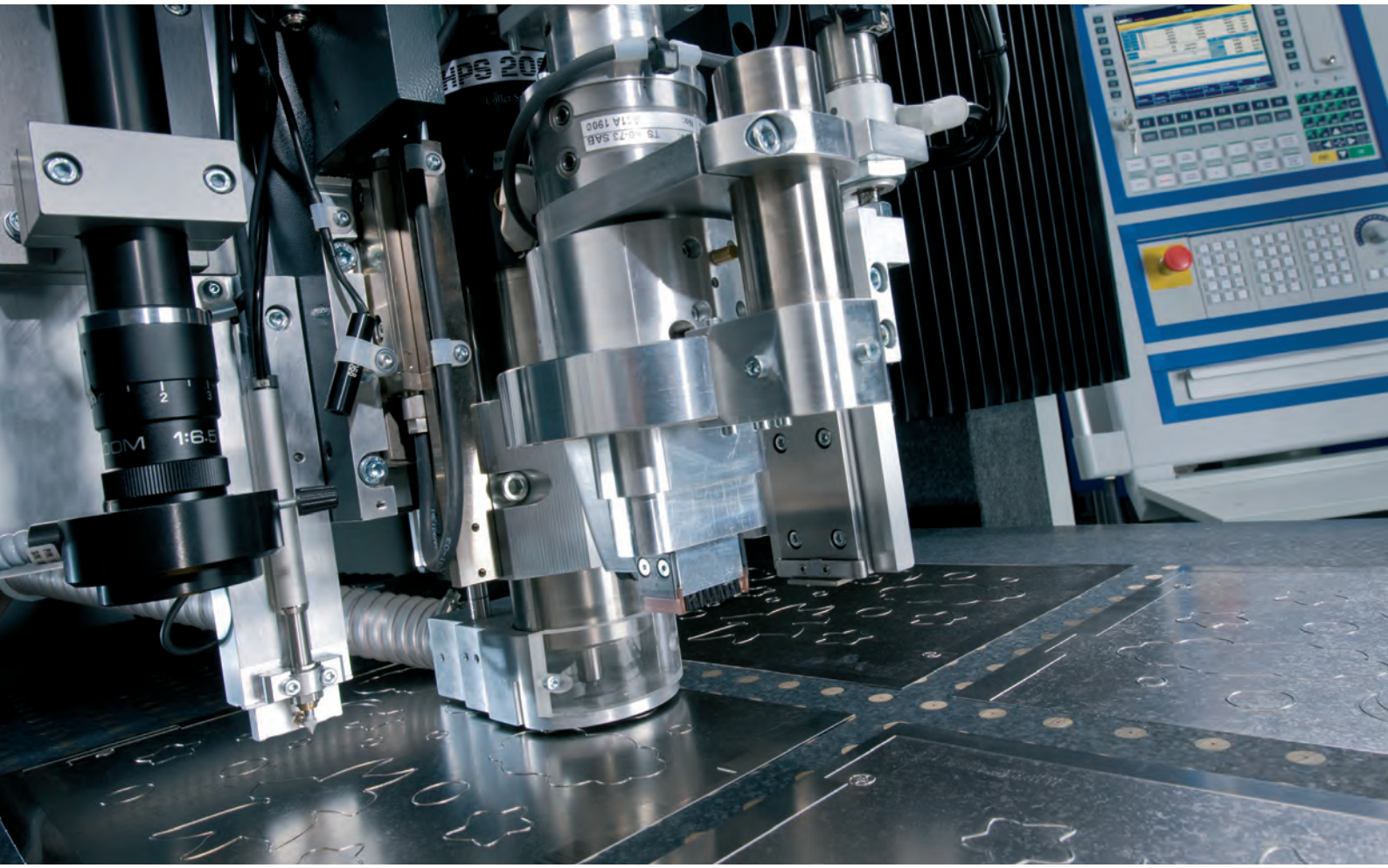

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ANDERSON EUROPE

WILCO Van Zwieten, commercial director at SAScoat

East meets West

AN INITIATIVE to start a labelstock manufacturing operation in an under-served region of Vietnam seems to be paying off for SAScoat. Carol Houghton reports

Approximately 200 km east of Vietnam's largest city, Ho Chi Minh – formerly known as Saigon – SAScoat has built up a loyal, enthusiastic workforce and established itself as a reputable labelstock manufacturer.

The company was founded four years ago and now serves a global customer base from its production facility in the beautiful costal surroundings of Phan Thiet, south Vietnam. Its legal team is headquartered in Switzerland.

Commercial director Wilco Van Zwieten chose this location based on a disruptive business model that 'labelstock travels'. He explains: 'It does not need to be locally produced, especially if it can be produced to the same standards at a lower cost somewhere else in the world'. SAScoat prides itself on this ability. 'The winning game is who makes the products most efficient, against the most competitive costs'. The average shipment is 8,000 km and an order can be completed Ex works within two days. Nguyen Hoang Nam, managing director, adds: 'Quality is our unique selling point. No one expected to have access to great products produced in Asia or even Vietnam'.

According to Van Zwieten the absence of any other coating laminating operation in Vietnam enabled the company to 'leapfrog the competition, starting faster and more efficiently than other businesses'.

The factory was built in 2009 and completed in 2010, and operations began with new state-of-the-art machines and a fresh, young workforce. All of the employees were new to the label industry and their employment history varied from supermarket work to tour guide, as well as graduates. Van Zwieten invests heavily in training and values the health and safety of his staff. This is mirrored by their obvious passion for the job and loyalty to the company and its philosophy.

TECHNOLOGY

The plant's two production lines are equipped with curtain coating technology and flying splice systems. The 1800 mm wide adhesive and silicone coating machines can reach speeds of 850 meters a minute and are able to handle a variety of substrates between 420 microns down to four micron synthetic materials. Both machines have a flexible sleeve system to cater for bespoke products and constructions, in addition to standard label stocks and adhesives.

Products are packed in shrink wrap foil throughout the laminating, slitting and packaging process. The robotic packing line is fully automated for consistency.

GREEN

The company is mindful of its environmental impact and has a number of systems in place to reduce its carbon footprint – something that could be done easier since everything SAScoat does was built up from scratch.

During the production process, waste material is sorted by color and substrate; separating board, paper, silicon, laminate and plastic. Refuse is collected twice a week and sold for recycling. Van Zwieten comments: 'This is a much more cost effective method of recycling than Europe, where you have to pay to get rid of your waste.'

All products manufactured by SAScoat are solvent-free and water-based. Its main energy source is LPG and the company runs and maintains its own water treatment plant in house. 'Thanks to a 300,000 USD investment every drop of water is reused,' adds Van Zwieten. He explains: 'The waste water is pumped into a reactor in which it is mixed with a variety of chemicals. It takes six to seven hours for the waste water to bind with these added chemicals. It is then fed into a conventional filter press where water and solids are separated and the PH level of the cleared water is adapted if needed.

'The water is then transported to the usual drainage systems, leading to the public waste water network of the industrial park. The current system SAScoat has in use has been designed in Switzerland, and

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QUICK FACTS

In 2012 SAScoat served 70 customers in 35 countries. Geographically, this was split 50 percent in Europe, the Middle East and Africa, 25 percent Americas and 25 percent Asia Pacific.

Production is 30 percent filmic substrates and 70 percent paper.

The company has 140 employees and runs two shifts, six days a week.

SAScoat does not employ expatriates to run any part of its business.

PHAN-THIET at night

THE pre-finishing product area

PRODUCTS await shipment in the export area

deployed by local engineering companies under our own supervision.' The solids retreived from the filter press can be mixed with potting soil.

SAScoat was awarded FSC (Forest Stewardship Council) chain of custody (COC) in March 2012. The certification compliments its portfolio of eco-friendly label stock. Van Zwieten comments, 'It provides a guarantee and comfort for our customers for a long term and consistent relationship, plus the assurance that products from Asia can be as green as anywhere else on the planet.'

Steel pallets are favored for internal use as they are safer, more hygienic and can be reused, whilst, wooden pallets are used for shipping. These are heat treated with a low oxygen/ temperature control system, EcO2 – a less toxic and more economical alternative to formaldehyde. The defumigation system only uses heat and extracts oxygen to get proper treatment done, as opposed to conventional systems where toxins are used to treat wooden pallets.

R&D

SAScoat's on-site laboratory monitors quality throughout the production process. It tests the materials at the speeds they are dispensed as well as final application of the label. It is also able to simulate the aging process to ensure the final product stays reliable.

FUTURE PLANS

Van Zwieten is optimistic about the future – the only challenge he identifies is that SAScoat is 'growing too fast!'

UPM Raflatac and Avery Dennison are the top two manufacturers in the region and SAScoat aspires to fill the gap as third. The ambition is 'to serve a global customer base and out-perform the competition with products, efficiency in conversion and cost for all customers'.

Van Zwieten recognizes the need to 'invest to grow'. 'We know for a long time already that for every dollar turnover we need to invest two dollars. That is not a game for the faint hearted but, at SAScoat, we are used to it'. SAScoat will undergo a 15m USD project in the next year to expand the production facilities, increase efficiency in-roll handling and operate even more economically. This investment program includes purchasing two more slitters, to be installed later this year. 'It's a big investment in terms of training and will involve sending operators to Germany/ Switzerland for three months.'

In the long term, SAScoat will manufacture both commodity and specialist labelstock. Van Zwieten believes it is just a matter of sourcing face material. He adds: 'Labels for local wine are currently produced in Spain, where the largest markets for that are in Asia pacific right now – it doesn't make sense to do that long term,'.

VIETNAMESE LABEL MARKET

Wilco Van Zwieten describes the state of the label market in Vietnam

The PSA market in Vietnam is relatively small but it is growing. In 2012, 50m sq meters were converted and this figure is climbing towards 60m sq meters. Growth in 2012 was 10 percent.

A lot of PSA in Vietnam is on PEK liner and more than 40 percent of the total volume is PVC material, mainly used for decorating motorbikes, shop windows and temporary billboards. Most of the PVC is supplied from Taiwan, China and – to a lesser extent – Thailand. The remaining volume is converted among 10 medium size label converters and another 50 smaller 'garage box' type of converters. Of the 10 medium-size converters approximately 15 percent of the PSA converted is exported throughout south east Asia; some of it will travel as far as Australia and New Zealand as ready-made labels. In 2012, Vietnam saw four foreign label printers start operations. From a sales perspective, it is sufficient to keep track of who starts businesses in label converting here and do a follow up.

Even though growth of GDP in 2012 has slowed to five or six percent, growth in labelstock has remained strong, with converters adding between seven and 12 percent on their volumes compared to 2011.

Service in Vietnam is written with a capital S, Customers are used to be supplied three times a day, even for a single slitted roll of label stock. Due to proximity and local distribution points in both Hanoi and Ho Chi Minh City this service requirement is easily addressed.

The supply chain of SAScoat is long and complex, due to geography and consolidations on the suppliers level; but SAScoat views this positively; it provides space for creativity. A short supply chain drives prices up and investments would slow - generally it would be bad for the economy.'

Global Release Liner Conference

DANIELLE JERSCHEFSKE reports on the annual AWA Global Release Liner Industry Conference & Exhibition 2013 held in Denver, Colorado in March. The conference brings together key industry players to educate, discuss, debate and share valuable information on the release liner market

GLOBAL

AWA's president and CEO Corey Reardon opened the conference by sharing a global market overview. 37.6 million sq meters of release liner was produced and used around the world in 2012. North America represents a 30 percent share and Europe 32 percent. Reardon said: 'In only a year or two Asia Pacific will surpass the western world in liner consumption.'

Release liner is experiencing growth above seven percent in Asia. Said Reardon: 'Note that the Asian market is not homogenous like North America and Europe. There's more disparity in growth amongst the market's countries with China and India leading.'

For comparison, the global growth rate of release liner is about four percent. The Middle East and Africa, looking mostly at Kenya and South Africa, experienced a four plus percent growth rate. Reardon explained that growth in South America is difficult to track exactly since it's primarily driven by Brazil.

Forty percent of global liner material is glassine. Last year the industry saw UPM invest in glassine production in China. Polyolefin coated papers represents 34 percent of the global liner material share driven largely by China.

LATIN AMERICA

Roberto Ribiero, manager for Asterisco Consultoria E Participacoes, reviewed the characteristics of the release liner market in Latin America specifically. The Latin American market consumed 1.77 million sq meters of release liner in 2012 where growth is expected to continue at around five percent over the next five years.

Ribiero said: 'The growth of pressure sensitive material in Latin America is derived from labels for wine.' It's worth mentioning too that 27 percent of converters in the region produce 80 percent of total annual labels consumed in the whole of the market.

Brazil and Mexico were said to represent 60 percent of the Latin American economy. In 2012, Mexico experienced GDP growth at six percent while Brazil had only three percent.

Brazil's growth in the last three years has been less than expected. This is attributed to investments focused on the domestic market, especially leading into the hosting of the 2014 World Cup and 2016 Summer Olympics.

Mexico is growing faster and has been outperforming Brazil in the last three years, partly because of its export focus. The country has free trade deals with 44 other nations, more than any other country in the world.

NORTH AMERICA

John Smedley, sales director for North America UPM specialty papers, said: 'Supply chain efficiency will be a key differentiator for PS material stakeholders in the coming years, as well as technical service and managing globalization.

Smedley highlighted the need for global consistency in material supply saying: 'End users want to be able to take a material from one market and use the same stock to run the same brand label on a press in a different country.'

International converters servicing global brand conglomerates, too, would like to have more consistency in running performance. However, with the complexity of the global paper supply chain, to fulfill this wish will require significant unraveling.

NANO CELLULOSE

Stirling Consulting president, Robert Hamilton, reviewed a pilot trial using nanotechnology to improve release liner base paper performance. Conducted at the University of Maine Process Development Center, the objective of the research is tri-fold: to improve the level sheet surface, to improve the bonding within the fibers and to increase the hydrogen fibers within a paper sheet.

A typical papermaking fiber has a diameter of 15-40 microns. Cellulose nanofibrils have a diameter of .02 microns. The minute size of the nanofibrils reduces the energy input from the mechanical refining of the pulp/cellulose product.

In the end, the trial found the technology to provide extremely good release properties. However, results gave no improvement to the level surface. Shrinkage was controlled nicely, which is a good indication of dimensional stability of the cellulose.

Hamilton said: 'The cost of the technology, once it's matured, is expected to be no more than a percent higher than standard soft wood cellulose.'

TRENDS

Film was highlighted as a fast growing segment in Asia and in Brazil for PP and PET liner particularly. To support that, during a Silicone and Release Liner Panel chat, professionals from Dow Corning, Avery Dennison, Flexcon and Bluestar Silicones agreed that the industry is starting to see more of a significant breakthrough with film liners in the label world.

Additionally, Chris Velasquez of Dow Corning said: 'Flexible packaging is driving properties that silicone can bring to packaging, so we see that as a growth opportunity.'

Value chain compression, referring to converters investing in their own coating and converting lines, was mentioned as a trend to keep an eye on. Converters that have made such investments in machinery from the like of ETI Converting are looking for three things: innovation, cost reduction and sustainability.

Release liner recyclability was addressed in a workshop conducted by Calvin Frost of Channeled Resources Group. The main question: is liner recycling an obstacle or an opportunity?

While there was no ultimate answer found for Frost's question, it was beneficial to have stakeholders from each part of the release liner value chain involved in a discussion on how to tackle recycling as an industry. What is clear is that there needs to be a value proposition for recycling release liner. It needs to be seen as a valuable material rather than waste.

The industry has seen innovation and collaboration surrounding this topic over the last couple of years, but the objective remains unclear, education needs to be done and change needs to be made.

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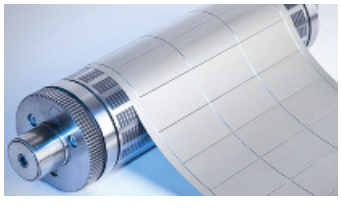

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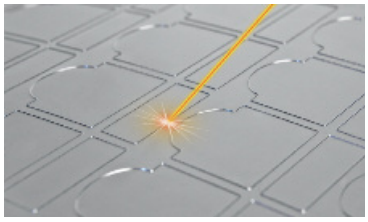

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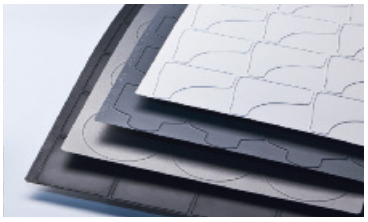

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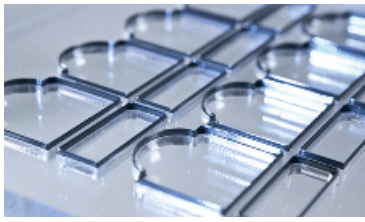

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TLMI Converter Meeting sustainable materials management panel

TLMI conference delivers valuable content

ECONOMIC AND ENVIRONMENT presentations given at TLMI's annual Converter Meeting gave label executives excellent food for thought, writes Danielle Jerschefske

North American label manufacturing executives convened at the 2013 TLMI annual Converter Meeting in Palm Beach, Florida earlier this year. To kick the event off, Alan Beaulieu, a principal at ITR Economics – who has now presented at the yearly meeting an unprecedented three times – shared his valued insight.

Beaulieu told the group to expect a consumer-led small recession in 2014. He said: 'The next 'good years' will be from 2015 through 2018.' Those interested in selling their business were advised to do so during this time, and for cash.

It's anticipated that the good years will be followed by a significant downturn in 2019 where cash flow will be critical to business survival. However, the dip will be less impacting than what much of the world felt in 2009. A global depression is forecast for the decade of the 2030s when the US will have interest rates well above the Jimmy Carter years. For this reason, and because banks have saved an incredible amount of money in recent years, now is the time to borrow.

'Borrow until you can't sleep at night,' said Beaulieu. 'Modernize your facility now, and automate as much as you can.'

Beaulieu warned the group about wage inflation: 'You're going to have to spend more money on training people with the right attitude and aptitude. Poaching will begin.

'Profit sharing is a great way to enhance profitability and is a way to make sure that your best people stay. Don't get left with the "C squad" trying to compete.'

SUSTAINABLE MATERIALS MANAGEMENT PANEL

Darrell Hughes, Avery Dennison VP and GM of label and packaging materials, North America, hosted a panel discussion on package recycling which included big name brand owners. It was apparent that end users are knowledgeable about the issues at hand and are making hard business decisions to support corporate sustainability goals.

Edward Socci, director of advanced research at PepsiCo, opened with a presentation on recycled content PET (rPET) bottles. He shared LCA results comparing the environmental impacts of rPET versus virgin PET packaging. Socci presented a chart that showed a 29 percent reduction in GHG emissions for PepsiCo's Naked brand of juices distributed in 100 percent recycled content PET bottles.

Jim Raguckas, label purchasing manager at Nestle Waters North America (NWNA), echoed Socci's promotion of rPET. NWNA moved its Resource brand spring water to 50 percent rPET bottles in 2012

Raguckas said: 'Plans are in place to continue incorporating rPET in the NWNA brand portfolio.'

When it comes to recovering and reusing materials, economy of scale can be a barrier. There is a limited supply of post-consumer PET, and a much lower price for the plastic down the value chain.

A key issue the industry is working to overcome is the contamination of PET during the recycling process. Already in 2011 the Association of Plastics Recyclers (APR) and the National Association for PET Container Resources (NAPCOR) flagged pressure sensitive labels for contaminating PET thermoform containers in Canada.

The associations have since established a protocol for recycle compatibility of PS labels and their parts – adhesive, facestock and inks. The protocol tests for effective release properties in the wash water process and haziness in the recovered plastic. PET loses value significantly when it's not pristine, which affects the economic viability of recovery.

Raguckas said: 'We are testing and validating more recycle friendly materials for PS labeling, ones that allow release in the wash water bath and also eliminate or reduce ink bleed in the recovery stream. This is a 'must have' for our brands.'

The label industry in North America has responded, and leading materials suppliers offer stocks designed to be more compatible with existing recycling methods. L&L's new website has additional information.

Both brand owners told delegates that their companies will continue testing reduced weight paper stocks and will move forward with LCAs of recycled content substrates. The reduction, elimination or reuse of materials used to package labels for distribution was encouraged.

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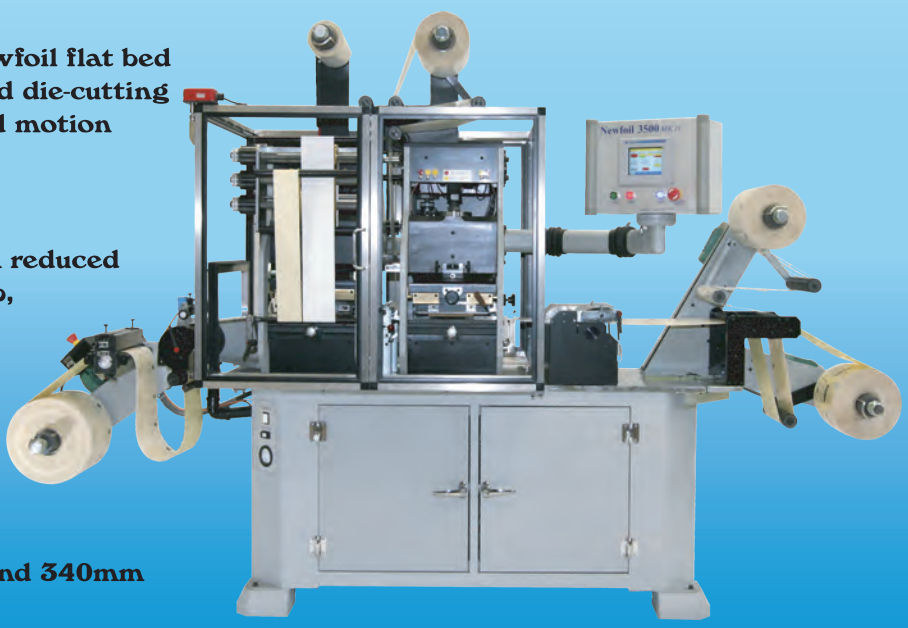

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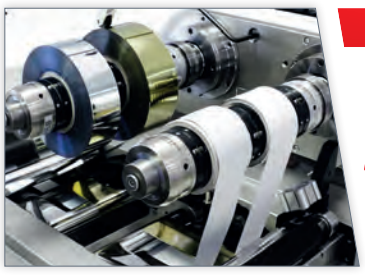

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STUART with his wife Michelle

Family is bigger than business

STUART KELLOCK, managing director of UK converter Label Apeel, takes a frank look at the pressures of running a business with family members

If you see the letters FB, you probably think Facebook. For me this is the acronym I used so I didn't have to say the words I disliked most, 'Family Business'. The reason I used to shrink away from these words is because of how FB's are perceived. Probably even more than that is the fear of how I was perceived as a second generation family business owner.

It might be me, but doesn't everybody think that second generation family business owners are a bunch of freeloaders? Can someone who has climbed their way up the corporate pole really have respect for the silver spoon-fed halfwit in front of them? I don't know. The only thing I do know is that the fear that someone might think these things of me has driven me to work hard so I can bury the idea that Label Apeel is a 'family' business.

It's actually been a long time since Label Apeel was a true family business with more than one member of my family in it. Well, that was until January when Michelle, my wife took a sabbatical from teaching to do maternity cover for our sales manager. So here I am, having spent 20 years trying to distance myself from the family business moniker, back where I started working with the family.

It's not my family that were at fault; they're wonderful people. It was the idea of how I was perceived for taking the family shilling.

FROM COP TO PRINTER

It was never my plan to work for the FB. The aim was to get into the police force. That didn't happen, so I did an apprenticeship as a film planner and platemaker. When the apprenticeship ended I had a fateful conversation with my grandmother over her ham, egg and chips that changed everything. I found myself moving from 'Only sad losers work for their parents' to 'Yeah seems like a good move.' I still don't know how she did it, but the die was cast and I knew that I had no way out.

I set rules: only two years, only interested in a sales job and I wanted a company car.

I ended up with less money, on the worst printing press ever, with a new set of bike clips. Welcome to the heady world of family business!

Twelve months after joining we ran out of work. It was 1992 and what was left of the hosiery and knitwear industry was heading east. I stepped up as salesman. In my head I'd be 'super rep' in an RS Cosworth, prowling Britain looking for label opportunities, driving, eating and talking on a massive mobile phone. No chance! No mobile, not even my own landline. I used dad's. No company car either. Instead, I got to drive mum's Mini Metro and dad's Volvo estate, but both came with the warning: 'Don't drop any crumbs.'

I realized I had to do make the best of a bad situation.

As Label Apeel grew I ended up in a business with both my parents and my

STUART Kellock, managing director Label Apeel

MICHELLE Kellock took a sabbatical from teaching to do maternity cover at Label Apeel

sister and, at its largest, 40 staff. People often think working for a family business is a wholesome, round the kitchen table affair. Ours wasn't. We often treated the people who worked with us badly. In short we treated our employees as if they were members of the family. In fact the only people we treated worse than the staff were each other. Stand up rows in the middle of the office and the sight of people storming out was not unusual. I resigned on at least three occasions. Yet we were successful, we had full order books, good profits and maintained a core staff over a long period of time.

PASSION AND ENERGY REQUIRED

At the time I wondered how we could make a success out of such a dysfunctional management setup. Although we lacked good management practice, we did have two key ingredients – passion and energy. We cared about the product to the point of obsession and beneath the fighting we cared about each other. Passion in all its forms has the potential to be both negative and positive and thankfully we were able to ride the positives.

Passion is a very difficult energy to control and peoples' passions are different. My parents started the business to create stable futures for their children. Their passion was to look after us. My sister was driven by the financial success of the business. My passion was to prove myself, to scour myself of the blemish of being daddy's little helper. I was the only one with what you might consider a negative motivation. It was about me and how I was perceived.

This led to the ultimate bust up where I sacked my sister, and my parents decided to retire.

At last I had the opportunity to make my mark on my own. I discovered that the ownership was less than I had probably hoped for. I missed the trips to the pub with dad. I missed sharing the joy when we won a new customer with my sister and I missed the kind words from mum at the end of one of those awful days. Now I was on my own and I had eight years to discover just how lonely that could be.

BACK TO 2013

Now Michelle has joined, I'm able to truly appreciate the benefits of working in a family business. Being able to share thoughts and misgivings is a very rewarding thing and something that I missed. We haven't yet had a falling out and I doubt we will. The difference is that Michelle and I share a common passion and we have a common goal. If the kids ever want to join us then that may be a different matter. I only hope they're not as cruel to me as I was to my parents.

For those who are wondering, my sister and I are again firm friends and she's in business with her husband. My parents were angry for about six months but we were with them the Christmas after they retired. Mum passed away a month ago and her retirement was too short and dogged by illness. Dad and I still enjoy a pint together and he loves thrashing me at chess. I suspect that I have been lucky to discover that family is bigger than business. It certainly was in our case.

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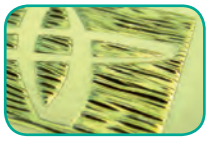

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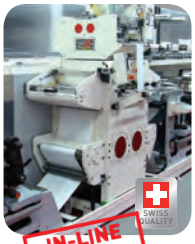

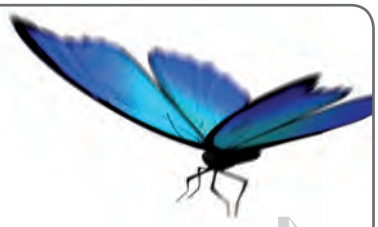

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(L-R) Niklas Olsson, Flint and Greg Palm, Mark Andy

LED breakthrough at Open House

MARK ANDY'S UK Open House saw a breakthrough demonstration of fully commercialized UV LED curing on a flexo press. Andy Thomas reports

Mark Andy held a four day Open House at its refurbished UK demo center in April, attracting 200 visitors from 60 countries and showcasing for the first time a fully commercialized LED curing system on a UV flexo press.

A stunning demonstration of the new Mark Andy ProLED curing system on a 6-color Performance Series' P3 showed how quickly this technology has come of age – and how it can match the performance of mercury lamp-based systems at a greatly reduced overall cost and level of energy consumption.

Introducing the ProLED system, Greg Palm, vice president new business development at Mark Andy, said that compared to a conventional UV Hg system, LED offers 'more press uptime with fewer equipment failures, a faster and deeper cure for higher productivity, and is more energy efficient with longer life bulbs and lower maintenance requirements. And because it's a solid state system, it offers instant 'on-off' switching.'

To demonstrate how little heat the LED lamps generate, Palm put his hand against the compact lamp head while the press was running. Taken together with a high level of curing control, ProLED is therefore well suited for thin or filmic substrates. 'Lack of heat and ozone also improve the safety and comfort of the working environment,' added Palm.

According to Palm, LED bulb life is at least 20,000 hours, which compares to 500-2000 for Hg bulbs. UV LED consumes around 50 percent less power, operates at 60 degrees Celsius (as opposed to 350degC) , and with no shutters or mirrors, has low maintenance requirements. There is no requirement for blowers or for ducting, decreasing ambient noise levels.

The first ProLED pilot system has been running 24/7 at a converter since October 2012 with no downtime for system or bulb failure, said Palm. Early jobs produced include paper labels, shrink sleeves and unsupported film labels, direct thermal printing and pouches – with no additional heat management on the press. There was a five percent increase in production speed.

'The first commercial label was printed at 250m/min on a 13in 9-station press,' said Palm.

Because LED operates on a narrow wavelength, it requires specially formulated inks, coatings and adhesives, which have been developed and implemented by Flint Group, Mark Andy's partner in the 18-month UV LED initiative.

Flint's EkoCure ink system has been extensively tested and successfully passed standard adhesion and abrasion resistance tests, according to Niklas Olsson, global brand manager Flint Group Narrow Web. EkoCure is a full ink set including Screen White, gloss and semi-gloss inks.

The initial investment for a ProLED system is higher than for conventional Hg, but Greg Palm said ROI is usually less than 12 months. 'This is because energy consumption typically falls by 75 percent, maintenance costs fall by 85 percent, and it has a 50 percent smaller carbon footprint.'

ProLED lamp systems are available as both an OEM and retrofit option. Future developments will include low migration versions of the inks and more powerful drying systems.

FAST DIE CHANGE

The Open House featured demonstrations of combination printing on a 430mm (17") wide 8-color P5 Performance Series press, fitted with a combination of UV-flexo print stations, a removable Screen print station, DMS rotary hot foil stamping, and the new Quick Change Die Cut (QCDC) unit first seen at Labelexpo Americas last year.

MARK ANDY ProLED system in action on P3 press

KEVIN GOURLAY with Rotoflex VLI and Nikka inspection, note lowered splice table

GREG PALM, VP new business development Mark Andy, places his hand on a UVLED lamp

QCDC replaces the traditional method of lifting a heavy die cylinder up and over the machine frame and then lowering it into the die station. The operator simply opens an access panel in the press side frame, wheels a cart into position, aligns the guide rails, and slides out the old die cylinder. The die cylinder for the next job is then wheeled into place on another cart, the rails aligned, and the new cylinder slid into place. The door is closed and the operator can register the new die in position from a comfortable working height of 965mm (38"). There is no heavy lifting or leaning over the press involved, virtually eliminating risk to operator or die.

The QCDC reduces set up time and waste, and increases production speed and die life, said Mark Andy. Changeover time, from when the press stops to when it produces its next saleable label, drops from a typical 10–15 minutes to less than one minute. Mark Andy calculates that on a two-shift operation of a 330mm (13") press, the QCDC can produce up to 29 percent more jobs per year.

QCDC is available on any new Performance Series P5 or P7 machine, and may also be retrofitted to the more than 250 already installed worldwide. Mark Andy recently received an FTA Technical Innovation award for this technology.

The P5 at the Open House ran a 7-color job including die cut, rotary screen and cold foil at speeds in excess of 85mpm. The screen unit was then removed and the die was changed in the QCDC unit. Two additional jobs were then shown in quick succession, demonstrating accurate matrix stripping at speeds up to 161 m/min and a 28 micron OPP running at over 200 m/min.

Interesting to note, that because the Stork Screen unit is driven on both sides, the P5 can run both Rotamesh and Rotaplate screens.

ROTOFLEX

Rotoflex showcased its VLI and the VSI inspection rewinders and the redesigned URC 2.0 control system which allows both machines to handle virtually all types of substrate tensions and web management at high speed.

Launched at Labelexpo Chicago, the VLI line has multiple slitting, multi lane counting, dual rewind, multiple web guiding, and missing label or matrix detection. The Open House unit was fitted with a Nikka inspection camera. The unit is optimized for unsupported film as well as PS substrates.

Kevin Gourlay, Rotoflex business director, said a new digital die cutting unit will be unveiled at Labelexpo Europe.

In March Rotoflex announced a strategic alliance with Canadian systems specialist Scantech, which will bring horizontal inspection rewind equipment to the Rotoflex portfolio. Under the agreement Rotoflex will market, sell and support Scantech equipment designs worldwide exclusively under the Rotoflex brand name.

The new horizontal machines will continue to be built in the company's Toronto, Ontario-based facility. Two new rewinders will be launched under the Rotoflex banner at Labelexpo Europe in September.

EMBRACING DIGITAL

Mark Andy has a long tradition of experimenting with digital printing, first in an alliance with (pre-Punch Graphics) Xeikon, and then integrating a Dotrix 4-color inkjet module onto a 2200 press frame (the DT2200).

But with the launch of its fast change Performance Series presses, Mark Andy has maintained that conventional print can compete with digital down to run lengths of well under 1,000 meters.

To fill the ultra-short run gap this leaves, the company launched to the European market its SRL 4.0 digital printer, a Mark Andy badged version of OKI's 4-color LED toner-based print engine. Capable of printing an image up to 320mm wide on a 327mm wide web at speeds up to nine meters/min, the SRL can handle a 305mm diameter roll, for roll-to-roll production, or it can work from sheet to sheet. It does not require the stock to be pre-coated, and can re-register a job to print pre-die cut labels.

Supported substrates range from self-adhesive paper and light card up to 216-gsm, to supported and unsupported film stocks including PET, Teslin and HDPE up to 150-micron. The SRL uses a PDF workflow with automatic image imposition.

The crossover point for the SRL 4.0 is reckoned by Mark Andy to be in the region of 3-600 meters, or 5,000–15,000 (100mm x 90mm) labels.

Complementing the SRL is the SRC (Short Run Converting) unit. The SRC can handle web widths up to 330mm, and has semi-rotary die cutting and a self-wind laminating facility. It re-registers to an eye-mark, has razor slitting for multi streams, edge trimming, and a waste matrix rewind.

As well as production runs, Mark Andy says the SRL can also be used for proofing on production substrates.

VILA ETIKETTEN operates a fleet of hot foil stamping units

VILA ETIKETTEN manager Ton Reichardt and Starfoil operational manager Rini Laros in front of the first Newfoil Servo 2500 installed at the Dutch label printer

VILA converts its labels off-line using an AB Graphic Digicon

STAMPING its mark with Newfoil

DUTCH LABEL CONVERTER Vila Etiketten is investing heavily in both digital and conventional production processes, including the latest Newfoil hot stamping technology. David Pittman reports

In a modern facility in Breda, The Netherlands, label printer Vila Etiketten is building an operation which meshes the best of conventional and digital processes to enhance and grow its operations.

This includes the first Newfoil Servo 2500, installed towards the end of 2012, which takes Newfoil Machines' established hot foil stamping technology and upgrades it with servo-driven motors for continuous motion.

Newfoil Machines has launched a series of high-speed hot stamping embossing and converting presses with improved performance. The Servo 2500 is the smallest of these, and features a 160 x 160mm fully adjustable printing and cutting die, and a 500mm diameter roll capacity with a 175mm web width. The servo control permits up to 18,000 cycles per hour. The standard 2500 model can carry out 9,000 cycles per hour.

Rini Laros, operational manager at Starfoil, Newfoil's representative in The Netherlands, says it has sold more than 150 hot foil stamping systems into the Benelux region over the years with most still operating.

This includes a number to Vila Etiketten, which has been a long-time customer of Newfoil, running its equipment since the mid-1990s and operating more than 20 at one point.

Laros says many of its customers have multiple units installed, although Vila Etiketten is its biggest customer.

The number Vila Etiketten operates has dropped from the 20s to 16 as it has invested in new systems and technologies over the years. The label printer's manager Ton Reichardt says this number could drop even further thanks to the efficiency gains offered by servo motors over stepper motors, adding that servo technology was needed in the hot foil stamping market many years ago, but took time to research and perfect.

Laros says a key benefit of a servo-driven machine is the reduction in machine downtime and improved reliability, with Reichardt adding: 'It offers production at double the speed, where the old model is capable of producing 9,000 labels an hour. This follows the upward trajectory of printing presses, which are operating at much faster speeds, so we needed this development for hot foil stamping to keep pace.'

This has been particularly notable in digital printing, where increased speed has been joined by an improvement in quality to match more established printing processes.

Vila Etiketten has invested in a trio of HP Indigo presses. Housed in a climate-controlled room built as part of the company's factory expansion, a ws6000, a ws6600 and a ws4500 are printing and converting labels both for Vila's own customers and from trade business.

'We are still in the early stages of the digital printing evolution, and while inkjet is coming, we believe HP Indigo is the best for us, and the quality is good.'

'Hot foil and digital were previously in competition with each other, but now they're being used together to add value to label work,' says Reichardt.

'We're not running everything at full speed though as speed depends on many variables, such as pressure and temperature, so it's about managing these variables to achieve the optimum result.

'It also has an effect on our workforce as an operator could previously run two of the older generation machines but as they have got faster, so they require a dedicated person to monitor each press.'

Further investment extends across the company's operations, from pre-press to infrastructure. It is currently developing its own in-house MIS/ERP system to integrate data and workflows from across the company's operations, down to integrating its ordering and delivery system with DHL to provide customers with a more rounded solution, and had LAN connections installed during a factory overhaul in 2005 prior to its investment in connected hardware, such as its HP Indigo presses.

Investment will continue, and Reichardt says: 'We'll buy a new servo version every year, maybe more, to overhaul our fleet.

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Labelmakers invests in materials manufacturing

THE JAC-STICK OPERATION of Dutch-based Labelmakers group is seeking efficiencies by producing its own label stocks for the retail and logistics markets. Nick Coombes reports

Established in April 2011 with a staff of 18, Jac-Stick is one of six companies within The Labelmakers Group in The Netherlands, the others being Telrol and Peha Labels Biolabel, HACCP Label, and LMG Ribbons. While the others print and convert labels using flexo and digital technology, Jac-Stick is the Group's production facility for coated and laminated label stock and high volume finished labels.

Jac-Stick's 12,000 square meter plant, which was purpose-built on a greenfield site in Almere, close to the Telrol and Peha Labels facilities, houses two ETI converting lines capable of handling webs up to 572mm (22.5 inches). Each is fitted with two Martin MBSF ('F' for Film) automatic unwind/splicers, and a Martin LRD rewinder at the delivery.

The ETI lines have coating, laminating and siliconizing capabilities, and in addition are fitted with gravure and flexo print stations, each capable of laying down two colors. The gravure unit can run water based inks at an impressive 120 m/min, and is also used for the application of special coatings and acrylic adhesives that offer an alternative to hot melt glue. After processing, the web is then die cut and rewound in one pass.

The decision to specify Martin Automatic technology was straightforward, according to company director, Ton Jacobs: 'The processes we undertake here require the quality that only continuous running can offer, so proven reliability was essential. Our research revealed that Martin has a track record that is second to none.'

The ETI lines run mostly self-adhesive blank and printed labels, including use of thermal substrates, with run lengths varying from 200,000 to four million running meters per order. The work produced by Jac-Stick is for the food, retail, and logistics

markets, plus a number of 'specials' that are typically 500,000 meters and upwards – clear evidence of the plant's need for continuous operation on a 24/7 basis.

'Our aim is to offer the maximum number of operations inline because we are shipping work in massive volumes,' comments director Hoessein Hadaoui. He adds: 'Our annual capacity at Jac-Stick is around 55 million square meters a year, or about one million a week, so the savings in time and waste offered by the Martin equipment is a vital part of our production efficiency.'

The company has previous experience of Martin Automatic machinery at its Telrol label printing plant, where the company estimates Martin saves the equivalent of one day per week in reduced downtime. 'We could see the benefit of Martin technology on one of our printing presses, and were convinced the return on investment at Jac-Stick would be fast – and so it is proving,' adds Hadaoui.

Asked if Jac-Stick supplied all the substrates for the two printing plants within the group, Hadaoui comments: 'They consume around 40 million square meters a year, which approximates to 80 percent of our capacity at Jac-Stick. It puts us in the fortunate position of being able to select the best and most economical solution for each job.' With The Labelmakers Group turnover set to top 45 million euros in 2013, of which Jac-Stick will contribute around 20 percent, there are good reasons for the directors to be optimistic.

As Ton Jacobs concludes: 'Running a successful business in today's market is all about revenue, and that comes from performance and efficiency. That is why we chose Martin Automatic and will continue to work closely with them.'

MARTIN LRD rewinder fitted to ETI converting line at Jac-Stick

JAC-STICK Directors Hoessein Hadaoui (left) and Ton Jacobs

MARTIN MBSF unwind/splicers fitted to ETI converting lines

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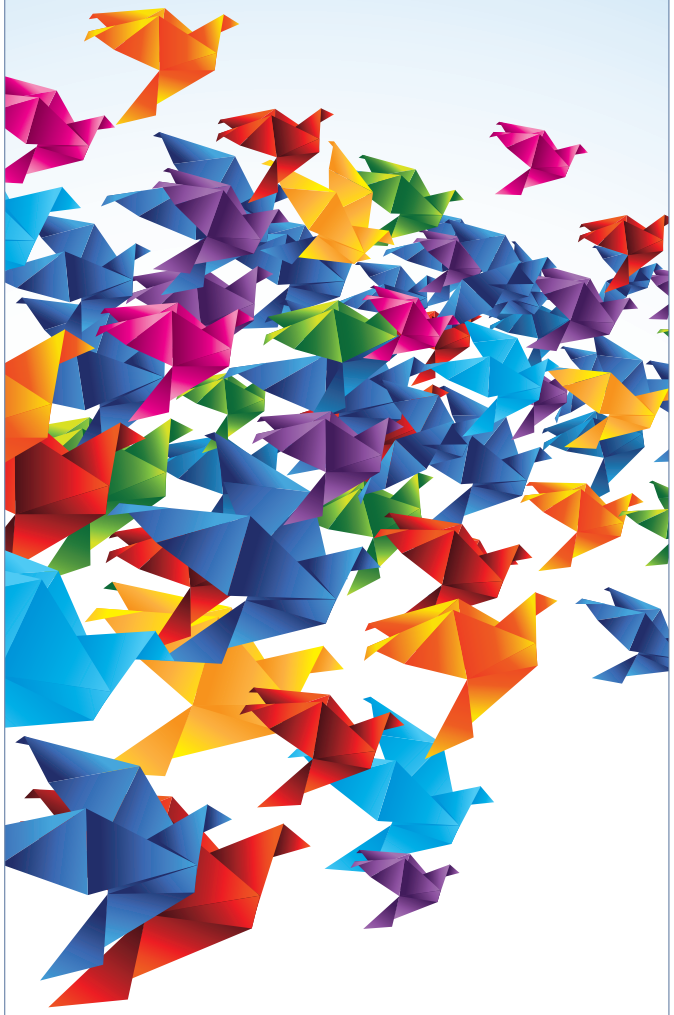

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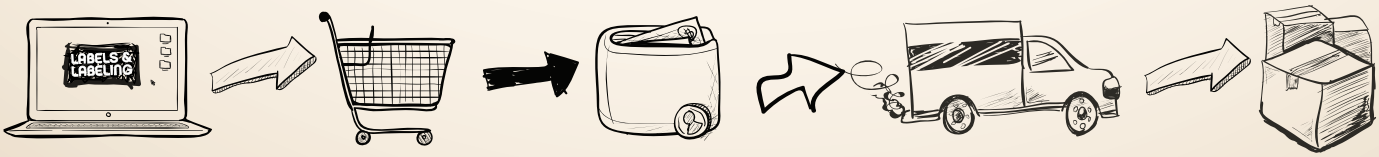

Super Nova turns to film

WET GLUE SPECIALIST NOVA DENMARK has installed its first in-line press as soft drinks manufacturers adopt wraparound labels. Andy Thomas reports

Founded as a commercial print operation back in 1904, the Nova group is today the biggest wet glue label converter in Scandinavia, serving the beer, spirits and soft drinks markets.

The original company was acquired by the Norwegian Nova Print Group in 1994 and later by the German-based Bagel Group, a large scale privately held enterprise which owns a group of converters specializing in wet glue labels across Denmark, Norway, Germany and Finland.

Although still heavily committed to the wet glue label industry, the Nova group has responded to the market trend towards wraparound BOPP labels with the installation of its first in-line press.

'We were putting this work out to a sub-supplier and two to three years ago we decided to take it in-house and started looking at narrow web presses,' says Torben Flindt, plant manager.

'For these relatively small print runs, Nilpeter had the right machines for the job, and we bought the first FA-6 press in Denmark.'

Nova Denmark's wraparound label business has grown rapidly since then, and today accounts for 20 percent of total production. 'All soft drinks houses turned to wraparound labels, first in Denmark and now starting in Norway,' says Flindt.

WORKING WITH WRAPAROUND

The Nilpeter FA6 press was installed in May 2012 along with a DCM slitter rewinder. It is a 562mm wide, 8-color UV flexo machine fitted with web cleaner, two corona treaters, a turnbar for reverse printing, water-cooled chill drums with cool-running IST UV lamps, Nilpeter's closed chamber Clean Inking system and BST inspection camera.

A work bench next to the press allows operators to assemble the next job while the press is running, with a FlexoWash unit cleaning anilox rolls and ink chambers.

'Taking our offset mentality to roll-to-roll has been excellent,' says Torben Flindt.

'We are used to running at 18,000 sheets an hour totally for the printing department, we expect to run at least 120 – 130 meters a minute on the Nilpeter – 150m is the maximum speed. A traditional label printer will be scared to run this fast because he can't visually monitor the job. This is the advantage coming from a business where productivity and lean printing has been forced on us. These pressures have come to label converters only recently!'

The press operators for the FA-6 were drawn from the offset department.

'They have found flexo very stable compared to offset as long as the variables are monitored,' says Flindt. 'It is handling the materials which is the problem. BOPP is still a relatively new thing for us and we are working out the best ways to optimize production in terms of web tension and surface treatment, for example.'

Adds Jørgen Jensen, quality and environment manager: 'One unexpected problem we came up against is that in the flexible packaging industry delivery times are very long compared to wet glue papers, so we have to plan film purchases long before we can see incoming orders. This makes logistics a challenge, particularly as BOPP has a shelf life of just six months.

'White film, for example, is on a four week delivery and two months for metalized. Buying without definite orders added to a short shelf life – that is the challenge for our industry! We as converters are adapting to use film but the flexible packaging

L-R Jørgen Jensen, Torben Flindt

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(L-R) Press operators Kim Juul Larsen and Thomas Roed, then Jørgen Jensen and Torben Flint

value chain has not adapted. For them we have to be a sub- delivery of another, larger order.'

Although digital printing is not on Nova's roadmap, the FA-6 press could be retro-fitted with a digital printing unit if the market moves that way.

BEER TRENDS

For Nova Denmark beer labels remain predominantly long run wet glue.

Non-alcoholic beers are one of the fast growing product segments for the Middle East, while fruit-flavored non-alcohol beer sales are on the rise in Europe.

Denmark, like Germany, recycles its beer bottles, which rules out new formats such as promotional shrink sleeves, and Nova has not seen a significant trend towards PS labels in the beer sector.

'The big brands would certainly like to find a clear wet glue label film to give the effect of a clear-on-clear PS label,' says Jørgen Jensen. 'But we have still not seen a sufficiently clear adhesive.'

Within the established beer brands there is a trend towards more rapid change of designs as the big brewers launch their own 'craft' beers to fight against the burgeoning micro brewery sector. Carlsberg, for example, has its Jakobsen sub-brand brewery in Copenhagen.

Young drinkers in particular are being targeted with new products. One unexpected success in Denmark has been cider, a category which hardly existed in the country until very recently.

In the Spirits market, mixer drinks are moving to pressure-sensitive and sleeve labels, but not the premium Spirits bottles. 'We still see this as a high value wet glue market going forward,' says Jensen.

Going forward, the Nova Group will continue its move to cover the emerging demand for film labels – but with an offset mentality which stresses efficient and lean operations. Avery interesting combination.

EFFICIENT sheetfed operation at Nova Denmark

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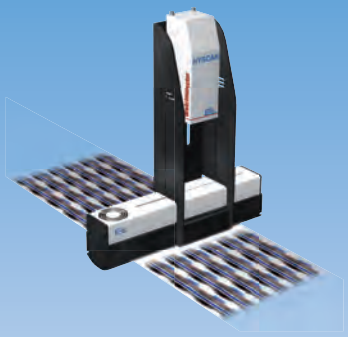

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Seeking Business Partners

TECHNICAL sales manager Anthony Cotton with Focus d-Flex

Focus on digital

FOCUS MACHINERY has introduced a hybrid conventional/digital press which fits easily into existing flexo

Flexo press specialist Focus Machinery launched at drupa the d-Flex hybrid flexo/digital printing and converting system using a 4-color UV inkjet module built and supplied by UK-based Industrial Inkjet (IIJ).

'We had been aware of the rise of digital, but it was hard to see where it would fit with our typical customer base,' explains Anthony Cotton, technical sales manager at Focus Machinery.

Cotton says the hybrid approach – integrating a CMYK inkjet module onto a modular converting base – was the best solution. 'These are small to medium sized label printers who will not be buying an HP Indigo or Xeikon. They want to use standard tooling, so where they already have the dies and no plates are needed, this becomes an excellent solution for doing very small runs, or for variable over-printing using the re-register capability. Very important for these printers, our unit is not a dedicated inkjet press. It is also a standard flexo press with all the standard finishing and converting.'

Why was Industrial Inkjet chosen as Focus' partner? 'We went through several months of research, site visits and meetings with a number of well known suppliers,' says Cotton. 'We selected Industrial Inkjet because of the robust industrial properties of the Konica Minolta heads and because IIJ had expertise not just in building inkjet modules, but in software integration as well. Combined with our expertise in engineering integration it was a perfect match',

STANDARD WEB WIDTH

The d-Flex is available in three standard web widths of 142mm, 282mm and 352mm. A wide range of configurations is offered including the number and sequence of flexo units and optional chill drums. Converting options include cold foil, lamination, sheeter, corona treater, web cleaner and anti-static bar.

Using KM1024i print heads the press has a native resolution of 360 x 720dpi and print speed to 80 m/min depending on selected resolution. 'This kind of speed means in-line production makes sense,' says Cotton.

Cotton reports widespread interest in the d-Flex 'A lot of our new enquiries are from companies which do not want a standard 6-color label press. I see more and more opportunities here for a hybrid flexo/digital press, particularly where you are going to be using large volumes of metallic or white ink along with variable

WHAT IS LIFE?

What is the service life of a UV inkjet print head? 'When a printhead needs replacing it is usually because it's been damaged rather than parts failure,' says John Corrall. 'Damage occurs for a number of reasons. If the UV lamps are positioned too close, stray light can cure the ink on the nozzle. Bad maintenance can be another problem. You should be using specific super-soft wipes. These are readily available but you can't use just any wipe. Many feel soft but are rough at a microscopic level and will damage the head. Bad inks can also be a problem and can take out a head. But generally, when we make a service call every six months we are just checking that the alignments are good. There are no parts to wear out. One customer has operated for over three years fault free and the only problem came when he changed inks.'

EKOFA MC Series

EKOFA Flexo
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"IIJ does a lot of color matching work for us. We send a file to color calibrate and IIJ generates an ICC profile. But the customer file needs to be accurate for this approach to work – specific inks on specific materials at a particular resolution."

imaging. White UV inkjet ink is an option but is three to four times more expensive than flexo inks.'

Is CMYK inkjet proving a limitation? 'No. Our enquires are about how can we make money from short runs rather than Pantone matching,' affirms Cotton.

'IIJ does a lot of color matching work for us. We send a file to color calibrate and IIJ generates an ICC profile. But the customer file needs to be accurate for this approach to work – specific inks on specific materials at a particular resolution.'

Focus and IIJ are continually running tests on new ink/substrate combinations. 'With experience we now find ourselves using less ink than when we started,' says Cotton.

Adds John Corrall, managing director at IIJ: 'Four-color inkjet is getting better all the time. Color gamut is increasing , and we are not looking at 6-color systems yet because that would put the price up significantly. We've spent a lot of time with substrates and color matching and can generally get a good match to most pantones. We measure the colors and say "we can get this close - can you live with that delta E?"'. For the majority of PMS colors we can get within a Delta E of 2.

Color management is built into the Global Inkjet Systems RIP, which also includes a new multipage PDF variable data tool. This allows full speed print of multi-page colour PDF documents.

INDUSTRIAL INKJET

Industrial Inkjet recently moved to a new demo and technical support center in the midst of 'silicon fen', the UK's center of high tech excellence around Cambridge.

IIJ is the sales and technical support center for Konica Minolta inkjet heads and builds these into modules in a wide range of configurations for OEM integration. The company also acts as a pilot line for Konica Minolta's latest head technologies.

'This is particularly true in a market like labels, where the challenge is to find what that market needs in terms of inkjet heads and inks,' says John Corrall.

Since moving to the new site IIJ has installed experimental inkjet rigs to test a wide range of applications including direct product decoration for glass bottles, tubs and tubes, as well as for label printing. A well equipped laboratory tests inks from different manufacturers for compatibility with the KM inkjet heads.

One R&D project is looking at direct printing of margarine tubs just before filling using multiple UV inkjet print stations running at speeds up to 80 m/min. 'The price of these systems is coming down and we are getting beyond the stage where it is just interesting R&D,' says Corrall. 'And there is more realism about what people want to achieve. This project already has backing from a major equipment manufacturer.'

A key element of IIJ's research is controlling the depth of the ink layer. 'Inkjet does not have to feel like screen - in fact it's easy to thin the ink out,' says Corrall. 'A lot depends on the material as well. The ink whets out on a high energy surface so the ink film can be thinner. On the other hand, some customers want to exploit the screen-type feel and the gloss of UV inkjet inks.'

Corrall sees some interesting applications coming through which could be adapted by label converters, particularly in security printing. One application involves reading the information on RFID tags, pulling variable data from a database then automatically printing and verifying. Another is UV fluorescent inkjet inks, currently being used for high security applications in passports, where photographs are digitally replicated and verified with a UV light pen.

Certainly, there is no shortage of inspiration walking round IIJ's R&D facility, and it points the way to a very interesting future for inkjet in the package print sector.

CASE STUDY

One IIJ customer in Sweden, Lundens Tryckeri , is using a hybrid analogue/digital press in an interesting way – to lay down a primer with a flexo unit before the inkjet module, allowing the company to print consistently on cheap and otherwise unusable media. 'Their target was to be economic with runs of less than 10,000 labels, but they break even up to 50,000 now,' says John Corrall.

HOT OFF THE PRESS

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

INDIAN FLEXIBLES GIANT COMPLETES EXXONMOBIL FILMS ACQUISITION

Jindal Poly Films Ltd (JPFL) has completed the acquisition of ExxonMobil Chemical's global BOPP films business for 235 million US dollars.

JPFL signed a framework agreement for the acquisition in October 2012, with the deal signed on May 3, 2013. The transaction is expected to close by the end of July.

The deal covers five BOPP production locations in the US and Europe, including Georgia and Oklahoma in the US, and in Italy, The Netherlands and Belgium in Europe. The transaction also includes a technology center and sales office in Rochester, New York, and an office in Luxembourg.

JPFL already operates the world's single largest site for production of BOPP and BOPET films at Nasik, India. Its current combined capacity of BOPET and BOPP is 337,000tpa, and its annual sales turnover as of March 2012 was 452 million US dollars.

JPFL is a part of the diversified BC Jindal group, with interests in flexible packaging, photographic products, thermal power generation and steel products. The flexible packaging producer has a network of agents and distributors around the world, from Australia to Venezuela.

The acquisition will make JPFL one of the leading manufacturers of flexible packaging films globally, with a combined capacity of approximately 445,000tpa for BOPP films.

AWA IDENTIFIES LINERLESS OPPORTUNITIES

The market for linerless pressure-sensitive labels is set to grow as costs and environmental pressures open up new applications, according to AWA Alexander Watson Associates.

In its The Linerless Label Market 2013, AWA states that linerless pressure-sensitive labels are enjoying a resurgence of interest in a packaging marketplace that is characterized by cost and environmental pressures.

The report examines the market segments where linerless labels are successfully used today, and assesses market demand, drivers and emerging trends, as well as issues and challenges for converters and users.

Eliminating the costs, and the waste and recycling issues related to label release liner, linerless labels demand a different approach to coating, conversion, and application, and The Linerless Label Market 2013 provides an insight into the current technology platform.

The report also features a review of extant technology and a directory of system providers.

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The workshop at Woelco China

German converter establishes China operation

WOELCO CHINA has been operating quietly but with increasing success over the last 10 years, and is today poised for significant growth. L&L China editor Kevin Liu reports

By what standard should one judge an enterprise successful? By its industry position? Or business scale? Profitability or growth rate? Innovation capability or brand influence? Or all the above-mentioned? For many years Labels & Labeling journalists have been visiting large and small label printing companies in China in order to dig out their success stories and their core values.

At present, there are more than 6,000 label printing companies in China, of which large-scale ones – with an annual turnover exceeding RMB 20m yuan (3.22m US dollars) – account for less than 20 percent, with small and medium companies making up the rest. For the future, enterprise integration and restructuring will certainly accelerate.

The rapid 10 year growth of Changzhou Woelco Technology (hereinafter called 'Woelco Changzhou'), a wholly-owned subsidiary of German-based Woelco AG, provides a valuable lesson from which those growing Chinese companies can readily learn.

L&L China recently visited the plant and interviewed general manager Jochen Schleiss and sales manager Eric Yang.

From the outside, this is a low profile company that you seldom find covered in print media or the internet. However, as soon as we entered the Woelco Changzhou factory, we found ourselves in a new world entirely. We were firstly impressed by the rigorous and practical German attitude to work. At the same time, although an exclusively foreign-owned company, it has adapted powerfully to the Chinese market.

This is not a huge plant, with around 30 employees and annual turnover of approximately RMB 20m yuan, But it has powerful technical innovation capabilities, which are reflected in its comprehensive product lines.

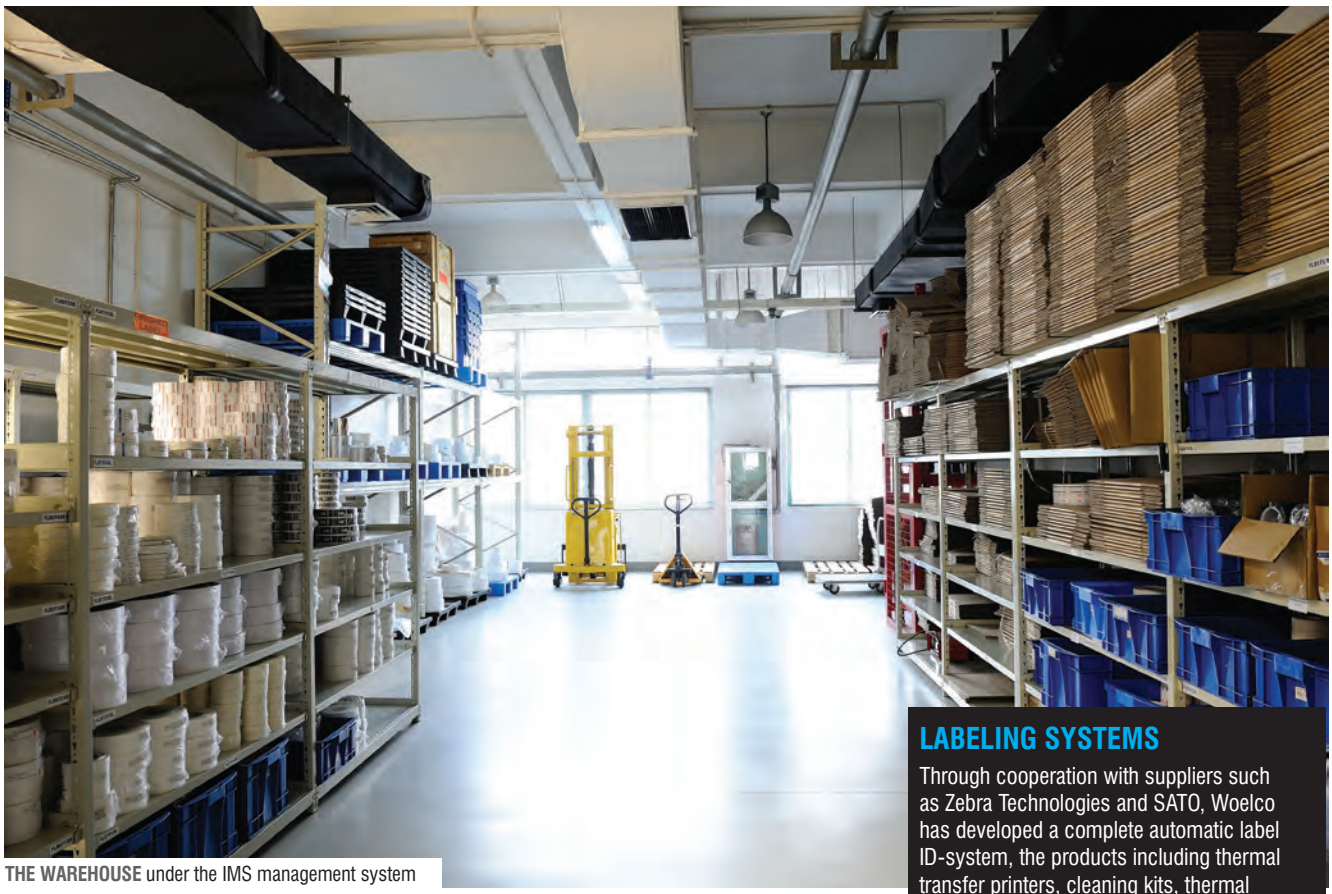
The company focuses mainly on high-tech labels in the electronics, communication and automobile industries, but can also provide a total solution from the processing of label products to R&D and production of complete labeling and identification systems.

MAKING CHINA HOME

Woelco AG was established in 1962 in Ehningen, Germany. The company specializes in providing label and system solutions for industries including automobile, communications and electronics. Among other accolades, it has been honored with a World Label Association award and received Preferred Supplier Status from the Bosch Group.

Woelco's global strategy can be summed up by the simple but effective '3x3' formula. This means to aim at three markets – the automobile, communications and electronics; to target three end user business departments – technical, systems development and labeling; and from three global production bases – the Ehningen plant in Germany, Mooresville in the United States and the Changzhou plant in China.

The move to China was guided both by the trend of end user globalization and to develop the potential of the Chinese market, Woelco first established an office in March 2003 in Shanghai, as a means of making contacts and understanding the Chinese market. When the time was ripe, it established Changzhou Woelco Technology Co., Ltd in 2006 in the Wujin Jintong High-tech Industrial Park in Changzhou, Jiangsu Province, approximately 200km from Shanghai. From here the business could cover the whole Yangtze River Delta region and



THE WAREHOUSE under the IMS management system

conveniently extend from there across the whole country.

The rigorous and quality-targeted characteristics of German enterprise are evident in the location and construction of the new plant. The work environment, the organization of the workshop and the management system all reflect top international standards. Soon after the establishment of Woelco Changzhou, it achieved the automobile industry's TS16949 quality control certificate and ISO 14001 environmental management certification.

Quality management is key to Woelco Changzhou's performance. An Integrated Management System (IMS), tracks continuous improvement metrics with the goal of increasing internal and external customer satisfaction and improvement of all processes.

Additional management tools are already in place or being implemented which cover such issues as workplace safety, risk management and environmental management.

By virtue of these strict quality standards and continuous innovation, Woelco Changzhou has grown rapidly in the Chinese market, with a customer list including Bosch, Siemens, Nokia, HP, Benz and Benq. Recently, Woelco established an office in China's largest automobile manufacturing base in Changchun, Jilin Province, in order to provide better service to this targeted market.

The main equipment operated by Woelco Changzhou is Gallus letterpress, one digital proofing press and rewinding machines. Customized products include special die-cut labels, anti-counterfeit labels and logistics labels.

TRAINING FOCUS

Most of the employees in Woelco Changzhou have a college degree or above; after joining, the company encourages them to study further through industry seminars and exhibitions. The GM of Woelco Changzhou, Jochen Schleiss, comments: 'We have years of experience and a continuous record of innovation in this industry. With the Chinese plant established, we are committed to localizing the application of Germany technology. We will undertake internal and external training for our employees in order to constantly improve their expertise and operating skills.' Some key staff are sent to the German headquarters for further training.

'In this way, we have gradually fostered a team of highly qualified, practical professional talents,' says Schleiss. 'We believe it is very worthwhile to invest in employees and that they feed back to us not only improvement of the company's technologies and R&D ability, but also spread positive energy among employees via their understanding of our company culture. This will boost, as the next step, communications with our employees all over the world.'

Woelco Changzhou frequently holds competitions inside the company to improve working skills, with employees encouraged to participate in trouble-shooting and decision making. The staff incentive program includes supplying safe and modern working conditions for employees.

A combination of advanced manufacturing skills from Germany, scientific management concepts and the professional talent training and selection system have allowed Woelco Changzhou to integrate rapidly into the Chinese market in the past 10 years.

According to Eric Yang, Woelco Changzhou has already made its mark in China and established itself as a leading supplier of labels in the domestic communication, electronics and automobile industries. Now, the company is planning to purchase new printing equipment in order to broaden its production possibilities.

LABELING SYSTEMS

Through cooperation with suppliers such as Zebra Technologies and SATO, Woelco has developed a complete automatic label ID-system, the products including thermal transfer printers, cleaning kits, thermal transfer ribbons, barcode scanners and Label Gallery label design software. Participating in the customer's logistics and inventory management brings more opportunities to sell these services.

Moreover, Woelco sells its own proprietary brands of labeling technology. From R&D and production of manual labelers to fully automatic assembly-line systems, the company is able to manufacture various contact or non-contact types of labeling systems. For example, they can produce label applicators for special shaped glass, plastic and other cylindrical products. Woelco can also provide customized labeling systems.

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Forces like sustainability, digital printing, and safety and regulatory standards continue to transform the way companies in our industry do business and formulate growth strategies. Responding to these forces as quickly as possible is essential to converters' continued success, and their ability to adapt to the market directives that will shape the industry tomorrow. This year's TLMI Technical Conference is about showing attendees ways to turn their vision into reality; to hear from industry experts and presenters about how companies can improve their bottom line, make production floors more efficient, and improve their internal business practices.

September 3-5, industry executives will gather in Chicago from all over the world and from all facets of the narrow web printing and packaging industry. Conference topics will include the latest developments in production practices, sustainability solutions, lean manufacturing, enterprise software and print process shifts.
For the first time in the conference's history, industry leaders will be taking the stage and discussing their own employee hiring and retaining practices in a session sponsored and run by the TLMI Young Leaders Development Organization.

The last TLMI Technical Conference was sold out and we urge industry members to register early. In a business landscape that is changing faster than ever, we encourage you to attend this year's conference to make sure you have the tools you need to translate your own vision into a profitable reality.

2013 TLMI Technical Conference Schedule

Tuesday, September 3, 2013			
4:00 PM to 6:00 PM	Registration		Crystal Ballroom Foyer
Wednesday, September 4, 2013			
7:00 AM - 5:00 PM	Registration		Crystal Ballroom
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Breakfast		Crystal Ballroom
8:00 AM - 8:07 AM	Welcome	Chairman of the Board: Dave McDowell, McDowell Label & Screen Printing; Conference Chairs: Michelle Shaieb, Whitlam Label Company; Wade Fouts, Wilson Manufacturing Company	
8:07 AM - 9:47 AM	*Sustainable Labeling Solutions*	Session Chairs: Cindy White, Channeled Resources Group; Darrell Hughes, Avery Dennison Materials Group North America	
9:47 AM - 10:07 AM	Break		
10:07 AM - 11:37 AM	*Thin is in: Exploring the Challenges, Pitfalls and Lower Limits of Thin Materials*	Session Chairs: Alex James, Harper Corporation of America; Jim Ratiu, A&M Label; Karen Moreland, RotoMetrics; Ron Horwitz, Dyna-Tech Adhesives, Incorporated	
11:40AM - 12:40 PM	Lunch		Regency A/B
12:00 PM - 5:00 PM	Tabletop Set-Up		Regency C/D
12:45 PM - 2:25 PM	*INKS TRENDING NOW# - Low Migration Inks and LED Curing*	Session Chairs: Mike Buystedt, Flint Group - Packaging & Narrow Web; Ingrid Brase, Henkel Corporation	
2:25 PM - 2:40 PM	Break		
2:40 PM - 4:20 PM	*Finding Tomorrow's Leaders - Hiring and Training for a World Class Organziation*	Session Chairs: Kelly Ferrara, Whitlam Label Company, Eric Seiler, Xeric Web Drying Systems	
4:20 PM - 4:30 PM	Close		Crystal Ballroom
5:30 PM - 7:30 PM	Tabletop Exhibit		Regency C/D
Thursday, September 5, 2013			
7:00 AM - 8:00 AM	Breakfast		Crystal Ballroom
	TRACK A	TRACK B	
8:00 AM - 9:30 AM	*Measure Waste: Measure Twice, Cut Once* Session Chairs: David Keely, The Dow Chemical Company; Jessica Harkins, Anderson & Vreeland, Inc.; Lori Campbell, The Label Printers; Tom Embley, Precision AirConvey Corporation	*Business Software: Adding Capacity without Adding Equipment* Session Chairs: Tim Daisy, EFI; Tammy Bivins, I.D. Images, LLC; Randy Krouse, Electro Optic US, Inc.	
9:30 AM - 9:45 AM	Break		
9:45 AM - 11:15 AM	*The Million Dollar Question, Flexo or Digital? Hear from Converters What Choices They Have Made* Session Chairs: Rick Mix, Xeikon; Dwane Wall, Creative Labels of Vermont	*How to Manage Color through Pre Press and Beyond* Session Chairs: Kelly Cooper, Flexografix; Mike Hang, Trinity Graphic USA, Inc.; Richard Black, All Printing Resources, Inc.;Michael Nicholas, Continental Datalabel	
11:15 AM - 12:45 PM	*Technology Boxing Ring - Press Manufacturers Duke it Out!* Session Chairs: Dwane Wall, Creative Labels of Vermont; Sean Cummins, Topp Digital Label Solutions; David Ellen, Domino Amjet	*FDA & OSHA - New Reforms & Standards Affecting the Industry* Session Chairs: David Dickerson, Spear; Rick Fox, Fox IV Technologies, Inc.	

*Session content and presenters may be subject to change.

For more Conference, registration and hotel information on the 2013 TLMI Technical Conference, go to www.tlmi.com
2013 TLMI Technical Conference - September 3-5, 2013 Hyatt Regency Hotel, Chicago, IL

ONE of the three Xeikon presses at CS Labels. The latest addition is a Xeikon 3500

CS Labels takes digital lead

NOW EUROPE'S BIGGEST XEIKON DIGITAL PRINT HOUSE with the installation of a new Xeikon 3500, CS Labels is intent on pushing the benefits and boundaries of digital printing. Andy Thomas reports

CS Labels has become the biggest single user of Xeikon digital presses in Europe following the installation of its third Xeikon press, a wide format Xeikon 3500. The arrival of the new press was timed to coincide with the West Midlands business expanding into an adjacent unit at its Willenhall Trading Estate location.

The new extension to the CS Labels business allows the company to double its office space, add a board room, and expand studio facilities, as well as providing a dedicated facility for its new Xeikon wide-format label press, and a temperature controlled paper store for all its digital machines.

The installation of the 516mm wide Xeikon 3500 represents a fifth machine purchase by CS Labels from Xeikon in just five years, with two of the early presses traded back during previous upgrade cycles. The new Xeikon 3500 machine provides an additional 50 percent printing capacity at the company.

A sizeable grant from the Government's Regional Growth Fund aided the purchase of the latest press. 'It is vital to monitor the availability of such grant options,' says CS Labels managing director Simon Smith. 'The availability of this funding was an important factor in our purchase decision, particularly with the additional cash required to re-fit the new building. It ensures that our cash flow continues to remain positive and we don't overstretch ourselves in any one direction.'

ALL DIGITAL PRODUCTION

Whilst two screen process presses are still in use, all flexographic printing has now ceased at the business, some five years on from the original Xeikon digital installation. Digital printing of labels now makes up some 90 percent of the throughput.

Has moving to all digital caused any problems for the

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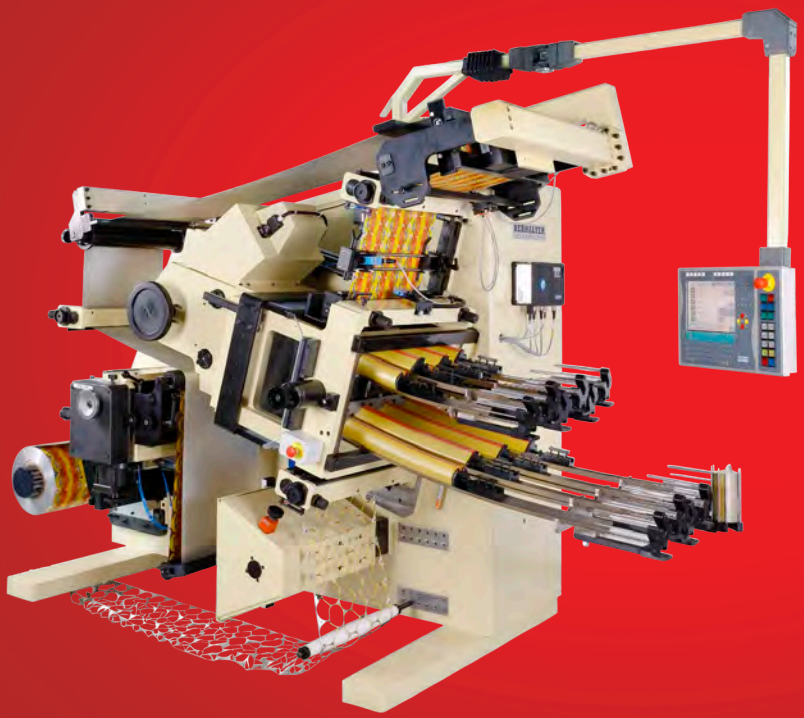

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company? 'Relatively few in reality,' says Smith. 'Of course, we focus on the advantages of the move to digital, and whilst we could always outsource any true flexographic orders, the speed improvements provided by Xeikon, along with the reduced run lengths being demanded by many customers, mean that digital really does seem to cover most of the requirements of our current client base.

'One recent convert actually sent their designers in to see us in order that we could provide them with a detailed explanation of the digital process. By the end of a very long day, they were not only convinced that digital was an essential move for their work, they had changed a design three times with press proofs, and they had increased the final order to cover 20 different types of label for their products.

'The gamut of digital is expanding all of the time. Short-run is certainly a key point of focus, but the flexibility, versatility and quality offered by the process are now more important than ever, and are seen as a real selling point by our sales people.'

516MM WIDE LABEL STOCK

The additional printing width available on the 516mm wide machine – the other Xeikon units at CS Labels produce a recognized industry standard 330mm wide web – provides a range of productivity enhancements, and offers significant additional capacity above and beyond its pure running speed. The company is using the new Xeikon software, VariLane. This allows the user to compile labels of differing length across the sheet. In conjunction with the machine's post-printing splitting capability, different label runs can be easily separated prior to re-reeling. 'This allows us to combine various jobs into one print run,' explains Smith. 'The cost of long run work especially can be significantly reduced by employing this technique.'

As the largest Xeikon label printing site in Europe, CS Labels is an official test site for the supplier, which has already resulted in the company trialing a number of software packages.

CS Labels is constantly seeking new added value print opportunities. The company has this year become the only certified UK Xeikon user able to offer ColorLogic metalized print solutions. 'ColorLogic is a great tool for us to have in our armory. It provides us with that something special when talking premium quality labels with a prospect.'

CS Labels is also introducing Xeikon's new ColorControl system. 'This enables us to have much better control over our output quality and match the output with conventional jobs that have been printed previously,' says Smith. 'It can manage our complete color workflow, allowing us to generate a new profile for every medium we print on for every press within our environment. It helps us to generate the best simulation of industry standards. And because it's a cloud-based service with no software to install and maintain, the tool requires low investment. Moreover, no investment is needed to develop in-house color management expertise.'

COMPETITIVE MARKET?

Digital presses are taking over more and more of the label sector. Does Simon Smith fear the increased competition? 'Not really. We have to always be mindful of the competitive nature of the business, of course. However, we are convinced that because we were at the vanguard of the move into digital label printing, we still have a two or three year knowledge advantage over much of the competition. Some companies have tried to drive the price of the printed product down: we aim to rise above that sales tactic with our skills. We will not get drawn into a price war. We win business with quality, problem solving and innovation.

"Jobs that have fallen into the 'digital challenges' category for the team at CS Labels have included the production of various 'peel & reveal' label products, and more recently a task that required the production of double-sided window-stickers containing personalized data front and back"

'Even today, our operators are overcoming issues, or digital job challenges, due to the experience that they have built up over the years. I am quite convinced that no other digital label printer in the UK could have handled some of the more complex jobs that we have produced this year.'

Jobs that have fallen into the 'digital challenges' category for the team at CS Labels have included the production of various 'peel & reveal' label products, and more recently a task that required the production of double-sided window-stickers containing personalized data front and back. 'It took us a little while to solve this problem, but we got there, and have now printed thousands of food hygiene stickers for up to 70 councils to date. It would have been incredibly expensive to have produced these by any other method.'

'We do not limit ourselves to small orders,' confirms Smith. 'We are talking very regularly to big business. We often find that bigger players have a clear understanding of the benefits offered by digital, and are very confident about embracing the technology. Current quotes that are in the mix include one for a 22 million run. The combination of the tools and skills that we have available means that it would be very difficult for a client such as this to find the product that they need anywhere else without compromising on their specification.'

In addition to presses, the company has had to be busy expanding its studio capabilities as well. 'Investment has had to take place across the board in order to keep up with the growing demand,' confirms Smith. 'Our expansion into the new building has allowed us to provide more space for pre-press, and new personnel have also been essential.'

More digital finishing equipment will be the company's next investment as its print capacity outgrows existing product.

3500 TECH SPECS

The Xeikon 3500 images at 1200 x 3600 DPI with 4-bit variable dot density across a 500mm wide substrate.

The press uses the Pericles screening library, which allows the screen ruling to be adjusted for every image element.

An inline densitometer enables the user to calibrate a press to ensure uniform and accurate color and color consistency between jobs and between presses. The press is configured with four process colors plus one station which can be used for opaque white or for a range of standard or custom-made spot colors to provide an extended color gamut.

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Avery Dennison optimistic about Latin America growth

AVERY DENNISON'S president and CEO Dean Scarborough and materials division president Don Nolan recently visited customers in Brazil, Chile and Colombia. James Quirk reports

Avery Dennison forecasts 'low double digit' sales growth for the company in Latin America this year, according to president and CEO Dean Scarborough – significantly higher than the two to four percent growth forecast the company expects globally.

Scarborough said the company has also seen low double digit sales growth in the Andean region in the first quarter of 2013, compared to the same period last year.

According to Don Nolan, global president of Avery Dennison's materials division, the company is growing faster in Latin America than in other emerging markets, and has invested some 50 million dollars in local infrastructure in the past 15 years.

Dean Scarborough and Don Nolan were speaking at a press briefing before a dinner in Sao Paulo with around 60 of its label converter customers. Among the attendees were representatives from leading Brazilian converters Alphacolor, Baumgarten, Grif, Mack Color and Prakolar.

The event in Brazil was part of a tour of customers in the region which also saw the pair visit Chile and Colombia, accompanied by Ronaldo Mello, Avery Dennison's vice president for South America.

'Latin America is an important region for Avery Dennison, both for our materials and RBIS divisions,' affirmed Dean Scarborough. 'We are seeing top line sales growth in the region.

'Latin America is becoming an important source of apparel for the United States, which benefits our RBIS division. In the material sector, we are particularly strong in the household goods, food and beverage, wine, and personal care sectors.'

Don Nolan added: 'Latin American customers are often among the first to adopt our new products,' citing particular interest from the region in the company's Global MDO film range.

Interest in Global MDO – described by Nolan as 'substantially thinner than other products on the market' – also reflects an increasing interest in environmental sustainability in the region. Another recent material launch, MultiCycle, which allows the label to remain on a bottle for up to 30 washes, is also garnering interest from Latin American converters, where returnable glass bottles are commonplace. According to Ronaldo Mello, 65 percent of beer bottles in Brazil are returnable.

GROWTH AND INVESTMENT

Scarborough, Nolan and Mello identified Peru and Colombia as the two fastest-growing markets in the region. They also enthused about the more mature markets of Chile – whose highly developed export market is dominated by self-adhesive – and Brazil, where they see great potential in the beverage sector as brands move from wet-glue to self-adhesive.

Nolan cited the example of mineral water, which has not yet seen wide adoption of pressure sensitive materials in Brazil, unlike in other parts of the world. 'As sales of premium brands increase,' he said, 'so does the likelihood of their using pressure sensitive materials.'

According to Ronaldo Mello, projects are already underway with various beverage brands in Brazil, including manufacturers of local spirit cachaça.

Don Nolan emphasized the company's recent investment in the region, which includes new distribution centers in Recife in northern Brazil and Lima, Peru. Capacity at the manufacturing facility in Vinhedo, Brazil, was increased last year. He said Avery Dennison has invested more than 50 million dollars in the region in the last 15 years.

In Argentina, meanwhile – currently beset by currency controls, import restrictions and high inflation – the company is benefitting from a local manufacturing presence not shared by its competitors.

New laws say companies can only import goods into the country if they are also exporting an equivalent volume. Avery's factory in San Luis, near the wine-growing region of Mendoza, is able to supply local converters with most of the materials from the company's portfolio. Exports from Argentina to Chile and Brazil have been increased in order to offset the importing of those materials which would otherwise not be locally available to Argentine converters.

L-R: Dean Scarborough, president and CEO; Don Nolan, global president of the materials division; and Ronaldo Mello, vice president for South America

MULTICYCLE, which allows the label to remain on a bottle for up to 30 washes, is garnering interest from Latin America, where returnable glass bottles are commonplace

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Acoban appoints new board

ACOBAN, the Mexican Association of Narrow Web Converters, has appointed a new board as it continues its focus on education. James Quirk reports

Acoban, the Mexican Association of Narrow Web Converters, announced its new board of directors at a recent networking event which brought 20 supplier and converter members together in Monterrey.

Jose Alfonso Rubio, owner of Materiales y Etiquetas Millenium, was named as the Acoban's new president. He paid tribute to his predecessor, Edgar Martinez, a partner at Grupo Etimex, for his successful two-year tenure at the head of the association.

Gerardo Gonzalez, owner of Etiprint, was appointed vice-president. Agustin Garza, director of WS Packaging Mexico, takes the role of secretary of the association; Heriberto Sanchez, owner of Etifilms, has been named treasurer.

The event in Monterrey allowed converter and supplier members to meet in one-on-one sessions of 15 minutes, so as to encourage connections and promote new products. Industry suppliers and Acoban members Esko, Grafica Novaro, Natural Ink and Proveedora Flexografica were in attendance.

'The aim for the next two years is to increase the number of members and to provide them with market information through surveys carried out in cooperation with the Chamber of Manufacturing Industry of Nuevo León [the Mexican state whose capital is Monterrey],' Jose Alfonso Rubio told L&L.

According to Rubio, Acoban will also seek to collaborate with North American label association TLMI during his term as president.

'We want to offer services which will allow our members to generate significant savings within their operations,' he said. 'And we want to continue to support graphic arts students by adding to the scholarships we already award every semester, and by strengthening the Acoban Tour for second-semester students.'

Involvement in education has been a pillar of Acoban's activities since its foundation. The association began a fund last year which currently grants 26 annual scholarships ranging from 50 to 90 percent to aid promising students who are unable to pay for their studies.

The students supported by Acoban attend the Conalep technical school in Monterrey, the only of its kind in Nuevo León. The association launched the Acoban Tour last year, allowing second-semester students – who have recently begun to study flexography – to spend a week visiting Acoban's label converter members.

The aim of the tour is to foster an interest in the label sector among the future generations of graphic arts professionals. The initiative has been a great success – this year's Acoban Tour, held in April, hosted 240 second-semester students.

'We want to give the students the opportunity to fall in love with graphic arts and have a closer connection with flexography,' said Acoban's administrative coordinator Monica Martinez. 'Visiting the converters allows them to see how these companies operate, to see the process in action, and to see the final product before it is sent to the client. The students can also do internships with the converters as part of their fifth semester.

'We are very grateful to Acoban members for opening their doors to the students – sometimes even offering them employment opportunities. It has been tremendously beneficial to both the converter and supplier members and the students themselves.'

In cooperation with Conalep, the association also runs a graphic arts workshop at the school, which this year is being attended by 460 students across three semesters.

L-R: Agustin Garza of WS Packaging Mexico, Jose Alfonso Rubio of Materiales y Etiquetas Millenium and Gerardo Gonzalez of Etiprint are Acoban's new secretary, president and vice-president respectively. The final board member, not pictured, is treasurer Heriberto Sanchez of Etifilms

L-R: New Acoban president Jose Alfonso Rubio praised his predecessor Edgar Martinez for his successful two-year tenure

LATIN AMERICA NEWS

FLEXO PRINT NAMED AS SOCIALLY RESPONSIBLE COMPANY

MEXICAN Center of Philanthropy recognizes converter for social and environmental initiatives

Mexican label converter Flexo Print, based outside Guadalajara, has been certified as a socially responsible company by civil association Cemefi (The Mexican Center for Philanthropy), *writes James Quirk.*

Flexo Print says it is one of the first converters in the country to achieve the ESR award – the Spanish acronym for socially responsible company.

The company was recognized for its commitment to both corporate social responsibility and environmental sustainability.

Social initiatives include a partnership with the local José Vasconcelos school; supporting children of staff in their studies; awarding scholarships to workers for high school studies; running internal and external campaigns promoting a culture of legality; and maintaining close relationships with workers' unions.

Environmental initiatives include the careful disposal of hazardous waste, recycling programs, reduction of waste, energy saving projects and a reforestation campaign.

'At Flexo Print, we have a definition of social responsibility,' said sales director Gabriel Ramírez. 'It is the conscious compromise between economic, social and environmentally sustainable management; taking into consideration the interests of the different groups of people with whom we deal; showing respect for people, for ethical values, for the community and for the environment; and contributing to the common good.'

Flexo Print, founded in 1994, has 200 employees and operates 14 printing presses at its plant outside Guadalajara. With flexo, offset, digital, silkscreen, embossing and hot and cold stamping capabilities, the company produces self-adhesive labels and shrink sleeves for the industrial and home care, health and beauty, food and beverage, pharmaceutical, and wine and spirits sectors.

'We believe in social responsibility and in the common good. We learn from our clients' examples and always seek to improve,' said Gabriel Ramírez.

THE INSIDER

A ROUND-UP OF THE LATEST GLOBAL LABEL STORIES

THE EVENT hosted around 60 converters from Medellin

AVERY DENNISON LAUNCHES NEW PRODUCTS IN COLOMBIA

Avery Dennison introduced a series of new products to the Colombian market at a recent event held at the Intercontinental hotel in Medellin. Some 60 customers from the local area were present.

The company unveiled its Prime Film and Global MDO ranges, Direct-Therm 200GP, Pharmaceutical range, and its portfolio of materials for the architecture and vehicle sectors.

Jorge Orejuela, general manager of Avery Dennison Colombia, Argentina and Chile, said at the opening of the event: 'Colombia and the Andean region has always been a strategically important area for Avery Dennison, and we are more committed than ever to our clients.

'We are committed to offering the most complete and innovative product portfolio to the market, supported by the best service.'

The Prime Film and Global MDO ranges, designed for the personal care sector, contain films which offer improved flexibility and transparency. They are claimed to be more sustainable and result in a smaller total applied cost to the converter and end user. They offer repositionability in the first minutes after application and improved on-press register control.

Direct-Therm 200GP, aimed at the food sector, is a thermal paper optimized for short run applications. It is said to offer exceptional performance in dry and humid conditions, while providing the durability and precision required by scanners.

Avery Dennison also launched Fasson Light Weight Litho, a material designed to meet the demands of the pharmaceutical sector.

The company also presented its portfolio for architecture and vehicle decoration, highlighting its new 'Conform Chrome' and 'Supreme Wrapping' films alongside the recently launched texture 'Carbon Fiber'.

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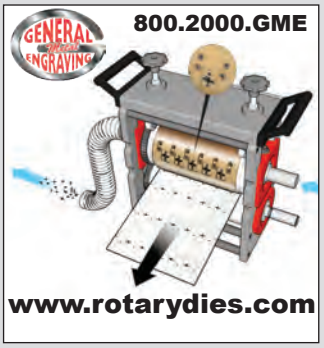

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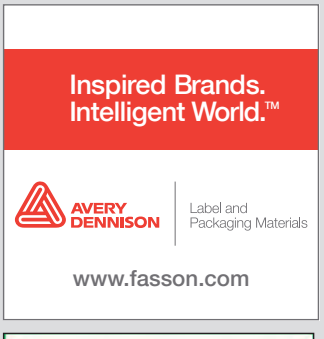

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Watch your step

EIGHT BEHAVIORS keeping your company in second place

1. YOUR NUMBER ONE GOAL IS TO MAKE MONEY
Taking your focus away from the bottom line may feel uncomfortable at first. But you'll soon find that when you focus on how best to serve clients, tough decisions make themselves. If it serves the client, you do it. If it doesn't, you don't. This neutralizes moral dilemmas and really simplifies your life.

2. YOU LET THE LITTLE THINGS SLIDE
So often in life, it's the small details that differentiate 'good' from 'great'. Stop being so distracted by the 'big grand ideas' and start getting the small details right. Promises kept, deadlines met, and small acts of kindness add up to happy clients.

3. YOU HABITUALLY LET CLIENTS GO TO VOICEMAIL
Clients First means all clients. Here's the payoff: When you make the choice to stand by all of your frazzled, frustrated customers, you will eventually reap financial and personal rewards. And chances are, your clients themselves will be grateful.

4. YOU FIND YOURSELF TELLING WHITE LIES
Honesty can be tough in the moment, but a reputation for trustworthiness (or untrustworthiness!) can stick with you for life. Live by a policy of never holding back or sugarcoating and you'll gain customer loyalty that money can't buy.

5. YOU'RE TRYING TO GET OFF THE PHONE RATHER THAN LISTEN
Companies that become number one don't do so because they win customers over once, but because they do it every day. A good experience last month usually won't keep a customer coming back this month if he or she believes that your level of service has slipped.

6. YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOUR CLIENTS LIKE
Do you see your clients as sources of income, or do you see them as actual human beings with likes, preferences, quirks, and stories? People want to do business with individuals they like – and they like people who like them!

7. YOUR MAIN OBLIGATION TO STAFF IS WRITING THEIR PAYCHECK
Your job is to serve others, period. You can't do that by making distinctions between the people who work for you and the people to whom you provide a good or bad service. Try to see your employees through a client's eyes and be honest: Would they win first or second place in a customer service competition?

8. YOU'RE NOT ABOVE BADMOUTHING THE COMPETITION
You can – and should – strive to win the approval, goodwill, and admiration of your competitors. If possible, get to know their leaders and employees and help them when you can. Don't do these things manipulatively but in the spirit of giving. Your efforts will come back to you with interest.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Extracted from Clients First: The Two Word Miracle (Wiley, October 2012, ISBN: 978-1-1184127-7-0, $21.95, www.clientsfirstbook.com).

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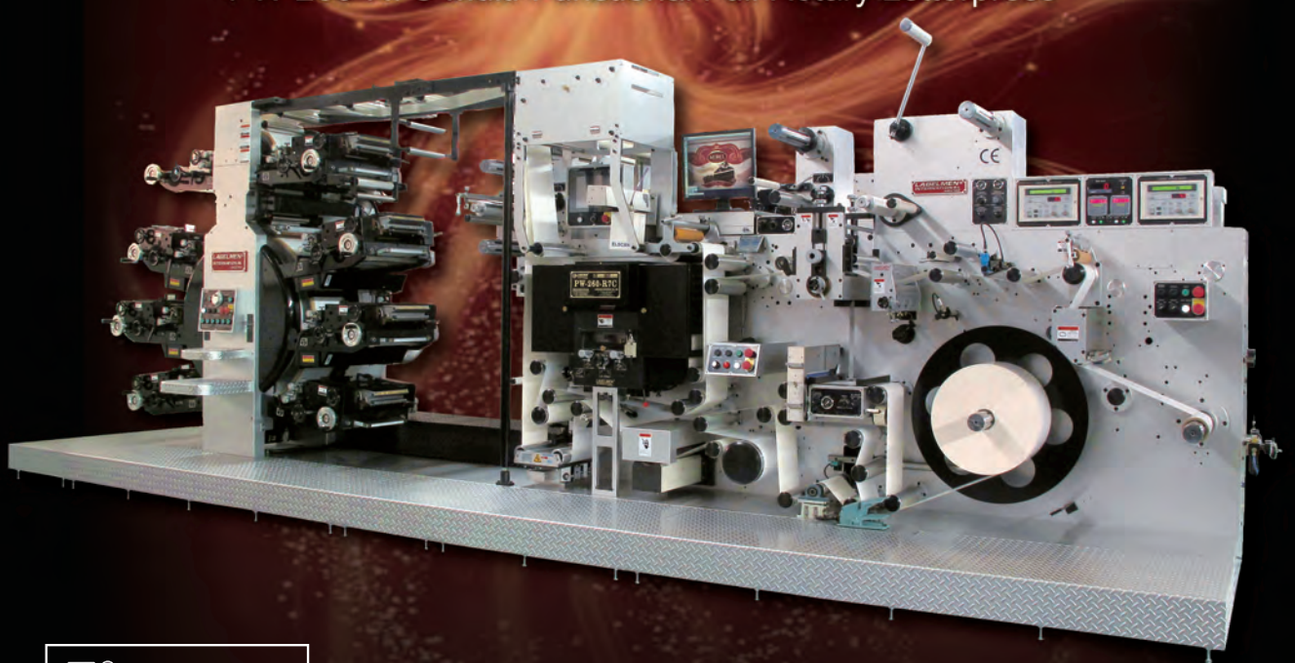

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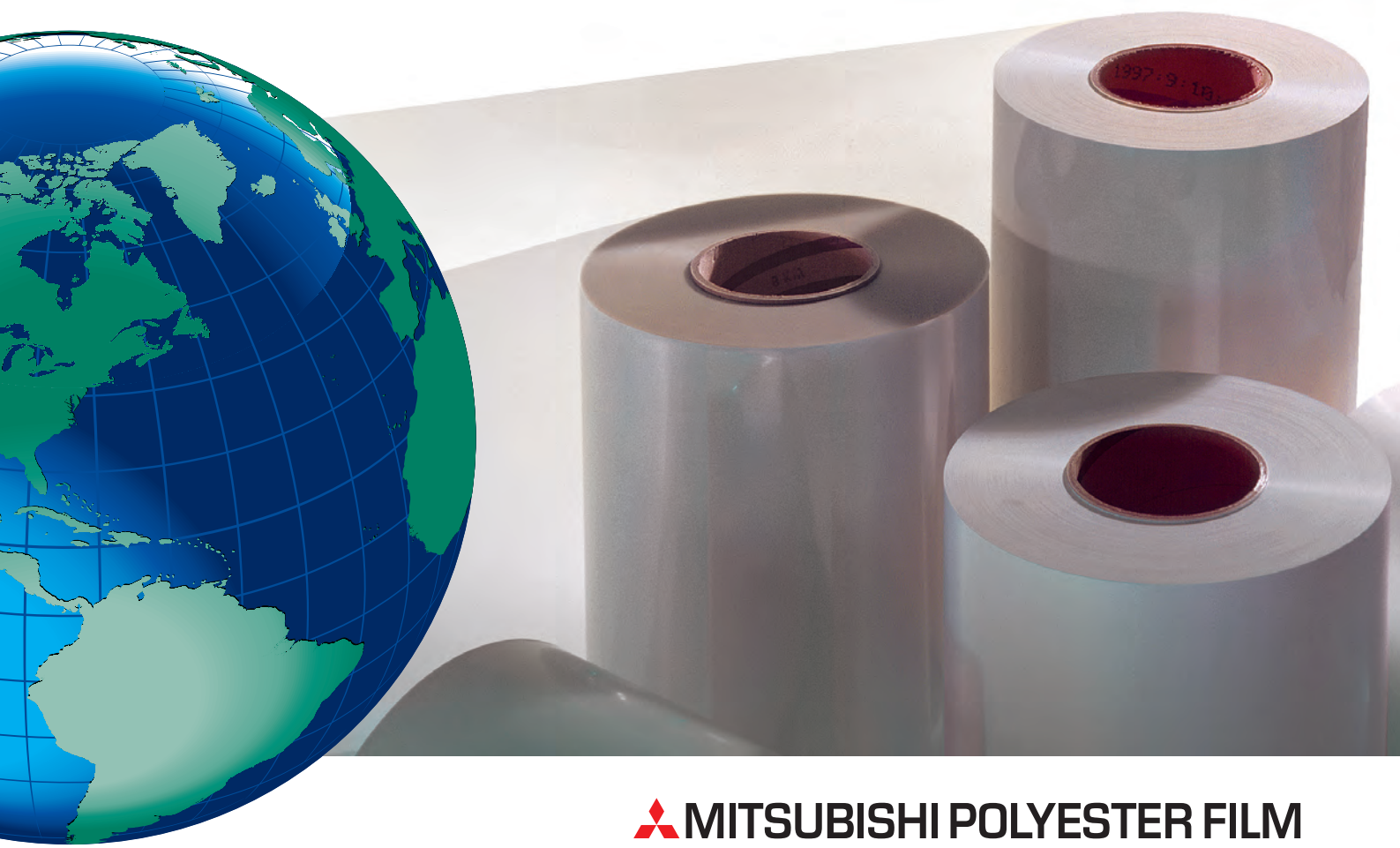

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