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VOLUME 45 | ISSUE # 3 | JUL - SEP 2023

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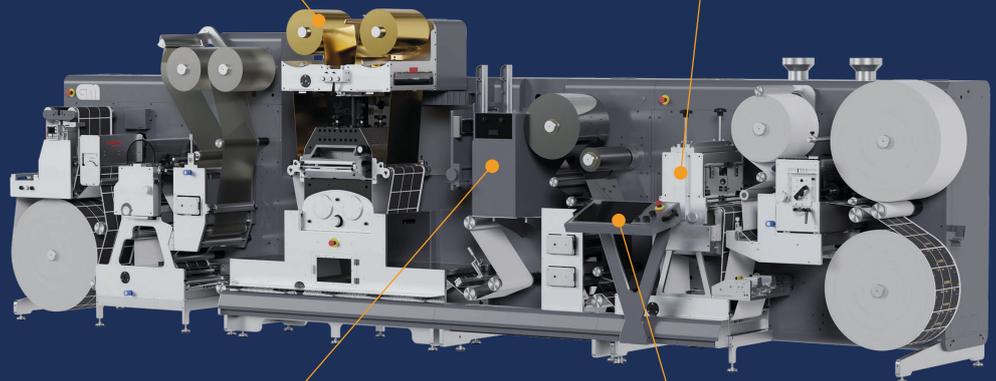
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CARTES is Gold Winner with "10 Vendemmie" label printed by GT360 by SOVEMEC Italy - www.sovmec.it (see below 1).

CARTES is the Silver Winner with "Araña" label printed by GT360 (see below 2).

Category Client Promotion Brochure.

CARTES is Gold Winner with "CARTES 1970-2020" label printed by GT360 (see below 3).

Category for Best Use of Laser Cutting (Decorative).

PARAGON Label is Gold Winner With "KOVAL" produced with CARTES Gemini Dual Laser Cutting Machine (see below 4) - www.resourcelabel.com



1



2



3



4

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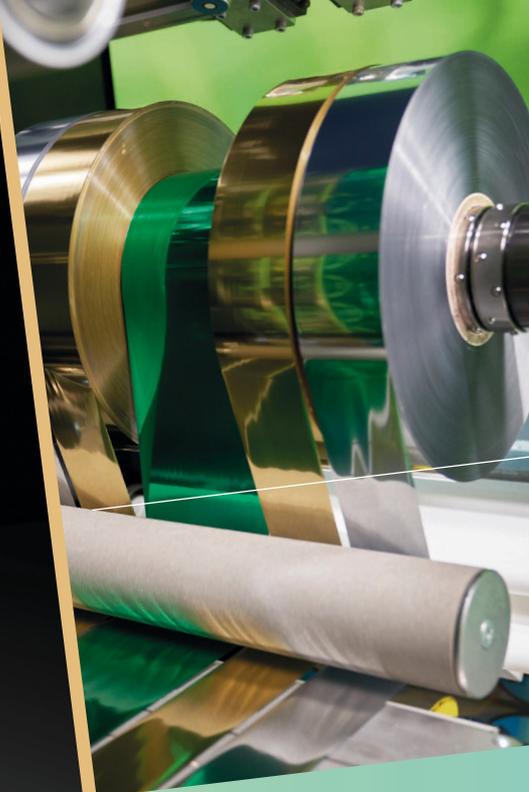
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L&L

– Meet the team

Labels & Labeling is the leading global information source for the label and package print converting industries with an editorial team and network of correspondents spread throughout the world



Chelsea McDougall
Group managing editor



Andy Thomas-Emans
Strategic director



Tim Gordon
Account director



Akanksha Meena
Global brands editor



Charlie Edward
North America editor



Yolanda Wang
China editor



James Quirk
Latin America correspondent



Gill Loubser
Africa correspondent



Bob Cronin
M&A columnist



Paul Brauss
Continuous improvement columnist



Vicki Strull
Branding and design columnist



Rosalyn Bandy
Sustainability columnist

Editorial

Chelsea McDougall, *Group managing editor*
Andy Thomas-Emans, *Strategic director*
Akanksha Meena, *Global brands editor*
Charlie Edward, *North America editor*
Yolanda Wang, *China editor*
James Quirk, *Latin America correspondent*
Gill Loubser, *Africa correspondent*
Bob Cronin, *M&A columnist*
Paul Brauss, *Continuous improvement columnist*
Vicki Strull, *Branding and design columnist*
Rosalyn Bandy, *Sustainability Columnist*

T: +44 (0)20 8846 2835
E: editorial@labelsandlabeling.com

Advertising

Andrew Galloway, *Sales director*
Tim Gordon, *Account director*
Alexa Rode-Hilbert, *Account director Europe & Africa*
Daniel Zhao, *Account manager China*
Chris Schroll, *Account manager USA and Canada*
Jenny Wang, *Account manager China*
Kevin Liu, *Project director China*
Mirco Mazzarella, *Account Director Europe & Latin America*
Pradeep Saroha, *Account manager India*
Randy Kessler, *Vice president of USA advertising sales*
Richard Quirk, *Account manager Europe & Asia*

T: +44 (0)20 8846 2818
E: advertising@labelsandlabeling.com

Design

Adam Evans, *Lead Designer*
Victoria Bone, *Designer*
Laura Burns, *Designer*
Simon Taljaard, *Designer*

T: +44 (0)20 8846 2841
E: design@labelsandlabeling.com

Production

James Wenman, *Design & production manager*
T: +44 (0)20 8846 2833
E: production@labelsandlabeling.com

Marketing

Paul Connelly, *Marketing director*
Hannah O'Farrell, *Marketing manager*

T: +44 (0)20 8846 2825
E: marketing@labelsandlabeling.com

Management

Lisa Milburn, *Managing director*
Jade Grace, *Portfolio director*
Chelsea McDougall, *Group content director*
T: +44 (0)20 8846 2818

Publishers

Tarsus Exhibitions and Publishing Ltd, Metro Building,
1 Butterwick, London, W6 8DL, United Kingdom.
T: +44 (0)20 8846 27001

Other offices

Tarsus Exhibitions Inc, 6300 N River Road,
Suite 301 Rosemont, IL 60018, United States.
T: +1 262 782 1900

Tarsus (Shanghai) Exhibitions Ltd. Room B1-B2,
Floor 28, Junyao Plaza, No.789, Zhaojiabang Road,
Xuhui district, Shanghai, 200032 China.
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Tarsus Exhibitions India Pvt Ltd, GoHive- 10th Floor,
Paras Trinity, Golf Course Extensions Road, Sector 63,
Gurugram-122002, Haryana, India.
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Subscriptions

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ISSN: 1478-7520

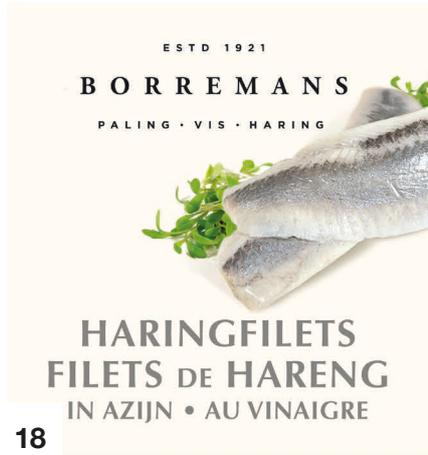
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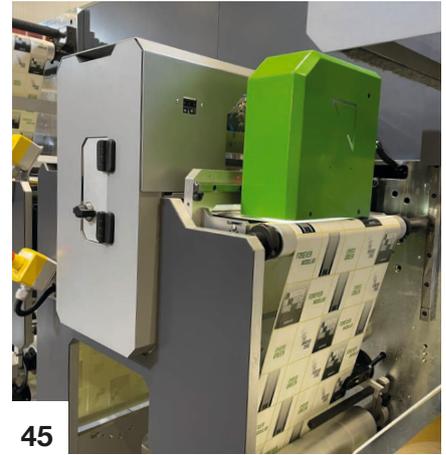
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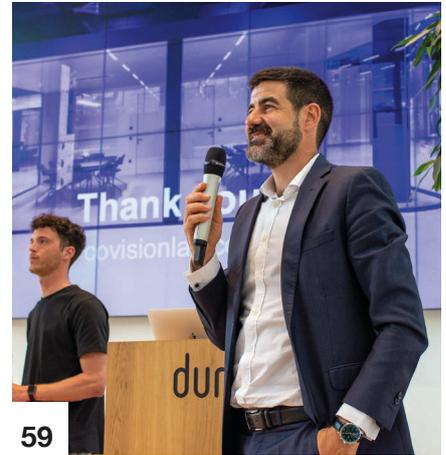
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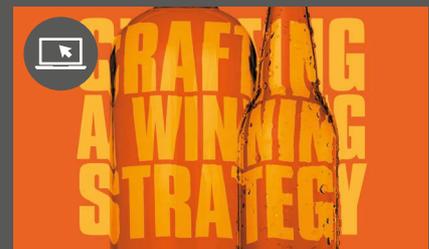
A UK-based alcohol-free beer brand, seeks to stand out in the market by offering a product that excels in taste and craftsmanship

Online contents labelsandlabeling.com



Installations sizzle in July (video)

As July heats up, installations have taken the spotlight. This video highlights the innovative tech installations from top companies across the globe



Read L&L issue 2 online (magazine)

The previous issue of Labels & Labeling is now available to read online



Sustainability trends boost wet glue market (feature)

Glue-applied labels remain the dominant form of prime product labels, providing key volume, sustainability and print quality



Brand protection: the brand owner perspective (Label Academy)

Christina Mitropoulos, from American Apparel & Footwear Association, offers a perspective on brand protection

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L&L looks back (L&L issue 4, 2013)



P52 Andy Thomas reported on the Finat congress in Munich, Germany. Dominated by family-run, medium-sized enterprises, Germany emerged as Europe's leading force in labeling. Amidst the stagnation of mature Western European markets, German converters were highlighted for strategies for finding growth opportunities.



P77 L&L reported that Ahlstrom's European operations merged with Munksjö, creating one of the world's largest specialty paper producers, and highlighted Munksjö's commitment to innovation and sustainability in a significantly restructured specialty paper industry, and placed a strong emphasis on release liners.



P83 L&L reported on the rise of linerless technology in response to cost and environmental pressures in the fresh foods sector. Ravenwood Packaging led this shift with a flexible system widely adopted by major retailers. Its application demonstrated the potential for other industries.



P145 L&L reported on Labelexpo Europe 2013. Key highlights included advances in toner and inkjet technologies and LED-UV curing. The event spotlighted growing trends in the label printing industry and debuted groundbreaking machines. At the core of its theme was simply: innovation.

Back to Brussels

Editor's note

When Labelexpo Europe 2023 returns to Brussels Expo – the first time since 2019 – it will unleash four years of pent-up technology development and innovation for the global label industry.

Labelexpo Europe arrives at a time when automation, sustainability and product diversification are coming together, and this year promises to deliver.

After an absence in 2022, flexo manufacturers are making a return with Bobst, Etirama, Lombardi, Mark Andy, Nilpeter and Omet all bringing narrow and mid-wed flexo technology to the show floor. It will also be an exciting year for digital technology, with the innovations launched in Chicago last year, taking center stage at the Europe show,

“Labelexpo Europe arrives at a time when automation, sustainability and product diversification are coming together”

including technology from Dantex, Domino, Gallus, HP Indigo and Konica Minolta on show.

Flexible packaging will be a major theme, with event organizers hosting a flexible packaging trail that takes on both digital and conventional press technologies, along with material constructions, decoration options, migration testing and more.

This is alongside a new wave of digital technologies for flexible packaging that will be launched this year, from the likes of HP Indigo, Screen and

Xeikon. Turn to page 100 for a comprehensive preview of all the technology on site.

In other news, we are grateful to have the support of Leonhard Kurz once again for this beautifully embellished cover design. Kurz has been supporting the cover of Labels & Labeling as a platform to showcase its eye-catching embossing materials and hot stamping technology.

The Kurz material used on this L&L cover was a Conductive Blue Luxor 110684 and was chosen by the design teams to reflect current

packaging trends. Conductive Blue Luxor is metalized and ultra-glossy and had sustainability features.

Hot stamping dies were provided by Hinderer + Mühlich. The design includes nanoembossing effects for a unique front cover. In nanoembossing, only the surface of the hot stamping transfer product is modified, while the printing stock remains unchanged for limitless design options.

This issue of the magazine and should be used as a guide to help you navigate Labelexpo. L&L looks forward to seeing you there.

Chelsea McDougall
Group managing editor

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Installations



01 *Screen L350UV SAI inkjet press*
Label Plus, New Zealand
 Queensland-based Label Plus has invested in a Screen L350UV SAI inkjet press. The press was sold and installed by Jet Technologies. Label Plus specializes in commercial label printing and offers a range of self-adhesive labels from its production site in Luscombe. The company utilizes flexography, offset and digital printing methods and serves various industries including pharmaceuticals, health and beauty, chemicals, food, household and wine. The L350UV SAI inkjet press automates the digital printing process, significantly increasing turnaround speeds. It also reduces ink and material waste, lowering costs and improving sustainability. Label Plus conducted a thorough evaluation process before choosing the L350UV SAI, including visiting users of the press in the UK to

understand its benefits in a sophisticated market.

02 *MPS EF next generation press*
Meyers, United States
 Meyers has expanded its production capacity by acquiring a new fully automated flexographic press, the MPS EF next generation. This 530mm, 10-color press incorporates IoT technology to enable 24/7 data collection and feedback, allowing for production optimization by identifying bottlenecks and suggesting improvements automatically. It is equipped with a side load die station and Martin Automatic butt splicer. Meyers, a print manufacturer in packaging, labels and retail display since 1949, has had a successful partnership with MPS since 2008. The user-friendly MPS presses, feature technologies such as the MPS crisp dot and patented e-sleeve, prioritize print quality. Additionally, the press

incorporates the GEW AeroLED high-power UV LED system to reduce power consumption and an AVT Helios inspection system for quality control.

03 *Bobst Digital Master 340 press*
Germark, Spain
 Germark, a label production company in Spain, has expanded its fleet of printing equipment with the addition of a Bobst Digital Master 340 press. The purchase is part of Germark's strategy to enhance automation and offer sustainable products. The company already operates two Bobst Master M5 flexo presses and a Bobst inkjet machine. The Digital Master 340 is a fully digitalized and automated production line, enabling seamless printing and finishing processes. Equipped with Bobst's Accucheck quality control system, it ensures precise calibration of the digital printing unit and thorough inspection of label quality. The press

allows Germark to manufacture adhesive labels in a single pass, minimizing waste and delivery time. The press can be operated by a single person and offers high-speed printing at a resolution of 1200 dpi.

04 *MPS EF 340 flexo press*
Redfern Labels, South Africa
 Redfern Labels has installed a new MPS EF 340 flexo press at its Johannesburg facility. The press, sold by Rotocon and MPS, features advanced technology such as MPSCoast for real-time performance insights, delam/relam and turnbar capabilities, multilam (cold foil), a separate laminating unit and two die stations with adjustable anvil systems. The press is equipped with Phoseon's Nexus One UV LED curing systems. Redfern Labels is known for producing flexographic labels including pressure-sensitive labels, printed BOPP and shrink sleeves. The

Leading digitalization



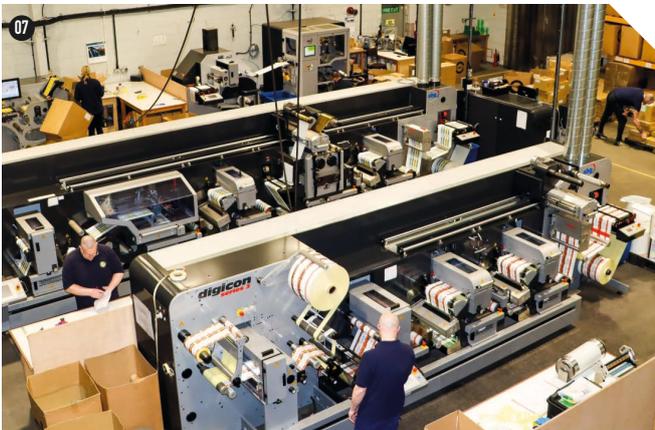
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Installations



MPS EF press data collection helps optimize performance and reduce waste by identifying bottlenecks and errors.

05 *Vinsak USAR 430 finishing machine*

Emirates Polystyrene Industries, United Arab Emirates
Dubai-based manufacturer Emirate Polystyrene Industries (EPI) improved its plastic packaging production by installing the Vinsak USAR 430 finishing machine at its label division, Eva Labels. EPI, established in 1988, produces plastic rolls and wanted to meet the growing demand for eco-friendly durable packaging in the dairy and ice cream industries. The modular USAR 430 machine features a fully servo-driven system, inline die-cutting, pneumatic unwinders and rewinders, razor slitting, dual rewinders and the capability to slit materials

ranging from 12-micron films to 450gsm boards. The integration of the USAR 430 allows Eva Labels to achieve high-quality label finishing, meeting diverse customer requirements.

06 *Two Mark Andy P7E flexo presses*

BlueStone Label Company, United States
BlueStone Label Company, a Tennessee-based label provider, installed two Mark Andy Performance Series P7E flexo presses at its production facility. The company has experienced remarkable progress, led by CEO Brad Shuff, expanding from a 700,000 USD business to over 14 million USD in just five years. The Mark Andy P7s are 17-inch 8-color full-servo flexo lines equipped with hot-air drying, UV curing, Vetaphone corona treaters, delam/relam units and slitting capability. Notably, it features production speeds of up to 700ft/min.

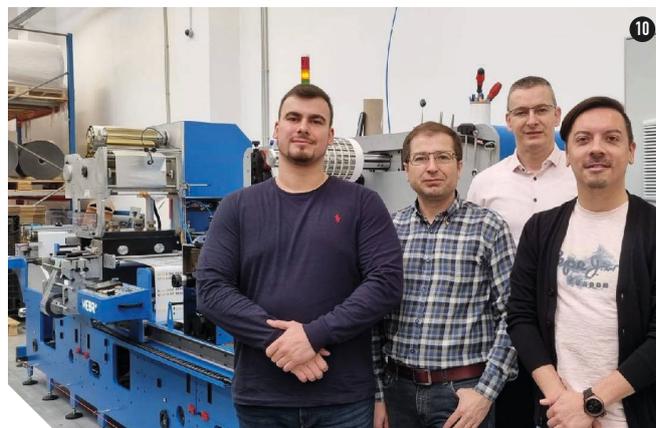
07 *AB Graphic Digicon Series 3 and more*
Abbey Labels, United Kingdom

Abbey Labels has enhanced its finishing capabilities by investing in three new machines from AB Graphic International. The additions include a Digicon Series 3 line for peel-and-reveal and multilayer labels, a Vectra turret rewinder for faster changeovers and a flatbed screen-printing unit for added-value embellishments. The new Digicon features a re-registration lamination unit and offers flexibility with its corona unit, flexo stations, die-cutting and auto-slitting functions. The upgrade has also freed up capacity on Abbey Labels' existing specialist embellishment Digicon, which now includes a high-speed screen-printing module. Furthermore, the investment includes a Vectra Autoset turret rewinder.

08 *Durst Tau 330 RSC E inkjet press*
Label-Form, United Kingdom

Label-Form has invested in the Durst Tau platform. The company completed its first commercial job using the Tau 330 RSC E single-pass inkjet press with five colors (CMYK and white) and a chiller unit. This new machine has opened new markets for Label-Form and provided quality benefits, including 1200 dpi resolution and enhanced color visibility with the use of white ink. The Durst technology complements other machines and now represents 35 percent of Label-Form's sales. The Ink Save Mode of the Durst press is expected to result in significant cost savings. The investment decision was influenced by a comprehensive evaluation of the market and the performance of Durst compared to other machines.

Installations



09 *Edale FL1 Prime flexo label press* **Bristol Labels, United Kingdom**

Bristol Labels, a provider of customized self-adhesive labels for the food and drinks industry, has invested in the Edale FL1 Prime flexographic label press. The FL1 Prime press, measuring 350mm (13.7in) wide, features a screen module, six color UV and EZ reg technology, offering a camera-based registration system for precise control in both X and Y directions. Bristol Labels, which primarily operates digital machines, added the FL1 Prime flexo press to expand its capabilities. The acquisition of the FL1 Prime press supports Bristol Labels' goal of doubling its turnover rapidly.

10 *Lemorau Mebr+ Litograf, Slovakia*
Slovakian printing company, Litograf, has acquired the Lemorau Mebr+ machine for

enhanced production. The Mebr+ machine, with a 330mm web size, offers optional features such as hot foil stamping with embossing drawer, air trim removal, waste rewinder and QRC software. Litograf's decision to invest in the Mebr+ followed extensive research and confidence in Lemorau's reputation for delivering quality machines. The Mebr+ machine, capable of rotary and semi-rotary operation, includes features like an electronic web guide, servo motor-controlled web tension, 250 job memories and double rewinding. Additional optional features available for the Mebr+ include corona treatment, cold foil, flexo printing units with UV curing and automatic knife positioning. Litograf has previously purchased multiple Lemorau machines, including another Mebr+, two manual core cutters (CT1500), an automatic rewinder (RA) and two roll lifters (ER400).

11 *MPS EF 430 flexo press Sungsin, South Korea*
Korean converter Sungsin has acquired and installed the MPS EF 430 flexo press, a next-generation machine for printing multi-layer adhesive labels. The sale and installation were facilitated by local partner Müller Korea and MPS Systems Asia. Sungsin's new flexo press incorporates several notable features, including the MPS inline laminator for pre-printed web lamination, a cold foil laminator, the MPS cross-over unit for web slitting and layer placement, the MPS rail system for precise positioning of converting units, e-sleeve technology for faster and predictable printing results and MPSCoast for real-time performance monitoring and analysis.

12 *Xeikon PX3000 UV inkjet press Etiflex, Poland*
Responding to rising demand for digital labels, Poland-based Etiflex

has invested in a Xeikon PX3000 UV inkjet press to enhance productivity and penetrate new markets. Co-owners Przemysław Wagner, Karol Kuligowski and Piotr Smoliński chose the Xeikon PX3000 for its high-opacity white print feature in one pass. The acquisition expanded its customer base to industries like craft breweries, beverages, automotive and cosmetics. The press prints five colors – CMYK and white – and handles a wider range of substrates for digital labels. The device's configuration allows hybrid printing and personalization. It has optimized production costs, improved performance and increased production capacity for Etiflex. The company is successful with clients requiring labels on transparent films, valuing the high-coverage white ink.



For more installation news, visit www.labelsandlabeling.com



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Label & packaging showcase

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04

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UDEN TILSAT SUKKER

275 ml

05

PRIVEDA

SPOT CLEARING PATCH

57 PATCHES

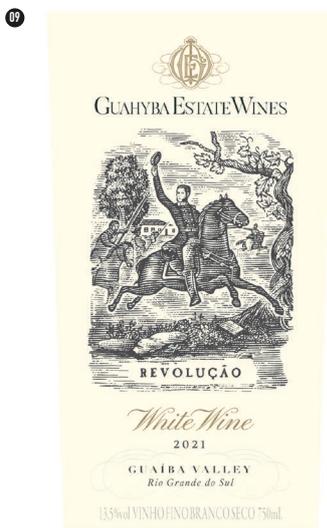
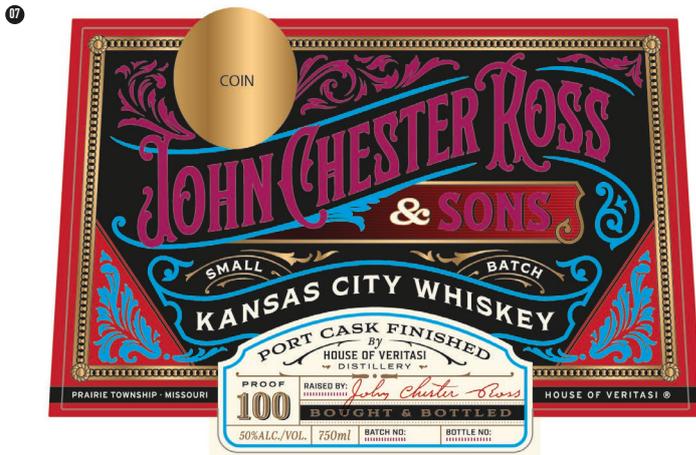
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02 Chimo
Design agency:
Design Republic
(Brussels, Belgium)

03 Borremans
Design agency:
Design Republic
(Brussels, Belgium)

04 Naturfrisk Apple
Design agency:
Everland
(Copenhagen,
Denmark)

05 Priveda
Design agency:
Rebase Design
(Bangalore, India)



06 Escalvada
London Dry Gin
Design agency:
Holy Studio
(Porto Alegre, Brazil)

07 John Chester
Ross & Sons
Whiskey
Design agency:
Holy Studio
(Porto Alegre, Brazil)

08 Zena Syrah Rose
Design agency:
Holy Studio
(Porto Alegre, Brazil)

09 Guahyba
Estate Wines
Design agency:
Holy Studio
(Porto Alegre, Brazil)

10 Genys Beershine
Design agency:
Bold brands
(Kaunas, Lithuania)

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Polilux is the youngest player of BOPP production industry. The company was established in 2018 and its main purpose has been to focus special products such as IML, PSL so far. Polilux has been performing production with specially designed Brückner Technology in order to produce the highest quality of label materials.

Polilux today exports material to 26 countries and this number reached in only 3 years after establishment. The company has only one purpose as to be a leading producer of special products. As a consequence Polilux launched its first BML (Blow-Moulding Label) product in 2022 and the company is producing high quality of PSL Facestock material which can serve high end market since January 2023. Polilux invested the first of its kind investment which will be the only one in the World. The main purpose of this investment is to match with company's objectives as to be leading special product supplier.



polilux

+90 282 686 70 00

info@polilux.com

www.polilux.com



Andy Thomas-Emans column

Sustainability and automation join forces at Labelexpo

As Labelexpo Europe 2023 approaches, suppliers are revealing the new technologies on show. Most have to do with automation and sustainability, Andy Thomas-Emans writes

In the run-up to the first Labelexpo Europe show for four years, it has been fascinating to attend supplier pre-show press conferences and learn about what they will be showing in Brussels and about their strategies going forward.

Two themes stand out: automation and sustainability.

Sustainability and automation are, in fact, closely linked. Making label converters more sustainable is not just a question of conserving energy and cutting waste in the production process. It is also about maintaining a sustainable workforce at a time when attracting young recruits to the industry is becoming more and more difficult.

Automation technology, increasingly powered by AI-driven machine learning, allows semi-skilled and skilled labor to be replaced, leading directly to a more sustainable and profitable business. This does not mean a threat to the existing workforce. Automation creates new and different roles further up the value chain.

Automation directly impacts sustainability in other ways – most obviously in waste reduction.

One example would be the automated uploading of job information directly from a management information system to set up a press or finishing/inspection equipment.

This replaces manual double-keying of job data, which is not only laborious and non-value adding but is also likely to lead to entry errors, which ultimately results in waste.

Extended color gamut printing (ECG) in flexo allows pre-press automation of the color management process, with no more manual color matching on press. But ECG also cuts down waste, both because print units do not have to be washed down between jobs, and because there is no leftover ink from mixing solid colors.

Automation is also impacting the converting end of the press, as we see a continuing move toward high-speed semi-rotary die cutting allowing automated

“Mid-web flexo and digital presses can produce short runs of flexible packaging with far less waste than on wide web CI and gravure presses”

loading and ejection of dies. This, in turn, greatly reduces the need for heavy tooling and the associated manual labor.

Many other striking sustainability initiatives are being launched at Labelexpo 2023.

Linerless is a technology that has long been confined in commercial production to industrial and VIP labeling applications, where square/rectangular cut labels are standard and there is a solid installed base of linerless application machinery.

But cracking linerless in the prime label market has proved a bigger challenge. Brands have been reluctant to give up the ability to die-cut labels, and reluctant also to change out their highly efficient automated PS label applicators.

Now Avery Dennison and Bobst have announced the launch at Labelexpo Europe 2023 a linerless system which involves printing on a standard laminate (so no change in the label converter's printing workflow), then delaminating the face material, which is microperforated, slit and surface coated with silicone all in a single machine pass. The backing liner is recovered and sent back to Avery Dennison for recycling.

Avery Dennison has worked with Harlands on the applicator side, so this forms a complete ecosystem. Will this finally convince brand owners that the sustainability benefits of prime linerless labeling outweigh the marketing benefits

of die-cut labels? Maybe it will be the 'challenger' brands who take up the technology as part of their overall drive to use sustainability as a unique selling proposition.

With a greater focus than ever on flexible packaging at this Labelexpo, flex pack sustainability comes under the spotlight. Label converters diversifying into flex pack have been quick to point out that mid-web flexo and digital presses can produce short runs of flexible packaging with far less waste than on wide web CI and gravure presses. And on the materials side, we will see the launch of fully recyclable mono-material plastic stand-up pouches along with a clear trend toward mono-material paper pouches. Xeikon and Screen both introduce presses targeted at this latter application.

And looking at label material sustainability trends, we see a pivot away from biodegradable and compostable materials toward those that 'enable' a truly circular economy. This is most noticeable in adhesives that separate the label cleanly from glass and plastic containers, enabling the recovery of clean PET and allowing glass bottles to be cleaned, relabeled, refilled, and back around the loop. Visitors will also note a trend to use more post-consumer waste in label constructions, helping create the economic underpinnings of the circular economy.

The special Labelexpo Europe 2023 show features will allow visitors to explore each of these themes in more detail. These include the Automation Arena, ECG workshop, Flexible Packaging Trail and masterclasses on flexible packaging and sustainability. In addition, make sure you continue to follow Labels & Labeling online as we report new sustainability and automation technology launched closer to the show.



For a detailed A-Z preview of Labelexpo Europe 2023, turn to page 100

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A holistic approach to continuous improvement

Take a look at the toolbox for continuous improvement. Paul Brauss writes

Each business improvement methodology has a primary focus and approach to driving improvement in an organization. A process engineer I worked with a couple of weeks ago asked which of the three improvement methodologies I liked the best between lean manufacturing, the theory of constraints and Six Sigma. This person was seeking advice on the best medicine for his company's mediocre financial performance. It is not the first time I have heard the question, and I offer this insight for leaders on the verge of making a commitment to improvement and looking to jump-start programs that are now inactive.

Waste and drivers

Lean manufacturing alone focuses on the elimination of process waste. Our lean training traditionally lists seven types of waste with three driving contributors.

The seven types of waste are:

1. Correction
2. Overproduction
3. Movement of Material
4. Motion
5. Waiting
6. Inventory
7. Processing

And the three driving contributors are:

1. Unevenness
2. Overburden
3. Current process methods

Waste has a distinct look and feel, requiring extra floor space, extra time, inventory stockpiles, missed shipments, mediocre quality and an organization that needs to be more proactive in prevention.

The worst of the waste elements is overproduction because it drives unnecessary work with movement, storage and cash drain. Because the waste is visual on the production floor, many lean initiatives focus on shop floor practices with a heavy emphasis on kaizen projects. The commitment to lean real-life practices produces good results. Still, after initial kaizen campaigns around 5S and some basic requirements, they become nothing more than isolated islands of excellence. Efforts are operator focused and typically do not address company culture, so most initiatives run their course quickly without sustained internalization.

The Six Sigma method focuses on

“Lean manufacturing alone focuses on the elimination of process waste”

process variability. Variation of process drives waste. Understanding process capability and both upper and lower limits are fundamental. Seeing a process drift through regimented quality checks allows time for operators to make necessary adjustments. The principles of Six Sigma focus on customer needs for quality and then eliminate variations to that quality expectation. There is a heavy emphasis on training and certification, and certified leaders tend to direct lengthy projects. The approach requires a constant focus on data integrity, and operators need a higher ownership level for adoption. Projects are driven by experts within the company who help make a process flow smoother. Since a high level of expertise is required, cultural adoption takes longer.

The theory of constraints hones in on the elimination of bottlenecks. The best book on the topic is 'The Goal,' and it's a mandatory reading requirement for most operational management programs. It is a staple requirement on any continuous improvement reading list. The fundamental requirement is to find the limiting factor in a series of processes. The emphasis is to improve the process until it is no longer a constraint. Then move to the following constraint and repeat. In the converter world, the most logical example is to look at the press and the related finishing equipment partnered with the press. It does not matter how fast you print a label if you cannot perform the finishing processes simultaneously. A mismatch causes inventory bottlenecks and waste. Finding

process constraints takes careful analysis and emphasizes a need for trained material flow experts who look for larger high-value targets that will unlock process capacity.

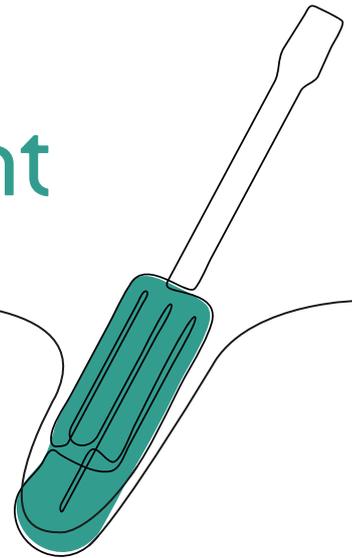
Continuous improvement tools

Continuous improvement tools, such as value stream and process mapping, impact analysis, waste identification and more (see boxout) are essential to the commitment to continuous improvement but, by themselves, cannot address the organization's full range of strategic needs.

I used most of the tools in the toolbox for many years, first as an industrial engineer, plant manager, and eventually the CEO of a major Fortune 500 company. The game changed when I was introduced to an improvement bundling approach that began with the fundamental belief that an enterprise is a series of linked processes.

Any improvement approach must understand their interdependencies so that performance improvement initiatives have a lasting impact aligned throughout an organization. Governance that reaches all major business processes must be important to a company improvement model, beginning with a high-level strategy implemented over the entire value chain.

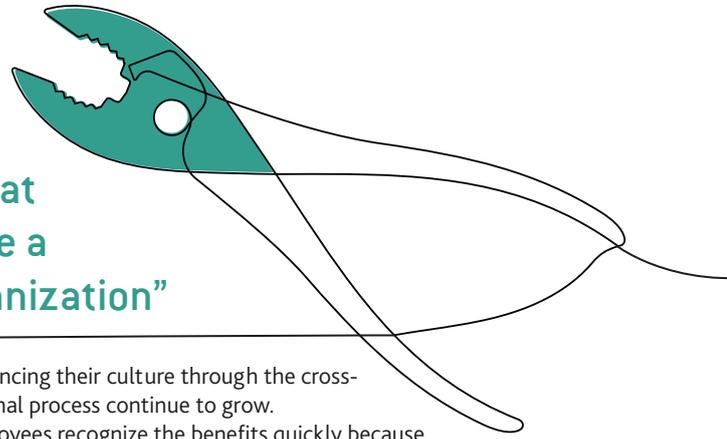
Most individualized tools mistakenly seen as large-scale process improvement efforts miss the whole value chain participation requirement and then come up short of expectations, often failing within the first 12 months of implementation.



Continuous improvement tool chest

- Value stream mapping
- Process mapping
- Pareto analysis
- Ishikawa diagrams
- 3W (who, what, when)
- Impact analysis
- Future state mapping
- Project management
- Metrics focused on time
- FPY (first pass yield)
- House of lean
- Standard work
- 5S
- Visual factory
- Waste identification
- Kaizen/barrier removal

“Any improvement approach must understand their interdependencies so that performance improvement initiatives have a lasting impact aligned throughout an organization”



As our initiatives mature, we understand eliminating barriers on press with improvements such as speed, set-up reduction, and minimizing change over time are necessary improvements that make work life for an operator much more manageable and produce beneficial results. Companies that have matured enough to understand that process shortcuts lead to downstream issues understand the need to implement barrier removal actions that help standardize the process. They often move to improve attention to metrics with process audits encouraging elimination and standardization of process variations. Resolving process barriers requires reaching across function responsibilities and implementing changes upstream of the shop floor. The benefit to this activity is often 10 times that of simple process techniques barriers.

There is a way to use all the process improvement tools already in use by many converters and accelerate cultural changes that yield returns 100 times more beneficial than taking the individual approaches discussed.

The focus is a Process Value Management approach using inclusive cross-functional teams driven from the top but highly dependent on a bottom-up implementation approach. It requires a holistic view of the organization across all the business processes.

The reason this is unique is that, unlike the singularly focused strategies that address specific areas, the cross-function teams, in concert with the tools from lean, Six Sigma, and the theory of constraints, accelerate a cultural change that brings a new way of acting and thinking to the continuous improvement process.

Cross-functional approach

As competitive forces increase and resource constraints strangle improvement efforts, business owners and leaders search for an approach to challenge leadership to act much differently to address the threats and awaken current resource participation. Using cross-functional teams expands stakeholders' representation in business improvement decisions. The team prioritizes initiatives, resources and objectives. They do this quickly by staying true to a hierarchy of metrics classified as 'drivers.'

I was introduced to the process by Dr Phillip Thomas, founder of the Thomas Group. The cross-functional approach became a holistic organizational catalyst for step changes in performance, eliminating my frustration at the benefit limits of traditional functional methods to improve. Companies that adopted the leveraged system achieved lead time reductions of 45 percent and productivity gains of +30 percent in the first year. The holistic approach assures that improvements in one company area do not have unintended consequences in another area. Before using cross-functional teams, people report suffering through this phenomenon quite often. The best example was working through silos of engineering quick-to-process cost reduction designs and sales quick-to-process orders that were not completely defined and subject to interpretation. The shortcuts upstream required to show the financial results of bookings and cost reduction often led to manufacturing problems.

The implementation approach of process management transcends the functional silo approach and engages more people as subject matter experts. Tailoring the implementation of cross-functional techniques can be achieved for every size organization. The commitment to process focus with driving metrics is universal. The results celebrated by leadership teams who have committed

to enhancing their culture through the cross-functional process continue to grow.

Employees recognize the benefits quickly because they participate in a holistic approach to excellence. They advance learning swiftly and become very active in success. Additionally, they become appreciative of their newfound converter partner. The improvement is no longer limited to pockets of the organization.

The cross-functional approach to management provides an overreaching umbrella for change management, enhancing the value chain throughout the organization. The process, including suppliers, helps fortify relationships with the converters and customers that benefit from the improvements.

The leadership team is at the epicenter of success, and their involvement is reflected in the activity of the cross-functional team. They take a complete enterprise view and become the champions for change, amplifying the top-down-driven and bottom-up implementation. The result of this conviction is the change in alignment from conventional silos.

The newly created horizontally linked value chain drives planning, leadership, communication and buy-in at all levels of the organization and all points along the value chain. If an organization has mobilized any activity in the lean initiatives, fitting the CFT structure around this effort will revitalize efforts and perpetuate work. In a visual factory with daily production boards and SQDIP boards (safety, quality, delivery, interruptions, productivity), the CFT leaders walk GEMBA to validate the ongoing efforts and aid operators and office workers in reporting progress.

What is the purpose of the CFT?

The purpose of a Cross-Functional Team (CFT) management process is to play a significant role in driving improvement in the company's global competitiveness by identifying and removing barriers from a specific business process. Issues or barriers exist not only within a functional area but also between functional areas. Identified issues must be addressed and feedback provided to the supplier of one process or from the handoff to the customer responsible for the process. Because process steps are related, with each having a supplier (input) and a customer (output), processes frequently cross the functional lines.

The CFT approach to problem-solving is recommended because it maximizes the subject matter expertise of an organization. First, the power and ability of a team to solve problems is usually much greater than that of a single individual. Second, the cross-functional aspect of a team adds another dimension of diversity. Team members from outside a particular function generally bring objective process viewpoints that can significantly impact the team's ability to arrive at creative process solutions affecting that function.



Paul Brauss, former CEO of Mark Andy and a past board member of TLMI, is a consultant and executive coach. See Braussconsulting.com, and buy his book at amzn.to/2NFzXkB



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Rebound with a rebrand

Branding and design columnist, Vicki Strull, recounts a successful packaging redesign she completed for a food brand

All of us would agree that coming across a prospective client that asks, 'How can you help my products sell better?' is the holy grail of prospects. They already value your expertise and are ready to collaborate. Their packaging isn't bringing in the anticipated revenue, or more importantly, as they forecasted for their stakeholders or investors. You may offer to add some bling with a metallic foil, increase the tactility with soft touch, or change the substrate to something smoother, shinier, or more recyclable. Often, those strategies will work, but other times, those recommendations in printing and finishing will not suffice. Instead, the packaging needs a rebrand to boost sales, captivate the audience, and move their products from the shelves to shopping carts.

Recently, I encountered a specialty food brand, Wildfare, whose packaging was lacking—an oversimplified design in pale colors with minimal finishing. In other words, the brand identity was boring, and the packaging was not just bleh; it was unappetizing—not good for a specialty food brand.

The CEO spelled it out for me succinctly: 'Our products are not selling, and we don't know why. Can you help us?'

Challenge accepted

Wildfare clearly did not understand that the job of packaging is to scream off the shelf and grab a shopper's attention, so they will choose that product over all the other competitors in a matter of a few seconds. Likewise, it's our job, as designers, marketers and packaging converters, to help brands create packaging that is compelling, tactile and designed to sell.

Shelf appeal

Across the board, the packaging appeared generic, with a marginal brand story on the primary display panel. In some cases, the existing packaging was outright unattractive. For example, Wildfare sells dried apricots that are sulfite-free. I've tasted them, and these apricots are soft, chewy, healthy and delicious. But they are also sticky, wrinkly and deep brown, so a window on the primary display panel is not the best choice to make the product appear appetizing. In other instances, SKU colors were so muted that the knock-out white type was illegible.

Functionally, the packaging wasn't working either. By the time the products hit grocery store shelves, labels were peeling and showed wear and tear. On the

flexible packaging, the logo overlapped the resealable zipper. And if that weren't enough, the converter had not accounted for the off-gassing of dried fruit flex-packs, so packages were exploding in the warehouse and in stores.

Positioning

Wildfare has a compelling brand story. The founders are originally from Turkey, and their brand purpose is to bring timeless, delicious, and healthy staples of a Mediterranean diet to the US market to be savored every day. They pride themselves in sourcing and curating from small orchards and producers who employ culinary traditions dating back 3,000 years. However, none of that translated onto the messaging or visuals of its packaging.

As I educated Wildfare on shelf appeal, brand purpose, positioning and messaging, I also learned that Wildfare positions its products as premium. Wildfare products are priced on the high end within each category—from olive oil and dried fruits to olives and various flavored bruschetta.

Audience

As I deconstructed the brand challenges, I needed to learn more about the audience. The CEO said that their target audience is health-conscious and adventurous eaters who are 20 to 40 years old. Hmmm...Are people in their 20s buying \$30 bottles of olive oil?

Listen, observe, learn

After these discovery conversations, I concluded: Wildfare is a brand that offers healthy, high-end specialty foods in banal packaging detrimental to their sales. Their current target audience of Gen-Z (20-somethings) to young Millennials (30 to 40) doesn't align with their more expensive prices. To compound these issues, Wildfare is neither communicating luxe nor why its products are special and deserve to be purchased at a premium. When it came to manufacturing its packaging, its converter seemed inexperienced and transactional, certainly not the type of relationship that creates meaningful and successful brand partnerships.

Time to get creative

Up to this point in the rebranding process, I've been educating, researching and analyzing, but now it's time for all of this discovery to inform my creative process.

Talking to your audience

We began by shifting the target audience. We eliminated 20-somethings and focused instead on Millennials, Gen-X and Boomers, targeting 35 to 65+ year-olds. These generations have more disposable income for premium-priced products. Additionally, while those with young children value healthy, organic foods for growing young bodies, those in the older generations

"The CEO spelled it out for me succinctly: 'Our products are not selling, and we don't know why. Can you help us?'"



appreciate the health benefits of a Mediterranean diet.

Messaging

To write the Wildfare story, we deeply explored semantics and perspective to develop a descriptive tagline focused on their customers and what they do. Using alliteration and imagery, the tagline 'Proud Purveyors of Provisions of the Mediterranean Soil and Sun' conjures depictions of the Mediterranean, orchards, growth and Wildfare as connoisseurs. Following that with a visceral brand story that includes phrases such as 'culinary traditions dating back 3,000 years' and 'delicacies steeped in history and tradition' adds to the richness of Wildfare's story that will be complemented with the visual identity. Finally, ending each copy block on the packaging with 'wildly irresistible Mediterranean fare' punctuates the focus on tantalizing customers.

Make your mark

Once our narrative was established, I moved on to visual storytelling. When I'm designing a brand identity, every detail is imbued with meaning. As a curator of imported foods steeped in history, I was delighted to find the typeface Surveyor, which is derived from historical engraved maps. I paired that beautiful classic serif font with a sans serif 'workhorse' typeface, Whitney Narrow, that was developed to be legible even at the smallest point sizes – which is a must when designing food labels.

To design the logotype with Surveyor, I morphed pieces of the upper- and lower-case 'w' with the dot of the 'i' to create a unique ligature that sets a thoughtful tone for the brand.

To create the mark that would accompany the logotype, I became energized by the Mediterranean culture and heritage: intricate mosaic patterns from the region; the delicate lacework stucco of the Alhambra, which I had recently visited; and bird, sun and tulip motifs, where I discovered that tulips originated in Turkey.

The color palette emerged organically, as I based it on the Mediterranean Sea, with its myriad shades of blue, depending on the time of day, how deep the water is, and whether the sun is glinting off the waves. From deep, rich purple, reminiscent of eggplant—a staple in Mediterranean cuisine—to colors of the sky, sunrise to sunset, and even the dark mysteries of the midnight hour, all are included in the color palette. Wildfare's color palette is now evocative, sophisticated and unexpected.

As I began to play with shapes, monograms and symbols, I mixed and matched colors, layered designs, and refined the concepts. Some of the icons



Wildfare products after redesign

“Through careful analysis, creative exploration, and a deep understanding of the new target audience, we transformed Wildfare’s packaging into a captivating and compelling visual story”

looked flat, while others had movement. We finally settled on a logo that combines a flower and the sun in the form of a mosaic. Our Wildfare mosaic flower brings the narrative story to life visually.

Packaging a rebrand

With the brand identity as a cornerstone, the next step was to redesign the packaging, Wildfare's original request. I designed five foundational templates to establish the basis of more than 100 SKUs:

1. A vertical label on their flagship product—olive oil
2. A horizontal label for a shorter jar
3. A flex-pack for dried fruits
4. A folding carton for pasta
5. A wrapper for a granola bar

Thinking about the design existing in a retail environment next to Wildfare's competitors informed how I applied the new identity to these various formats, shapes and sizes.

The background on the labels and packaging is a warm sunrise progressing into a beautiful blue sky, evocative of the Mediterranean. Anchoring every primary display panel is Wildfare's mosaic flower, representing the sun since every product in the Wildfare line relies on the sun. This prominent unique mark becomes instantly recognizable and differentiates Wildfare from its competitors.

Finally, the window problem of dried fruit was solved with photographic compositional fruit imagery in its most appealing form—freshly picked.

A converter's turn to make it shine

While the graphics are meaningful, the colors are intentional, and the typography is legible, even the best designs are incomplete without vigilant production and finishing. We know the most successful

brands appeal to our haptic brains with textures that encourage us to pick up those packages. High-quality 4-color printing, embellishments, coatings, and finishing were essential to complete Wildfare's rebrand. Metallics add shine to the mosaic flower. With 50 percent white under 4-color printing on a metalized film, we achieved just enough shimmer on the gradient, and the tactile spot gloss on the fruit imagery and logotype added a subtle contrast to the soft, dull varnished background.

With the rebrand complete, we applied the new designs to more than 100 SKUs.

We began with a brand struggling to sell its products due to dull packaging and a lack of effective messaging. Through careful analysis, creative exploration, and a deep understanding of the new target audience, we transformed Wildfare's packaging into a captivating and compelling visual story.

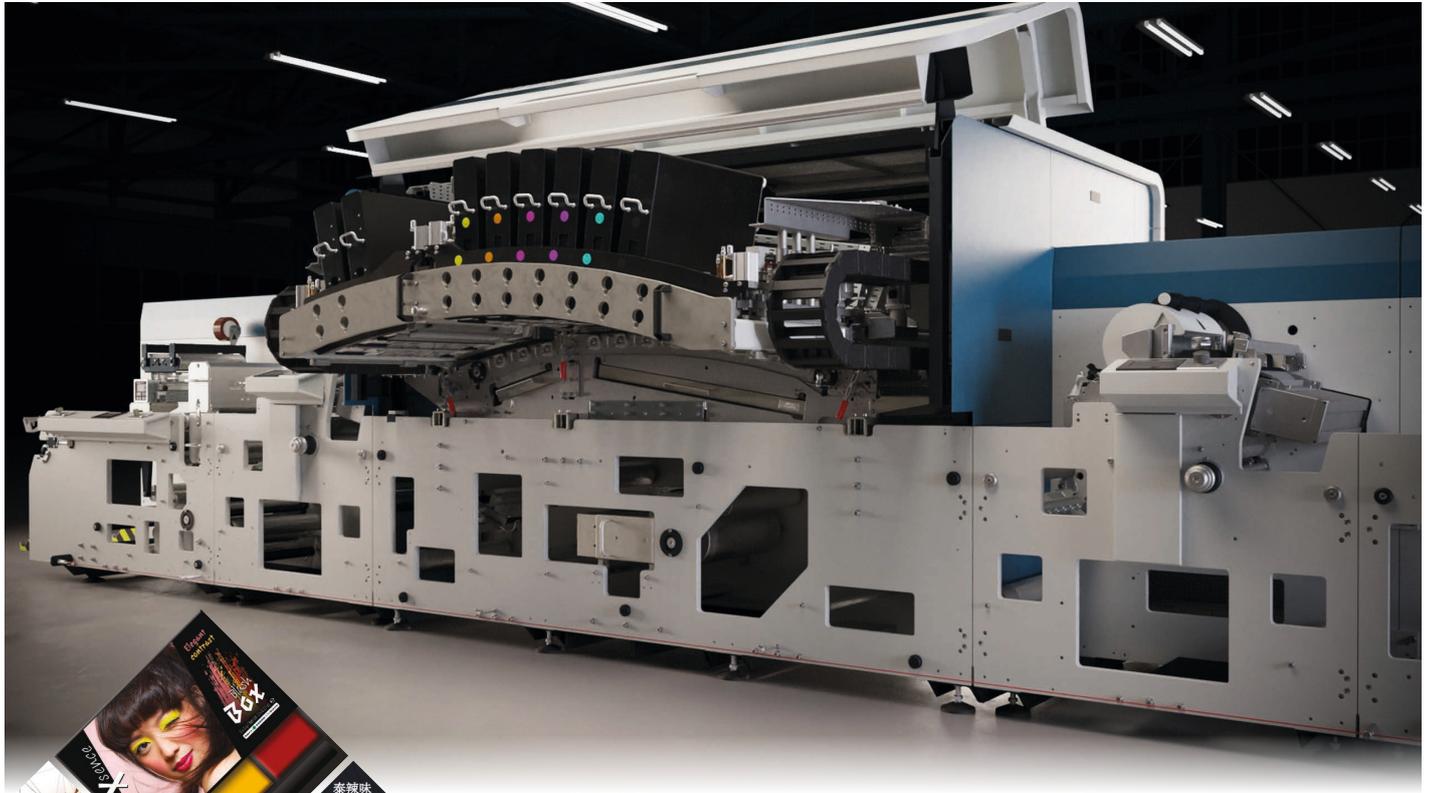
The result? Packaging and a brand identity that now reflects the brand's purpose and premium products. To date Wildfare has expanded sales from the limited tri-state area on the east coast to the Midwest and west coast.



Vicki Strull is a packaging designer, strategist, and speaker who advises top-tier and emerging brands on how to leverage the power of print and packaging within

their omnichannel marketing strategies. She consults with print service providers and OEMs to create new revenue streams and shares her strategies in a master class for MarketWise Academy and at design, packaging and print events around the world. Join fellow trendsetters at vickistrull.com or follow Vicki on LinkedIn @vickistrull

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Navigating today's labels and packaging climate

The aftermath of the pandemic is creating a unique set of challenges. Bob Cronin of *The Open Approach* offers advice for navigating the top five

Labels and packaging have seen a dramatic shift in sales and sentiment over the last few months. Entrepreneurs and executives don't have the same optimism, and employees are getting restless.

Despite the changing dynamics, we'll weather the storm. In good times and bad, we're relied upon for marketing, brand-building, security, tracking and more — bringing value to just about every industry.

Still, we have some new obstacles. One of today's biggest challenges is the aftermath of Covid-19. Over the last few years, we've tried to avoid material shortages and price hikes by stocking up, adding equipment to handle work we previously sourced, and hiring new staff. We took aggressive action on short-term issues. While this benefited our immediate needs, it didn't position us for tomorrow.

So, now we're left with some new impacts. We're also facing pressures from our marketplace and economy at large. Let's take a look at our five major challenges and see what we can do to navigate them.

1. Overstock Just about every business has excess inventory that it needs to clear. This means all of us are trying to push through the same material to customers, with some competitors drastically undercutting to offload their shops. At the same time, converters are lowering prices to protect their end market. This has caused increased concern and frustration as sales margins have dropped — on the few projects that are actually getting in the doors.

We need to turn this 'commodity' thinking around and focus on what has made us successful for all these years: Providing solutions. Show your customers why you're a valuable resource. Take the

“Investor interest in labels and packaging continues, because private equity and others believe this is a great place to be long term”

downtime to devise a product that answers a marketplace need. Have clients out to your plant. Identify their pain points and rebuild yourself as a partner in their growth, rather than just another supplier.

2. Operational price increases Our profits are also eroding due to inflation in office supplies, professional services, insurance premiums, healthcare/benefits, ESG costs and even things we stock in employee breakrooms.

If you haven't calculated the ROI of all your spending lately, it's time to do so. Examine your biggest costs first, and don't be afraid to question long-time vendors. Should you be looking for new benefits providers — or options? Are there incentives that can save you money on health premiums? Are there tasks now done manually that you can save with automation? Are there subscriptions or ongoing services that aren't essential? A little belt-tightening can help you get through these times easier while creating a more agile organization.

3. Recessional concerns The demand for labels and packaging hasn't changed; the timing has. The purchasing acceleration of 2021 and 2022 has been replaced by a slowdown as customers use the items they stocked up. This, coupled with some pullback due to expected recessionary pressures, makes it seem worse than it is.

These aren't new issues. Ups and downs are what you've faced since day one. The extremes have just seemed like feast and famine. Labels are still the best growth market in the printing industry. And there are always new applications, uses, and products to drive this. As we balance out, we'll return to the steady pace we've been accustomed to.

4. Labor issues Remote work, the rising minimum wage, and the changing attitudes of the younger workforce have become significant concerns across every industry.

This makes company culture, training and mentorship more

important than ever. Now's the time to readdress how you manage your human resources and internal communications, career progression pathways and employee loyalty programs. These are issues that aren't going to subside, so the sooner you retool, the better.

5. Mergers & acquisitions slowdown Current trends also have had an impact on M&A, because of the higher financing costs and the unknowns of sellers' true run rates (2021/22 vs. today).

These issues make it difficult to value any entity and develop a strategy from which to build. Thus, we've seen a bit of a drop and more companies seeking suitors that can pay cash.

That said, investor interest in labels and packaging continues, because private equity and others believe this is a great place to be long term. Our companies are still sought after as cornerstones, value drivers, and profit-enhancers, though potential candidates should expect greater due diligence. Keep in mind, history is the best judge of your worth so if your fluctuations are drastic, you may want to wait till you have a steadier outlook.

If there's one takeaway from all of it, it's that you need to make decisions for the long term. Our market will always have change and obstacles to deal with. You'll thrive if you stay focused on the future. I'm always happy to consult if you want to get a sense of your best options.



Bob Cronin is managing partner of *The Open Approach*, an M&A consultancy focused exclusively on the world of print. In addition to

spearheading several large label and packaging industry transactions, the firm handles value-enhancement, due diligence, industry trend analyses, and exit planning. It is one of the most tenured agencies in this space. The *Open Approach*, visit www.theopenapproach.net, email Bob Cronin at bohrcronin@aol.com, or call or text 630-542-1758.

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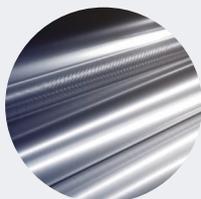
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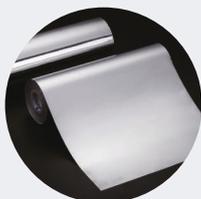
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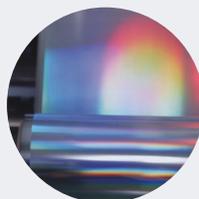
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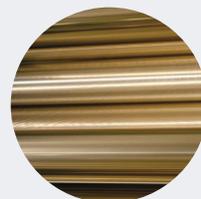
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Biodegradable vs compostable materials

Biodegradable and compostable materials are gaining traction in the label, but understanding their differences is essential, writes sustainability columnist Rosalyn Bandy



With the Federal Trade Commission updating its Green Guides, which were introduced in 1992 and last revised in 2012, it's time for label suppliers and converters to understand the accuracy of their environmental marketing claims.

The terms 'biodegradable' and 'compostable' are often used to describe materials that break down in a specific environment and consumers often equate those terms with an environmentally-friendly product. However, the terms are often used inappropriately, and therefore a growing number of states, including and many municipalities around the US, have legislation about using those terms.

For example, in California, Maryland and Washington, it is illegal to use the term 'biodegradable' in any marketing terms associated with plastic. This is because 'biodegradable' is often interpreted as 'compostable' and can cause contamination for composters.

Biodegradable

Let's look at the terminology and what the Green Guides want you to know about marketing.

'Biodegradable' means that an item can be consumed by organisms like bacteria or fungi that will help break the item down into some compounds found in nature. The term doesn't reference any specific conditions required for the item to break down nor does it refer to the extent of the degradation or anything that might be left behind once the item degrades.

If you are claiming that a product is biodegradable, you'll need to have testing data that shows under what specific conditions it will break down (Aerobic? Anaerobic? Marine? Sunlight? Heat?) and that the entire package (including inks, adhesives and labels) will break down within a year.

The current Green Guides also mention the term 'after customary disposal.' This is important. If the customary disposal of an item is landfill, incineration or recycling, a biodegradable claim would be considered deceptive unless there is clear and prominent data that shows the rate and extent of the degradation in that customary disposal environment. Obviously, that's not possible in an incinerator or recycling facility and nothing breaks down in a landfill in one year.

Claiming that an item is biodegradable is tricky business, and puts your company at risk of being accused of making deceptive claims.

Compostable

Now let's look at the term 'compostable.' The term, by definition, is used to describe products that disintegrate in a composting facility via microorganisms, humidity and heat into natural, soil-enhancing material that is nontoxic. The finished compost product is comprised of CO₂, water, biomass and inorganic (non-carbon) compounds.

When you claim that an item is compostable, there is no

“Claiming that an item is biodegradable is tricky business, and puts your company at risk for being accused of making deceptive claims”

confusion about under what conditions it occurs. Compostable products require a commercial or industrial composting facility to break down, and, rarely, a home composting environment. ASTM International has specific tests for compostability - ASTM D6400 and ASTM D6868. These tests require a complete breakdown of materials into soil-enhancing compost in 90 to 180 days.

From the Green Guides: 'Marketers who claim a product is compostable need competent and reliable scientific evidence that all materials in the product or package will break down into — or become part of — usable compost safely and in about the same time as the materials with which it is composted. Marketers should qualify compostable claims if the product can't be composted at home safely or in a timely way.'

Marketers also should qualify a claim that a product can be composted in a municipal or institutional facility if the facilities aren't available to a substantial majority of consumers.'

That last paragraph is important because the US does not have an abundance of composting facilities. Many products qualify their compostability claims with a statement such as 'This package meets ASTM D6400 Standard and can be composted where municipal or industrial composting facilities exist. Appropriate facilities may not exist in your area. Check with your local community as to availability.'

Everything that is compostable is also biodegradable, but the opposite is not true. If you are developing a compostable label, the entire construction: substrate, adhesive, inks, topcoats and any varnishes must all compost at about the same time as the item to which it is adhered. The ASTM tests, along with a third-party testing certification, will provide customers, and, ultimately, consumers (and the FTC) that the product is legit without any risk of deceptive environmental claims.



Rosalyn Bandy is VP of sustainability for TLMI. For more information about TLMI sustainability, please contact Rosalyn.bandy@tlmi.com. For information about TLMI membership, please contact Engagement Director, dale.coates@tlmi.com

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Avery Dennison hosts sustainability seminar

With circular economy legislation about to hit the label supply chain, Avery Dennison held a well-timed seminar on how converters should respond. Andy Thomas-Emans reports



Mikaela Harding, Avery Dennison UK and Ireland marketing lead



James Wigzell, sustainability lead at Avery Dennison UK and Ireland



Stuart Foster, CEO of industry-wide advocacy body Recoup



Margaret Bates, managing director of On Pack Recycling Label (OPRL)



Cerise Cooper from Again explains the CleanCell concept

“Data is going to be key going forward, for example, when measuring the carbon footprint of a label or the recyclability of a container”

Avery Dennison recently hosted an information-packed seminar on the challenges and opportunities presented by the current debates around sustainability, with UK and EU legislation now forcing the supply chain to address these issues as a matter of urgency.

James Wigzell, sustainability lead at Avery Dennison UK and Ireland, kicked proceedings off by looking at consumer perceptions of packaging, particularly the ‘war on plastics’.

‘This has meant that compostable and biodegradable are often at the top of companies’ sustainability lists, or they want recyclable packaging that cuts down on (virgin) plastics,’ says Wigzell.

‘But we need to take the debate away from ‘bad plastics’ and explain that there are still vast opportunities for more functional plastic labels, like the reclosure label on a pack of ham which ensures it stays fresh and cuts down on food waste. Or labels that can make a bottle recyclable where it is not currently. How can we take the consumer on that journey?’

The new legislation will compel brands to properly validate sustainability claims, says Wigzell. ‘Three or four years ago we

used to get requests “can we put this on our package” where the claims were unfounded. Now the advertising authority in the UK has cracked down hard. So, data is going to be key going forward, for example, when measuring the carbon footprint of a label or the recyclability of a container.’

Legislation such as deposit schemes and producer responsibility means brands will have to use materials that make the pack or container recoverable, or they will be charged. In extreme cases, the pack could be removed from the market.

‘For example, multi-laminate cartons will have to change. But wet wipes are a good example of where labels have made a plastic pack work. Wet wipe packs are single-use products but are now easy to recycle. Reclosure labels have allowed the elimination of injection-molded lids and a move to flexible packs using less material. The reclosure label can be either PP or PE to match the flexible packaging material, allowing the label and pack to be recycled together. All this happened over two to three years and demonstrates how this has been turned into a labeling opportunity.’

Wigzell pointed out that the cost-of-living crisis does not need to

exclude sustainability. Cost reductions can be achieved while obtaining a more sustainable outcome. ‘You can offer thinner products or make containers recyclable, which is a huge benefit for brand owners. Challenges can become opportunities.’

He next addressed the compostable packaging dilemma.

‘The problem is that compostables require industrial and not home composting. But the consumer perception is they can degrade it in their garden or throw it out the car window. In the UK we are not set up for compostables and even where we are, how would the waste processor know if a label is definitely compostable? It is a real challenge and difficult to recommend in the UK. Of course, there is a lot of investment in getting a complete product that is compostable and this situation could be different in other European countries.’

Sustainability certification

To create a level playing field on sustainability, it will be necessary for brands’ claims to be checked by an independent body and then issue a certification that consumers can trust.



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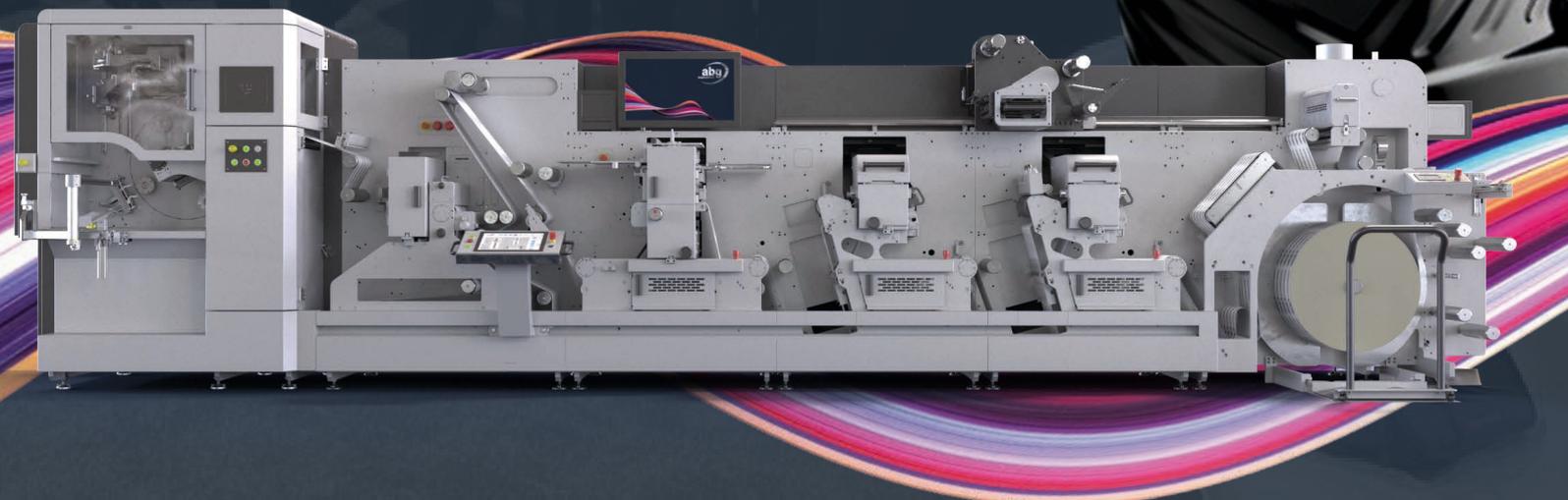
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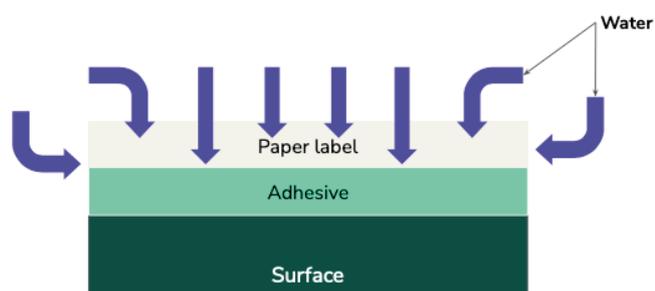
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“We need to take the debate away from ‘bad plastics’ and explain that there are still vast opportunities for more functional plastic labels, like the reclosure label on a pack of ham which ensures it stays fresh and cuts down on food waste”



How a wash-off paper adhesive works

Carbon tool

James Wigzell previewed the results of a software tool endorsed by the Carbon Trust which assesses both carbon emissions and water use across the range of Avery Dennison's label products.

The report, based on primary data from the company's own operations, currently captures around 70 percent of Avery Dennison's label and packaging materials (LPM) output globally. The Carbon Trust tools will now be used by Avery Dennison when advising customers, developing new products and carrying out greenhouse gas emission audits.

The report will include both 'cradle to gate' measurements and an extended version taking into account transport and end-of-life.

The Carbon Trust tool has already revealed some surprising conclusions.

- Moving from an acrylic to a rubber-based adhesive increased carbon emissions by 4 percent but reduced water use during manufacture by 36 percent— equivalent to 4,346 hours in a shower with an average flow.
- Moving to a thinner grade of semi-gloss white paper (MC Light RDX FSC) led to an 11 percent reduction in carbon footprint and 12 percent water saving compared to the standard product.
- Exchanging a virgin paper face material for one with 32 percent recycled content led to a 6 percent increase in CO₂ emissions and 16 percent increase in water use – demonstrating that it is more sustainable to reduce material weight than add recycled content. 'Repulping paper to make recycled content uses more water, so you are better going to a thinner virgin paper,' notes Wigzell.
- Moving from a recycled face paper to a virgin PP film, both on glassine liner, led to a 9 percent reduction in carbon emissions and an astonishing 45 percent reduction in water use. 'We have forgotten why plastics is such an amazing material,' says Wigzell. 'This demonstrates that for a lot of applications, plastics are the better solution'.

Stuart Foster, CEO of industry-wide advocacy body Recoup, noted the urgent requirement to standardize guidance for brands and their supply chain. Already, for example, the UK has started diverging from the EU on food contact regulations.

Foster echoed Wigzell's earlier comments about biodegradable packaging. 'Recoup supports biomass as an input but not biodegradable packaging.' Foster referred to a current court case where Symphony Environmental is challenging the EU's ban on oxo-degradable technology for single-use plastics. Oxo-degradable accelerates the breakdown of plastics into ever smaller components, but the EU argues that this leaves micro-plastics in the environment.

Foster outlined a partnership with RecyClass, an offshoot of Plastic Recyclers Europe, which chose to pair with Recoup for their UK testing/approvals. The RecyClass coalition has 780 members which takes in the entire packaging supply chain, including processors.

OPRL (On Pack Recycling Label) focuses more on the infrastructure set up in the UK to recycle particular pieces of packaging. Where RecyClass focuses more on individual components - label, cap and flexible package - OPRL focuses on the finished pack.

Margaret Bates, managing director of OPRL, explains the mission to deliver 'simple and consistent' messaging around what counts as recyclable and refillable packaging.

To earn a OPRL certification a container or pack must be realistically recyclable. This means, for example, that a container should be collectible by 75 percent of local authorities.

'All compostable or biodegradable packaging will get the "Not Recyclable" badge until there is a guarantee of appropriate processing facilities,' says Bates.

Multi-layer pack constructions will find it increasingly difficult to achieve certification, while multi-component packaging could require each component to be labeled separately.

'This will change the way packaging is designed and will boost UK recycling rates – it will definitely impact on business,' says Recoup's Foster.

To achieve a RecyClass 'Refillable' certification, packaging will be required to be refilled with the original product a minimum of 10 times. Refill systems must be available to at least 75 percent of the UK population who could potentially have purchased the pack; refilling facilities must be available for a minimum of three years and must be certified as without risk to the consumer.

'We need these labels because the majority of consumers currently put items into the recycling bin without checking whether they can be recycled,' says Foster.

Extended Producer Responsibility regulations will require that by 2025 recyclability of all packaging must be assessed, with a scale of fees based on recyclability to be paid by any company which places packaging onto the market or imports it. Data collection provisions require companies to break their packaging into material categories.

The UK nations are already diverging in their collection strategies. For example, Scotland is legislating to place a returnable 20p deposit on single-use containers from 330ml to 3L, now expected to be in place by October 2025.

'A problem is that we do not know yet how recyclability will be determined,' says Recoup's Foster. 'Many things are not clear, except that it will be a lot more expensive. Producers are either really, really worried about it or do not realize they should be worried about it.'

Building a refill network

Chrise Cooper, business development representative at start-up Again, explained how the company is building a unique mobile infrastructure for refillable packaging.

An Again CleanCell can be set up at any location where used bottles are collected. The self-contained plant includes sorting and de-labeling of containers, closure removal, cleaning, drying, computer vision inspection and robotic palletization. Each CleanCell has a processing capacity of 500,000 units a month and is certified food safe.

Cooper says each CleanCell generates 60 percent less carbon emissions than

recycling the same container. 'We have been working to de-label containers using Avery Dennison's wash-off labels, so for the brand, we are just like a virgin container supplier.'

Again runs a traceability program alongside CleanCell called Tag, which uses a unique QR code embedded in a permanent label that tracks the number of reuses. It offers live inventory visibility and tracking of CO2 emissions in the circular

process.

CleanCells are installed within existing supply chains where they can take advantage of existing bottle return logistics. That may be at grocery retailers, national distribution centers or pub chains.

Early adopters of Again's CleanCell include Diageo and the Greene King brewery company.

'We are also working with Smol, an online retailer of refillable cleaning



OPRL Recyclability definition



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CleanCell in action

liquids. We clean bottles returned by their customers, clean them and send them to Smol to refill and send back to the consumer,' explains Cooper.

Another closed-loop partnership is with doorstep delivery start-up Milk and More. Milk and More supplies milk and a wide range of other products direct to consumers. When customers return their bottles to Milk and More fulfillment centers, each brand's bottles are separated using a tracking QR code, cleaned and sent back. This project is currently being scaled up and expected to be up and running by the end of the year.

“All compostable or biodegradable packaging will get the ‘Not Recyclable’ badge until there is a guarantee of appropriate processing facilities”

Experience to date shows that a bottle needs to make at least seven round trips to make the biggest carbon emission gains.

Challenges

Cooper says the biggest challenge CleanCell faces is washing off label residues. Again is working in partnership with Avery Dennison and its converter partners to validate wash-off labels it can recommend to its brand partners.

A big issue is that CleanCell operates at relatively low temperatures and uses an alkaline rather than the more common caustic soda wash.

Three Avery Dennison wash-off adhesives have been trialed to date. Both WX6030 and WW2031 work well, while WW4031 does not wash off at the lower temperatures which the CleanCell soak tank is set to.

Again is testing a range of bottle types with Glass Technology Services in Sheffield, England to qualify them for CleanCell.

Variations in bottle shape and size, print coverage, varnish and coating on the label can all affect how the label performs in the CleanCell environment.

'We also need a huge amount of information from a brand regarding their filling line, temperatures, storage etc to confidently recommend a wash-off label,' says Cooper.

Cooper says CleanCell makes reuse simple, affordable and scalable for any brand. 'It has a far lower environmental impact than recycling. We compete with the cost of single-use packaging at around GBP 12p (USD 15C/Euro 14C) per unit; there is zero upfront capital investment since brands can access our network as a service; and we have a team of packaging engineers helping brands ensure they safely reuse packaging.'



Avery Dennison will demonstrate its full range of sustainable label technologies at Labelexpo Europe 2023

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CERM 

Omet sharpens flex pack focus with X7 demo

Omet's XFlex X7 mid-web press was demonstrated at a flexible packaging-focused open house that also included a visit to film converter ACM. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

“The press was shown printing a high-quality shrink sleeve label, 8 colors UV flexo plus cold foil application, with two extended dryers for soft touch matte varnish application and an embossed varnish”

In May Omet hosted an open house dedicated to flexible package converting at the company's Innovation Park, its new permanent showroom and demo center in Molteno, Italy.

Over 60 visitors attended the event that featured live demonstrations of flexo printing of shrink sleeve labels on a mid-web Omet XFlex X7.

This was followed by a visit to flexible packaging specialist ACM Spa in Cremona, who were printing shrink sleeve labels and flexible packaging on an XFlex X7 and Varyflex presses.

Marco Calcagni, Omet sales and marketing director, opened the event with a speech that emphasized the increasing customization of the presses manufactured by Omet today, with tailor-made configurations making use of Omet's R&D expertise.

Focus on sustainability

The open house hosted a presentation by Fabrizio Radice of Corapack, who focused on new compostable and biodegradable flexible packaging materials. The application was for dry pasta containing anti-fog additives.

The packaging utilizes Planet Ethic's PLA film. 'This has characteristics similar to polyethylene and polypropylene,' says Radice. 'It is transparent and with excellent resistant characteristics. It can be printed with OK Compost certified inks in four colors with excellent results not inferior to the printing of oil-derived film.'

Radice says the film degrades in about 70 days in an industrial composting center, where it is transformed into fertilizer. 'Waste quickly becomes a useful and natural resource. Furthermore, PLA is produced with natural and renewable raw materials and not from petroleum.'

Radice stressed the difference between biodegradable and compostable film. Biodegradable films are degraded by biological agents and break down into simple substances – water, methane and carbon dioxide – and there is no clear guideline for how long this process will take.

'The composting process uses aerobic biodegradation,' he says. 'A mature compost looks like loam and contains the nutrients useful for agriculture.'

Tony Parsons of Nazdar brought delegates' attention to UV-LED inks for packaging, with some guidance on the use of inks for food-contact packaging.

Daniel Yjord of Flexowash spoke about the importance of automated plate and anilox cleaning with a live demonstration of the Flexowash machines installed at the Innovation Park.

Yjord stresses that thorough cleaning of anilox rolls, particularly on high count jobs, is key to print quality and color consistency.

'Our customers have seen this leads to a decrease in setup time and a reduction in print stops, as well as the elimination of cleaning solvents, and means operators can focus on running the press,' he



XFlex X7 demonstration

says.

Experience in the field showed that improperly cleaned anilox and plates led to over three hours of press stoppage time a week, culminating in costs to the business of almost 30k Euro. 'This means the payback for an automated cleaning system is between six months and two years,' Yjord says.

Silvano Tamai presented Tesa's technology for mounting plates, focusing on the Twinlock compressible self-adhesive sleeve onto which flexo plates can be directly mounted. 'This allows converters to eliminate the use of double-sided tape, which leads to a reduction in waste and transport emissions, improving your overall carbon footprint,' says Tamai.

X7 demo

At Omet's headquarters, guests saw a printing demo on the XFlex X7, optimized for flexible packaging and shrink sleeve labels. The XFlex X7 combines the best features of both the XFlex X6.0 and Varyflex V2. It is a 670mm (26in)-wide mid-web press designed for printing unsupported film down to 9 microns.

The XFlex X7 incorporates motorized printing pressure adjustment on anilox and impression cylinders, Multivision cameras for automated register control on each printing unit with on-the-fly pre-register. The press was shown printing a high-quality shrink sleeve label, 8 colors UV flexo plus cold foil application, with two extended dryers for soft touch matte varnish application and an embossed varnish. The press can also be configured with a 670mm-wide rotary screen unit and high-value rotogravure unit, which is capable of both surface and reverse printing and equipped with an integrated chill drum.

This demonstration job required holding stable print register at high speeds, demonstrating the effectiveness of Omet's Zero Gears system, which combines direct drive with anti-bounce technology.



Omet will demonstrate its KFlex flexo press platform and XJet hybrid technology at Labelexpo Europe 2023. For more information, visit www.labelexpo-europe.com

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Grafotronic launches IQ automation

Using new smart camera technology, Grafotronic has developed a fully modular automated job set-up and monitoring system. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

Grafotronic has demonstrated a new automated makeready and machine monitoring technology based around interlocking smart cameras at its Aspire networking event in Warsaw, Poland.

The IQ workflow automation suite will be launched at Labelexpo Europe 2023, where it will be incorporated on a Grafotronic converting line on the Automation Arena feature.

The philosophy behind IQ is that automation should handle all routine tasks during setup, then continue to monitor each converting station during the run. This would mean that an operator could, effectively, run two machines simultaneously.

The IQ workflow automation suite is built on Grafotronic's modular plug-and-play converting technology, with smart cameras located on each module.

At the Aspire event, the IQ system was demonstrated on Grafotronic's flagship DCL2 converting line.

The DCL2 was configured with infeed, flexo, semi-rotary die-cutting and slitting modules, each with its own smart camera. The cameras control movement of the servo motors on each module, both during job setup and while the job is running.

To operate in full automation mode the IQ system only requires small cross marks printed between the label lanes and edge registration marks.

On the infeed module is a camera covering the web width. This has two functions.

Firstly, by reading the web edge



Grafotronic DCL2 with IQ automation suite

“We wanted to bring to the table simple plug-and-play automation”

registration marks, it guides the motorized registration sensors on each upstream module.

Secondly, it provides the location of the cross marks to the camera on the slitter module, which controls the positioning of the motorized SCI-FI slitting knives. This allows slitting accuracy to be verified even after the cross marks have been removed with the matrix waste.

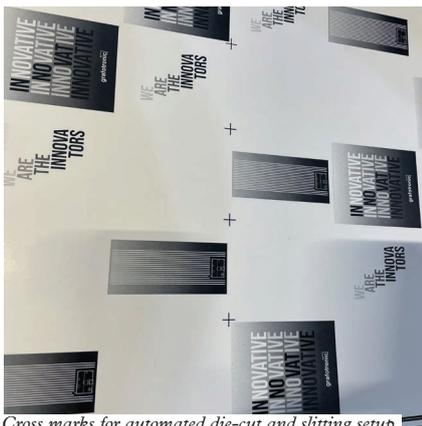
The camera on the flexo unit has two functions: to monitor and control registration of the flexo station print cylinder, and to identify where the die-cut should take place by reading the cross marks.

‘The flexo station camera and die-cut camera work together,’ says Marcin Wozniak, head of software development at Grafotronic. ‘The flexo camera says where the crosses were, and the camera on the die-cut modules measures where they should have been, and checks there are gaps there.’

Each IQ-equipped module works fully independently. When the modules are connected in a simple plug-and-play operation, they work seamlessly together as a complete system.

Standalone automation

Comments Morten Toksvaerd, business



Cross marks for automated die-cut and slitting setup



Smart camera on infeed module

Remote monitoring

During the Aspire event, visitors were shown Grafotronic's remote support system, which allows the company's engineers to monitor every machine in the field in real time. ‘Our machines are designed for this from the beginning,’ says Mattias Malmqvist. ‘The system will automatically raise an alarm if any components are stressed, allowing us to suggest preemptive maintenance.’ The support system runs on Grafotronic's secure Cloud portal.

“The cameras control movement of the servo motors on each module, both during job setup and while the job is running. To operate in full automation mode the IQ system only requires small cross marks printed between the label lanes and edge registration marks”

development manager at Grafotronic: 'We wanted to bring to the table simple plug and play automation. The IQ technology means we can set the converting line up fully automatically without the need for an operator, and then we can monitor the machine automatically during operation, just using those simple marks. We do not need a barcode or a workflow system, only those simple printed marks run the entire automation program.'

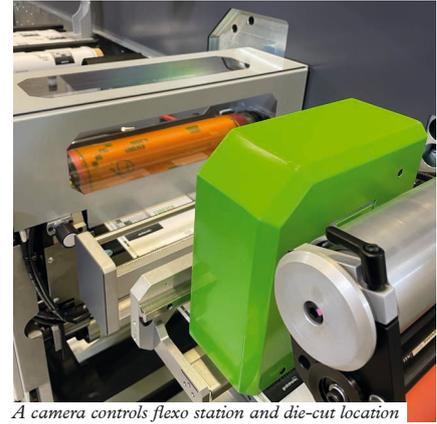
Toksvaerd continues: 'Grafotronic IQ is all about no more manual side adjustments, no more manual register sensor settings, and no more depending on the individual operator when it comes to set up times, waste and product quality. Grafotronic IQ takes over all the manual adjustments, and station by station is being

set up in a blink of an eye. Roll change, flexo printing, semi-rotary die-cutting and slitting, all is done and checked with a tolerance below +/- 0,1 mm.'

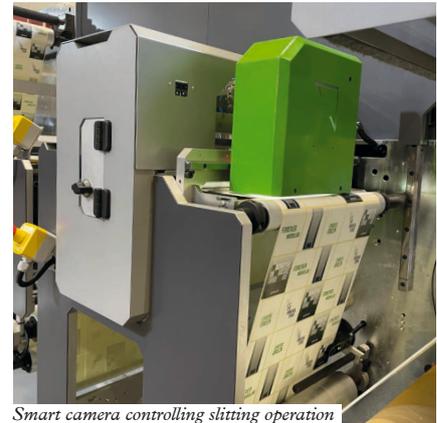
The IQ-equipped DCL2 machine at the Aspire event completed a fully automated job setup including varnish, die-cut and slitting with just 2-3m of waste.

'But very important is that this automation acts stand-alone and without any IT knowledge needed by the operator,' says Toksvaerd. 'All the information it needs is printed on the roll-edge marks and die-cutting registration marks. Then it runs itself.'

Modularity is at the heart of Grafotronic's converting systems. 'We do not have a base machine – every single module is stand-alone,' says Toksvaerd. 'So after



A camera controls flexo station and die-cut location



Smart camera controlling slitting operation

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Automation Arena

Labelexpo Europe 2023 will feature an Automation Arena demonstrating a full 'lights out' (ie with no manual intervention) production workflow from file creation to digital printing, converting and inspection. The participants are Cerm, Esko, Xeikon/Kurz and Grafotronic.

The Automation Arena workflow will start with the creation of wine label designs on an Esko workstation and delivery to the new Xeikon TX500 press over the Cerm MIS. The roll moves to the Grafotronic DCL2 fitted with IQ workflow automation suite, and the DCL2 then carries out autonomous job changes, handling all settings automatically. The label design includes a flexo varnish, which is engaged and disengaged automatically depending upon which label, front or back, is being converted.

Also new is Grafotronic's Revolver fully automatic turret rewinder module. Features include glueless start for clean separation of printed labels from the core, printed roll closure labels,

automatic core positioning and finished roll eject.

Other automation features on the DCL2 demonstrated on the Automation Arena machine include automatic die loading and ejecting on the 150m/min semi-rotary die station and automatic longitudinal SCI-FI knife positioning system.

An Esko AVT 100 percent inspection camera will be positioned after the die-cutting and slitting stations on the Automation Arena DCL2. This will detect if the printed and converted roll is free of defects or needs further rework. That information will be communicated to the Cerm MIS which will print the appropriate closing rolls.

Grafotronic will also supply a Boon-tech Velox automatic core cutter linked to the Cerm MIS to complete the automation project.

Both the Xeikon press and DCL2 will report real-time production data to the Cerm MIS and show visitors will be able to view that information via a browser on their smart devices.

you buy a machine you can add modules, including IQ modules, and mix and match. We can add a module on-site in just eight hours. Once customers realize that, it makes the initial investment decision easier.'

Young team

The IQ system's smart camera technology was developed in-house by engineers at Grafotronic's Warsaw research and manufacturing hub. This is a young team - indeed the average age of the workforce is just 29.5 years old, and more than one-third is female. Comments Mattias Malmqvist, partner and vice president at Grafotronic, 'To keep the best engineers you need to always be providing them with challenges. We are facing more competition here and we are having a close cooperation with the technical universities in Warsaw and are of course working hard to be an attractive working place for the next generation of engineers.'



Grafotronic's IQ automation system will be demonstrated live on the Automation Arena at Labelexpo Europe 2023. For more information, visit www.labelexpo-europe.com

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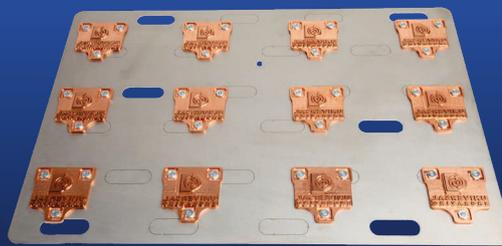
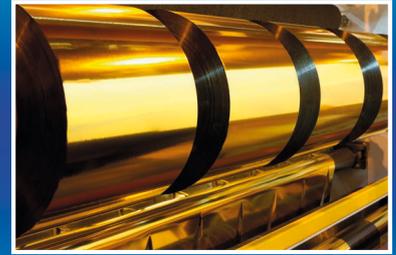
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Gallus celebrates centenary with 'industry hub' initiative

Gallus wants its St Gallen Experience Center to become a hub for wider industry collaboration on automation, AI and digital transformation across the label supply chain, Andy Thomas-Emans reports

Gallus has celebrated its 100th anniversary by opening the Gallus Experience Center at the company's historic home in St Gallen, Switzerland.

Gallus CEO Dario Urbinati says the Experience Center is designed to 'foster collaboration to drive innovation and sustainability.'

'Whether you are a manufacturer, supplier, converter, printer or brand, you are invited to use the new facility to explore ideas, test and develop new technologies, and teach and experience a technological ecosystem.'

Gallus is also using the facility to showcase its range of digital, hybrid and flexo presses along with Cloud-based software solutions.

Opening the facility, Heidelberg CEO Dr Ludwin Monz, comments, 'As we celebrate the 100th anniversary of Gallus, Heidelberg is delighted to stand alongside the Gallus team this week – united, as one group.'

Monz pointed out that labels and packaging now represent 50 percent of Heidelberg group sales.

'The new digital and automated solutions we see introduced by Gallus today play an important role in the future of Heidelberg,' Monz continues. 'As a result, Gallus is an important pillar within the company's growth strategy, and we're more committed than ever to its long-term future.'

Heidelberg sees annual growth of over 2 percent in global package print volumes, making this the strongest growth area in the printing industry.

'Digital printing technology used in label production offers some of the greatest growth opportunities in the printing industry,' says Monz. 'One-third of all labels worldwide are already printed digitally today. Digital printing is thus driving change in this promising market segment, with inkjet growth of around 6 percent a year. Heidelberg intends to expand its position here with the Gallus One.'

Meta trends

In his address, Urbinati focused on the wider trends driving the growth of digital print and automation in the label market.

He identified the label industry's 'pain points' as labor shortages, increasing input costs, non-negotiable sustainability targets and increasing consolidation among converters and suppliers.

Skilled labor shortages, says Urbinati, are here to stay. 'Within a decade we will have retired the largest generation ever, the baby boomers, and will lose its knowhow, skills, experience and capital.'

At the same time, birth rates are declining globally and big tech and the service industries are absorbing the Gen X and Y workers coming onto the market. Young workers are also rejecting the commuting and shift work patterns which have formed the bedrock of traditional factory organization.

Immigration is no longer an answer for developed countries as the same demographic trends are affecting the countries of origin, says Urbinati.

Taking these trends together, there will be less labor available for the industrial sector and the situation will only get worse going forward.

'So with human intervention now a bottleneck in the production



Ferdinand Reusch, Dr Ludwin Monz and Dario Urbinati open Gallus Experience Center

“The Gallus Experience Center exists to help the industry move toward a complete digital transformation”



Gallus Experience Center

Gallus announces upgrades to Gallus One and ECS340

Two significant equipment-related announcements were made at the Gallus centenary event.

The first was the Gallus One with Converting, a new configuration for the Gallus One digital press which adds an inline flexo station and a semi-rotary die-cutter capable of changing between jobs in one minute. The press operates at 70 m/min and includes a vision inspection system.

The second announcement was an upgrade kit for the Gallus ECS340 ('granite') flexo press, which effectively turns it into a Gallus Labelfire 340 hybrid press. The Labelfire was originally built around the ECS platform, and the upgrade involves adding the digital printing unit (DPU) from the Labelfire to the ECS press. The upgrade can be carried out in the field.



Gallus Labelmaster Advanced

Legacy upgrades

Although there is no more manufacturing at Gallus' St Gallen site, there is an active retrofit and used machinery refurbishment business.

This gives Gallus customers a route to either buy second-hand press, sell or exchange their legacy equipment, or upgrade their existing kit.

Among many examples of the latter displayed during the centenary event was an LED retrofit kit for the RCS 330/430 press.



Frank Kropp, senior VP of research & development, Heidelberg

“The customer portal brings together all the current digital services and software products offered by Heidelberg”

chain, automation and interconnectivity turn from a cost saving into a necessity for industry survival. The current business strategy for manufacturers and converters is no longer sustainable,' says Urbinati.

'The Gallus Experience Center exists to help the industry move toward a complete digital transformation. This is not just about an inkjet press, but a new, integrated way to think about our industry - a complete Cloud-based integration including conventional equipment. And this needs a new way to calculate cost – total cost of ownership. This will be measured by increased sustainability, which means less waste and energy consumption, and by the Integration of software and hardware using APIs. Considering demographic change, we can then make our industry sexy and competitive with the service sector.'

Urbinati stressed that the Gallus Experience Center is an initiative for the entire industry, including Gallus' competitors. 'We want the whole industry to participate in this process. We already have more than 50 partner companies'.

Esko, for example, has a facility on-site to work on seamless integration with the Heidelberg digital ecosystem. The company has installed a CDI Crystal 4835 flexo plate imager alongside Asahi's Kasei latest water-wash plate processor (nominated for a Label Industry Sustainability Award).

Frank Kropp, head of R&D at Heidelberg, emphasized the group's strong partnership with Gallus. Heidelberg is providing deep expertise in industrial digital printing and drying technology along with a worldwide support ecosystem, Prinect workflow and the new customer portal (see below).

Kropp said the ultimate goal of both companies is 'autonomous printing where the boundaries between the machine control and the workflow are dissolved'.

In practice, this means the Digital Front

End (DFE) of the press is connected over the Cloud to an IOT (Internet of Things) network. This makes possible a range of services including remote press monitoring, predictive maintenance, automated color management, substrate qualification and AI/machine learning to support the user with optimal parameters for running the equipment.

Kropp announced a new customer portal to be launched in October which combines these capabilities into one platform.

The portal brings together all the current digital services and software products offered by Heidelberg. This includes performance monitoring, predictive maintenance, workflow and job management and purchase of consumables and parts. Gallus will be integrated into the portal at a future point.

Idea exchange

Adding to the exchange of ideas at the Gallus centenary event was a presentation from AI expert and consultant Katie King, who looked at where AI is being deployed, its potential and its limitations. Despite much gloom-mongering, it appears AI is following the same pattern as previous industrial revolutions, making some roles redundant while creating different roles further up the value chain.

The key use of AI, says King, is to analyze Big Data, both historical and in real-time, and present actionable options to operators and management teams.

AI had massively sped up the development of Covid vaccines, for example, by being able to spot patterns that human analysis alone would never have seen.

King also warned of AI's limitations: it does not know 'the truth', it cannot make creative decisions and it is dependent upon the limitations of the dataset it is trained

on.

Retail expert Jack Strattem delivered some fascinating insights into consumer behaviors that ultimately impact the labels and packaging industries.

Firstly, post-Covid consumers are showing a marked preference to use bricks and mortar shops if they know – by interacting online - a product is definitely in stock.

Similarly, consumers value speed and convenience, which both rely on agile supply chains, but at the same time appreciate 'slow delivery' – for example enjoying the unboxing/wrapping experience or help in setting a product up.

Secondly, there is a preference for spending on luxury goods, with consumers compensating by using discount retailers or cutting their spending elsewhere.

Thirdly, consumers want sustainability but are not prepared to pay extra for it. 'So sustainability needs to be built in, but at zero extra cost,' says Strattem.

Covid has had other interesting side effects on consumer behavior. 'For example, the QR code was pretty much dead before Covid. But suddenly every restaurant was printing them on their menus to order food. Now consumers understand how this works and QR codes are ubiquitous.'

Strattem concludes that a lively interactive mix of online and offline is the future for retailing, with consumers less brand loyal and more open to innovations that make them feel valued.

'And more brands want to go direct to consumers – often in partnership with physical shops - using personalized packaging and smart, connected printing.'



The Gallus One digital press can be seen at Labelexpo Europe 2023. For more information, visit www.labelexpo-europe.com



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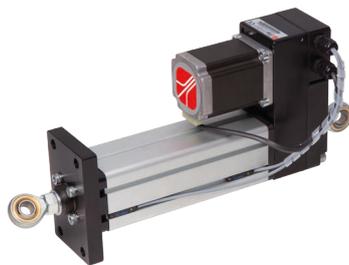


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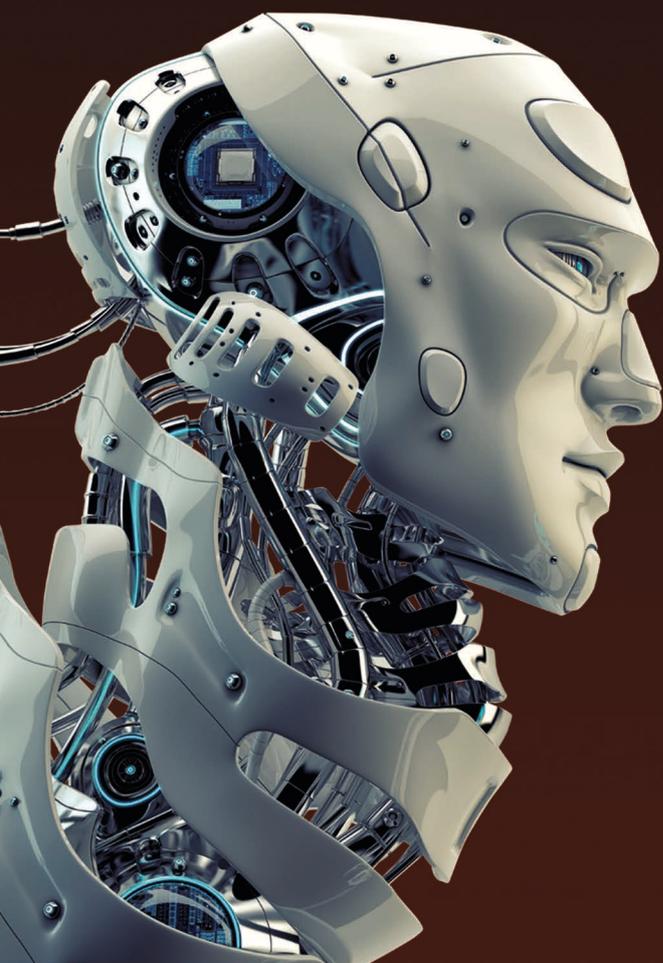
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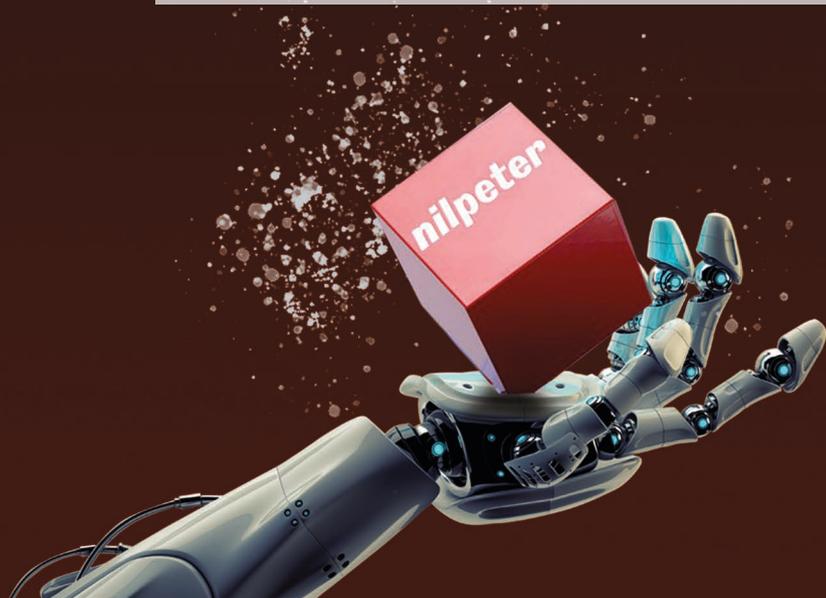
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Finat ELF 2023 addresses industry challenges

This year's European Label Forum hosted by Finat in Vienna showed that the label industry still has challenges ahead. Chelsea McDougall reports

Jules Lejeune was recognized for his years of service to the European label industry

Standing in front of the Finat European Label Forum, AWA president Corey Reardon presented market statistics that showed such a sharp decline in Q4 of 2022 and Q1 of 2023, it appears as if the global self-adhesive label industry drove off a cliff.

His presentation on the state of the European label market showed all signs pointing downward.

What's happening, Reardon explains, is a lingering hangover from the Finnish paper workers' strike and a major correction to the paper supply chain and significant destocking in key label end-use segments.

A similar story can be told for label buyers across end uses, where there is significant destocking occurring as companies are depleting their current inventories and postponing procuring new labels and packaging.

'The current state of the industry is not very optimistic,' says Finat president Jules Lejeune.

Philippe Voet, Finat president adds: 'Our industry demonstrated its essential role in keeping the critical infrastructure alive during the lockdowns of 2020 and helping the economy back on its feet a year later. However, that year also revealed the first signs of the vulnerability of our globally consolidated supply chains, and economic recovery was held back by the lack of raw materials, consumables, components and labor.'

This industry-wide destocking is manifesting in declines in key market segments like food, beverage, health and personal care and automotive. All this is amid fears of a looming global recession.

'What seems like short-term declines may mean regression in the context of long-term growth,' Reardon says. 'Production data is showing that market demand has gone through the floor, but consumers are still buying food and beverage and personal care items. People still need to eat, drink and brush their teeth. Even in a recession, they don't stop doing that.' Though consumers may not be

"The good thing about our industry is we've always done well in bad times"

spending as much on premium products.

In a bit of good news, demand for food, beverage, health and personal care appears to be crawling upward in Q1 and Q2 of 2023 but still below late 2021 and 2022 levels, according to the AWA report for Finat. AWA expects this to turn around later this year, and there are already some promising signs pointing that way.

By the numbers

European self-adhesive label volumes fell by 21.4 percent in Q4 2022, and 15.6 percent in the beginning of 2023. Other label formats also declined, albeit much slower than self-adhesive labels.

The overall lesson of this year's Finat ELF is that the label and packaging industry market volatility will likely continue. And yet, the industry is poised to make investments where necessary, even in a time of high inflation.

AWA was recently contracted to conduct Finat's Radar Report and presented the results at the association's annual event in May. Finat increased the frequency of the market reports from half yearly to quarterly.

According to the survey, there is some hesitation among converters when it comes to capital equipment investments, but that could be a reflection of a time of high inflation. The true test will be Labelexpo Europe when it returns to Brussels. After years of pent-up demand, all signs point to Labelexpo being a buying show.

'The good thing about our industry is we've always done well in bad times,' says Nilpeter's Jakob Landberg in a panel discussion on investing in times of disruption. 'In bad times the industry tends to replace old equipment and in good times, they invest in increasing capacity.'

Finat asked converters what and when they are likely to invest in capital equipment and found that investments

in digital presses seem to be postponed slightly, with 74 percent of respondents saying that they will purchase digital presses after 2023.

Meanwhile, conventional press investments are being planned for the more immediate or distant future: 57 percent of converter respondents have plans to purchase conventional equipment in 2023 or 2024, while 30 percent are delaying it until after 2025. A similar outlook is ahead for finishing equipment.

The Finat ELF was hosted in Vienna from 31 May to 2 June, was attended by 300 members, and featured a host of in-depth educational sessions and panels. Amid concerns that growth forecasts are sliding, other key topics included regulations, β risks, technology infrastructure, further supply chain disruption and strained labor markets.

Sustainability undoubtedly took center stage. Finat attendees took lessons from the keynote speaker Thomas Rau, who discussed a storied architecture career in which he's been at the forefront of designing environmentally conscious buildings. He continues to promote the use of renewable energy.

Next year's Finat ELF will be in Athens, Greece, from 22-24 May.

Top 5 European label-producing countries

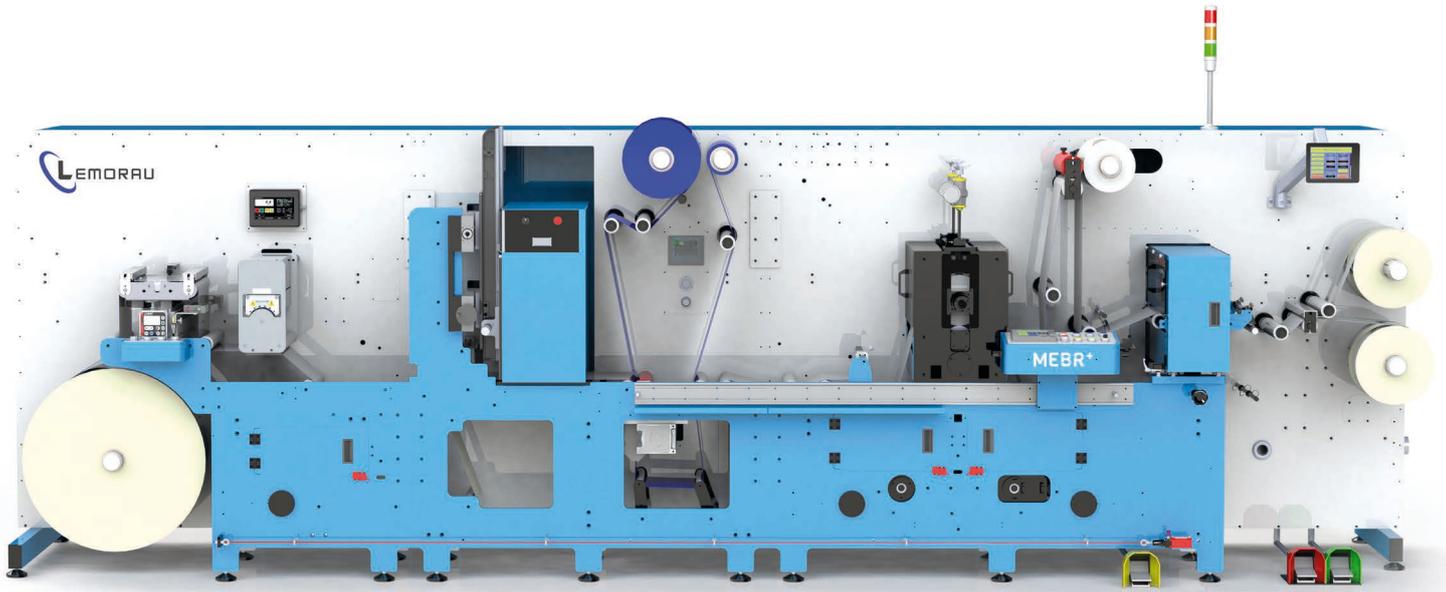
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Bobst pushes automation and sustainability agenda

At its annual press event, Bobst made a series of important announcements indicating the way forward for its narrow and mid-web press technology. *Andy Thomas-Emans reports*

With Labelexpo Europe 2023 on the horizon, Bobst has announced a major push across its whole raft of package printing and converting lines toward the digitalization of the packaging supply chain.

At the same time, the company made significant announcements on its labels business, including new die-cutting systems, Pantone validation and a new user interface for both flexo and digital presses.

While many of the announcements at the Bobst annual press event in Lausanne, Switzerland, were not directly related to the labels and mid-web flexible packaging sectors, they clearly show the direction of travel at Bobst - and are already filtering down to areas of more direct interest to L&L readers.

Falling into this category is Bobst's 70 percent acquisition of Dücker Robotics, which develops robots used in loading and palletizing corrugated board. The technology will certainly scale to folding carton converters and the more industrialized sheetfed offset wet-glue label converters. But going forward it could also form the basis of automated logistics for the inline labels sector.

Likewise, Accucheck, which uses the artwork PDF to generate inspection recipes, started as a system targeted at folding carton converters and has now been ported to Bobst's narrow and mid-web label machines.

Another Bobst partner which has directly impacted the labels' portfolio is Sauber Technologies, which specializes in additive manufacturing (3D printing), fluid dynamics and aerodynamics, already used in Formula 1 R&D.

Explains Patrick Graber, strategic marketing director at Bobst. '3D printing has evolved with titanium which is a very strong material with excellent thermal stability. 3D printing allows us to simulate ink flow dynamics and functioning of it. It gives us then the ability to print final components with these geometries which are integrated to our clusters. Each inkjet printhead has its own ink chamber where ink is optimized in very small quantities by regulating heat and pressure to achieve perfect viscosity right before jetting.'

Another company-wide technology is Bobst's oneECG extended color gamut implementation, which is built on the existing Revo ECG technology for Bobst inline presses. When matched with LED-UV curing, Bobst has measured a staggering 60 percent decrease in energy use.

'Sustainability is the key driver for increasing adoption of oneECG,' comments Graber. 'Customers were not ready before, but oneECG is more and more an acceptable way of working, particularly where you have short-to-medium runs.'

At the heart of Bobst's corporate digitization agenda is Bobst Connect, a Cloud-based bundle of services and analytics which currently includes equipment monitoring and performance management modules. Bobst announced the addition of a Tool Management module, currently targeted at the folding carton sector. Tools are 'enrolled' and automatically identify themselves to the machine using the optional Toolink RFID tag. The software then monitors tool wear and allows Cloud-based management of the tooling inventory.

Moving forward we can expect to see sustainability, maintenance



Jean-Pascal, Bobst, addresses journalists

“Sustainability is the key driver for increasing adoption of oneECG. Customers were not ready before, but oneECG is a more acceptable way of working with short-to-medium runs”

Flexible packaging

Bobst has taken note of the growing volume of flexible packaging printed on mid-web (what Bobst calls narrow web) digital presses and introduced the compact Nova MW solventless laminator for this market with web widths from 400-830mm.

monitoring and quality control being added.

At Labelexpo Europe 2023 Bobst will demonstrate, together with its partners, a complete workflow with seamless integration between inline flexo and digital processes, enabling the digitalization of all process steps.

Labels deep dive

For the first time, Bobst's press event included a session dedicated to labels, demonstrating the increasing importance of the inline digital and flexo portfolio within the group. Last year the label division took on 80 employees, and another 50 this year. The company has seen particularly strong growth in its high-end 'All-in-One' press sales.

'The need for automation and workforce issues mean this segment will continue to increase,' says Graber.

Graber points out that it is not only the larger consolidated labels and packaging groups who are buying the top-of-the-range

'All-in-One' Digital Master press but also medium-sized converters such as Germark in Spain. Explained Graber, 'Automation is the key here – Iban (Cid)'s DM340 is run by a single operator where you would usually need two to three operators – one printer, one finisher and one for splice and inspection. With a DM340 and an in-line turret slitting rewinder, most processes are automated with minimum manual intervention. Thanks to this inline process from PDF to ready-to-ship rolls, waste is cut in half and a complete job change can be performed in under three minutes. Another big benefit for medium-size customers is the space these presses free up.'

Graber was keen to restate Bobst's continued commitment to both its flexo and digital technologies, with a key focus both on integration and automation. Flexo accounts for around half of Bobst's label press sales, and customers are asking for more automation.

Says Graber, 'On flexible packaging and on labels the M6 can also handle short runs with a combination of auto job change capabilities and oneECG, which will be demonstrated at Labelexpo in Brussels. Looking more into the long term, we are looking into robotics which can automate processes such as preparation and packing.'

New user interface

A major announcement at the event was Bobst Sphere, a common user interface (UI) for both flexo and digital inline presses. The re-designed UI comes first to the Digital Master and inline flexo M6 press series and will be gradually rolled out to Bobst's other platforms. For the Digital Master press, this means a single interface controls both the digital print engine and



Bobst and Avery Dennison collaborate on linerless technology

Linerless breakthrough

Bobst and Avery Dennison have been working together on a new linerless technology targeted primarily at the primary (prime) label market. The result is the ADLInrSave system which will be launched at Labelexpo Europe 2023.

Standard laminated self-adhesive rolls are delivered to the converter, who prints the label design in the normal way. The printed face layer is then delaminated and a silicone coating is applied over the top surface, followed by micro-perforation, slitting and rewinding of the linerless rolls.

The labels are applied to containers on applicators specially developed with Harland Machine Systems. The used liner is collected by Avery Dennison for recycling back into liner-grade material.

According to Avery Dennison, LinrSave allows 50-80 percent more labels to be carried per roll compared to a standard PS laminate. Overall packaging weight is reduced by 30-50 percent, and there is a 27 percent CO2 saving according to Avery Dennison's Carbon Trust tool.

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“Bobst Connect will give access to data-driven analytics, higher machine up-time with remote connected maintenance, and the ability to identify and optimize production trends thanks to historical data reporting”

flexo and converting components. Sphere UI includes a simple troubleshooting wizard and is fully Industry 4.0 compliant. It is now undergoing beta testing and will be available in Q4 2023.

It is interesting as well to see how the labels portfolio presses are being integrated into Bobst's Connect and Accucheck technologies mentioned above.

Explains Graber, 'For label converters Bobst Connect will give access to data-driven analytics, higher machine up-time with remote connected maintenance, and the ability to identify and optimize production trends thanks to historical data reporting. In addition, Accucheck quality reports will be accessible in the Cloud, along with real-time performance monitoring of key production metrics and job analytics.'

An update package, Accucheck for Labels, will be available in Q4 2023. This will incorporate fully automatic setup, job queue synchronization, serial coding inspection (zoning and code upload), LILO (lead-in-lead-out) exclusion from inspection, and quality

reports integrated into Bobst Connect.

Built-in inkjet calibration features will include fully automatic angle and stitch and bad nozzle jet detection and compensation, and uniformization of color densities. Accucheck will detect deviated nozzles and not just blocked nozzles and provide real-time alerts to the operator. Bobst works with X-Rite spectrophotometers to measure deltaE tolerance to Pantone targets.

Die-cutting and Pantone validation

Bobst already has a 370mm-wide high-speed semi-rotary die cutter and has now added a 530mm-wide version, both with automatic plate-change and DigiGap automated pressure control. 'The die cutter runs at 160 m/min and you are in registration after a job change in one to two minutes,' says Graber.

Bobst also announced a new Quick Change rotary die-cutting system, which claimed to halve magnetic cylinder changeover times.

Bobst further announced Pantone validation for its inkjet engine and DFE (digital front end).

'We are the first to get Pantone validated,' says Graber. 'This ensures both our workflow and output are in accordance with Pantone standards, which gives brands confidence. We started the process one year ago, also for our gravure business. Flexo will follow at some point, so all our presses, whether for short or long runs, will be color-matched to the same Pantone standard.'



Bobst will demonstrate both its Digital Master and Master M6 presses at Labelexpo Europe in a single integrated workflow. For more information, visit www.labelexpo-europe.com



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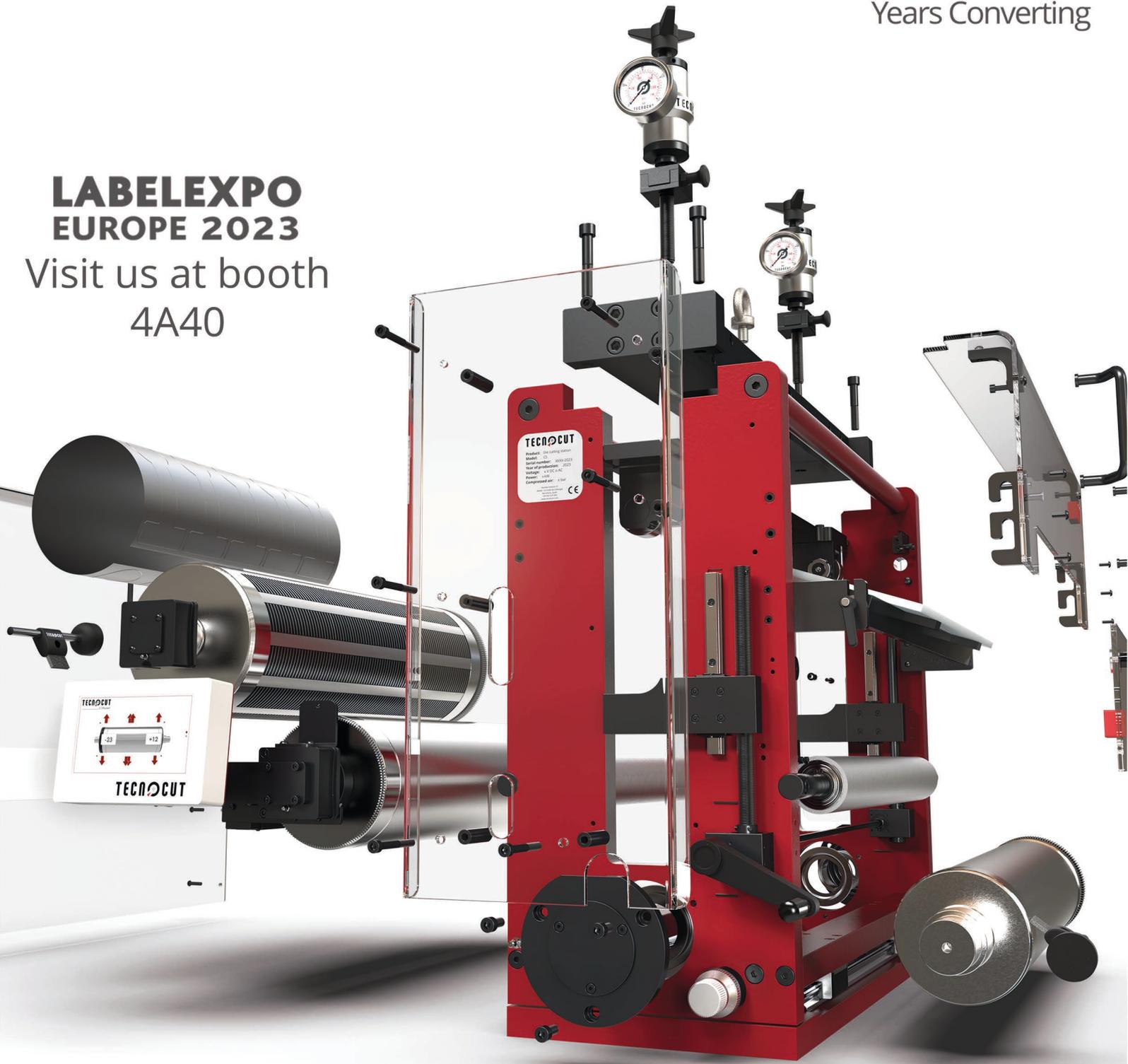
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Durst Beyond event envisions the future of digital print

A new automated print quality inspection system and UV ink series were key highlights from Durst's customer event held at the company's Brixen HQ. Adrian Tippetts reports

Durst used its recent open-house and conference event to introduce a radical new automated quality control system called Hawk Eye, which will be officially launched at Labelexpo Europe 2023.

Durst Hawk Eye uses camera vision systems to automate print quality on-the-fly, resulting in significantly reduced waste and overall improved print quality, according to Martin Leitner, product manager, labels and flexible packaging at Durst. The technology will be standard on all new presses and retrofittable on all RSC presses installed since 2018.

Comments Leitner: 'Durst is seeking to drive performance of its Tau RSC presses further with a new technology that automates quality on-the-fly, bringing the possibility of waste and setup reduction and operator time savings.'

Held at its headquarters in Brixen, Italy, the three-day Durst Beyond event showcased the company's latest printing, ink and software technologies, including both Hawk Eye and a new generation of UV inkjet inks. Additionally, round-table discussions and presentations provided insight to help label and packaging printers succeed when faced with rapid technological and demographic change, in an increasingly regulated supply chain where sustainability, speed and quality matter.

Process automation has been a dominant industry topic for perhaps a generation. Generally, the benefits of this have been framed in terms of waste reduction and repeatable quality, but now digitization is seen as essential for long-term corporate survival. Demographic changes will mean chronic labor shortages, so label and packaging converters must start planning to reduce human intervention and rely more on computerized technologies.

With that in mind, people and planet were the two defining issues of the conference. 'People are critical for our industry, yet human resources are increasingly a challenge,' says Thomas Macina, global sales director, labels and flexible packaging. 'How do we find people, train them, keep them motivated, how to retain them? How to ideally depend on fewer stakeholders who can take decisions and train machines to perform.'

UV ink developments

The digital press is only one element of a productive, reliable digital workflow. Efficient data handling, color matching, ink certification and performance, quality control systems and training are also vital elements of the workflow. Durst manufactures its inks and software for its presses, these are the essential cornerstones of a high-performance printing system, and the focus of innovation.

Stefan Kappaun, executive vice president of inks and fluids at Durst Group, highlighted the strong growth prospects for UV inks in the label printing market of between 8-10 percent a year, given their versatility, light-fastness, fast curing, chemical and temperature resistance, and compatibility with different substrates and analog pre/post-treatments.

Kappaun announced the latest developments in Durst's UV inkjet ink program, with new environmental and safety certifications as well as a dedicated low-migration inks range for indirect food contact applications.

Durst's Tau RSC UV ink portfolio for its RSC label and packaging



Thomas Macina, global sales manager, speaks at the Durst Beyond event

“Without a doubt, we see the proliferation of SKUs, shorter lead times and the demand to eliminate obsolescence and inventory”

printing platforms comprises two sets: the 'standard' Tau RSC UV ink and the Tau RSC LM (low migration) Ink. The standard Tau RSC UV ink, available in CMYK, and optionally orange, violet, green and white, is suited for automotive, electronics, industrial, commercial printing, chemicals and personal care. The low migration ink, in CMYK and optional orange, blue and white, is designed for food, beverages, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and toiletries. Covering 95 percent of the Pantone range with seven colors, both have Swiss Ordinance compliance while the LM inks are also compliant with the Nestlé exclusion list.

The inks are REACH, Toy Standard and Greenguard certified. Durst has also gained certification from the Association of Plastic Recyclers for its inks when used on pressure sensitive labels with HDPE or PET containers, showing that this ink and substrate combination works in the recycling process.

Software solutions simplify workflow

Michael Deflorian, business unit manager, software and solutions, explained Durst's heavy investment in developing software technology to streamline the process from pixel to output. The Durst software and solutions business unit has more than 70 people dedicated to software, developing products in e-commerce, prepress and automation groups.

'At the heart of the Durst offering is the press, the production environment. But automation is the key to feeding it efficiently,' says Deflorian. 'If you digitalize processes and customer touch points, then you get a lot of data. Data is key to understanding how to feed the machine in the most efficient way, and how to optimize processes.'

The range of software includes Durst Smart Shop and Smart

“By going digital, we’ve been able to reduce finished inventory from USD 1M to under USD 700,000 and print on demand from e-commerce sites”

Editor software to support the development of an e-commerce business model, and Durst Workflow Label which automates prepress tasks and ripping; The Save Ink feature within DWL makes it easy to remove excess flood color areas outside the dieline of the label file, for example, with the potential to dramatically reduce the cost to print. The software provides estimates for ink consumption and ink cost, per color, for any file.

Durst’s software is optimized for integration with third-party ERP systems, such as commonly used platforms from Sage or Cerm.

Workflow analytics is a machine-related software, standard with the press. It provides live and historical performance data, helping the user stay informed about productivity, ink consumption, output levels and job status.

Additionally, with remote access, Durst service teams can monitor the performance of the customer’s machine for early problem detection, such as the need to replace a filter.

Panel discussion highlights sustainability

During the Durst Beyond event, a panel discussion looked at changing business models with digital printing, emphasizing the challenges of meeting sustainability targets.

The brand perspective was provided by two representatives from



Durst hosted visitors to its HQ in Brixen, Italy

Dr Schär, an international food and dietary supplements business headquartered in South Tyrol, Alexander Mayr, who leads the packaging artwork studio, and Davide Agnoli, global packaging project manager.

Agnoli noted that sustainability has broadened to include targets for sustainable packaging, CO2 footprint, and diversity and inclusion at Dr Schär.

‘With sustainable packaging, we focus on three aspects: reduce, reuse, recycle,’ says Agnoli. ‘For the reuse part, we are trying to cut usage of plastic by 25 percent by the end 2024. With recycle, we are trying to achieve a transition to fully recycled materials by



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The Durst RSC press portfolio

Durst entered the label market in 2009, and now has an installed base of 420 UV inkjet labels presses worldwide. Its UV inkjet press portfolio comprises three Tau RSC presses and a standalone hybrid platform suited for various applications and output requirements. All feature the core print technology based on the Samba print head capable of 1200x1200dpi with 2pl drop sizes. Productivity is the main differentiator between platforms: Tau 330 RSC E, intended for producing about 50,000sqm/month with a maximum speed of to 52m/min; Tau 330 RSC, designed for about 100,000sqm monthly output and a maximum of 80m/min; while the RSCI, suitable for up to 200,000sqm/month, reaches 100m/min at 600x1200 dpi. Also available in 420mm and 510mm widths, the RSCI can produce at up to 3000sqm/hr, making medium and long runs competitive.

the end of 2024. Our partners and suppliers are working in that direction, developing solutions in terms of film that is easy to handle in different countries.'

Mayr is the point of contact for Dr Schär's printing suppliers around the world. He highlighted the difficulty of complying with global environmental regulations that often differ from country to country and change frequently. This means there is an ever-present risk of scrapping printed stock.

Mayr's solution is more product regionalization, and lower minimum order quantities. Switching from gravure or flexo to digital process for some products would make this possible.

Robert McJury, president of TLF Graphics, a label converter based in Rochester, New York, noted that brands are pushing suppliers for more sustainable packaging. But while surveys repeatedly reveal consumer concern about plastic packaging, switching to 'eco-friendlier' alternatives does not always result in increased sales.

An organic tomato grower customer of TLF switched to kraft board, for example, but it proved less popular as the product was not visible.

McJury explained how adopting digital printing has helped TLF on its sustainability journey. Its two 13in Durst presses were installed in 2015 and 2018 and now account for 55 percent of the company's revenue.

'We've printed about 37,000 orders on our Durst presses. And while the obvious benefits like reduction of waste, labor and power consumption spring to mind, one of the interesting things is that we've eliminated 151,000 printing plates from going into the landfill,' says McJury.

With substrate waste between jobs limited to approximately two linear meters (6ft), the digital presses give TLF the agility to meet customer demands for shorter runs, increasingly on a just-in-time basis – although the company is regularly running jobs up to 90,000 linear feet (27,432m). McJury comments: 'Without a doubt, we see the proliferation of SKUs, shorter lead times and the demand to eliminate obsolescence and inventory. By going digital, we've been able to reduce finished inventory from USD 1M to under USD 700,000 and print on demand from e-commerce sites.'



Durst will launch its Hawk Eye automated print QA system at Labelexpo Europe 2023. Visit www.labelexpo-europe.com for more

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Graphimecc opens the curtain

Graphimecc's expertise in serialization, quality certification and high-tech converting is helping brands secure their global supply chains. Andy Thomas-Emans reports



Encoding Lab customer support facility in Verona



Spark Jet inkjet printer with LED curing and dual Spark Cam inspection module

Graphimecc is full of surprises for those – like this writer – who previously saw the company mainly as a manufacturer of high-quality finishing machines.

The first surprise: while Graphimecc does manufacture label finishing machines, it does not regard itself as a competitor to other manufacturers in that field, as it focuses on certification of production output quality, not the converting process itself.

Surprise number two is to walk into a truly lights-out smart label coding factory, where jobs arrive remotely and are run by fully automated production lines specializing in high-security serial numbering, RFID/NFC encoding, validation and delivery, often involving complex inline material constructions running multiple webs and inserts.

The third surprise is the machine manufacturing and assembly hall. Instead of the kind of serial production of standard modules one usually sees, here there are a small number of bespoke machines under construction for specific customer requirements, and not only for labels but also for tags and sheet products like folding cartons.

Perhaps the final surprise is the ratio of engineers to production personnel. Graphimecc employs 24 software and electro-mechanical engineers out of a staff of 50, and these are graduates of companies like Ferrari with an average age in the mid-20s.

So how does this all fit together?

Government contracts

Graphimecc was founded in 1985 by Vittorio Avona. Andrea Ranzato Vianello joined him in 1999 with the aim to develop a company focused on systems to secure and track high-value items, securing patents on what is today regarded as the bi-directional print certification process. Ranzato Vianello remains at the company as owner/CEO, with his sons Ivan and Marco now actively involved in the business.

In 2000, Italy's National Printing House commissioned Graphimecc to design a system for the serialization of pharmaceuticals in Italy, known as the pharmaceutical tax seal (BOF). The system was specified to create 100 percent certified printed output with zero error for encoding, traceability and anti-counterfeiting.

From there, Graphimecc's core business primarily grew through supplying complete systems to the high-security printers who work with government agencies.

They deliver advanced technologies for ID documentation and

“The commercial market had caught up with what we had been doing for two decades”

fiscal recovery using secure data encoding combined with overt, covert and forensic security features.

Graphimecc's customers include the European Central Bank and Banca Italia.

Pivot to brands

A few years ago, Graphimecc looked at how it might apply these core technologies to brand protection and supply chain security.

‘We saw that the market had shifted to a requirement for traceability and sustainability and we started to have those discussions,’ says Dr Vlad Sljapic, group chief commercial officer at Graphimecc. ‘Now the whole world was talking about QR codes and traceability and we recognized that the commercial market had caught up with what we had been doing for two decades.’

This led to Graphimecc forming partnerships with leading suppliers and converters in the brand protection and track and trace field, including Avery Dennison, Checkpoint, Beontag, All4Labels, Eurostampa, MCC, Reynders and Schreiner Group. Graphimecc also reached out to work directly with some brands, including Audi, Gucci, Merck and Zara.

Projects ranged across healthcare, fashion and textile, industrial, logistics, automotive and wine and spirits sectors.

‘We see a requirement in the branded goods market today for zero fault certification,’ says Ranzato Vianello. ‘You simply cannot track and trace your products if there are faults in your system to begin with.’

Sljapic adds that it is crucial to understand the distinction between inspection and certification: ‘Inspection is to understand if something is good or bad. Certification is a machine manufacturer's guarantee that there are no errors in the final products, regardless of the operator's actions. Most people offer an inspection report, which is to understand there is an error, but not what you do to take out that error. We design the machines that automatically eliminate errors and guarantee that they have done a good job of it, even if the operator stops paying attention.’

The EU's Digital Product Passport (EU DPP) scheme forms an important part of Graphimecc's strategy in the branded goods



L-R Andrea and Ivan Ranzato Vianello

sector.

EU DPP will be the EU's official method of sharing key information on a product's sustainability and circularity between all relevant parties across the supply chain.

Responding to the challenge, Graphimecc has developed direct connections with key track and trace platforms like Avery Dennison's atma.io, a Cloud-based product identification system that assigns unique digital IDs to everyday items, connecting them to the Internet of Things.

This provides businesses with unparalleled supply chain transparency, by tracking, storing and managing all the events associated with individual products from source to consumer, to product disposal or reuse.

'Our automated systems can obtain the unique IDs directly from an external data source, and apply them in an encoding and certification operation, allowing converters to easily expand their service offer portfolio to brands and offer traceability as a value add,' says Sljapic.

Bespoke machinery

Graphimecc's machine systems need to be understood in terms of this overall focus on secure encoding and certification.

The company's converting machines are designed to deliver secure variable data printing, print quality control and certification of the finished product, as well as RFID encoding, converting and validation where required.

More complex bespoke systems, such as RFID booklet construction and inserting, can also be provided.

Modular components include the Spark Jet inkjet module – capable of jetting tactile varnish and Braille up to 270 microns thickness - the Spark RFID encoding module, Spark CAM inspection module, and defect management and removal.

'We design the machine as part of a process from the ground up to deliver a certain product,' says Sljapic. 'Certification is an important part of this. We build everything for the machine, and everything

Labelexpo presentation

During Labelexpo Europe 2023, Dr Vlad Sljapic will be holding a daily Automation Arena presentation on how converters can develop new business models by offering secure track and trace with unique product IDs to their brand-owner customers. The presentation uses Avery Dennison's atma.io as an example and will show how codes are obtained and how they are represented on the label by QR codes or RFID.

“We see a requirement in the branded goods market today for zero fault certification. You simply cannot track and trace your products if there are faults in your system to begin with”

works on one integrated, closed-loop and fully-automated system.'

An example of how this fits together is Graphimecc's Zero W pharma label inspection and certification platform.

Unlike standard pharma inspection systems, the Zero W is not bi-directional. When a defect is spotted, at operating speeds of up to 150m/min, instead of reversing the web to inspect the splice point, create the replacement labels and re-inspect, in the Graphimecc system the faulty label is instantaneously reprinted - individually or in a full sequence - and passed through the dual inspection camera system in a single direction and without reducing the linear speed.

Every circuit board of the Graphimecc system has been designed from the ground up by the company to increase data and production throughput, resulting in three to 10 times higher productivity in comparison to standard bi-directional systems.

'Buying off-the-shelf systems and OEM integrating them was not an option - otherwise you have to downgrade your own tech to make it work with other peoples' kit,' says Ranzato Vianello.

'Now we have the ability to correct the error on the fly and certify it with a second camera working on the same PC without having to go back and forward.'

The sister machine is for turnkey RFID label and tag production. The Graphimecc Zero RFID W platform operates at speeds up to 120m/min, with electrostatic and mechanical stress safeguarding and on-the-fly QA.

It combines tag insertion and personalization into a single production step and UHF, HF and HF NFC tag types. Like the Zero W pharma, the system is fully automated and designed for use by non-specialist operators.

'To take out human error is key,' explains Sljapic. 'We can fully automate, including adding robotics, or leave the operator in at some level. Whether the operator is experienced or non-experienced does not matter.'

Contract manufacturing

One part of Graphimecc's Verona HQ is dedicated to a fully automated 'lights out' contract encoding and certification facility.

Graphimecc uses GM Enterprise MAS (Modular Automation System) to generate jobs and launch them into production remotely with just-in-time supervision of job status.

'With this facility, we can support companies that want to set up new operations or enter new markets which require secure encoding, and they do not have to take risk of choosing the right or wrong technology too early,' says Ranzato Vianello. 'You work with our encoding lab and you can resell the output as your own service to your customers until you decide what you really need.'

One job running during L&L's visit was the production of personalized labels for hang tags. 'We receive the data at 9 pm and the labels are ready for next-day delivery,' explains Ranzato Vianello.

One huge benefit of running this operation is to create feedback for the software and systems being developed in Graphimecc's Encoding Lab.

'We have created an accelerator internally to anticipate problems and future challenges,' says Vianello. 'This is supported by the feedback from our internal manufacturing facility, and our research is applied there directly.'

Graphimecc is a great example of a company where the sum equals a lot more than the individual parts. Expertise at the highest levels of product security, combined with in-house software engineering, bespoke machine design and automated contract manufacturing delivers a unique resource for label converters, brand owners and the converting machinery manufacturers with whom Graphimecc collaborates.



Graphimecc will exhibit at Labelexpo Europe 2023 and Dr Vlad Sljapic will present daily on the Automation Arena stand on digital product IDs



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Dscoop Edge World Expo: A real 'magic' show

Dscoop World Edge hosted a celebrity keynote

Dscoop Edge World Expo witnessed the launch of HP Indigo 200K digital press and played host to a celebrity keynote speaker. Charlie Edward reports

The 2023 edition of Dscoop, hosted in St Louis, Missouri, in March proved to be a melting pot of innovation. Over 1,100 attendees from more than 40 countries gathered under the St Louis-themed banner 'gateway to growth.'

Basketball legend Earvin 'Magic' Johnson, known as much for his business acumen as for his athletic prowess, delivered the keynote speech. Johnson emphasized the importance of teamwork, community and personal growth, setting a tone of shared strategies and innovative ideas.

Johnson says: 'My journey first started on the basketball court in Lansing, Michigan. I had won every championship from third grade to ninth grade. Then I went to a high school that had never won a championship. As leaders, even with the marketplace being bad right now, we still have to figure out how to win. When I went to this high school that wasn't known for basketball, I had to figure out how to win.'

Johnson says he's driven by two things: excellence and being 'best in class.'

HP Indigo 200K North America debut

For the machine heads, the highlight of Dscoop was the North American debut of the HP Indigo 200K digital press. Aviram Iluz, global product manager at HP Indigo, underscored the machine's potential in the flexible packaging market. According to the Flexible Packaging Association, flexible packaging is the second largest packaging segment in the US, making up about 19 percent of the \$177B USD packaging market in the US.

The new mid-web press, launched this spring at HP's VIP event in Israel, is designed to increase productivity and provide on-demand delivery with no minimum orders, all while facilitating unique designs and reducing energy consumption.

The press features a 30 percent increase in speed and 45 percent boost in productivity compared to the 25K, HP says. The press is also meant to serve as a tool for converters looking to make the evolution into Industry 4.0.

Dscoop also unveiled an array of fresh initiatives during the event, including a print exchange platform and an expanded climate action committee. This committee, which was established in 2022, is made up of volunteer printers and partners aiming to guide Dscoop companies toward becoming carbon net-zero.

Expansive educational sessions

The event also featured educational sessions on key trends in the digital printing space, from exploring on Industry 4.0 to insights on emerging trends like the move to digitally printed flexible pouches.

HP's Brent Holloway co-hosted one such session on flexible pouches. Label converters are eyeing flexible packaging and

"Sustainability is all great on paper, but it requires an action"

pouches as a way to diversify their business and meet the growing demand for short-run digitally produced pouches. Holloway says the North and South American flexible packaging market grows around two to four percent each year. But digital printing, Holloway says, 'is growing about two and a half times that.'

Holloway was joined by RooTree, a Canadian printer that takes an eco-friendly approach to flexible packaging.

As growth in digital flexible packaging enjoys a more robust growth pace, it's important for printers to communicate the sustainability benefits of this packaging format, such as less energy to produce and transport than rigid packaging. And yet, most flexible packaging is made up of a multi-layer construction, and therefore not recyclable.

RooTree's president and CEO Phil St-Cyr says: 'At the end of the day, it's going to take a recycler, it's going to take a brand to pass that message on. But I think we can do so much more, because sustainability is all great on paper, but it requires an action.'

John Dettmer, a color expert at HP, led a PrintOS presentation on the importance of quality in color printing. He emphasized the role of tools like PrintOS in achieving consistent color results. The predictive interface was on display, demonstrating its ability to anticipate potential issues before they occur. Color Beat, another feature of PrintOS, increases operational efficiency by making color a competitive advantage. It allows for color control time to be cut down to minutes per job.

Testament to commitment

In conclusion, the Dscoop 2023 conference served as a testament to the digital print industry's commitment to innovation, growth and sustainability.

'It doesn't mean anything if there's no heart and soul - and that's all of you,' Dscoop executive director Peter van Teeseling told the Dscoop audience. 'You are all part of a truly amazing global community.'

That global community makes up the largest digital print community in the world. It includes more than 16,000 HP industrial digital press owners and partners across more than 100 countries. Some traveled more than 20 hours to make the trip to St Louis, Dscoop says.



For a video recap of Dscoop Edge World Expo, visit <https://bit.ly/3ppF6jH>

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FTA InfoFlex 2023: diving into the future of flexo

At FTA Forum and InfoFlex 2023, innovations in flexographic printing, like color management, efficiency and the ever-evolving relationship of digital and flexographic technologies took center stage. Charlie Edward reports

The Flexographic Technical Association's (FTA) Forum and InfoFlex 2023 event held on April 17-18 at the Greater Columbus, Ohio, Convention Center brought together nearly 1,200 industry experts, professionals and enthusiasts to discuss the latest trends and technologies shaping the flexographic printing world.

With a focus on building relationships, expanding product offerings and improving production efficiency, the event showcased innovations in color management, UV-LED curing technology, digital printing and more.

Flexo and digital

For a show focused on flexography, it was undeniable that the future of conventional print and its place in the emerging digital printing landscape was a hot topic.

Although digital printing has gained significant attention, Steve Schulte, vice president of sales and marketing at Mark Andy, and Keith Nagle, a sales manager at Bobst, both believe that digital technology will not replace flexographic printing.

Schulte says, 'I don't think flexography is going away because there's still long-run jobs. Until digital gets to that crossover point that they can run fast and the cost per label gets much lower, flexography will always have a place.'

Nagle shares a similar view, emphasizing that there's room in the market for both, 'One doesn't replace the other, but they complement each other very well,' he says.

Nagle also made note of the increasing level of automation in the label and packaging industry, including the prepress portion and plate mounting.

Regarding the future of conventional technology, Nagle says, 'It's going to get more automated to help with the workforce issues that we have in the industry.'

Bobst recently released Bobst Connect, a cloud-based digital platform that enhances and improves packaging productivity. Bobst also announced an update to its Digital Master series, which integrates Bobst Connect. The company also expanded its portfolio of die-cutting products. In addition to semi-rotary die-cutting, quick change rotary die-cutting was introduced, offering a 50 percent time saving to change



Attendees gather on FTA's bustling show floor at the Greater Columbus Convention Center

“The FTA provides the technical content and educational seminars to provide those opportunities for certifications and continued education for our customers while at the show”

magnetic cylinders.

Sanja Valentic, Esko's general manager of North America operations, spoke about sustainability in packaging. She says: 'Every year, sustainability is one of those topics that you see, people will post a green symbol on their website and after six months, it disappears. This year, sustainability has actually become a real, tangible part of everyone's messaging.'

Color management

Color management and efficiency were other key themes at FTA, with Bill Dewalt of GMG Americas highlighting the dramatic speed increase in his company's new profiling software.

'Some projects [used to] take hours, and it went down to minutes. The developers were very excited about that,' he says.

Dewalt also pointed out that this technology, GMG's OpenColor software, helps companies overcome the challenges of finding skilled staff members by allowing the existing workforce to work more efficiently.

GMG's conversion technology offers the ability to simulate colors with pinpoint accuracy, potentially eliminating the need for test charts. It's a comprehensive approach that considers multiple factors, including spectral color data, the printing process, substrates and even the sequence of ink application. The system's adaptability

is designed for situations where parameters change, allowing for swift calculation of a new profile without needing a fresh proof.

Color management continues to evolve, and Raymond Burnthorn from X-Rite emphasized the importance of adapting to these changes. As the industry shifts toward a younger workforce, Burnthorn observed that young people tend to perceive color differently than their more experienced counterparts:

'The younger industry sees the depth of color,' he says. 'They have the ability to see the changes more distinctly.'

Other new products

The XSYS booth featured new products from the global flexographic specialist.

Dan Rosen, a sales manager at the company, showed off the FTV, a printing plate launched in the second quarter of 2023, explaining: 'It's a special plate that has one-to-one reproduction to the image file.'

The diverse perspectives from industry experts demonstrated that the future of the flexo industry is bright, with a continued focus on sustainability and automation.



For more information, check out our video review of the show at: <https://bit.ly/3CTxOHZ>

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Emerging trends on display at Esko World 2023

Over 450 industry leaders converged in Orlando, Florida for Esko World 2023 that highlighted key trends in personalization, sustainability and technological integration amid global change. Charlie Edward reports

EskoWorld 2023 took place from May 23 to 25 at the Gaylord Palms Resort and Convention Center. Amid the information shared throughout more than 150 educational sessions, seven main themes emerged at the show.

Automation, sustainability and consumer preferences

First and foremost, the trifecta of automation, sustainability and consumer preferences were evident. An overwhelming 73 percent of label and packaging suppliers expressed belief in automation as the key to revolutionizing packaging. Similarly, 71 percent of consumers and nearly 90 percent of brands recognized the importance of sustainable packaging. Consumers' willingness to pay a premium for environmentally friendly packaging indicates a major shift towards eco-consciousness across the industry.

A key statistic revealed at Esko World showed 58 percent of brand owners surveyed believe packaging waste, plastic regulations and environmental claims will make the most impact on packaging and labeling companies in 2023.

As the printing and packaging world veers toward a more sustainable future, emerging technologies and consumer behaviors will be the driving forces to moving the needle. Noting that, the second takeaway cements technology and the cloud as indispensable allies in the industry.

The convergence of technology and packaging is apparent, as 48 percent of brand owners are turning to cloud systems to minimize costs and stay competitive in this cutthroat market.

Brands to go digital

Moreover, the importance of the unboxing experience and digital twin technology emerged. As online shopping continues to dominate retail, the act of unboxing has become a trend. It is reported that 62 percent of consumers who watch unboxing videos plan to purchase the product, signaling a massive opportunity for brands. In line with that, the advent of 'digital twin technology' aims to bridge the gap between digital and physical product representations, ensuring consumers' online and offline experiences align seamlessly.

Esko's session on its Store Visualizer tool aimed to help bridge that digital gap, as well. The virtual reality tool allows customers to virtually enter a retail environment, test the visual impact of its designs and determine the best shelf placement from various vantage points. The tool uses VR and eye-tracking technology to record a research participant's journey in the virtual store, and heat maps to help identify the areas where the participant has gazed at a brand's product packaging. This information helps brands determine if their packaging is effective at leading to a purchase.

Personalization gaining ground

Another key takeaway was the emphasis on personalization. A NerdWallet survey showed 37 percent of Americans say they purchase from small businesses to receive a more personal experience. Meanwhile, Mintel suggests that in the next half-decade, brands will focus on their dedicated customer base's unique characteristics. Rather than big-name brands trying to appeal to everyone, they'll likely break into smaller, more specific



Esko President, John Edison addresses the Esko World 2023 crowd

“Visitors were not just attending, but were engaging in discussions on how their own businesses can and must evolve – and how advances in technology can make that happen”

segments that cater to their customers' individual tastes and needs.

Consumers want to shop local, vintage

More consumers are showing their support for small businesses, and making deliberate choices over hasty ones. Companies that succeed in highlighting their roots and sustainability efforts are likely to gain a competitive edge. According to the NerdWallet survey, about a third of shoppers are ready to spend more money to shop locally. The same percentage is also patient enough to endure longer wait times at smaller establishments as compared to big box stores or chains.

Finally, on a lighter note, retro and vintage packaging has made a comeback. Packaging designs that evoke nostalgia and transport consumers back to simpler times are gaining immense popularity. Retro designs now captivate consumers, reinforcing a brand's longevity and commitment to tradition.

Overall, Esko World focused on addressing the pressing challenges that businesses currently face and strategizing for future obstacles. On top of these key takeaway themes, other challenges facing business owners today include the energy crisis, material shortages, labor and skills deficits and eroding profit margins.

Melissa Plemen, senior director of inside sales and marketing at Esko says: 'Visitors to EskoWorld were not just attending, but were actively engaging in lively discussions on how their own businesses can and must evolve – and how advances in technology can make that happen.'



For a video recapping our trip to EskoWorld 2023, visit: <https://bit.ly/3NQoCKO>

Strong debut in Mexico for Labelexpo

The inaugural Labelexpo Mexico 2023 featured 145 exhibitors and nearly 6,000 attendees. James Quirk reports

The inaugural Labelexpo Mexico 2023 exhibition, held at the World Trade Center in Mexico City on April 26-28, welcomed 5,878 visitors from 46 countries and 145 exhibitors.

The strong turnout – and positive feedback from visitors and exhibitors alike – vindicated the organizer's decision to hold its first machinery show in Latin America, after running Label Summit conference and table-top events in the region since 2005.

Feedback from the show floor was uniformly positive, with exhibitors frequently describing how the event had exceeded their expectations. Not only were visitor numbers strong, at nearly 6,000, but there was a significant attendance (around 20 percent of the total) from outside of Mexico, including Central America – Guatemala and Costa Rica in particular – as well as Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Peru.

The positive atmosphere on the show floor was a testament to the current sense of optimism in the local market, which is benefiting from trends such as nearshoring – the influx of foreign companies setting up manufacturing operations in Mexico in order to serve the US market more easily. Numerous converters cited this as a key factor in recent growth. Both local and export markets for tequila are also growing strongly – particularly in the US where the spirit is soaring in popularity.

A report by Mordor Intelligence estimates a 5.5 percent CAGR in the Mexican label market between 2021 and 2026, while local association Canagraf says that label converter numbers have risen in the past decade from around 300 to 450-550.

Tasha Ventimiglia, Labelexpo Americas group director, says of the show: 'We saw the trends driving the growth of the Mexican label industry. For example, the tequila market is booming not just in Mexico but in the US as well, with lots of highly embellished labels from challenger brands appearing on store shelves. And a lot of foreign investment is happening in Mexico, mostly due to its strategic position to serve the US market, with international companies like Tesla and others building plants in Mexico, creating further opportunities for local label converters.'

Labelexpo Mexico 2023 event manager Mirco Mazzarella adds: 'This was a fantastic debut event and I would like to thank our exhibitors, visitors and staff onsite for helping to make this first Labelexpo Mexico an astounding success. Our suppliers were very impressed by the quality and number of converters, particularly from outside Mexico, and we had a few suppliers commenting on the number of flexible packaging printers in attendance. Over 70 percent of exhibitors rebooked for Labelexpo Mexico 2025, with the majority of those upgrading their space.'

Printing technology

The show featured a wide range of working machinery, with Nilpeter demonstrating its FA-17 printing shrink sleeves, and digital presses on display from Mark Andy, Epson, Konica Minolta, Durst and Pulisi.



AstroNova's QuickLabel brand showcased the newly released QL-E100, an introductory, compact and portable color-label printer. Additionally, QuickLabel showed the QL-120X, and the QL-300, the first-ever 5-color label printer (CMYK+W). The TrojanLabel T2-C, claimed to be the first high-capacity label press with a footprint compact enough for a table-top, was also on display.

Bobst, which celebrated the 25th anniversary of its Mexico office last year, made its first Mouvent digital press sale in the country last year, and Bobst's head of narrow and mid web Matteo Cardinotti says further sales are taking place this year. 'The shortage of flexo press operators means that digital is a solution,' he says. 'Inkjet can compete with flexo better than other digital technologies.' Regional marketing communications manager Tove Dahlstrom said the event had exceeded expectations: 'It's a really good show, surprisingly so given it is the first edition. The audience is very qualified and we have received lots of leads.'

Dilli showed its Neo Picasso inkjet press in Mexico for the first time. The South Korean manufacturer appointed Grupo Zur as its agent in the country last year. 'There is lots of potential in the Mexican market for digital printing,' says Jin-Kyu Jeong, overseas packaging solution team manager. 'The Latin American region is a new focus for the company.'

Domino focused on promoting its K600i inkjet print bar, which can be retrofitted onto existing presses to add variable data printing capabilities. Senior account manager Gary Peterson says: 'We do a lot of business in sectors such as tequila, agriculture and fruit where there is a need for variable data such as tax stamps. Nearshoring is creating a lot of opportunities in the Mexican market.'

Durst showcased its Tau RSCi UV inkjet press, which is available in web widths of 330mm, 420mm or 510mm. It is designed to be able to handle medium- to long-run jobs as well as short-run. The Tau RSCi is equipped by default with a chill roller and jumbo winders to guarantee material flexibility and maximum ease of use.

Epson demonstrated its L-6534VW inkjet label press, which enables reliable and repeatable high-speed printing at up to 164 ft/min for jobs up to 13.39in in width. The new generation PrecisionCore linehead center drum system is a space-saving,



“Feedback garnered from the show floor was uniformly positive, with exhibitors frequently describing how the event had exceeded their expectations”

CMYK printing at 1,200 DPI and can be complemented by a flexo unit before and after digital print to allow, for example, a flexo white to be laid down followed by a flexo spot color, or cold foil, or lamination. Mark Andy closed 'several deals' on the show floor.

Nilpeter demonstrated its FA-17 flexo press at a booth that was constantly packed with visitors. The press features reduced waste and shorter job changeover times, as well as higher performance in terms of production speed and registration. The automation ensures the performance of the press and its optimal performance for short runs, without adding additional costs to the production process. At Labelexpo Mexico, the press was equipped with eight printing units with UV curing, and a rail system for the application of value-added processes such as cold stamping and lamination. The press ran shrink sleeves with cold foil applied in-line.

Pulisi, a Chinese manufacturer known for its inspection systems, demonstrated its new AOBead DPIM UV inkjet press in a 6-color configuration. The press has a 330mm web width and in-line inspection system. The company is represented in the US and Mexico by SM Investments, a new venture from Ajay Mehta and Rohit Mehta, respectively former founder and managing director, and corporate director, of Indian labelstock manufacturer SMI Coated Products, which was acquired by Jindal Poly Films last year.

SET Industry represents a number of Chinese and Thai suppliers in Mexico. Among the equipment on its stand was Han Global's LabStar 3305 inkjet press and a Hontec finishing system. CEO Jorge Diaz reported high visitor numbers to the stand and noted the number of converters from Central America, Ecuador and Colombia.

Sun Digital, HP Indigo's exclusive channel partner in Mexico, promoted HP Indigo's digital technology and its own brand of finishing equipment, Suntek.

Utecto promoted its Onyx Go central impression (CI) flexo press, which was launched last year. The Onyx Go is claimed to offer the fastest printing speed in the short-run flexo segment at up to 400m/min, which enables users to print up to 50 million square meters annually across three print widths: 820, 1,020 or 1,320mm.

Converting equipment

AB Graphic showed its Omega Ti200 and DigiLite systems. The Omega Ti200 is an entry-level machine that enables the production of RFID and electronic article surveillance (EAS) labels. Designed to take rolls of printed die-cut labels and insert smart RFID or EAS tags (or a range of other inserts) in a single pass, the Omega Ti200 is described as single-lane, low cost and easy to use. The DigiLite is a versatile, compact digital finishing system, available in both rotary and semi-rotary configurations.

Brotech demonstrated its SDF-E digital converting system, equipped with semi-rotary flexo and semi-rotary die-cutting. Additional options, such as cold foil, can be added to the modular machine. The company had sold five SDF-E systems from the show floor at the time of L&L's visit, with a sixth about to be confirmed, according to managing director Ramon Lee. Also on display was a seaming machine for shrink sleeves, which had attracted a further two sales. Lee said that the company plans to set up a demo center in Querétaro, Mexico, next year. Brotech has sold into the Latin American market for nearly 10 years. It has two technicians based

compact design integrating all the functions required for production, such as corona treatment, white ink, digital varnish, web cleaner, ionizer and an additional UV curing unit, all as standard.

Etirama was promoting its various flexo presses in a market that is second only to its native Brazil in terms of installations. The press manufacturer signed a distribution deal with local agent Jetrix at Label Summit Latin America 2015, and has since sold 42 presses in Mexico.

Flora showed its 5-color UV inkjet label press J330-S, designed as a compact and fully integrated single-pass platform. It uses the Epson S3200 600 DPI printhead and can run with speeds up to 60m/min. The 350mm print width can support a wide range of applications.

'We've experienced strong growth in China, so in the past year we have increased our focus on international markets, exhibiting at both Labelexpo Southeast Asia and Labelexpo Mexico,' says director Victor Xu. 'International markets recognize that Chinese technology is high quality.'

Heidelberg was promoting the new Gallus One hybrid press, launched this year. Gallus presses are sold directly by Heidelberg Mexico, whose head of marketing Fernando Menendez says: 'There is a lot of opportunity in the local market. Gallus is a premium brand, so we have to demonstrate to local converters that they can afford the presses thanks to our financing options. The gap is closing between the perception of the machines as expensive and the reality.'

Konica Minolta demonstrated its AccurioLabel 230 and AccurioPrint C4065 on its stand. German Farrugia, director of sales and marketing for Konica Minolta Mexico, was impressed by the number of visitors from the wider region. 'We've had a good flow of prospects. There are lots of high-level visitors. We are growing our presence in the market as digital receives more interest.'

Mark Andy's Latin America sales manager John Vigna described the event as 'outstanding'. 'It has surpassed our expectations,' he says. 'It shows that the market here is active and growing.' The company showed its Digital Pro 3 flexo/toner hybrid machine, an entry-level to mid-market system that offers a low cost-to-print ratio from its compact footprint. The digital toner engine offers



“Over 70 percent of exhibitors rebooked for Labelexpo Mexico 2025, with the majority of those upgrading their space”

in Mexico, and is represented in the country by local distributor Banzi as well as Konica Minolta. An extensive dealer network covers the rest of the region, as well as channel partners of HP Indigo.

Cartes ran demonstrations of its digital finishing technology Jet D-Screen (JDS) on the Gemini platform, combined with its laser die-cutting and converting system, which together allow for the embellishing, finishing and die-cutting of digitally printed labels. According to Enrica Lodi, the company's key markets in Latin America have historically been Argentina and Chile, because of the advanced embellishment options offered by its machines and the large wine label markets in those countries. 'We've received lots of interest in our laser cutting and digital embellishment technology, and leads from Mexico, Argentina, Chile, Ecuador, Colombia, Peru and Central America.' Cartes is looking to appoint an agent in Mexico.

Dimatra launched a new inspection system at the show – the first developed by a Mexican company, according to sales manager Eduardo Flores. A slitter rewinder equipped with the new inspection system was on display, alongside shrink sleeve seaming and cutting equipment. 'It has been a very good show – it has a big future,' says Flores. 'We sold a sleeve cutter to a Mexican converter on the first day, and almost half of the visitors to our stand were from outside Mexico.'

Strong Chinese exhibitor presence

A notable aspect of Labelexpo Mexico 2023 was the high number of Chinese exhibitors on the show floor – more than a quarter of the total. There were 39 Chinese manufacturers with stands, many showing machinery, and still more were represented through local distributors.

Below the top tier of converters, the Latin American market is more price-sensitive than the US and Europe. The Chinese manufacturers, whose quality of equipment has improved a great deal over the past decade, therefore have a strategic advantage when competing in the Latin American market against US and European suppliers. Their significant presence at Labelexpo Mexico was proof of the increasing focus they are putting on the region.

DPR launched its new Aries semi-rotary slitter rewinder, which comes in 250mm and 350mm width versions and runs at 30m/min. Also on show was the Taurus laser finishing system. DPR's vice-president Michael Panzeri says: 'We target a niche part of the market: mid-range production level but high quality. We've received lots of good leads and seen people who are looking for equipment to improve their production.' Up to now, the company has mainly sold 'entry-level equipment' into the region, according to Panzeri, but the first Latin American installation of the Taurus system was scheduled for the week after Labelexpo Mexico in Suriname – a lead garnered at Labelexpo Americas last year. An Aries system, sold through Mexico-based distributor Imidia, is being installed in Guyana in June.

GM showed its DC330Mini finishing system, equipped with UV flexo varnish, lamination, cold foil, die-cutting, slitting and dual rewind, and sold the machine to long-time local customer Eticom. Taking up just 2.7 meters (8.8 feet) in length due to the short web path, it features servo-driven tension control and offers excellent registration. It is also suitable for running in line with a digital press or GM's own hot foil and screen embellishment units. 'It's important for the Latin American region to have a Labelexpo,' says GM's Latin America sales manager Jos Kabouw.

Golden Laser showed its newly designed

LC-350 double-head high-speed laser die-cutting machine. It is equipped with a barcode scanning camera and supports job changeover on the fly with automatic speed change. It features a modular design that can be fitted with functions such as corona treatment, varnish, hot stamping and slitting.

Grafotronic demonstrated its DCL2 modular converting line and boon-Raptor sheeter for self-adhesive material and film. Latin America sales manager Francisco Soto describing Mexico as 'an important market' for the company.

Lemorau showed its ICR3 table-top rewinder and CT1500 manual core cutter. The company's Natalia Lopes said: 'We were able to collect over 300 leads mainly from Mexico and nearby countries and had over 10 floor sales.' Since making its Labelexpo debut in Brussels in 2013, before which it only served its local market, Lemorau has built a customer base of 600 companies in 81 countries.

Manroland Latina demonstrated a DCM BabyCat inspection and doctoring machine and a Prati Saturn inspection slitter rewinder equipped with camera technology from BST Eltromat, while also promoting equipment from Pantec, Omet and Miyakoshi – all brands it represents in Mexico. Hans-Ramon Hoffman, of Manroland Latina, says: 'We had a very successful show with over 120 leads. There has been an evolution in the market – even

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smaller printers know they need to add value to their labels and increase their productivity.'

Vemax presented its VRR HD 430 and VRR TA V380 inspection slitter rewinders, suitable for labels, films, tags, laminates and flexible packaging. The VRR HD 430 has a wide width, and is driven by servo motors both in the unwinder and in the rewinder. It is compatible with any 100 percent inspection system. The new VRR TA V380 system features an automatic changeover head rewinder with double disc-type shafts driven by servo motor, with stop for automatic change and cutting, and precision in repeatability.

Materials

Arclad launched three new self-adhesive products at the show: WO PET, a recyclable material available in white and clear polypropylene; Natural Bond, a paper-based self-adhesive material made of sugar cane bagasse, a source that is renewable in shorter periods (less than a year) compared to conventional wood-based sources; and Natural Banana Seal, which expands this sugar cane bagasse facestock to banana and other fruit labeling applications. In addition to its two plants in Colombia, Arclad began production in Minas Gerais, Brazil, last year. Marketing manager Carolina Jaramillo says: 'We are very happy that there is now a Labelexpo in Latin America. Mexico is our biggest export market, and we have seen many new and existing customers.'

Armor-IIMAK, which runs a plant in Querétaro, Mexico, demonstrated its Inkanto range of thermal transfer ribbons, which now include as standard the company's new CleanStart technology, which removes dust from the printhead. Armor-IIMAK's textile resin range has been expanded, and now also includes a new black material.

Beontag presented products from its two segments of graphic and label materials and IoT technology. Among the products shown were EcoTags, made of paper and emitting less than half the CO2 per unit compared to a pet tag; in addition to PCR Coated Paper, Liner RPet and Linerless, which are eco-friendly self-adhesives.

Mactac promoted its range of pressure-sensitive adhesive

"We are excited by the opportunities in the Latin American market. The sky is the limit"

materials for use in graphic design, packaging, retail display, fleet graphics, automotive assembly, medical device assembly and more.

Yupo was showing its synthetic substrates for in-mold labeling and promoting the recognition by the Association of Plastics Recyclers (APR) of its white polyolefin IML unprinted substrates for HDPE bottles. Alex Cruz, sales director for North and South America, says that Mexico is 'one of our top markets', and that the company is also seeing strong growth elsewhere in Latin America, particularly in Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador and Central America.

Workflow and inspection

eProductivity Software (ePS) presented version 11.0 of Metrics ERP, a management software designed specifically for the packaging and labeling industry. Among the modules is iQuote, an estimating system that automates the process of choosing the most cost-effective path to produce a job. The company is represented in Mexico by ISBI.

Esco promoted its ranges of software, AVT inspection systems and platemaking equipment. 'It's great to have an exhibition in the region,' says regional business supervisor Miguel Badillo. 'The event has surprised us – we've seen a huge number of clients from all over the region. We see Mexico, Brazil and Colombia as the three countries with most market potential in the region.'

EyeC showcased its latest technology for quality control automatization. Visitors could see live demonstrations of the scanner-based EyeC Proofiler DT line with scan sizes up to 1,778 x 1,219mm. Also on show was the EyeC Proofiler Graphic, which automatically verifies the entire content of print-ready files or step-and-repeat files against the approved artwork when integrated with the user's workflow system, as well as inspection systems from the EyeC ProofRunner Highlight series.

Label Traxx showed the recently launched version 9 of its MIS, which has various new features. Cloud Data Warehouse provides secure online access to real-time data, while Cloud API is a public, documented API enabling label converters to integrate Label Traxx with other applications in a mixed technology environment. The



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“It’s important for the Latin American region to have a Labelexpo”

Enterprise Edition offers a set of capabilities designed to serve the requirements of multi-site organizations. At the show, Label Traxx unveiled a new subscription pricing model which requires only a small initial investment, helping Latin American converters to invest in its software. ‘The market is ready, and the product is ready,’ says Label Traxx president Rob Mayerson. ‘There is a generation shift in owners – the new generation is tech-savvy, used to the digital world, and is embracing software. We are excited by the opportunities in the Latin American market. The sky is the limit.’ Mayerson reported the first sale in Mexico of Sitaline, Label Traxx’s online ordering system, on the first morning of the show as well as ‘lots of leads’.

The company has a new team in Mexico, with sales executive Isaac Velasco, formerly of HP Indigo, and training and support specialist Elias Barajas Alvarez, formerly of Multi-Label Corporation, joining the company this year and present at Labelexpo Mexico alongside Mayerson.

Unilux showed the newly launched UniPrint inspection system. UniPrint is a print monitoring system which the company says offers ‘similar features to comparable vision systems at a more affordable price’. The most significant innovation comes in the ability to inspect standard and UV-visible inks and coatings with a single system.

UpSoftware showed the latest

enhancements to its Sispro production and planning software. A new cellphone app allows remote monitoring of production machines in real time, while various new modules are being launched this year including for quoting and production orders, according to CEO and founder Sergio Perez. The Argentine company sells exclusively to Latin American clients, and cites Mexico, Chile and Ecuador as its fastest-growing markets currently. With two local distributors in Mexico, it has around 20 installations in the country across various print sectors, including labels and corrugated.

Ancillary equipment

Alphasonics demonstrated its Melanie anilox cleaning system. ‘We are the only company in the market that can clean aniloxes 100 percent,’ says Chris Jones VP of Alphasonics USA. The company serves the Mexican market from its US operation in Virginia, and has recently increased its presence in Latin America through the appointment of ELO Graphics as its agent in Brazil. It has also partnered with Laserflex in the same country to install a demo system at its facility.

Etirapid represents brands such as Epson, Godex, Argox, Eclipse, Austik Technologies and Afinia. Daniel Cahmi, general manager, says: ‘It has been a great show. We sell mainly into Mexico, and are impressed by how many converters have come from

all over the country. It’s a high-quality audience with many big converters here.’

Flexo Wash featured its FW Handy Mini 2 anilox cleaner and the PW 45 WR plate washer.

The FW Handy product line of anilox cleaners are fully-automatic units designed to deep clean/restore anilox rolls and print sleeves of all sizes. The fully-automatic plate washers are designed to gently wash flexo polymer plates and letterpress plates, leaving them 100 percent clean and dry, ready for immediate reuse.

GEW showed its AeroLED system for full cure, printing, coating and converting applications up to 60cm wide. It is also compatible with GEW’s ArcLED system. Using the same fan and ducting arrangement as the industry standard E2C, customers have flexibility to switch between arc and LED curing on any station. The switch to GEW’s LED technology is ‘super quick and easy’, according to VP of sales Amir Dekel. ‘It has been a very good show – better than expected,’ he said, confirming that the company has signed up for the next edition in Guadalajara in 2025.

Heaford received more than 50 leads on the first day of the show alone, according to international sales manager Nick Vindel. The company was demonstrating its best-selling FTS plate moulder as well as a new plate demoulder.

Kocher + Beck showcased the latest development within its GapMaster range, the new GapMaster EM, in addition to its ranges of magnetic die-cutting technology such as magnetic cylinders and flexible dies. Amin Silva, sales manager for Mexico and South America, reported seeing ‘a huge number of new potential companies’ at the show. ‘I’ve been able to talk to not only CEOs but also plant managers and technicians, who are the people I sell to. I’m surprised at how good a show it has been.’

Martin Automatic promoted its range of web handling equipment. The company’s Kelly Hart says: ‘Martin Automatic has been a consistent exhibitor at every Label Summit held in Mexico, and the recent Labelexpo event surpassed expectations. The attendees showed genuine interest and presented Martin with numerous inquiries. As a result of this positive experience, Martin Automatic plans to participate in the next Labelexpo Mexico.’

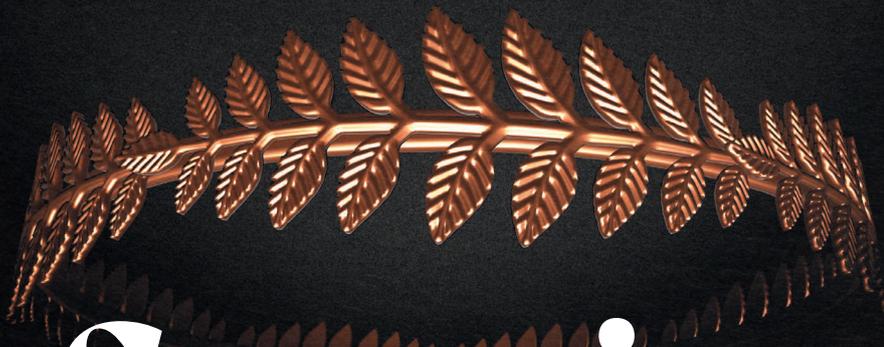
Wilson Manufacturing promoted its ranges of custom-manufactured engraved cutting dies, flexible sheet dies, magnetic cylinders, print tooling, accessories and more. Among the products on show was a magnetic cylinder with a flexible die sheet.

Bogota to host Label Summit Latin America 2024

The next edition of Labelexpo Mexico will be held in Guadalajara in 2025. Label Summit Latin America – a two-day conference and table-top exhibition – will take place in Bogota, Colombia, on March 12-13, 2024.



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All4Labels expands in Mexico

All4Labels Mexico mainly produces self-adhesive labels and shrink sleeves

The global labels and packaging manufacturer has more than doubled its factory size and production capabilities in Mexico. James Quirk reports

All4Labels has moved to a new larger facility in Mexico City and is in the process of installing a host of new technology as part of an impressive expansion plan to grow its presence in Mexico and the United States.

The global labels and packaging manufacturer has completed phase one of its growth plan in the country – the move to a gleaming new 12,000 sqm factory which took place last year and represented an investment of 12 million EUR. The facility is All4Labels' regional headquarters, serving Mexico, the United States and Central America.

Phase two, taking place this year, sees the company install 4 million EUR worth of equipment, including digital, flexo and gravure presses as well as a revamp of its pre-press capabilities. New offices are also being installed.

Further expansion is also on the cards, with the company eyeing an adjacent facility as means for further growth.

The ambitious plans match All4Labels' global strategy: 'We are a global leader in labels, with a focus on digitalization and sustainability,' says All4Labels' chief sales officer Guido Iannone.

All4Labels in Mexico

All4Labels' presence in Mexico dates to the group's founding in 2016 by Brazilian converter Baumgarten and German companies Rako and X-Label. Two years prior, in 2014, Baumgarten had expanded its regional footprint in Latin America with the acquisitions of Mexico-based Etiquetas Rodak and Argentine converter Autopack.

All4Labels, therefore, began life with a strong presence in three key Latin American markets: Brazil, Mexico and Argentina. Further expansion took place last year with the acquisition of Brazilian converter Flexoprint, which also operates a facility in neighboring Paraguay.

The Etiquetas Rodak facility acquired by Baumgarten in 2014 was

“The five new printing lines, focused on pressure-sensitive labels and shrink sleeves, will treble production capacity”

All4Labels' Mexico base from its foundation until the move to the new site late last year. The 20 million EUR investment in the new factory and new equipment demonstrates the company's faith in the continued growth of the Mexican market.

Mexico's label industry, forecast by Mordor Intelligence to register a CAGR of 5.5 percent between 2021 and 2026, has been the beneficiary of a number of recent trends which are boosting growth in the country.

A key legacy of the pandemic has been a shift in attitude toward supply chains. Disruption during the pandemic, increasing geopolitical tensions, and rising labor costs in China have led to many companies seeking to streamline their supply chains and manufacture closer to their consumer markets: a trend known as nearshoring.

Mexico – with its long border with the US, tax advantages offered by trade agreements, and highly trained workforce – has been a strong beneficiary, though the effects are being felt elsewhere in Latin America, too. The country has seen an influx of foreign companies setting up local manufacturing operations. Foreign direct investment increased by 12 percent in 2022 compared to the previous year, reaching \$35.3 billion USD, according to the Mexican Ministry of Economy.

Mexico is also seeing strong growth in e-commerce. Despite predictions that it would fall after the pandemic when lockdowns stimulated a surge in online-buying, e-commerce continued its

New CEO

Paloma Alonso is assuming the role of chief executive officer at All4Labels Global Packaging Group, starting September 1, 2023.

Alonso previously was CEO for Cepsa Quimica, a 3B USD chemicals company with seven manufacturing plants and joint ventures around the world.

Previously, Alonso worked at Dow, holding P&L responsibility

in numerous global and regional businesses (Dow's LATAM Packaging and Specialty Plastics division was also a business with revenues of 3B USD).

Under her leadership, All4Labels will execute its vision of transforming the packaging industry through sustainable and digital solutions, prioritizing safety and service, while continuing the company's successful global growth agenda.



L-R: Cristina Prado, key account manager; chief procurement officer Daniele Frascchetti; Horacio Guerreiro, commercial director; chief sales officer Guido Iannone (on screen); L&L editor Chelsea McDougall; L&L contributor James Quirk; Sandy Almirall, North America region president

“The export market for tequila is booming”



All4Labels' new facility in Mexico is 12,000 sqm

inexorable rise with growth of 23 percent in 2022 compared to the previous year, according to the Mexican Association of Online Sales. Online sales are now treble what they were in 2019.

Certain end-user sectors are also showing strong potential. Iannone cites the wine and spirits market as a 'key focus for growth' for the company. Both are performing well in Mexico: a burgeoning local wine market is providing opportunities for converters, while the export market in tequila is 'booming' thanks to rising demand from the US, where it is increasingly being seen as a premium product thanks to celebrity endorsements.

Rapid expansion

It is against this backdrop that All4Labels is rapidly expanding its business in Mexico, a task entrusted to North America region president Sandy Almirall. With phase one – the move to the new 12,000 sqm factory, more than double the size of its previous site – complete, the next stage of the expansion was well underway at the time of L&L's visit the day before the inaugural Labelexpo Mexico show in late April.

Equipment being installed this year includes a gravure press which has a web width of 1,050mm and can run at speeds of up to 300m/min; three flexo presses – two new and one transferred from All4Labels' site in Hamburg, Germany; and an HP Indigo 6600 digital press with an off-line AB Graphic Omega converting system.

Further investment is going into pre-press equipment and two ink mixing labs, one each for flexo and gravure inks. New offices are also being constructed within the facility.

The five new printing lines, focused on pressure-sensitive labels and shrink sleeves, will treble production capacity at the site, according to Almirall, while space remains for further press installations in the future.

The new equipment joins an array of existing printing options, including machines that offer flexo, offset, gravure, silkscreen, hot foil, cold foil, embossing, relam/delam and reverse printing capabilities, as well as advanced converting systems.

Homecare and personal care are All4Labels Mexico's largest end-user markets, with beverages (mainly spirits)

Motherland key to wine and spirits strategy

A key pillar of All4Labels' strategy in the wine and spirits market is its Motherland campaign, a showcase of its premium printing and embellishment capabilities around the globe, which was launched last year.

Motherland features labels designed for wines and spirits from various countries where All4Labels has a manufacturing operation: Argentina, China, France, Germany, Italy, Mexico, Russia, and South Africa. Created alongside the company's new packaging design division, All4Graphics, each label seeks to embody the traditions of the region of origin while also highlighting All4Labels' technical capabilities through premium embellishments and interactive technology. These include its proprietary Starshine metallic embellishment, and smart technology such as traceability and QR codes that link to personalized voice messages to enhance the consumer experience.

'Motherland is more than a marketing journey,' explains Cristina Prado, key account manager. 'It shows that we understand the unique characteristics of different beverages and their heritage. It demonstrates all the different technologies that can be used and emphasizes that each All4Labels site has these capabilities.'

the fastest-growing segment, according to Almirall.

The majority of All4Labels Mexico's customers are international brands with operations in Mexico, the United States and Central America. 'Production exported to the United States is rising due to the nearshoring trend,' says Almirall. 'The export market for tequila is also booming as it positions itself as a premium product and with the Hispanic population in the US growing. It is soaring in popularity.'

Alongside the new facility and equipment, Almirall is also rapidly expanding his team.

With 150 employees currently, the aim is to reach 200 later this year and some 220 to 250 in 2024. A further phase of expansion may come next year, with the company considering the purchase of a neighboring facility. 'We are looking at expanding this site in the next 12 months,' confirms Almirall, 'possibly into the adjacent building.'



For more information, visit all4labels.com



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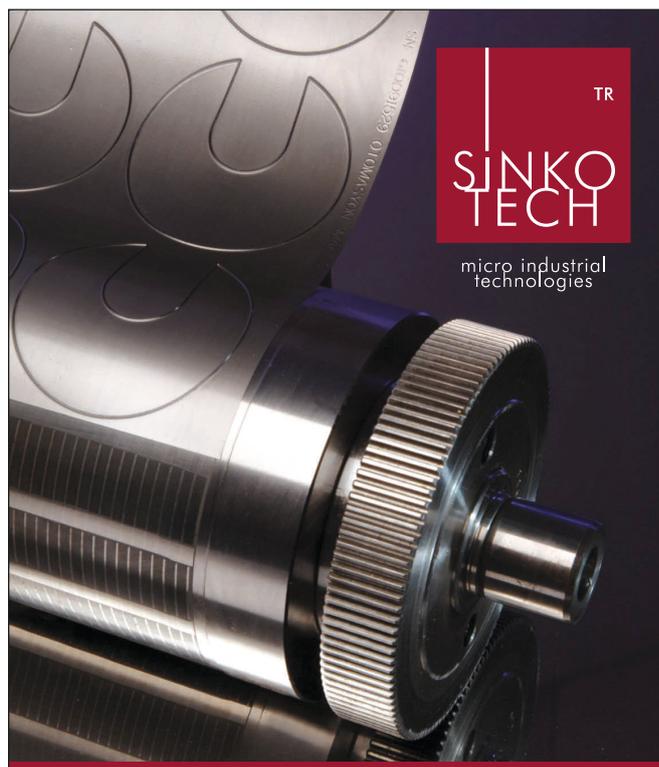
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Megohm Digipack expands with Jetsci ColorNovo SAPFC

The company plans to add pouches to its portfolio in the coming years. Pallavi Choudhary reports

Mumbai-based Megohm Digipack, a manufacturer of printed labels, in-mold labels, tubes and shrink sleeve labels, has installed Jetsci ColorNovo SAPFC UV 6-color inkjet label production with finishing and embellishment capabilities to produce short-run self-adhesive labels.

Megohm Digipack is a sister company of Swapnali Labels and it was established in February 2023 by Swapnali Yadav, founder and director who is the daughter of Gopal Yadav, CEO, of Swapnali Labels.

Swapnali Yadav developed a keen interest in her father's business during her many trips to the factory as a child. She was fascinated by printing processes and technologies. She pursued an MBA degree from the University of Sydney and worked in Australia for a few years. However, she decided to come back to India and join her father's business. As an extension of the family business, she started the new venture Megohm Digipack for digital labels and packaging.

Swapnali Labels was founded in 2013 by Gopal Yadav and provides long-run flexo printing for labels. The company has two flexo presses from Alliance India for this purpose.

Yadav says: 'After the pandemic, we have realized that start-ups in India are performing well in the market and the demand for short-run labels and packaging has increased. And, to fulfill the demand for short and medium runs, we have established a different unit Megohm Digipack for digital printing services.'

According to her, the market demand in India has evolved over the past five to 10 years. The Covid-19 pandemic has played a crucial role in this shift. New start-up brands emerged in the market during the pandemic. These start-ups often lack the resources to maintain large quantities of packaging, so they prefer smaller quantities. Conventional printing setup requires plates and cylinders that can oftentimes lead to additional costs as opposed to digital printing.

Additionally, there is a growing desire for customized packaging and new designs. Conventional processes struggle to meet these demands, but digital printing allows for flexibility. With variable data printing (VDP), every label can be unique, giving businesses the freedom to choose their own designs in smaller quantities.

Flexible packaging

The company focuses on labels and tubes at the moment. It will foray into new segments including short-run flexible packaging and mono cartons in the near future.

'We are already experts in labels,' Yadav says. 'We want to now normalize digital printing in labels while adding new segments such as flexible packaging and mono cartons where the demand is growing.'

Megohm Digipack provides its products in pharmaceuticals, home products, fragrances and cosmetics segments.

Sustainability is important for the company. The company also provides its customers with paper labels that are biodegradable and eco-friendly and has partnered with waste collection bodies to ensure that the waste produced in the factory is handled responsibly and recycled. The digital printing process will further help the converter to reduce waste in terms of consumables such as plates, cylinders, material and ink waste in registration.



(L-R) Gopal Yadav, CEO, of Swapnali Labels with his daughter Swapnali Yadav, founder and director of Megohm Digipack

“After the pandemic, we have realized that start-ups in India are performing well in the market and the demand for short-run labels and packaging has increased”

Megohm Digipack looked at several machines but chose the Jetsci ColorNovo press because of its inline finishing and embellishment capabilities.

'We wanted an all-in-one machine and we came across Jetsci and we were very happy with the press. It has a flexo station for cold foil, and lamination along with finishing capabilities such as a punching and slitting station. This allows us to produce finished product in a single pass,' Yadav adds.

The converter will offer brands and customers a demonstration of the machine for transparency.

The Jetsci ColorNovo digital label press utilizes inkjet technology and offers a print resolution of 600x600 DPI and speeds of up to 50m/min, with the ability to print on surfaces up to 330mm in width.

Dinesh Thakur, DGM - sales, Jetsci Global, says: 'Megohm Digipack was looking for a digital label press. After exploring their options, they ultimately decided to shift their preference and selected the Jetsci Global online printing, finishing and converting machine as their digital label press. This machine is the flagship product of the ColorNovo portfolio. Jetsci Global ColorNovo SAPFC stands out in the market because it offers printing, finishing and converting in a single pass. With Jetsci Global, Megohm Digipack can benefit from an inkjet system with an extended color gamut. Additionally, they have access to various finishing options such as lamination, cold foil, special color printing, and post-coat application. The machine also offers the convenience of rotary die-cutting, all accomplished in a single pass.'



To read more about Megohm Digipack, visit <http://megohmdigipack.com/index.html>

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Syscon rides high on Thai market growth

Thailand-based Syscon is leveraging narrow web flexo and digital along with wide web gravure to provide integrated customer solutions for labels and flexible packaging. Yolanda Wang reports

Syscon Labels & Packaging Company is located in Samutprakarn, Thailand, and the company's current head, Nipat Joncharoensiri, is a typical second-generation printer. His father is a veteran printing entrepreneur, running a flexible packaging printing business with about 300 people.

Regarding his experience in the printing industry, Joncharoensiri tells L&L, 'Since I can remember, the printing workshop was one of my childhood playgrounds. The unique smell of paper and ink, and the regular sound of the printing equipment, all fill my memories.'

After successfully completing his studies, Joncharoensiri did not immediately join his father's printing factory but took a year out to gain some wider experience. 'Because I am so familiar with printing, I really wanted to go out and see other industries and experience the work and life of a standard employee after graduation.'

It was this experience that prompted him to choose to return to the family business and carry on the company that his father founded. Working outside the company for a year gave Joncharoensiri a different understanding of the printing industry, particularly the opportunities for improvement and innovation. How should converters use existing technology to improve production efficiency and reduce production costs? Which area of printed packaging has greater development potential?

After working in his father's company for eight years, Joncharoensiri finally decided to focus on the label printing industry. So he spun this off the original company's business, invested in land in Samutprakarn, on the eastern side of Bangkok, and set up a completely new company and factory, now called Syscon Labels and Packaging Company. This new factory officially started production in 2017, and currently, the workshop area has reached 2,600sqm, with 60 employees.

Under Joncharoensiri's leadership, Syscon's business volume only decreased by 8 percent in the first year of the Covid epidemic in 2020, and achieved steady growth in the following two years, with increases of 12 percent and 25 percent, respectively. He estimates that business



Gallus EM280

“Compared with gravure technology, inline flexographic printing allows for printing shorter runs, is a more flexible production process and is more environmentally friendly”

volume will increase by 40 percent in 2023, and the annual output value will reach 120 million Thai baht, (USD 3.37m). So, how did Syscon do it?

Continuously improving efficiency

From its inception, Syscon made innovation its primary focus. The production lines are equipped with a Nilpeter FA line, a Gallus press, and an HP Indigo 6600 digital printing press. Syscon was early users of HP Indigo 6000 series in Thailand.

The company prints self-adhesive labels, shrink and stretch sleeve labels, heat transfer labels, and in-mold labels, which are mainly used in personal care, food, engine oil and home care markets. Currently, paper labels and film labels each account for half of the company's product mix.

Shrink sleeve labels were previously produced using gravure. 'Compared with gravure technology, inline flexographic printing allows for printing shorter runs, is a more flexible production process and is more environmentally friendly,' says Joncharoensiri.

He also carefully analyzed the customer base. 'Among the customers Syscon serves

now, about 70 percent are international brands, and the rest are local brands. In our interaction with them, we found that international brand customers pay more attention to the quality of label products. They are more inclined to choose international brand materials, such as Avery Dennison and UPM Raflatac. Local customers care more about the price of the product, followed by product quality, so we recommend some local materials suppliers to them, striving to provide them with more market-competitive products and services within their budget.'

During the three years of the Covid pandemic, the entire industry was forced to slow down, and Syscon took full advantage of this time to optimize its internal production processes and materials procurement. To some extent, these moves alleviated the pressure on profits caused by the rise in the price of raw materials.

For example, the inline flexographic equipment used by Syscon had operated on an average production speed of 40 to 60m/min. Through optimizing the equipment, the company has increased production speed by 10 percent every six months, with the goal of reaching 90m/min.

Syscon also increased investment in automation. For example, in 2022, the company invested in an inline inspection system from Luster, which offers 100 percent defect detection function.

'Our first meeting was in 2017 and the cooperation between the two sides since then has always been constructive, with no communication barriers,' says Joncharoensiri. 'In addition to trusting their product quality, what impressed me the most is their quick response to any problems. I remember once, the company's equipment parts failed, and Luster sent replacement parts by courier within two days. They also provide online remote troubleshooting services, enabling us to diagnose problems in real-time.'

Expanding into flexible packaging

Joncharoensiri is no stranger to the flexible packaging industry, which was the main business of his father's company. The innovation of Syscon was to use digital printing technology to produce flexible packaging, including multi-layer pouches, spout pouches and poly bags.

'Flexible packaging is known for its lightweight, portability and convenience for transportation, and has become valuable in numerous sectors,' says Joncharoensiri. 'Particularly in Thailand, where the tourism industry makes up a large portion of the overall economy, flexible packaging has been adopted as the preferred packaging option for many products. Souvenirs, such as dried durian snacks and mangoes, are popular items tourists frequently purchase as gifts for their families, further propelling the demand for flexible packaging. Given these circumstances, the market potential for flexible packaging in Thailand is immense.'

Joncharoensiri found that customers were seeking an integrated offering of labels and flexible packaging solutions. 'After comparative analysis, we also found that labels and flexible packaging have many similarities in the print production process, including printing, slitting, rewinding and surface treatment, all of which strengthened our determination to develop the flexible packaging side of the business.'

With the increase in the company's flexible packaging business and the demand from users for better prices for these products, in 2019 Syscon invested in a Taiwanese-built Manworldly gravure press and a Jiangyin Huitong automatic pouch making line, specifically for the production and processing of flexible packaging products.

'We choose between gravure or digital printing of flexible packaging products according to the size of the order,' says Joncharoensiri. 'For large-volume products, the production efficiency of gravure printing is higher, and the cost is lower; for short-run products, the advantages of digital printing are more evident.'

Currently, flexible packaging products account for 30 percent of the products produced by Syscon. Considering the rising consumer demand in the Thai market, the company will focus on wide web gravure equipment in the future to improve its production capacity and service capabilities in this area.

Future development

Joncharoensiri believes the key factors for success in this market come down to quality, delivery time, service and cost. This perspective makes the company very careful about each investment in hardware and software.

As a new-generation print manager, he gauges the company's order situation and calculates existing production capacity. If the total order volume exceeds 60-70 percent of total capacity, it signals a need to invest in new production equipment.

He also emphasizes the importance of building a reserve of company talent. Currently, there is no dedicated training institution for narrow web flexographic printing in the Thai market,



Nipat Joncharoensiri of Syscon, Yolanda Wang and Terany Ren of Luster

“With many Chinese label companies setting up factories in Southeast Asia, Joncharoensiri feels both pressure and challenge”

so internal training within the factory is needed.

As the impact of the pandemic gradually recedes, material supply is stabilizing, and factory delivery times are also stabilizing.

Joncharoensiri believes there are two key trends that need to be focused on in the future. One is environmental protection, as brands and markets seek more eco-friendly labels and flexible packaging solutions. As consumer focus on the environment increases, national and governmental regulations in this area will become more stringent. The second is value-added features and embellishments, which can help brand products differentiate visually from competitors. For example, unique QR code applications have not only become a trend but have brought significant benefits to users and brands in multiple dimensions.

Joncharoensiri is keen on learning and acquiring new knowledge. He has participated in several international professional exhibitions and seminars and has visited several international label printing exhibitions in Europe. He says, 'Market and customer needs are constantly changing. For label printing companies, it is necessary to step out, pay attention to new industry trends, understand the latest industry materials, technologies and solutions, and constantly enhance internal strength to maintain the ability to provide high-quality solutions for customers.'

With many Chinese label companies - including both suppliers and label printers - setting up factories in Southeast Asia, Joncharoensiri feels both the pressure and the challenge. However, competition indicates the existence of a market, and he hopes that everyone can compete creatively to jointly promote its development. He has spent four months studying Chinese in Beijing, China, indicating a deep commitment to understanding and integrating into the global landscape of the industry.

Syscon, under the guidance of Joncharoensiri, is well-positioned to continue making strides in the flexible packaging industry. With a clear focus on quality, customer service, innovative technologies and sustainable practices, Syscon is demonstrating the potential to become a key player in the region. At the same time, Joncharoensiri's openness to learning, and his proactive approach toward staying updated on industry trends, reflect a leadership style that is adaptive, forward-thinking and inclusive. With such strong foundations, Syscon appears to be on a promising path for the future.



To discover more about the integration of labels and flexible packaging, visit [Labelexpo Europe 2023](http://www.labelexpo-europe.com) in September (www.labelexpo-europe.com)

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Cymmetrik Group expands with sleeve labels

Cymmetrik's new Zhejiang plant uses inline flexo printing technology rather than gravure to explore the sleeve label market. Yolanda Wang reports



Donald Liao, deputy general manager of Cymmetrik Zhejiang

“Sleeve labels are easily removed from the package after use without any residue. Such advantages make it very conducive to the recycling of the whole package”

company. With the development of the Shanghai operation, the original factory space was no longer adequate to meet the needs of the company's expanding business.

After careful consideration, Cymmetrik decided to further segment the company business into two parts: self-adhesive labels and sleeve labels, which pushed them to set up two new factories. As part of this strategy, the Zhejiang plant was put into operation in December 2022, and the Jiangsu plant began production in May 2023. Shanghai remains an R&D and sales services base.

As the new stronghold of the household chemicals business unit, Cymmetrik Zhejiang mainly produces high-end sleeve label products, including shrink sleeves, wraparound labels and others.

'Sleeve labels have always been a promising direction we have kept keen eyes on,' says Donald Liao, deputy general manager of Cymmetrik Zhejiang.

'Sleeve labels are easily removed from the package after use without any residue. Such advantages make it very conducive to the recycling of the whole package. In particular, shrink sleeve labels could not only have 360-degree display effects but also are suitable for different bottle types. Under the background of increasingly strict environmental protection policies, sleeve labels are attracting increasing attention from brand owners.'

Sleeve labels are the third biggest labeling technology in the world by volume, and the current market growth rate has surpassed that of self-adhesive labels, especially in the Asia market.

However, as the Chinese government has gradually tightened its ban on plastic products, sleeve label producers have been affected by the plastics reduction strategies of brand owners.

'We believe that reducing plastic does not mean completely discarding plastic,' adds Donald Liao. 'As a senior label

supplier, we need to collaborate with our industry chain partners to scientifically reduce the use of plastic, such as using thinner and lighter plastic label materials while ensuring product performance and promoting recyclable and degradable plastic label products.'

Flexible service

Cymmetrik Zhejiang is equipped with Mark Andy and Spande flexo presses, as well as seaming and automatic inspection systems, with a workshop area of 2,800sqm.

Most sleeve label products today are produced using gravure printing technology. Cymmetrik Zhejiang chose inline flexo presses to produce sleeve label products base on two considerations.

Firstly, the environmental attributes of flexo printing technology, including platemaking, ink and automated press control, not only reduce VOC emissions but also saves on material waste.

Secondly, the flexibility of inline flexo technology, especially for sleeve labels with different finishing requirements such as cold foil stamping and screen, is met by the modular configuration of modern flexo presses. This makes the entire production process more standardized and automated, which will greatly improve production efficiency and reduce production costs.

The flexo presses at the Zhejiang plant are equipped with inline gravure and rotary screen printing units, allowing a range of olfactory and tactile effects to be achieved, meeting more than 90 percent of the sleeve label printing requirements in this market.

'The Zhejiang plant aims to provide customers with high-end sleeve label products, utilizing the efficient and flexible production mode of inline flexo press to achieve multiple combinations of different processes, thereby increasing the added value of label products, boosting brand customers in upgrading their packaging and effectively strengthening brand

Founded in 2021, Cymmetrik Zhejiang, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Cymmetrik Group, is mainly engaged in the printing and production of high-end sleeve label products. The establishment of this new company is part of an important diversification strategy into new market segments.

Cymmetrik Group is a prestigious label converter headquartered in Taiwan. It was registered in Taipei, Taiwan in 1969 and started producing labels for the electronics industry in 1981. It expanded into the household chemicals label sector in 1986 and started to build factories in Shanghai and Shenzhen in 1995. Now the group has 13 manufacturing bases located in Taipei, Tainan, Shenzhen, Kunshan, Zhejiang, Jiangsu, Yantai, Chongqing, Henan, North Vietnam, South Vietnam, Thailand and the United States. The company has offices in Shanghai and the United States.

With over half a century of experience in label printing and production, Cymmetrik Group has been continuously cultivating and expanding into regional markets across Greater China, Southeast Asia and North America, providing local support and services for global brands.

New needs

Today the production volume of the Cymmetrik Group of companies has reached 12 billion pieces a year, with household chemical labels accounting for 60 percent.

Cymmetrik Shanghai is an important manufacturing base for the household chemical business unit of the whole

communication effects,' says Donald Liao.

Where sleeve labels are being produced by flexo printing for the first time, transitioning from gravure, Cymmetrik Zhejiang will collaborate with brand owners and suppliers to optimize the processes from design and proofing to find the most suitable and competitive label solution for customers.

Cymmetrik has also installed a unified ERP system across the group for standardized management and control of procurement and warehousing of materials, as well as production scheduling, print process management, warehouse materials in and finished products out and invoicing. This allows the group to optimize its entire production process, which enhances overall competitiveness and provides customers with consistent delivery of high-quality label products.

Cymmetrik Shanghai was one of the first label converters to invest in flexographic technology in China. The company has already completed the transformation from letterpress to flexo printing, and from gravure to flexo.

'Our abundant technical knowledge and practical experience accumulated over many years in the label printing field gave us the confidence to expand flexographic technology into the sleeve labels sector,' says Donald Liao.

Sustainable development

Sustainable development is a concept affecting the development and transformation of the whole label printing industry in China. Cymmetrik Group has been implementing the '3R' principles (reduce, reuse and recycle) for many years, and this also applies to the Zhejiang plant.

'Although labels account for only a small proportion of the

Cymmetrik's Cymdicator wins 2023 iF Design Award

Cymmetrik's Cymdicator – a smart time-temperature indicator label – beat more than 10,000 entries worldwide to win the food packaging category of the 2023 iF Design Award – a resounding validation of its outstanding R&D, innovation and product design capabilities.

Cymdicator time temperature indicators assist in monitoring cold chain efficiency throughout the storage, transportation and selling processes of food products. The label monitors food temperature and tracks time in transit. It accurately records instances of food exposure at above-par temperatures that result in an irreversible quality change and present the record in a way that is accurate, intuitive, and easy-to-read.

The label can be customized to different monitoring conditions at a specific temperature range and monitoring period as specified by the end user.

entire product package, as a label converter we can carry through a low-carbon strategy in many ways, including label materials, ink, printing methods and waste recycling, to facilitate the achievement of our customers' sustainable development goals,' Liao says.

Nowadays, its clients such as Unilever, P&G, Shanghai Jahwa and many others, have put forward new requirements for environmentally-friendly label products. Regarding production process, Cymmetrik Zhejiang is giving full play to the deep-rooted professional knowledge and trouble-shooting ability of its technical team to reduce the uneconomic use of materials and waste by



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Kevin Liu of Labelexpo Asia, Donald Liao of Cymmetrik Zhejiang, and Yolanda Wang of Labels&Labeling during the opening ceremony on Dec 2022

“The flexibility and modular configuration of modern flexo presses makes the entire production process more standardized and automated, which will greatly improve production efficiency and reduce costs”

a range of strategies, including color management, automated workflow, and introducing advanced layout software – all without affecting customer requirements.

In addition, Cymmetrik Zhejiang promotes a sustainability revolution in its internal production processes. For example, the ERP system helps achieve a paperless workflow among departments, greatly reducing the amount of paper used by office workers. At the same time, the new factory has strictly implemented environmental protection measures since the beginning of the factory renovation.

The main measures include: the current building has adopted photovoltaic power generation, which meets 40 percent of electricity consumption during peak hours; the external walls of the factory use insulation materials to collect and reuse the heat generated during the production process; all presses and finishing equipment in the plant have been equipped with energy-saving and more efficient LED-UV drying systems; ink and solvent wastes are recycled internally and ink cans are reused.

‘Cymmetrik Zhejiang is the first factory built by the company during the Covid-19 epidemic, which not only proves our confidence in the label printing industry, but also keeps our promise to our customers over the years,’ Donald Liao says. ‘I believe that the Zhejiang plant will quickly develop into an innovative, high-end sleeve label printing enterprise with customers’ trust and environmental friendliness.’



The Spande inline flexo press technology can be seen at Labelexpo Asia 2023. For more information, visit www.labelexpo-asia.com

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Dieline Awards 2023 winners

Dieline Awards, now in its 14th year, has revealed winners presenting trophies to 143 recipients across 43 categories, along with its 14 overall top winners, Akanksha Meena reports with the Dieline

Sponsored by Neenah and Designalytics, Dieline Awards 2023 recognizes the best and brightest designers and agencies creating product packaging the world over, raising awareness of the enormous value of brand packaging design.

This year, The Dieline received nearly 1,600 entries, with winners hailing from 26 countries. All entries for the awards were judged by a panel of jurors that are experts in their given field. Additionally, awards were evaluated across five categories—creativity, marketability, innovation, execution and on-pack branding, with every entry going through two rounds of rigorous critique and appraisal.

Labels & Labeling selected a few winners to highlight. The full list of winners can be found at thedielineawards.com:

Design For Good Award: Corrections - The Prisoner • Designer: Chris Burnett



The Prisoner Wine Company is a wine brand that creates bold blends and even bolder labels. The label design is inspired by Spanish artist Francisco Goya's *The Prisoners*, a series of etchings consisting of three pieces offering a critique of judicial torture depicting shackled and restrained men in stress positions.

The Prisoner is actively involved in raising awareness and funding support for justice reform. Such efforts include supporting the Equal Justice Initiative, which provides legal representation to the illegally convicted, those serving harsh and unfair sentences, and those facing abuse behind bars.

The latest collection from The Prisoner is called *Corrections*, a trio of wines (a Malbec, Tempranillo and a Viognier) featuring labels by Los Angeles artist Chris Burnett. The three collages, *Finding Flowers*, *New Hope* and *The Other Side*, invite viewers to look past their own prejudices about inmates.

Burnett's work aims to highlight the resilience and dignity of incarcerated individuals, inviting viewers to honor the humanity in every person's story, regardless of their past. Proceeds from the sales of *Corrections* also supports Rubicon Programs, a San Francisco nonprofit organization focused on ending systemic inequality and fighting poverty.

Designalytics Design Effectiveness Award: Basil Hayden • Designer: Design Bridge and Partners

The Designalytics Effectiveness Award was created to help elevate the role of package design by spotlighting the immense financial impact that it can have on consumer brands. Winner selection was entirely data-driven, based on sales performance in the marketplace, as well as rigorous quantitative consumer testing.

The award went to Design Bridge and Partners for its work on the bourbon brand Basil Hayden, where it enlarged the metal belt – the brand's most memorable asset – and removed the oversized paper label, opting for something more streamlined and pearly white. The new design has also fared better on the shelf and resonated with consumers, with a 71 percent purchase preference over the previous design.

During the six months following the redesign, sales of Basil Hayden increased by 15 percent compared to the same period during the prior year, despite a modest decline in sales for the whiskey category overall. Basil Hayden's market share also increased by 15 percent.

'Designalytics has analyzed thousands of redesigns, and the evidence is overwhelming: smart, strategic, consumer-centric design drives brand growth. It's prompting a sea change in design management right now, and it's exciting to watch,' says Steve Lamoureux, CEO and founder of Designalytics. 'Brands like Basil Hayden are in the vanguard. They recognized that they could leverage design to increase market share and partnered with a proven, forward-thinking agency in Design Bridge and Partners to help make it happen. The results speak for themselves.'



First place in the water category: Jinkuang - The Perfect Laminar Flow • Designer: Shenzhen Tigerpan Design

It's believed that Chinese is the only ethnic group that drinks cool boiled water. It is a unique institutionalized custom for generations. To the Chinese, drinking boiled water is sort of cultural heritage and part of domestic life, the elder showing caring through encouraging the younger generations to drink 'hygiene boiled water'. This vital part to Chinese daily life was portrayed perfectly by a treasury Song-Dynasty painting named Riverside Scene at Qingming Festival about a thousand years ago.

The label design here expresses more of the lifestyle than of the function of the water. The highly transparent glass bottle is embossed with a re-creation of the artwork. Combined with a traditional Chinese layout, the bottle is modernizing the art into our daily life. Twelve bottles stand for 12 earthly branches and 12 themes of the paintings are shown on each, which line up to form a long scroll. As the bottles are customized for high-end meetings and events alike, they communicate culture and leave a premium impression. After use, it can also function as an artwork or for storage use.



Second place in the dark spirits category: Mona – Rock Bottom Rum • Designer: Demelza Rafferty



Mona's Void Bar created its rum, and the packaging system is sleek and sophisticated. Because sandstone is rooted within the brand's foundation, a piece of sandstone is affixed to the bottle's base. And beyond the bottle's elegant structure, the label is interesting because it's attached across the top, creating a new way of viewing a bottle. The right amount of distinctive styles allows this brand to stand out.

The design brief for a rum for Mona's Void Bar said that the bar sits at the subterranean base of Mona, cut out of the sandstone rock the museum sits on. The packaging for this tiny bottle should be premium, and tie into the Void Bar branding – a long black vertical rectangle – utilizes the sandstone, and the general dark vibe of Mona.

Demelza Rafferty came up with an oversized tamper-proof seal label, to not obstruct the view of the golden-colored liquid within. The Void Bar logo is incorporated into the seal. The typography for 'Rum' evokes a pirate feel with its cutlass-esque 'R' as a nod to the origin and mythology of rum, and to Mona as a rebel brand. The bottle has an actual piece of sandstone affixed to its base; echoing the Void Bar at the bottom of the sandstone museum, a literal rock-bottomed rum. A custom slide-box was produced to both enhance the premium quality of packaging and for safe shipping.

Second place in the wine and champagne category: Saura • Designer: Maba

The packaging design of Saura wine implements the stone texture within the label design because Saura is a wine fermented in fossil stone tanks. The intricate details, paired with the gorgeous texture, create an immersive design experience that's entirely unparalleled.

This small winery is located in a unique place, a farm in the mountains in the municipality of Caravaca de la Cruz, which houses in its territory numerous species of fauna and vegetation that coexist with small terraces of vineyards immersed in the forest.

The wine is fermented in fossil stone tanks, and extracted from a surrounding quarry. The proposal for the design of the wine label takes up this wild nature, as if it were a bas-relief sculpted in the stone, to narrate the process of the wine inside it.

The family consists of three wines, Mesias, Cogeventos and Cauro Ventum. The differentiation of the top range is marked by the color sealing as well as a slight darkening of the stone. The most special and limited edition, under the name of Mesias, marks each numbered bottle on its band, sealing the cork with sealing wax in a traditional way.

Cauro Ventum, the entry wine of the range reflects its freshness in a more illustrated narrative, abandoning the reliefs without losing the magic of the place.



The Dieline will be hosting The Dieline Forum, a design and branding-focused conference, during Labelexpo Europe 2023. For more information, visit www.labelexpo-europe.com/dieline-forum



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LABELXPO EUROPE 2023 UNVEILS EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Labelexpo Europe will play host to a wealth of learning opportunities, writes Labelexpo conference manager Helen Stoddart



Labelexpo is not just about exploring the latest technology on the event floor, the event organizers also have a packed agenda of educational content, in addition to leading-edge feature areas.

On the show floor, the Automation Arena will demonstrate a full 'lights out' production workflow, from file creation to digital printing and converting. Participants include Cerm, Esko, AVT, Xeikon and Grafotronic. In addition to an automated setup and inspection of both printing and converting processes, the Cerm MIS will collect real-time information via a Cloud portal, which visitors can monitor on their own smart devices. Cerm will demonstrate the printing of closing labels on each roll on the turret rewind.

The event will also host a FlexPack Trail designed to show label converters how to diversify production and enter the lucrative flexible packaging market. Participants include Nilpeter, Screen, Thermal Transfer Solutions, Xeikon, Omet, GEW, Flint, Synthogra, Xsys, Lombardi and Bobst.

MASTER CLASSES

Visitors have the choice of three half-day master classes on 12, 13 and 14 September. Hosted by the Label Academy, this in-depth educational series will cover flexible packaging, sustainable labels and packaging, and wine label printing.

The **Flexible Packaging Master Class** is designed to teach converters what they need to know when entering this lucrative sector. Sessions include an introduction to flexible packaging from HP; a look at flexible packaging substrates presented by Nanette Thomas of Synthogra; creation of artwork and pre-press with Jan de Roeck of Esko; printing processes and techniques



with Alberto Redaelli of Lombardi, will explore; an update on the UVFoodSafe findings lead by Jonathan Sexton, on behalf of Finat; inks, coatings, curing and laminating, by Michelman; and converting flexible packaging, by Karlville. Steve and Harry Baker, of UK-based Baker Labels and BakPac will showcase their experience of moving into flexible packaging.

'After almost 50 years producing self-adhesive labels, Baker Labels expanded into the digitally printed flexible packaging market in 2020,' explains Steve Baker. 'In the three years since we launched our BakPac flexible packaging division, we've been on a steep learning curve. Where there are many crossovers with label production, there are also many new challenges to overcome. It has been a very interesting and exciting journey for us.'

The **Sustainable Labels and Packaging Master Class** will guide converters seeking to bolster their environmental credentials and contribute to a circular economy. Topics will help converters understand: sustainable inks and coatings from Pierre Dogliani at Flint Group; pressure-sensitive labels from Avery Dennison; and flexible packaging. Other sessions include a converter perspective on sustainability, presented by All4Labels; how to use blockchain for sustainability benefits from Federico D'Annunzio, founder/CEO of Traent; options for matrix waste, by Karsten Kejlhof of Lundberg Tech; turning liner waste into an opportunity, from Ophélie Gourdou of CELAB Europe; and The Holy Grail of closing the loop, presented by Jan 't Hart, at AIM (European Brands Association). Pablo Englebienne, regulatory affairs and sustainability manager, Finat, will cover packaging and packaging waste



regulations and design for recycling guidelines.

Englebienne says: 'Sustainability is at the top of the agenda of legislators, with a whirlwind of regulatory changes at the EU level taking place within the framework of the European Green Deal. I will discuss how these changes are set to impact business in the packaging industry, with a specific emphasis on label printing.'

New for 2023 is a **Wine Labeling Technology Master Class** that will explore the latest printing techniques for this dynamic market. This includes exploring EU regulations and wine label production processes such as specialist inks, coatings and embellishment techniques from Mark Walkling of Sun Chemical; paper substrates presented by Susana Fajardo at Fedrigoni Self-Adhesives; and the branding perspective on creating the perfect wine label. Andy Thomas Emans, strategic director, of Labelexpo Global Series, will cover printing technology and machinery choices, while Uffe Nielsen of GM, and Kurz will present wine label finishing and embellishment. Stefano Pistoni from UPM Raflatac will introduce the master class with a recent neuromarketing study looking at consumer choices and the wine labeling market. Ignacio Sánchez Recarte, from CEEV (European Committee of Wine Companies), will cover the required EU regulations.

Recarte says: 'At the end of this year, with the entry into force of the new EU wine labeling rules authorizing the use of e-labels for the communication of product mandatory information, the wine sector will face the biggest innovation in the last decades in the field of labeling. Labelexpo represents a perfect forum for CEEV to promote the collaboration of the whole wine supply chain for a smooth adaptation to the new labeling environment.'

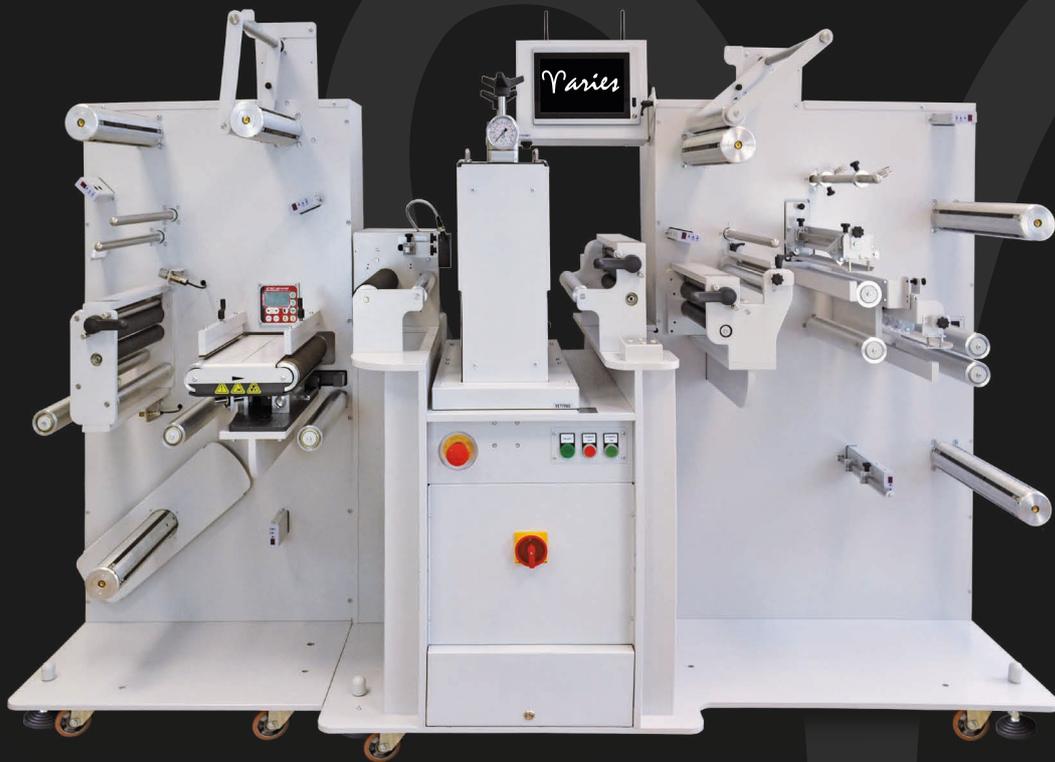
The Dieline hosts brand owner and design conference

Labelexpo is reaching new audiences with a branding and design-focused conference in partnership with the Dieline. The Dieline Forum at Labelexpo Europe 2023 will focus on

sustainability, where visitors will hear from some of the trailblazing brands. For more on the Dieline Forum, visit www.labelexpo-europe.com/dieline-forum.



For more on Labelexpo Europe 2023 master classes and features, visit www.labelexpo-europe.com/features-schedules



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SPOTLIGHT SHINES ON UPCOMING GLOBAL LABEL AWARDS

*The Global Achievement Award and Label Award shortlist is announced and will be honored at Labelexpo Europe 2023.
Charlie Edward reports*

The 2023 Global Label Awards are set to return to Labelexpo Europe 2023 with the winner of the prestigious Global Achievement Award and the shortlist for industry awards announced.

The awards take place at a gala event on 11 September, the first night of Labelexpo Europe 2023.

The Global Achievement Award is given to Malcolm Rae, who is being recognized as making a key contribution to the label industry, and who is considered a high-profile industry influencer and motivator.

As the founder of GEW, Rae has been instrumental in transforming the label printing landscape, shifting it from a primarily water-based medium to a majority UV ink-based one. His contributions have thus shaped the narrow web industry's transition to UV curing, an innovation that has fundamentally changed the way labels are produced.

Rae's career, spanning over 35 years, has been characterized by groundbreaking invention and innovation. He holds 21 international patents for key products, including the ubiquitous E2C, a staple in the label industry that is installed on 30,000 label print stations worldwide. More recently, Rae has been instrumental in directing GEW toward UV-LED curing. He spearheaded the development of exchangeable lamps with arc UV lamps, thereby providing converters an easier pathway to transition to UV-LED technology.

Rae's vast knowledge, vision and expertise in UV curing have earned him global recognition. His leadership at GEW and his contributions to the label industry have been lauded with several awards, including the prestigious Queen's Award for Export.

SHORTLIST ANNOUNCED

The Global Label Awards will also recognize winners across various categories. Among these is the team award, a new category introduced this year. This award recognizes teams that have made significant strides in developing new services or working methods that have the potential to drive the global label industry forward. The shortlisted nominations include the team behind the GSE InkConnection blog site and the Mercian Labels 'lights out' project members.

In addition to the team award, other categories cover a broad spectrum of the industry. The rising star award, the innovation awards for companies of different sizes, the sustainability award, and the converter of the year are also announced at the event.

The rising star award shortlist includes Tommy Schouten of Geostick and brothers Harry and Tom Baker of Baker Labels jointly nominated. This award recognizes individuals with a track record of exceptional and growing contributions to the label industry, demonstrating clear potential for future leadership and responsibility.

The innovation awards split nominees based on company size. For the over 300-employee category, the nominees include Asahi Photoproducts, Dow and Lintec. For the under 300-employee category, the nominees are Cartes, GEW and Rotometal. These awards honor companies that have demonstrated an outstanding commitment to innovation and progress within the label industry.

The sustainability award nominees are Fedrigoni Self-Adhesives, Lintec and UPM Raflatac. This award celebrates companies that have made significant strides toward a sustainable future for



GEW founder Malcolm Rae announced the winner of the label industry's most prestigious award

"It has been a fantastic experience during our judging session to see the full range of innovation, team energy and powerful sustainability initiatives driving this vibrant industry forward"

the global labels industry. In a world where sustainability is of growing concern, the importance of recognizing companies that are pioneering green initiatives cannot be overstated.

Lastly, the converter of the year award is set to recognize companies that have gone above and beyond in fostering a diverse and inclusive work environment, developing employee programs, contributing to community initiatives, implementing sustainability programs and introducing innovative products or programs for end users.

The nominees for this category are UK-based Baker Label, Singapore-based Honsen and Italy-based Pilot Italia.

The judging panel is a joint effort of Finat, TLMI and the editors of three prominent label industry publications. The Label Awards judging panel is Philippe Voet, president of FINAT, Tim McDonough, TLMI chairman, Chelsea McDougall, editor of Labels & Labeling, Greg Hrinya, editor of Label & Narrow Web, and Jean Poncet, editor of Etiq & Pack.

Reflecting on the judging process, Andy Thomas-Emans, chair of the judging panel, says: 'It has been a fantastic experience during our judging session to see the full range of innovation, team energy and powerful sustainability initiatives driving this vibrant industry forward. On behalf of the judges, I would like to thank everybody who submitted nominations, and we look forward to revealing the names of the winning individuals and companies at Labelexpo Europe in Brussels this September.'



The Label Awards will take place on 11 September at Brussels Expo. For more information, visit www.labelawards.com



LABELXPO EUROPE 2023 TECHNOLOGY PREVIEW

AB Graphic International (ABG) unveils its automation technology ABG Connect, an automated workflow system that connects all stages of the print and finishing process into one automated workflow. New products include advances in non-stop winding technology and a new turret rewinder model. ABG will also introduce the Converter, a compact, fully modular high-speed converting line incorporating automated flexo coating station.

ABG will collaborate with HP on stand P100 to demonstrate its non-stop unwind and rewind system seamlessly integrated into the HP Indigo V12 line.

Abezeta Group shows the Strong State SF-DFT hard durometer digital flexo plate featuring Strong's built-in flat-top dot technology. It offers the convenience of flat-top dots with no additional platemaking steps or equipment required. SF-DFT offers near 1:1 mask-to-plate imaging capability, thus eliminating the need for a bump curve, which helps printers to expand the available color gamut and print a smaller dot.

Accraply introduces its Accraply Revolve line of modular shrink sleeve seamers, configured with the aim of making shrink sleeve seaming simpler and more efficient.

Acme RollTech shows its latest ACE (Advanced Channel Engravings) engraving technology along with ATAC - Acme Tactile for screen-type raise effects, AHDW - Acme High Density White for opaque white printing for solids and text.

Actega presents its latest inks, coatings and adhesives as well as its Ecoleaf technology, a sustainable alternative to traditional metallic decoration. Actega's range of haptic and visual effect coatings offer soft touch, matte and raised image effects. Actega will also focus on its white and metallic inks.

Afford Inks showcases its LED UV narrow web flexo inks, aiming to attract interest from end users, machine integrators, distribution partners and OEM clients.

Agergaard Graphic Supplies showcases high-performance end seals and doctor blades. The coatSeal Flexi 3D end seal series is made to withstand abrasive and viscous UV inks and achieves reliable sealing results with an improved rotational contact area between the anilox roller and end seal. The coatSeal Universal molded rubber seals offer sealing for all ink types and coatings, including white and metallics. The low-wear steel and plastic doctor blades steelBlade and polyBlade are designed for high-quality label and packaging printing.

Ahlstrom showcases its range of silicone coated release papers. The company will also present new products with enhanced sustainability and circularity features including: Acti-V RF glassine

release paper including at least 15 percent post-consumer recycled fiber, and the typical light-yellow color used for label release liners. Acti-V RF Natural glassine release paper features a natural kraft color, based on a combination of post-consumer recycled cellulose fiber (at least 15 percent) and unbleached cellulose fibers. Acti-V RF Natural also eliminates the use of any dye and allows greater carbon footprint reduction with the replacement of bleached cellulose with unbleached.

The recently launched Acti-V Industrial RF Natural is a custom version designed for double side silicone coating for application in double-sided PSA tapes.

Alphasonics exhibits Plaeto for the first time at Labelexpo Europe. Plaeto is an automatic plate-loading system that sits just in front of the PCX and will automatically feed up to 30 plates directly into the device. The company is also showing a new, improved proofing roll cleaning system, and an array of anilox cleaning systems.

Amica Systems launches its Gemini digital label press. The new Gemini 330-4C UV label press is fitted with automatic purge, wipe and cap functionality. It offers print quality up to 600x1200 DPI with inter-color pinning lamps and a print width of 216mm or 330mm.

The company is showing its LPS330 UV-LED inkjet label press for short and medium-run jobs. Print quality is up to 720x1200 DPI with white-CMYK-varnish.

For the narrow web label press market, Amica launches a 6-color (CMYK+orange+green) version of its Scorpio 6C UV-LED inkjet press, expanding the current range of 54mm, 75mm and 108mm wide versions. The presses are equipped with an automatic cleaning system and pinning LED lamps.

Anytron unveils its latest Any-Press. This 5-color dry toner press is powered by a 13in wide LED engine with inline lamination.

Additionally, Anytron highlights the Any-Jet II, an integration of digital printing and laser die-cutting. The Any-Jet II offers digital printing, laminating, laser cutting, slitting, and matrix removal capabilities.

Apex International showcases its patented GTT engraving technology. Apex will launch its embossing technology for textures and raised effects.

The company also shows its latest offering in anilox technology, Conical Anilox.

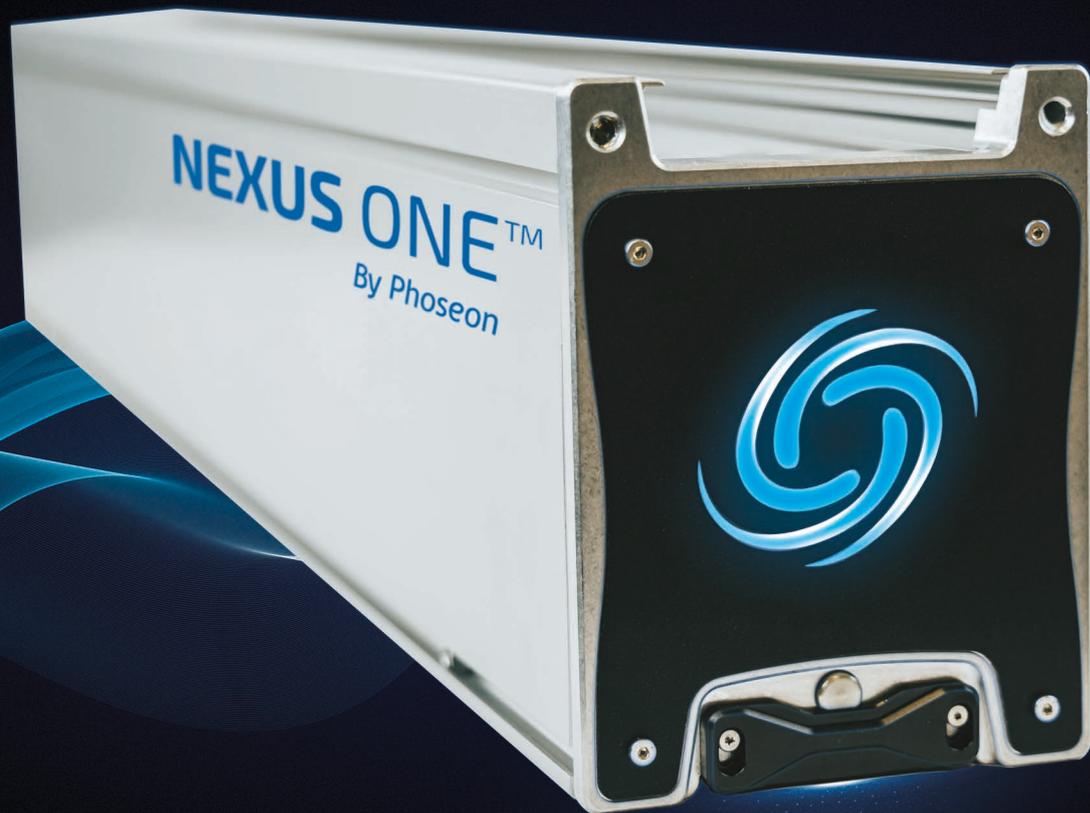
Applied Laser Engineering introduces its Twin Track cell engraving technology. Twin Track enables allows users to achieve high cell volumes with a low depth of engraving.



AB Graphic International

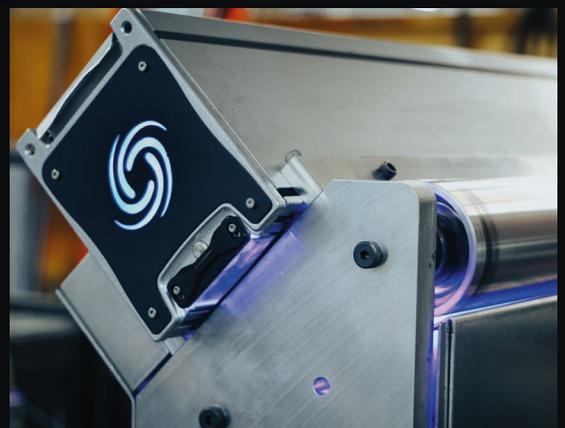
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Accraply

Arrow Systems launches its ArrowJet line in the European market. The ArrowJet line features water-based pigment inkjet technology from Memjet and boasts print speeds of up to 50m/ min. The ArrowJet Aqua 330L is built with Siemens servo motors and is designed for use for both labels and flexible packaging.

The ArrowJet Aqua 330R Hybrid Pro features inline priming and varnish.

Arrow Systems also announces the ArrowBolt line. Featuring Memjet's latest Durabolt technology, the ArrowBolt can run up to 150m/min with 4x nozzle redundancy.

Armor-limak offers new features for its inkjet thermal transfer ribbons. Clean Start is a printhead cleaning feature that is built into the thermal transfer ribbon. It removes debris and dust from the printhead before it builds up and impacts print quality.

Array Graphics/norwix shows the high-speed, high-resolution norwix digital printing systems utilizing HP thermal inkjet heads and piezo-based iM2 assemblies.

Asahi Photoproducts debuts its updated wastewater recycling unit for use with the AWPTM plate processing system. The unit features proprietary filtering technology said to reduce wastewater by 75 percent, and detergent usage by 40 percent.

Ashe launches the Diamond duplex slitter series for wider web applications, and the Opal TST range of high-speed blank label converters with auto two-spindle turret rewind. Operating on the stand will be a fully automated 'glueless/coreless' four-spindle turret slitter, an Opal ISR with 100 percent camera inspection and a mid-web sized (800mm wide) Solitaire duplex slitter for flexible packaging products.

AkeBoose presents its chamber doctor blade systems for label and narrow web flexible packaging applications. The Nova TK chamber doctor blade assembly is particularly suitable for integration in flexible packaging printing. The modular setup allows customization to the press requirements with plug-and-play installation.

AtéCé Graphic Products launches a new cutting plotter that operates in both roll to roll and roll to sheet modes. The company also presents ink dispenser systems for mixing conventional, food packaging compliant and UV/LED-UV offset inks as well as food packaging compliant (LED)UV flexo inks.

Avery Dennison unveils a new range of VI and decorative linerless labels, a suite of solutions that eliminate the need for a liner, thereby reducing material use and waste and minimizing the environmental impact of packaging. The company also presents its latest sustainable products and labeling materials with a lower carbon footprint, and products that enable packaging recycling or reuse. Visitors can also experience demos of its digital products and understand how intelligent labels enable consumer interaction and end-to-end supply chain transparency.

Axicon Auto ID promotes the Axicon 15000 series of 2D and linear barcode verifiers. The 15200 and 15500 models can now measure and grade the quality of DPM (direct part marked) symbols, as well as conventionally printed 2D matrix codes, such as Data Matrix, QR Code, GS1 DataMatrix, and GS1 QR Code, as well as PDF417. The verifiers will also grade the quality of conventional linear barcodes such as EAN-13, UPC-A, and UPC-E provided they are not too large for each verifier's field of view.



Amica Systems

The 15200 is set up for smaller symbols, and its field of view is 60x45mm meaning it is suitable for codes typically used on retail, pharmaceutical and healthcare items. The larger field of view of the 15500, 95x75mm, means it can also be used to grade the symbols typically used on outer cases and logistics labels.

Baltink promotes water-based and UV-curable coatings, including for special effects such as soft touch, matte, deep matte and structured. Baltink also promotes water-dispersion coatings with barrier properties intended for direct food contact and to provide a barrier to fats, oils and liquids.

Baldwin launches its upgraded Guardian PQV 4.0 with new Wizard-iQ Interface. Wizard-iQ can set up a repeatable process with a few clicks, lowering the barrier of entry for new employees. PQV 4.0 incorporates automated-Delta-E color monitoring and both single- and dual-sided 100 percent print quality inspection.

Benford UV showcases its latest Eco LED UV system designed for web presses as well as its UV, LED UV and IR/hot air technology for all types of press and industrial applications.

bel presents the latest version of its Overprint Management Information System (MIS) for labels, IML and packaging. Its cost estimation tool offers a hybrid view of conventional and digital environments for production proposals, comparing costs in varying print quantities for each press technology.

Overprint is further optimized with improved materials management, traceability and quality control features. Additionally, bel showcases its system for automated real-time data collection utilizing IoT devices on the shop floor. The integrations with Esko Automation Engine and Hybrid Cloudflow will be displayed, streamlining process management and workflow automation.

Advanced integrations with press manufacturers will be unveiled, such as real-time job ticket submission via JDF integration on a DFE and incorporating inspection reports from other systems into the job ticket.

Berhalter presents the new Swiss Die-Cutter B4. With a production speed of 500 strokes a minute, the Swiss Die-Cutter B4 provides an adjustable opening level of the punching tool and digitally monitored penetration depth. Another addition is active substrate guidance.

Alongside the B4 model, Berhalter introduces its Cutcontrol technology, linking all production processes and providing key performance indicators. Operators can access real-time data streams from the machine, accessories and

punching tools.

Bio4Life showcases its entire range of certified compostable materials with a focus on applications for fruit labels. The face materials are derived from renewable resources and all are coated with the BioTAK compostable adhesive. The product range includes paper from agricultural waste, FSC & PEFC certified paper and a variety of bioplastics. The products comply with EN13432 and are certified by

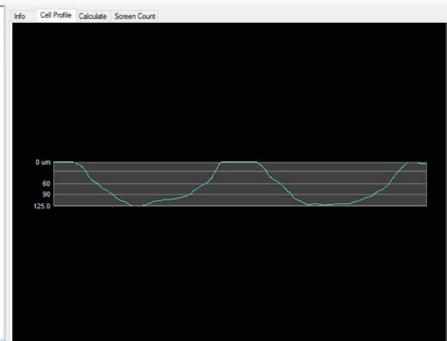
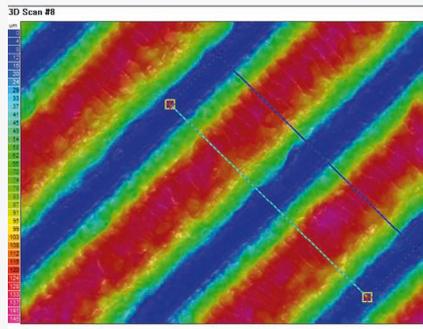
DinCertco or TÜV Austria.

Bobst showcases the Digital Master 340 All-in-One modular label press, running at 100m/min. The Bobst Accucheck system performs 100 percent inline quality control at full line speed. The full configuration will include flexo modules and an automated semi-rotary die-cutting unit.

Bobst also highlights the Master M6 flexo press with oneECG extended color



Ashe



Applied Laser Engineering



Alphasonics

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gamut printing and V-Flower printing units enabling fast, automatic changeovers of the printing cylinders without stopping the press.

Busitel shows its new resin ribbon P314. Working on all kinds of printers (flat head, near edge and TTO), P314 offers a mix of resistance, flexibility and high-speed printing. Moreover, based on a 4-micron PET film, P314 allows up to 12 percent plastic reduction for each roll.

Brotech launches the SDF Plus digital label converting system, which supports multiple processes including hot foil stamping, flexo printing, cold foil /adhesive lamination, screen printing, varnishing, die-cutting, slitting, snowball waste removal and dual rewinds.

Also displayed is the modular SDF-E series which can be expanded with options such as additional flexo coating stations, printing, cold foil/lamination, hot air (I/R) dryer for water-based primer or printing, auto-slitting unit, sheeting or IML stations.

The CDF finisher features flexo printing, spot varnish, super varnish, cold foil, lamination, full-rotary/semi-rotary die-cutting, slitting, and dual rewinds.

The TR turret rewind has an auto hotmelt gluing system or glue-less core loading system for core gluing and roll end closure for non-stop rewind.

BST shows its BST TubeScan Eagle View 100 percent inspection system. An additional five-megapixel camera allows zooming in on any web section of 35x25mm with a pixel resolution of 14 µm. BST also demonstrates dynamic job changes in realistic production environments where multiple jobs are printed on one roll. TubeScan automatically detects the new job and retrieves the corresponding master image in real time without stopping the press.

Cartes presents six machine configurations. The GE363VJL digital finishing technology is a Jet DScreen (JDS) on the Gemini platform, combined with laser die-cutting.

The GT360 series with Jet D-Screen (JDS) is integrated with flexo, traditional silk screen printing, hot stamping and semi-rotary die-cutting.

The GE362WL+turret rewinder laser die-cutting machine will be shown with automatic job change. The ILC laser cutter allows cutting of colored substrate without leaving white edges or can remove white borders from dark labels.

GE361L is an entry-level laser die-cutting and converting machine.

GE364VHWR is equipped with hot stamping on the Gemini platform, along with two flexo stations and a semi-rotary die-cutting unit.

Cellopack showcases its new range of



Anytron



Asahi



Berhalter



BST



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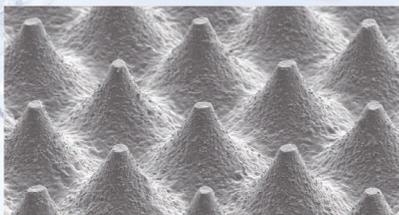
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self-adhesive label material converted in Egypt.

Cerm promotes smart MIS software. It offers an automated workflow connecting all elements of the converting business. Cerm also features on the Automation Arena.

Cheshire Anilox Technology launches a new anilox sleeve design developed to lengthen lifespan by protecting the roll edges, and a new engraving designed to enhance ink transfer, reduce pin holing and enable printers to use finer line counts.

It also showcases Maxflo+ engraving designed to improve the way ink is transferred to the plate, reducing foaming, ink spitting, mottling, pin holing, plugging and dot gain. The engraving is available in a variety of volume options and can be utilized in multiple print applications, from fine print to flood coat. Cheshire also demonstrates its full range of engraving technology including TactiLoX for high build tactile finishes and easyFlo HD for high opacity whites in a single pass.

Clean Solutions Group shows cleaning technology for anilox rolls and sleeves. It will showcase one of its laser cleaners, the JetCleaning AL 900.

ColorConsulting showcases its color and ink management technology. The company also unveils InkWeigh version 6.0 with new 'Smart Traceability' feature allowing tracking of production batches including orders, leftovers and warehouse locations.

ColorConsulting also shows Alwan Color software including PrintStandardizer and HydraFix technology that, combined with Alwan ColorHub, offers a dedicated solution for printers utilizing hybrid digital-flexo technologies.

Comexi presents a central impression cylinder used in its Ci8 offset printing press. The Ci8 allows reduction of environmental impact using solventless EB offset inks.

ContiTech Elastomer-Beschichtungen presents offset printing blankets optimized for label and packaging production.

Daco Solutions launches the Daco PLR slitter rewinder with a three-spindle semi-automatic turret rewinder and an integrated 1m (40in) unwind, with web widths of 350mm (13.75in) and 430mm (17in). The machine is available with an inspection table and a vision system. The company is also exhibiting the Daco PLD350 with a rotary die station for blank label production. The company also brings the new Daco SRV350 fully servo slitter rewinder with



Bio4Life

a Nikka vision system, back numbering and auto-set slitting knives. The SRV allows clients to specify a machine for most slitting and rewinding requirements.

Daetwyler SwissTec displays the MDC Goldstar doctor blade with a low friction coefficient and corrosion-resistant coating. This coating provides a lubricating effect, enhancing the blade's lifespan.

Dantex Group presents its PicoJet technology including PicoCenter and PicoPilot workflow automation software with touchscreen interface. Features include Dantex's SuperText, SuperWhite, and DecoTactile technologies. It is a hybrid press with reel-to-reel inline finishing capabilities, and it offers an option to add white with 92 percent opacity in a single pass at speeds up to 75m/min.

Darui China showcases a new generation of laser label die-cutting machines. This technology offers both roll-to-roll and roll-to-sheet finishing options. The fully digital laser process system performs well in handling small and medium-sized orders.

DCM Usimeca will present a shrink sleeve seaming machine equipped with laser perforation. It will also present a doctoring rewinder for quality control and correction of reels, equipped with a 100 percent inspection system. There will also be a bi-directional narrow web slitter rewinder for inspection and doctoring.

DecoSystem will present its full range of inspection systems. Sentinel is a 100 percent print inspection system including color control, 2D and 3D code grading and variable data verification. The Sentinel Workflow option enables connection between press and rewinder to minimize waste and monitor production. Scandiff2 proof software identifies pre-press issues early in the work cycle. Multilabel is optimized for pharmaceutical labels and includes the Sentinel print inspection system and numbering inkjet system. Finally, Deco_GPR is software for tracking production data, accessible from a PC, tablet or mobile device.

delfort shows its Tersil UltraLightBase glassine for self-adhesive applications, claimed up to 40 percent lighter than current market alternatives.

Delta ModTech demonstrates its updated Crusader Converter, featuring on-demand converting including precision RFID antennae placement. This system integrates multiple processes such as rotary die-cutting, winding, conveying and accurate part placement.



Bobst



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Cartes

Other features include laser die-cutting, multilayer lamination, heat-seal pouching, coating and drying.

DG press shows a print unit from its latest sleeve-based web offset press, the DG-Auxo. Using solventless inks, the press is suitable for handling shorter run lengths in the flexible packaging market. The DG-Auxo comes in 520mm, 900mm, and 1085mm widths and operates at speeds up to 400m/min. The smaller DG-Auxo 520 is tailored for security printing, while the wider DG-Auxo 900 and DG-AUXO 1085 are designed for flexible packaging printing and label printing.

Dilli shows its Neo Picasso UV inkjet press incorporating upgraded tension control for a wider substrate range. The Neo Picasso has a maximum print width of 330mm and operates at speeds up to 50m/m using CMYKOV (with optional OV/OG/VG spot colors) and double white, which provides a high level of opacity. Its maximum resolution is 600x1200 dpi. The machine comes standard with a corona treater, chill roller, pin-curing LED system and full-color variable data printing capability.

DNP will display its V390 resin labelstock for thermal transfer overprint (TTO) and near-edge printing. Other products on show include V300, M255, M295HD 4.0 and TR4085+.

Domino demonstrates the N730i UV inkjet label press and the K600i variable data printer along with the new K300 high-resolution inkjet printer capable of speeds up to 250m/min. The N730i prints at 1200 dpi using Brother Bitstar print head technology. It is configurable in up to seven colors (CMYKOVW) and can achieve up to 92 percent of the Pantone color range. It has an optional flexo priming station to optimize print quality on more difficult media types. An additional flexo station can be

added to support varnishing, a brand spot color or flood white for shrink sleeve applications. The K600i enables variable data printing at speeds up to 492ft/min, printing serial, batch, random or PINs; alphanumeric characters; variable images; linear barcodes; 2D matrix or QR codes. Domino will also reveal its new online ripping in real-time.

Dongguan Xincal Packaging Materials shows special label materials, protective film and adhesive tape.

Dow presents its silicone release coatings and acrylic and silicone adhesives. Syl-Off release coating products can handle speeds up to 1,300m/min. Additionally, Dow will display a range of high-performance silicone and water-borne acrylic adhesives. Dow will also showcase its INVISU 7007 washable adhesive for filmic labels. This adhesive allows PSA labels and PET bottles to be separated in a recycling system.

Drop AG by Hans Lüscher will show the Drop DirectPoser, a direct exposure system for flexographic printing plates based on EPDM materials. This system produces flexographic printing plates for various sectors including label, pharmaceutical, corrugated, coating plate and dry offset. The system engraves plates directly using a fiber laser without the need for chemicals, which reduces energy consumption and carbon emissions. Drop AG also presents the Drop Phoenix CtS UV laser direct plate setter. The machine provides exposure solutions for screen, offset printing and pad printing applications.

DuPont Teijin Films presents Melinex films, designed for long-life durable labels in applications such as auto and electronics. These films offer excellent temperature and chemical resistance. They are printable and available in white, clear, matte and black,



Dantex

and are commonly used in pressure-sensitive labels where durability is essential. The labels based on Melinex polyester films can be directly printed using flexographic and UV inkjet technologies or other digital print technologies with a suitable top coating.

Durico shows a range of direct thermal film and inkjet-compatible label facestock. The product line includes new direct thermal films that are phenol-free and heat stable, as well as films resistant to solvent, alcohol, hot water and tallow. Durico also displays translucent direct thermal films and durable inkjet PP films that comply with BS5609 and GHS. Lastly, the company presents inkjet DuPont Tyvek suitable for use with color inkjet printing systems.

Durst Group introduces Hawk Eye technology, which uses machine vision and artificial intelligence to automate print quality. In addition, Durst Group is unveiling a new Tau RSC UV ink set, available in CMYK OVG and white, which broadens the Tau print systems' application range. The company is also showcasing the Tau 510 RSCi equipped with a double white print engine. The press operates at a speed of 100m/min at a printing width of 510mm, achieving productivity over 3000sqm/hr.

Eclipse Label Equipment showcases its latest 'print and finish' systems designed for in-line label production from blank label stock. In addition, the company presents a new in-line laser label finishing machine, the Eclipse LF220-LAS. This is designed to operate either with a pre-printed roll of media or in line with any digital label press or finishing system.

ECO3 demonstrates its in-house prepress and plate making systems for narrow- and mid-web flexo converters. Amfortis is a dedicated all-in-one PDF workflow technology covering all prepress



Daco Solutions

production tasks from preflighting, step and repeat and proofing to rendering. All are available via secured cloud services. The company also shows SPIR@L screening and GridTune screening technologies.

MAGIS F dry film and MAGIS P-Eco water wash plates are also on display providing flat-top dots topologies. MAGIS DI digital imaging systems provide the imaging engine up to 4.800 dpi.

Ecosystem Costruzioni showcases its new single pass roll-to-roll finishing line digitally printing varnishes and UV adhesives. It handles reels up to a diameter of 1,000mm with speeds up to 90m/min. The base system can be expanded to a double bar version for simultaneous metal

transfer and high build varnish application. Maximum resolution is: 2160x720dpi, and coat thickness ranges between 6- 100 microns. Production speed is up to 48m/min.

Elkem introduces the Silclease UV LED Series release coatings. Elkem provides silicone release coatings in a range of formats, including solvent-based, water-dilutable emulsion formulations, solventless thermal and UV. The new UV LED curable silicone solutions support the industry's shift toward a more sustainable footprint.

Emmendinger Maschinenbau (EMB) presents die-cutting machines for producing lids and labels in large lot sizes. The company also shows sparkling wine capsule machines that offer a wide range of decoration possibilities at high production speeds.

Errepi updates its Leonardo automatic rewinder, and features products from its portfolio including the Volta and Archimede winders, Galileo flexographic printing machine, Giotto inspection machines, and die-cutting machines such as the Dante and the Vittoria and Vittorino core cutters.

Erhardt+Leimer exhibits a new generation of Smartscan print image inspection systems, in addition to its full product range of web guiding, web tension control, web monitoring, web inspection systems, web thickness and basis weight measurement systems.

Esko is presenting an ecosystem of automated workflow, flexo platemaking, digital printing and automated print inspection tools. It is showcasing the CDI



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Cheetah 500 with AI technology



Darui China

Crystal XPS 4835 and AVT Helios System along with its range of prepress software, including Esko Phoenix, an AI-based tool for planning and imposition productivity with an interface between prepress and production data. Additionally, Esko is demonstrating how it collaborates with X-Rite Pantone in color management software and measurement solutions to support digital workflows.

Etirama launches the Etirama SPS3 press with pre-register system. The servo-driven SPS3 press has a 350mm web width and includes options such as cold foil, delam/relam, lamination, sheeter and turn bar for reverse printing.

An electronic pre-register system facilitates the production of small and medium-sized jobs with a quick and economical setup. The versatile press can run at speeds of up to 150m/min, allowing it also to handle long runs effectively.

The SPS3 can run self-adhesive, light cardboard and paper substrates. When equipped with UV LED or hot air curing, it can print unsupported films to produce wraparound, in-mold and shrink sleeve labels. It is also suitable for printing aluminum blister packs.

Eukalin Special-Adhesives showcases its pressure-sensitive adhesive range as well as its water-based adhesive for shrink sleeves. Eukalin's pressure-sensitive adhesives enable high-performance applications including durable industrial labels and consumer goods. Eukalin also shows its UV-C acrylic hotmelt PSA range.

Evonik launches its next generation of Tego RC products made using recycled silicone feedstocks and can be cured using either LED or traditional mercury lamps. Evonik also launches a single-component, ready-to-use release coating. Evonik's new product will enable label producers to

adopt UV LED curing technology.

EyeC demonstrates ProofRunner Web HighLight. Installed on a Rotocon rewinder, the latest inline inspection system has been developed for 100 percent inspection of labels and flexible packaging.

HighLight illumination allows the system to inspect finishes including hot stamping, holograms, or blind embossing.

The EyeC Profiler DT line will also be on display, along with the EyeC ProofText automated web-based artwork proofreading system with sync algorithm. It detects and evaluates deviations from the wanted text, including content and font style, within a single process, based on the original artwork PDF file.

FAG Graphic Systems launches the FAG Flex4Pro Flexo Analyzer. Combined with the new FAG Relix4 this is designed to control flexo plate production, enabling quick measurement of dot sizes and relief depths.

FLEXcon Global promotes coated and laminated films and adhesives for markets including durables, automotive, industrial

and healthcare.

Flexo Wash introduces the FW 850 laser anilox cleaner. FW 850 series models clean up to two narrow web rolls in one cycle and can be installed without a water supply or drain. It can handle aniloxes up to 7in in diameter, 27.6in length and 110lbs (49.9kg) weight.

Fortisblades exhibits industrial slitting razorblades. Fortis, Fortis+ and Fortius series are designed for use on all types of film. The high resistance to wear and tear ensures a smooth cut, even in complex structures and/or recycled materials.

Gallus showcases the Gallus One digital label press, developed in conjunction with Heidelberg. Built on the Gallus Labelmaster press platform, Gallus One is a 340mm wide roll-to-roll UV inkjet digital inline label press. It offers print speeds of up to 70 m/min.

GEW shows its full product range with a particular emphasis on its air-cooled UV LED system, AeroLED. AeroLED is a high-power system for full cure, printing, coating and converting applications up to 60cm wide.

The design update makes AeroLED compatible with GEW's ArcLED system. Using the same fan and ducting arrangement as the E2C, printers have the flexibility to switch between arc and LED curing on any station.

In an AeroLED system, air is extracted by a single centralized fan sited away from the press. AeroLED features the same LED chassis and core components as GEW's water-cooled LeoLED lamphed. AeroLED's design enables the lowest energy usage of all GEW products.

GIC launches the Taginnov line for RFID airline baggage tags, clothing labels, tracking tags, logistics labels, pharmaceutical labels, tickets for events or transport, skiing lift tickets and packaging. This new line consists of systems for integration of wet or dry RFID tags in adhesive or cardboard substrates.



Dilli



DCM

Gietz shows ROFO 450 web-fed flatbed hot foil stamping system for narrow web embellishment processes. The ROFO 450 Eco will process PS materials, paper, cardboard, film and composite substrates. The machine achieves speeds of up to 120m/min with a dynamic foil web transport with a 90 degrees rotating foiling unit. Gietz also introduces a wider version ROFO 570 Eco with a larger stamping surface.

Golden Laser launches a new sheet-fed laser die-cutting system. Golden Laser also shows a laser die-cutting machine designed and manufactured for the roll-to-roll or roll-to-sheet finishing of package printing. For the digital label printing industry, Golden Laser's laser die-cutters work well with all pre-press and post-press systems including rotary die-cutting, flatbed die-cutting, screen printing, flexo printing, digital die-cutting, varnish, laminating, hot stamping and cold foil.

GSE unveils software and dispensing solutions for fully automated ink and color management in label printing. With programs for purchasing, inventory control, reusing press-returns, ink batch tracing, color formulations and management reports, GSE Ink Manager provides solutions for automating and accelerating every ink-related step in the print house. GSE also showcases its Colorsat ink dispensing systems, which blend accurate spot color on-demand, while cutting out waste, errors and delay in color preparation – claimed to potentially reduce ink consumption by up to 30 percent. They are extendable and tailored to volume and application needs – including for label, flexible packaging, carton and corrugated board printing. Dispensers are available for UV, LED-UV, low-migration, water-based and solvent inks, and flexo, gravure and screen processes.

Grafisk Maskinfabrik (GM) brings nine machines on display, including the DC350Flex+ wine line for foiling and embossing, screen colors, and flexo varnish effects. With 130m/min rotary die-cutting (80m/min semi-rotary) and a 50-ton pressure hot stamping module, the DC350Flex+ series is fully customizable and can work either standalone or in line with a digital press.

The new HF350 hot foil machine adds embossing and foiling

effects in a compact footprint. The company will also show DC350Mini compact label finisher and DC350Nano.

The SR350 slitter inspection rewinder and the LR250+ inspection rewinder are also on display. The machine can be configured for pharma labels and even turned into a mini-inkjet digital press. Also shown are the CC160S semi-automatic core cutter, and the CS350 high-speed sheeter.

Grafotronic brings 10 machines, eight of which are new technology. The company shows Revolver, a fully automatic turret, new modules for full in-register lamination, crossover and printing on the glue side and the DCL2 in five different configurations. Grafotronic demonstrates five machines equipped with the AI-based computer vision system Grafotronic IQ, which allows autonomous job changes, handling all job settings automatically.

In the Automation Arena, Grafotronic is the exclusive finishing partner. Together with Xeikon, Esko and Cerm, Grafotronic shows how the converting processes can be automated, showing an IQ-equipped DCL integrated into a fully automated end-to-end workflow.

Also on display will be the new Haptic series, with two new screen modules, a new hot stamping machine and the latest digital embellishment system powered by Kurz.

On top of that, Grafotronic will show its SCI-FI laser for the digital converting of printed labels and stickers. The company will also present Boon-Tech efficiency-enhancing auxiliary machines including slitter/rewinder, fan-folding equipment, core cutter and label cutter.

Hangma Paper Products shows high-quality semi-gloss paper, adhesive thermal paper, BOPP, PP, and special customized material.

HB Fuller introduces Swiftak PS 8405 water-based pressure-sensitive adhesive (PSA) with non-water whitening properties. It is designed for those seeking a premium PET label with a no-label look. This adhesive delivers performance with clarity and optimized peel, tack and aging properties.

The company also promotes ultra-removable and highly

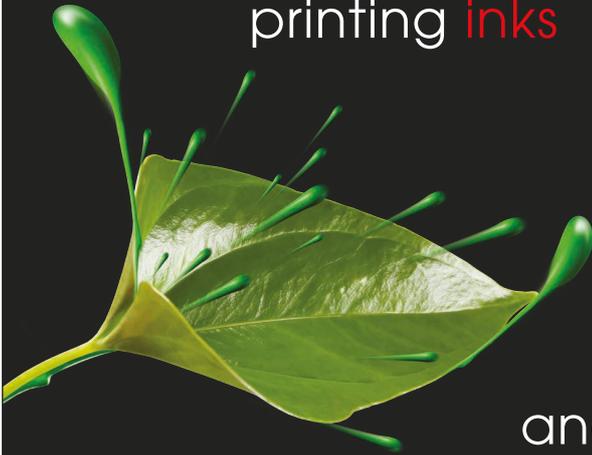


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Domino

repositionable Gel-Tac products based on water-based acrylic, pressure-sensitive microsphere technology. Labels can be removed without leaving visible residue, markings or damage to the material. Photo albums, consumer advertising, masking tapes, wall or window decals, graphics, wallpapers, linerless labels and tape constructions that can be repositioned or replaced.

Henan Yinjinda New Materials promotes functional polymer film materials. The company develops products for labels and multi-packaging of drinks, medicines, cosmetics and electronics. The company's products include a regular transparent PETG and also PETG with 30 percent PCR, a white PETG and crystallizable film.

Henkel showcases its comprehensive pressure-sensitive adhesives product portfolio and a wide range of new PSA products. The company displays sustainable PSA products to improve food safety, container recycling and waste management. It demonstrates a variety of PSA technologies including water-based, solvent-based acrylic, rubber hotmelt and UV hotmelt PSA. With UV hotmelt PSA, Henkel enables broader use of acrylic-based hotmelt adhesives across a wide range of applications and industries, particularly where solvent-free adhesives with minimal VOC emission can help meet regulatory requirements and sustainability goals. Henkel also presents its ECO and RE PSA portfolio for labels, with targets of reducing carbon emission in label production, reducing waste, and enabling usage of high-quality recycle.

Hermans, a specialist in embossing and foil dies, shows laser-engraved clichés for premium labels and packaging applications. Fine detailing and adding texture to foil and/or embossing dies will be demonstrated. The company presents Ready2press, a mounting plate that reduces changeover times between foiling jobs, designed for all types of foiling machine

system. The company also introduces lenticular clichés with applications ranging from decorative to security.

Hangzhou Cron Machinery & Electronics promotes the Cron HDI-920 high-definition digital flexo imager designed for mid-sized packaging formats. The HDI-920 can produce plates for labels, hangers, soft bags, paper cups, folded paper boxes or books. The system will image polyester-based letterpress plates, thermal offset printing plates, digital flexo printing plates, ablative film and metal-based letterpress plates. HDI-920 is equipped with Cron's SMFO laser optical system for accurate and stable imaging, with a resolution up to 9600 DPI.

The HDI-920 is equipped with a fully-automatic plate clamping system as standard, which adjusts plate positioning according to the size of the plate without requiring sticky tape.

HCI Converting Equipment launches its latest FSL-TR1300 turret rewinder designed for slitting label stock, wraparound labels, shrink sleeve label films and flexible packaging films. It features automatic splicing and roll changing, stand-by paper cores with auto positioning, finished roll eject and an unloading device. The company also promotes the new FP-X250-2 shrink sleeve seaming machine with rewind auto splicing, ultrasonic lay-flat measuring and solvent detection technology, with both seaming and doctoring processes on the same machine. The machine runs at a speed of 500m/min.

Height-LED will bring its latest UV-LED curing products. The LED array delivers an intensity of 26W/sqcm or 40W/sqcm for flexographic printing applications.

HP Indigo will showcase end-to-end digital production with the first presentation in Europe of both the HP Indigo V12 digital press and the recently-launched HP Indigo 200K digital press. Alongside the HP Indigo 6K digital press, converters will be able to learn about Indigo's LEP and LEPX technologies.



Dow

The V12 digital press will be demonstrated showing flexo-matching productivity; the HP Indigo 200K Digital Press delivers a 30 percent improvement in speed and a 45 percent increase in productivity over the 20000 model, and opens the door to more flexible packaging converters who want to enter the digital market.

The HP Indigo 6K is demonstrated offering E2E solutions.

HP hosts the Digital Pouch Factory, featuring the HP Indigo 200K digital press, demonstrated with prepress and finishing equipment.

Hönle presents LED-UV curing devices for pinning and final curing in label printing applications. The new LED Powerline LC HV is supplied with a voltage of 400 V DC. The LED system achieves high intensities for curing printing inks and varnishes. The two device versions differ in the width of the light aperture and thus in the irradiation intensity, reaching up to 25,000 mW/sqcm. The length of the device can be modularly adapted to the application. Hönle also shows water or air-cooled LED-UV curing systems.

Its subsidiary UV-Technik Speziallampen will present tailor-made UV and IR lamps as well as measuring devices.

Hololens shows its seamless PET film with PRI (platinum relief image) technology featuring striking 3D visual and metalized effects.

Hontec promotes the MPX series label finishing platform based on the company's Digifini platform. It combines a variety of process modules, such as flat-bed hot stamping, intermittent flexographic printing, flat-bed silk screen printing, rotary die-cutting, flat-bed die-cutting, laser die-cutting, buffer and turret rewinding, sheet cutting. Linked through an EtherCAT system, the company can build a variety of customized finishing combinations according to customer needs.

HPRT shows the Gala 4in industrial label printer, HT600 4in thermal transfer



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label printer and other labeling and scanning products. The heavy duty Gala prints at speeds up to 14ips. It has a color touch display, intuitive interface and optional accessories including a cutter and rewinder.

Hybrid Software Group showcases technologies covering the full workflow for flexo and digital production of labels and packaging, including Packz PDF editor for prepress automation, CloudFlow workflow suite with flexo screening technologies, color management products, Smart DFE, and a complete portfolio of products for industrial inkjet applications.

Ibeslab unveils a comprehensive range of adhesives for shrink sleeve production on a range of different films including PET, PVC, OPS and PLA. These adhesives feature an optical marker to facilitate inspection of the welding line at high speeds under a special UV light. Ibeslab also offers a new line of water-based flexographic cleaning products.

Infigo experts will demonstrate how to build and scale an online brand through web-to-print technology, from creating a unique storefront to integrating customer experience and printing workflow modules.

Inglese exhibits with its partners Toray Industries, DuPont Cyrel, Esko, Refine Finishing, Breit Technologies and Azul Sistemi. It demonstrates the Refine 17in-wide Compact 2 finishing system, with features such as a semi-rotary flexo unit, UV-LED curing system, cold foil lamination, semi-rotary die cutting and semi-automatic turret.

Eco-friendly cast and cure embellishing films by Breit Technologies will also be on display. PP Cast and Cure films, with a width up to 1016mm, are reusable multiple times and fully recyclable. Films are available in several patterns for holographic or textured effects, matte soft touch and extra clear. It includes anti-scuff and anti-counterfeiting applications.

Inglese also features its new AC-J series anilox cleaning machine, suitable for frequent color changes and geared for anilox and sleeves. The product is made for both narrow web and wide web.

Innovia Films presents Rayoface CPE45 and WPE45, clear and white-label facestock films intended to replace PE and MDO films in health and personal care applications. These films are claimed thinner than alternative facestock films. The company also showcases Rayofloat APO and APO-HS (high shrink), floatable polyolefin shrink sleeve films designed to improve the purity of recycled PET bottles. Additionally, Innovia Films highlights its EUP IML film. With a density of only 0.55 g/cm³, EUP is a high-yield, high-opacity, matte IML film. EUP gives outstanding sheet feeding speed during printing, along with excellent ink adhesion. It is available in 50 and 60 microns and is targeted at PP or PE small- to medium-size containers, where zero distortion is a must. Innovia's Encore range of low-carbon footprint label films will also be on display, along with options for films containing recycled content.

International Graphic Films Europe NV shows self-wound

self-adhesive over-laminate films. The company offers polypropylene and polyester over-laminates on rolls, which are custom slit according to customer requirements.

IST Metz displays its Modulux LED-UV system, a high-performance, no-frills, modular system for narrow web flexo printing applications. The basic equipment includes LED unit, cooling, control cabinet and control system.

Italstick presents an environmentally friendly line of papers made from 100 percent post-consumer paper waste; grass papers, made of up to 40 percent grass fibers without the addition of coloring agents; and RippedBrown kraft, natural, unbleached, uncoated paper. They also offer phthalate-free PVC and a wide range of plastic films for offset and digital printing, all made with water-based acrylic adhesives.

Itasa showcases its latest developments, from Glassine to SCK. Sustainability lies at the core of Itasa's product design.

Jalema shows a unique storage system for flexo and offset plates, protecting them from UV light while saving space. The system includes a coding system for easy plate retrieval.

Jiangxi Tianyin Paper Co shows self-adhesive thermal label rolls for logistics labels, barcode labels and supermarket cash register labels, which can be customized in various sizes and colors.

Jetron introduces the D2Roll LB3350, UV inkjet label press. This press is designed to print on a wide range of materials including self-adhesive labels, foils, papers and laminated films. The LB3350 can be configured as mono or with up to seven colors and in widths ranging from 50 to 350mm. The press runs up to 50m/min.

Jiangmen Hengyuan Label Technology Co shows a full range of label materials including direct thermal and semi-gloss papers, PP White, PP Clear, PP Silver, PE, PET, Synthetic paper, Woodfree paper and Inkjet papers.

Jiang Huayi Imp and Exp Co shows self-adhesive labels. The company is certified with ISO 9001, ISO14001 and ISO45001.

Jindal SMI introduces two new products: polyolefin base conformable PP and PCR PP. The polyolefin film delivers outstanding conformability and flexibility for label applications with excellent converting characteristics. Available in both clear and white finish, it is claimed 40 percent thinner than standard PE films. PCR PP is made with 30 percent post-consumer recycled content, and can be used in different label applications, helping to reduce the usage of virgin materials.

Jurmet exhibits its Langer3 inspection machine, suitable for wraparound labels and other monofoil, linerless as well as lined labels. The machine is equipped with a 100 percent inspection camera, has a working width of 520mm and can operate at speeds of 500m/min. The company also displays a slitter machine, Winder3, with automatic knife setting, and a programmable core cutter, Cater-d.

Karlville Converting presents its Pack Ready thermal laminator, known for high-strength bonds without requiring an adhesive. For

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shrink sleeves, Karlville Converting displays its latest seamer and inspection combo. Its third-generation Plus series seamer, K3 Plus, operates at 500m/min and forms the sleeves via an automatic adjustable forming section. For Inspection, Karlville shows a high-speed inspection machine equipped with E+L edge guides on both unwind and rewind. It is possible to adjust the amount of oscillation and the type (sine or square) via the MMI.

Karlville Swiss shows the compact KS-SUP-400 pouch machine. This machine offers fast set-up, high production speed, minimum start-up scraps and the capability to manufacture custom-shaped pouches. The company will showcase for the first time live, the possibility to manufacture short-run custom-shaped pouches with an innovative toolless system.

Klöckner Pentaplast introduces SmartCycle Pro, a heat shrink sleeve film that is recyclable in the RIC 1 stream and made from 30 percent certified post-consumer recycled material.

Kocher + Beck introduces the GapMaster EM, a servo-driven system offering both rotary dial and digital input adjustments. The company will also display its water-recycling processing unit, and flexible dies with an anti-stick coating that results in less adhesive residue on the cutting edges. The new coating is

certified in all applications such as pharma/medical applications (FDA Certified) and is environmentally compliant. Also on display is a digital KMS pressure gauge system equipped with a variety of sensors that offer higher stability under changes of load. A quick-change die-cutting station is also highlighted.

Konica Minolta shows a full production workflow for the label converting and packaging industry, in partnership with Grafisk Maskinfabrik (GM) and MGI Digital Technology. Five systems will be running. This includes the first showing in Europe of the AccurioLabel 400 single-pass digital press. Konica Minolta also shows the toner-based entry-level AL 230 press configured with MGI's DC 330 Mini and a new compact buffer. MGI's Jet Varnish 3D Web Compact and Octopus Web machines will be shown together with Konica Minolta's PKG-1300 digital printer, designed for short run, on demand corrugated and box printing.

Konica Minolta also brings its comprehensive software suites, including Accurio Pro Flex and Accurio Pro Dashboard.

Kurz presents the DM-Uniliner 2D and the DM-Uniliner 3D embellishment systems, and the Distorun module, a material-saving cold transfer unit that enables single-image application. Kurz

subsidiary H + M will be showing effects for label finishing with its stamp technology. In addition, the latest products for brand protection will be presented. These include, for example, ValiGate from Scribos and various security solutions from TrustConcept. At its booth, Kurz subsidiary MPrint will be presenting the latest in digital printing technology. Also at a separate booth, Kurz will present a new service to produce thermal transfer ribbons not only in standard black, but to customer-specific special colors and security solutions.

Labeltech highlights the Ortles slitter rewinder equipped with the new E+L Smartscan MIS2 4K inspection system and an upgraded version of the Lavaredo automatic knife positioning system, for both razor and rotary knives.

Labeltech also debuts Reit, a small versatile rewinder, available in several configurations (bidirectional doctoring machine, slitter rewinder, inkjet printer). The machine is designed to meet the growing demand for small batch productions.

The latest version of the Stelvio modular converting machine, with Lombardi flexo unit for printing/varnish, UV-LED curing, cold foil lamination, full/semi-rotary die cut and Vajolet semi-automatic turret rewinder is on display. Labeltech also offers



GIC

the Sciliar bidirectional horizontal rewinder, with REA Jet HR2 inkjet variable data marker and BST 4000 Tubescan inspection system that will be running live.

Label Traxx shows MIS/ERP software for the labels and flexible packaging segments. Its latest Version 9 modernizes the user experience and introduces Cloud API, data warehouse, Sitaline Sales Portal / CRM, and batched automated scheduling enhancements.

Lartec presents new finishes for flexible dies that provide greater durability and cutting precision.

Laserclean unveils the ALCS 1000 SF Anilox laser cleaning system, which now includes advanced safety features and a user-friendly interface. The system provides real-time monitoring and hazard alert systems to ensure operator safety, and the interface enables easy navigation and operation.

Lemmaco shows hot and cold stamping foil, thermal transfer ribbons, self-adhesive labels, UV varnishes, window patching and BOPP films. The company also offers biodegradable product variants

LemuGroup introduces three new machines: LI 220 RFID for multilayer label production and NFC/RFID chip inserts; MA 350+GTU for premium finishing of digitally printed labels; and the fully automatic GTU 440 with a boxing system that can automatically pack label rolls.

The LI 220 offers two operational alternatives in a single module. It enables the production of multilayer labels and also allows NFC/RFID chip inserts, between the liner and the label, without hindering the visual design of the label. MA 350+, connected to a GBS turret, is targeted at the production of premium finishes for digitally printed labels in the wine, cosmetics and pharmaceutical markets.

Lenze presents its digital networking services including Nupano, an open automation platform. The company promotes its other digital services including machine condition monitoring, without requiring extra sensors. Data comes directly from the drives. The company uses AI for machine optimization and predictive maintenance to ensure improved machine availability. If a fault occurs, the machine automatically creates a ticket to inform service



Golden Laser

technicians.

Leonardus SRL launches certified recyclable plastic-free holographic metalized paper that delivers the same performance as traditional holographic film without using plastic. The 70gsm paper is easily printable and recyclable in compliance with Aticelca501 standards.

Lintec Europe launches a labelstock material to improve the recyclability of PET bottles and a direct thermal paper as an alternative to synthetic paper products. MMP Mono Material Polyester (PET) is designed for application to polyester packaging such as single-use water bottles. The clear film features a strong yet removable adhesive. The film and adhesive are manufactured from polyester so if any labels are not removed before the washing and grinding process the risk of contamination is reduced. A special top coating also enables the labels to be de-inked in an alkaline washing process.

Lintec's new direct thermal paper offers superior moisture and water immersion resistance, improved rub resistance and is microwave oven compatible. The material has successfully replaced plastic-based labelstocks in the food, beverage and logistics sectors.

Lombardi showcases the latest versions of its Synchroline and Invicta presses. The presses offer flexible options for integration and are compatible with a variety of materials. The 670mm wide Invicta i1 press will perform live demonstrations of both unsupported films and PS materials production. The Synchroline platform will be producing full color VDP with digital embellishment options, while several conventional embellishment modules are also displayed.

Lombardi also offers hybrid inkjet/conventional solutions with its Astra model. Also, a preview of the latest version of the mid-web flagship Invicta I2 is offered.

Luminochem introduces LuminoMark pigments, organic UV fluorescent pigments suitable for brand protection, labels or direct product marking and creative design. The pigments are virtually invisible in ambient light but show their vivid colors when exposed to UVA light.

Lundberg exhibits the MatrixCompactor 200 for label matrix handling. This system enhances production throughput, reduces



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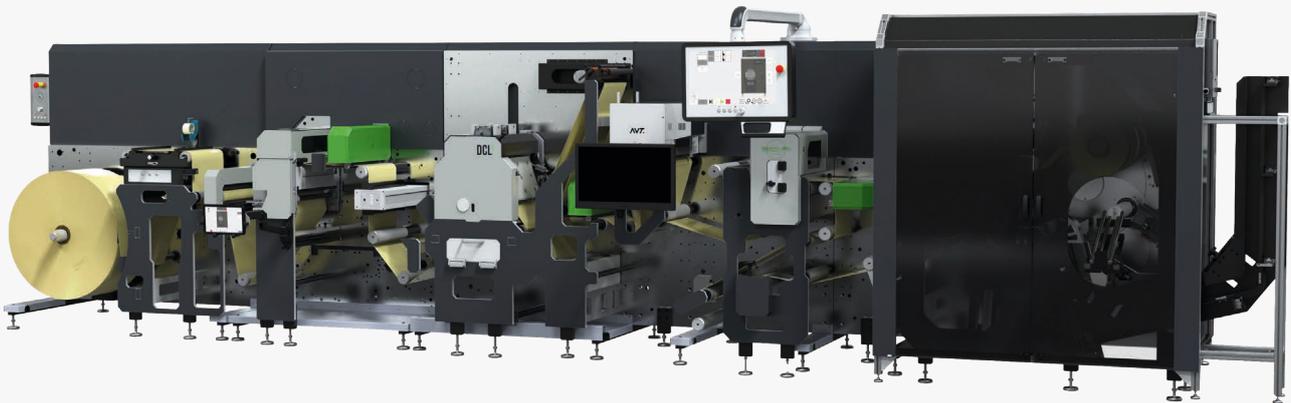
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waste of virgin material, reduces unnecessary disposal of paper cores, and reduces the number of heavy lifts for operators all while contributing to a more sustainable production process.

Luster showcases the LabelHero Series inspection system, which consists of a dual-camera inspection system and variable data detection module. It can be integrated with different types of production lines including flexo printing, digital printing, die-cutting and slitting.

Maan Engineering presents its hot-melt coating equipment. The company will introduce a network of coating and converting specialists who work in partnership with Maan Engineering and unveils a partnership with ABC.

Mark Andy launches the Pro Series flexo press, designed for cost-effective self-adhesive label production. The servo-driven press is based on the established Performance and Evolution Series press platforms. The modular structure of the press means it can be upgraded with a digital toner unit and transformed into a hybrid press.

Mark Andy also shows its hybrid digital and flexo technology. The Digital Series HD, equipped with a Kurz Distorun embellishment module, will be on working demonstration. Also, on working display will be the latest version of Mark Andy's toner hybrid, the Digital Pro Max.

The company also highlights the expanding activities of Mark Andy Print Products (MAPP), a portfolio of end-to-end products for label manufacturing, including equipment and consumables, as well as service and consultancy.

Martin Automatic displays an MBS automatic unwind butt splicer and an LRD transfer rewinder. Both machines have been sold to German label printer Krämer Druck and will be delivered and installed directly after Labelexpo. These machines save space, can be installed directly against walls at either end of the press and still allow access for maintenance and roll loading and unloading.

Matho unveils the CB-100, an advanced mobile cutting and extraction system specifically designed for non-adhesive or self-adhesive edge trims, die-cut pieces and matrix waste generated from production lines. An integrated material separation

system enables efficient recycling processes to be implemented. Users have the option to choose from various collection options, including PE bag, octabine, roll container/bin, screw compactor and others.

The CB-100 incorporates an integrated cutting module, reducing waste volume and an energy-efficient radial ventilator, minimizing energy consumption.

Maxcess brands RotoMetrics, Fife, Tidland, Maxcess Vision Systems and Componex launch new products, including RotoMetrics' new flexible die portfolio and RotoScan intelligent die station; Tidland's RD AutoScore scoring system, FIFE-500 Max web guide and Maxcess vision systems for tag and label applications. The flexible die portfolio makes it easy to find the right die for a specific application for better press performance no matter the liner. The RotoScan intelligent die station provides accurate control of die pressure to account for any substrate variability, while providing Industry 4.0 analytics. Tidland's RD AutoScore delivers fully automated lateral and depth control. It reduces setup time while increasing operator safety. The Fife-500 Max web guide minimizes waste with networking capabilities. Finally, Maxcess vision systems detect defects, like color variations, misprints and plate issues, while enhancing overall product quality and reducing waste.

Melzer offers the SC-X Smart Label Production Line with integrated punching units, trim removal and various other options. This production line for RFID labels and tickets can process both dry and wet inlays at speeds up to 60m/min. It uses servo-driven easy-to-change transponder unwinds for up to six tracks. Both dry and wet inlays can be processed at full speed of up to 60m/min. The 330mm (13in) wide web grants high output and efficiency. Melzer's inline verification system is standard and ensures 100 percent tested final products. Melzer also offers fully automatic machinery solutions producing high-end documents like e-IDcards, driver licenses, e-passports and inlays.

Michelman shows water-based primers and overprint varnishes for digital printing on a wide range of substrates, including recyclable and renewably-sourced substrates. The company's



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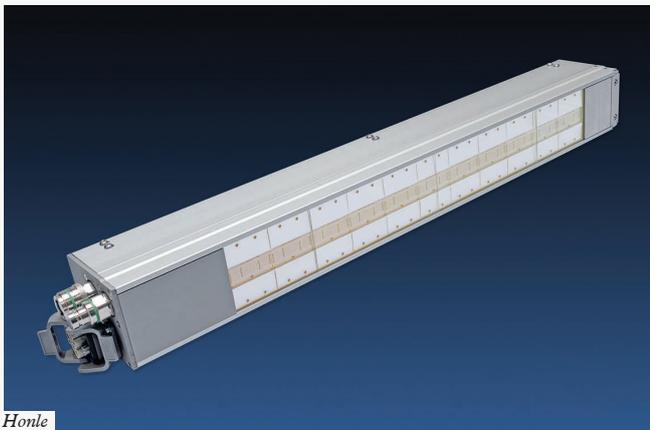
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products provides water, oil and grease resistance, oxygen and moisture vapor transmission control and heat seal for paper and film substrates. Michelman's DigiPrime family includes priming solutions optimized for paper and film applications in labels, flexible packaging and commercial printing. Its HP-certified primers for flexible packaging are used in pouches and lidding. The company's DigiGuard Plus UV OPV strengtheners provide water, chemical, thermal and mechanical resistance for more durable labels. Its products for pigmented water-based and UV inkjet printing include JetPrime, a family of high-performance primers for paper and film substrates, and DigiGuard IJ OPVs. Michelman also shows products for coated offset substrates that are ideal for high-speed commercial printing, folding cartons and corrugated packaging printed with pigmented water-based inks.

Meech unveils Hyperion 650QAC, a quasi AC (QAC) ionizing bar that offers a flexible and adjustable solution for effective ionization in various production environments. Its QAC high-voltage waveform generates positive and negative ions from each emitter pin, delivering rapid ionization with very low offset voltage. Equipped with auto-balancing technology, the 650QAC ensures consistent performance. Designed for RFID tag production, the 650QAC bar controls static charges in unwinding, printing, drying and rewinding processes, preventing catastrophic failure and latent defects.

Ministone presents its patented 200DPI/300DPI/600DPI-thermal transfer, thermal thin-film label printheads, suitable for various industrial label printers. The company can customize the printhead for various resolution, width and speed requirements.

Miyakoshi will showcase its machine intelligence Yales AI operating system and an upgraded version of its established MLP label printing machine with several new options to support more efficient operation.

MoistTech Corp shows the IR 3000 moisture sensor, which measures moisture levels, as well as water, solvent-based coatings and coat weight thicknesses during the paper/converting process. This improves product quality and increases productivity with significant cost savings. The company's moisture sensors provide continuous, reliable readings with zero maintenance and a one-time calibration. The sensors feature a non-drift optical design allowing operational personnel to confidently make immediate process adjustments based on real-time measurements.

Monotech Systems presents the Jetsci dSpark digital label varnish and cold foiling label embellishment press. Also shown is the Jetsci KolorSmart+ 6-color UV inkjet label production press, designed for both short-run and long-run label printing with variable data and security printing features.

MPS introduces MPSCoast, a technology that uses sensor technology combined with cloud-based real-time data collection. MPS also explains the EF Next Generation, MPSCoast and MPS's business vision 'connect to grow'. MPS also launches the MPS Virtual Coach, a tool designed to assist print operators in maintaining best practices for efficiency and quality.

Mühlbauer showcases the CL40000, a flexible RFID inlay converting system suitable for mid and high-volume production. This machine can produce various output products such as smart labels, smart tickets and wet inlays, and features a high throughput rate, label/ticket lamination, die cutting and 100 percent output testing. It achieves a throughput of up to 40m/min.

Nanovis presents a fast, thorough and environmentally friendly cleaning process for HP Indigo accessories. The Bella's DC-1300 can clean up to four BIDS simultaneously, combined with manual brush cleaning for the pump sensor units. The company also offers a Bella Trolley for safe and efficient transportation between the printing and cleaning machines. Nanovis will also exhibit sustainable cleaning solutions for all conventional printing presses.

Nikka Research shows the Alis camera used for optical



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Karlville

inspection on printing presses and rewinders. The Alis cameras cover web widths from 250 to 880mm and are offered in three lines: M entry-level, L modular and H high-resolution inspection. All models are suitable for new or existing equipment and can be linked in workflows. The company also offers a range of apps for enhancing the functions of the camera. It also introduces a quick job change technology for 100 percent inspection of short production runs. This PDF-driven process enables automatic setup and inspection from the first copy in digital printing and converting lines. Nikka Research products and technologies will be demonstrated live on stations with moving webs, configured for the most common applications – printing press, rewinder and offline.

Nilpeter demonstrates for the first time at a printing exhibition the 26in/670mm-wide FA-26 press, designed for short-run production of flexible packaging and labels. The FA-26 supports multiple drying/curing technologies required for the production of different flexible packaging products.

Also shown is a fully automated FA-17 UV flexo press and a digital varnish bar, a product that replaces traditional varnishing techniques.

Nilpeter's Digital Shadow technology is designed to capture data on usage, performance and maintenance needs.

And in collaboration with Screen, Nilpeter introduces a new combination press integrating flexo printing units with the advanced Screen Truepress Label SAI S 7C.

Norwix Inc shows its latest variable data printers. These include the high-speed, high-resolution PC22 model using HP TII 4.0 technology, and the piezo-based iM2 and iM4 printers, suitable for label replacement and label printing in high-speed production environments.

Omet offers live demonstrations of its new Kflex UV flexo printing press and an XJet hybrid flexo+inkjet printing press. The company can integrate flexo, digital, offset and gravure printing technologies into its different press platforms. Presses can handle materials from 12 microns mono films such as PET, PVC/PET shrink, BOPP, IML, foils etc to 600 micron paper-based packaging such as cartons, paper cups and liquid packaging, covering a wide gamut of packaging materials.

OneVision shows its Label Automation Suite, flexible, modular automation software which combines production planning with print file optimization. It ensures an error-free and fast production process, with increased throughput and maximum transparency and reliability across all production steps. The intuitive user interface allows label printers to control and monitor all production processes, which are mapped as a 'digital job ticket' in the software.

Optimus shows MIS software solutions in conjunction with its long-standing Italian distributor Servizio Informatica, including



Lintec

Optimus dash.

Pantec presents the new Cheetah N, a rotary embellishment system for applying 3D images to shrink sleeves using heat and pressure. The customized 3D images are applied to the shrink sleeve by heat and pressure from a carrier film. The Cheetah N can apply up to 20 images per second. Also on display is the Rhino S, an embellishment system with a new RSD tool change system for improved machine uptime. This enables the time-consuming set-up process to be done outside the Rhino to increase machine up-time.

Polar showcases the LabelSystem DCC-12 die-cutting system, designed for automated in-line production of die-cut labels made of compressible materials. The system is designed for highly automated in-line production of banded die-cut labels made of compressible materials, such as OPP foils for in-mold, and allows for remote maintenance and diagnostics, and integration into the digital workflow. The new industrial control system enables remote maintenance and diagnostics, as well as integration into the digital workflow. The new control system has enabled improvements to various parts of the system, resulting in a 25 percent increase in productivity. The new DCC-12 achieves an output of 10 cycles/min.

Polyart Group launches two sustainable substrates: r-Polyart, a synthetic paper made of 30 percent post-consumer recycled material, and Fiberskin, a weather-resistant paper that's recyclable, biodegradable and printable by dry toner, for short-term outdoor exposure, outdoor tags, labels and signage. The company also introduces Polyart Laser Food, a food-compliant synthetic paper for dry toner printing. It can be used in direct contact with food according to the European directive EU 10/2011 and FDA regulations.

Postek shows its MX print-and-apply system featuring a built-in logic controller and Python-based printer programming language to provide low-level access APIs. The MX series print-and-apply applicator provides a full printing solution without a PLC or PC.

Prati shows its DigiFastone digital finishing line, based on the company's Futura field-upgradable open platform technology. The line is fully digital from inkjet module to laser die-cutting and turret rewind, and offers the capability to produce short-run promotional labels in the food and beverage, wine and spirits, cosmetics, personal care and home care sectors.

DigiFastone can produce tactile effects and textures, decorations and textures up to 130m, and Braille and Marburg Medium printing for pharmaceutical products. The system generates low wastage, reduces setup times, and offers a register accuracy of 0.15mm.

Printmark Group introduces Japanese care label printers for woven tapes and single-tag printers for single-sheet tags. The company also introduces the Spica series textile printers for

nylon and satin labels. The Spica series is compatible with the ultrasonic cutter UC-50 provided as an option.

Priber shows SQ Label barcode and labeling software, an intuitive single-page designer for uncomplicated tasks and a comprehensive job designer for a detailed look at any print job with real WYSIWYG. With its built-in support for various printer models, customers can take advantage of advanced printer features and settings, ensuring the best possible print quality and performance. The company also offers the SQ Label Barcode and Labeling Software for customized printing capabilities. The software offers scalability and flexibility, with built-in support for various printer models.

PrintCity Alliance participants include DG Press, GMG, IST Metz, Kocher+Beck, Leonhard Kurz, Weilburger Graphics, Westland and Zeller+Gmelin at a joint stand. A highlight is a jointly produced high-quality label tied to a multifunctional packaging concept for co-branding.

GMG offers color management and proofing; IST Metz offers UV curing systems; Kocher+Beck offers rotary die cutting and tooling technology; Leonhard Kurz offers hot stamping, cold transfer and digital transfer applications, holograms; Weilburger Graphics offers finishing varnishes, adhesives and water-based flexo inks; Westland offers rollers; and Zeller+Gmelin offers UV inks and coatings.

Premier Coating & Converters displays its Premeco range of sustainable self-adhesive labeling materials that contains substrates such as grass paper, recycled paper, plastic-free film, and PCR content films. These materials are recyclable, contain recycled content, are thinner and are BS EN 13432 certified biodegradable or compostable.

Print Systems introduces products for the automated washing of photopolymers, anilox rollers and press parts. The company's product line also includes a UV-LED exposure unit for flexo and letterpress plate production and a



Lombardi

water-washable plate processor with a unique filtration system.

PrintsPaul offers a 5-color printing system available in two versions, the entry-level Ecoline and Deluxe. The 5-color toner-based printing unit is also equipped with a flexographic printing unit. The company also presents a one-pass inkjet system for finishing label webs, and Luster inspection units. The company's product portfolio includes hot foil stamping, flexo units, die-cutters and screen-printing units.

Prisma introduces the modular LF-350 finishing line for self-adhesive labels. The line is configured with a flatbed silk-screen printing unit with printing format up to 310x400 mm; a hot stamping/embossing station; a flexo group; and semi-rotary die cutting and rewinder. The machine operates at 50m/min in semi-rotary mode, 18.000 imp./h with relief foil stamping and 7.000 imp./h or 35m/min with silk-screen printing. The emboss/ foil stamping unit incorporates a 90 degree swivel foil stamping head, producing over 65 tons pressure, hologram application. The flatbed silk-screen printing features servo-driven squeegee and flood coater with precise movement on two high precision rails.

The LF350 incorporates auto-register and is fully modular.

QSPAC Industries presents its portfolio of linerless overlam for flexo and digital printing. The company's new offerings include soft touch, holographic, thermal transfer printable, gloss and matte products.

Radior exhibits the latest generation of UV flexo metallic inks, scratch-off inks and release coatings. It will also display its LED UV metallic and fluorescent inks. The company introduces the latest versions of Radiorplus Ecogreen, a mineral oil-free metallic ink and the Radiorplus Foodpack, low-migration metallic inks. The company also presents new water-based inks for food packaging. New Liquimetal W LMFP for coating units and Smart Inks W LMFP for narrow web is also shown.

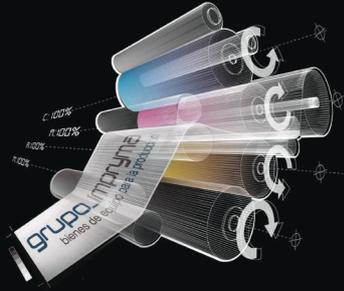
RK PrintCoat Instruments showcases the FlexiProof 100 machine, which incorporates a custom-designed LED UV unit. This machine's main components are identical to a standard flexographic press. FlexiProof 100 utilizes a doctored ceramic anilox roller and a photopolymer plate, and, with a maximum speed of 100 m/min, realistic printability testing can be undertaken on all types of flexo substrates. The company also shows the VCML Pilot coater, a reel-to-reel machine developed for printing, coating and laminating for R&D and product development. Other displays will include the GP100, Esi Proof, Klox Complete and K Hand Coater.

Renova shows brakes and clutches designed for the unwinding and rewinding of rolls of any size and material. Pneumatic brakes and magnetic powder brakes fit any application and maintain the high torque ratio necessary to obtain an accurate web tension. The company also offers core chucks, safety chucks and expanding shafts.

Re SpA launches ReVision Net, a web



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Model	Web width	Max. Printing width	Thickness of printing material	Printing length
WJPS-350D	350 mm	340 mm	60-350 g/m ²	170-345 mm
WJPS-450D	450 mm	440 mm	80-350 g/m ²	210-420 mm
WJPS-560	560 mm	540 mm	80-350 g/m ²	210-420 mm
WJPS-660	660 mm	650 mm	80-350 g/m ²	210-420 mm

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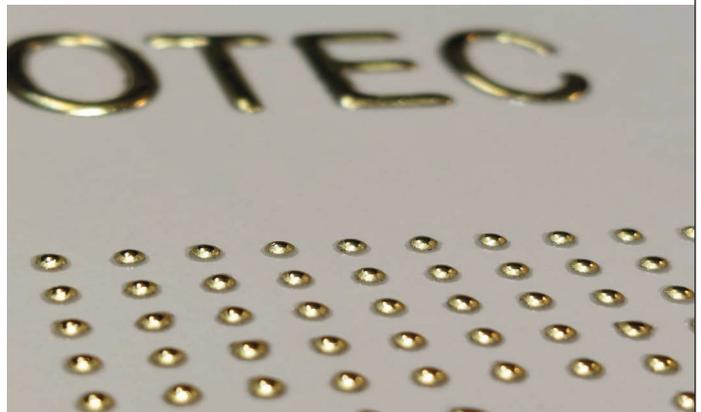
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Melzer

viewing and control system integrated with compact high-quality cameras and a 16X Zoom feature. The company also introduces its web guiding systems, tension control systems, pneumatic and electromagnetic powder brakes, safety chucks, pneumatic air shafts and friction shafts.

Rheintacho shows a wide range of stroboscope lights, including the RT Strobe 12000 with a length of 1,000mm, providing optimal lighting for large inspection surfaces. The operation of this stroboscope is handled through an integrated control panel, and a cascade setting is possible, allowing several Rheintacho stroboscopes to connect to one common control.

Rhyguan showcases a compact fully digitally controlled finishing machine with corona, full rotary flexo (flood varnish), digital die-cutting and automatic slitting. The machine is designed for efficient finishing of ultra-short run jobs without any tools and prepared for a JDF workflow and standard QR code scanning for automatic set-up. For wine labels, the modular Plus330 is shown with a new fast silkscreen unit, silkfoil, and a heavy-duty hot foil module with dual heating zones and constant dwell-time for reliable and fast set-up. For the longer runs jobs, Rhyguan shows a machine with 50 percent improved productivity by increasing the semi-rotary die-cut speed from 60m/min to 90m/min. Also on display is an improved slitting rewinding machine with automatic dual knife slitting blades for wrap-around bands. For the longest run jobs a brand new fully automatic turret with automatic glue applicators and a quick change mandrel system is on display.

Roosen BPL shows reel handling equipment designed to reduce the risk of injuries and worker fatigue and includes a range of reel lifting and turning equipment.

Rosas Maschinenbau demonstrates its third-generation Gazelle high-speed

bidirectional rewriter for imprinting a variety of labels. The new Gazelle III 6-color digital imprinting machine features an unwind diameter 650mm, web widths from 40-330mm, print width up to 200mm, corona treatment, a flexo primer station, Graph-Tech's EZ 202 DOD color inkjet head based on Epson S3200 technology, double white DOD UV inkjet with 600 dpi, a 4C DOD UV inkjet with 600 dpi, and an LED UV curing unit.

Also shown are two of Rosas' table top rewinders: the Cheetah 500 with AI technology for label inspection with an advanced RFID HF and UHF tag serialization module with code verifier and backside serialization and TIJ printer for numbering and coding. The second is a tabletop rewriter, the Leopard 300, with a Smartscan label inspection system, 2k resolution, and 180m/min inspection speed.

Rotary Technology (Guangzhou) shows a full range of rotary tools, including flexible dies, magnetic cylinders, print cylinders, rotary cutters, slitters, anvil rollers, shafts, screen rings, anilox rollers, tint rollers, rubber rollers and more.

Rotary Sp. z o.o. shows rotary tooling, including magnetic die-cutting cylinders, varnishing rollers, gears and embossing rollers.

Rotocontrol EMT presents a portfolio of finishing machines for label slitting, rewinding, inspection, die-cutting, overprinting, digital and booklet printed labels. Its machines can be fitted with numerous modules for capabilities like integrated vision inspection, semi-automatic turrets, multiple slitting, counting and product detection. Advanced machines for various printing processes are also part of its offering. Also featured is EMT International's Chameleon finishing technology and auxiliary processing solutions for the global inkjet market.

Sandon Global showcases anilox engravings designed to boost print performance and increase anilox return on investment. Its products include Fluid HEX, Fluid UV, HOW (high opacity white) and its patented GMX Anilox, all designed to overcome common narrow web print issues and technical challenges such as ink spitting or coatings with large particle deposits.

Schobertechnologies unveils a Twin Spider set-up for their RSM410 IML/MX. The Twin Spider is specially designed for the high-speed die-cutting and stacking of in-mold labels. The drive technology of the RSM410 IML/MX combines continuous and vector rotary die-cutting technology in re-registration mode, offering format independent solutions.

With the Twin Spider set-up, the RSM410 IML/MX provides a high-speed, programmable robot-automated stacking and counting system ('Spider'). This robot automated delivery is designed in such a way that different products can be stacked with the same print image.

Screen together with Nilpeter presents a digital flexo hybrid printing press that combines Screen's SAI inkjet digital printing technology with Nilpeter's FA-Line flexo platform. The machine delivers stable and high-quality combination printing, and enables efficient production of value-added labels with expanded gamut printing and white imprinting capabilities. Additionally, Screen introduces an in-line digital primer prototype for the Truepress L350UV SAI label digital printing press.



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MoistTech

This feature addresses the challenge of poor ink adhesion on various substrates by incorporating a digital primer directly into the press.

Screen also showcases the Truepress PAC520P inkjet digital printing press for paper packaging. This high-speed, water-based inkjet press offers label converters entry into the flexible packaging market with a compact footprint, low environmental impact, and compliance with food-safety regulations.

Seal King shows a range of high-quality security products, including tamper-evident labels and security tapes. The tamper-evident label materials are available in different colors and transfers such as non-transfer, total transfer and partial transfer. The security tapes function as an anti-theft and counterfeit measure, leaving behind a visible VOID message when opened. The security tape can be used on cartons, paper and pallets wrapped with stretch film. It is available in lengths from 50m to 500m.

SEI Laser presents Labelmaster, a laser die-cutting and finishing system available in 350mm and 600mm widths. SEI laser also launches the KyoJet, a high-resolution digital UV inkjet in-line press. Together, the Labelmaster and KyoJet optimize the



Mark Andy

web-to-label concept in which everything is digital, everything is online, in a single step, without any operator activity, with zero waste, downtime, setup, and without requiring flexible dies.

Sermar Machines presents a compact vertical fan folder and showcases the new sheeter range models Smart Cut and Easy 2 Cut with electronic guillotine size change size. It supports single cut or double cut and is provided with a rotary slitting knife unit able to produce two-up jobs. The cut register, according to sheet size, is electronically controlled through a label gap/print mark sensor reader. The delivery can be to a fixed table or a belt delivery with job separator. Sermar Machines also presents a new label converting unit in line with a spiral fan folder, the model SP-508-E, which operates at speeds up to 150m/min.

Shree Lamipack exhibits a variety of labelstock in paper and filmic material and release liners alongside thermal paper rolls or POS rolls in various grammages.

Shosky Security exhibits a paper void label material. This product provides an environmentally friendly alternative to plastic, featuring a translucent paper facestock that reveal a security message when removed.

Shenzhen Dicheng shows customized anti-counterfeiting printing materials and Li-ion battery strapping tape. The product appears as a regular tape but reveals a hidden message when removed, providing security protection. The PET surface material can be in opaque silver, shiny silver, sparking silver, laser, white or other color, transparent or non-transparent.

Shenzhen Lamplac Science Co. shows cationic resin UV ink and LED UV light sources for various printing methods.

Shenzhen Puty Technology Co. discusses its wide range of products, such as the Puty label identification line, which is utilized across a spectrum of industries, including power telecommunications, warehousing logistics and pharmaceuticals.

Siegwerk presents a portfolio of UV, LED-UV, solvent-based and water-based ink systems, including special whites suitable for shrink sleeves used for non-food and food packaging applications. These inks are available as standard and low-migration systems and are suitable for a range of applications including shrink sleeves, food packaging and more. Siegwerk also showcases an ink series for the direct-to-object printing market and for sensitive applications, as well as innovations for improving packaging recyclability.



Maan



Norwix

Included will be its newly developed TMPTA-free LED-UV curing systems Sicura Flex Dual Cure for non-food applications as well as Sicura Nutriflex LEDTec for food, pharma and hygiene packaging applications.

Siemens shows its 'digital twin' technology which allows machine simulation and optimization and leverages machine data to enhance processes, optimize equipment use and improve maintenance scheduling.

Sihl presents its developments in label facestock, Artysio flexible packaging, and tags, with a focus on sustainability. The product range includes innovative materials for water-based on-demand inkjet printing, including films with up to 90 percent recycled content. The company also offers pre-made stand-up pouches and an extensive tag range that includes tear-resistant, hang and linerless tags. Many of its products are FSC-certified and recyclable. The company also shows PressureTAC, linerless tags for logistic applications.

Siltech shows inks for variable information printing with liner-free labels, aimed at reducing paper waste. The inks are available in multiple colors and can turn any substrate into a thermal-activated area.

Sirpi presents a full range of products for the label industry, including UV screen inks and UV varnishes for special effects. It shows black matte UV for wine label production and a full range of UV varnish ideal for the protection and decoration of labels. The company has screen and flexo varnishes suitable for overprinting digital labels that can accept hot stamping and offer a complete range of inks and varnishes for various applications.

Sistrade showcases its latest software version V.12.13 that highlights the label technical data sheet (TDS) as the main data repository, which in combination with graphical process management and digital job order contains all the technical data necessary for a smart production and full data traceability. Graphical process management allows users to control in real-time the status of all the different graphical processes of the products and also confirm if the customer approves all the information, design files and samples.

TDS stores all the information related to a specific product estimate that was previously approved through the workflow. All the data can be automatically imported into the TDS from estimates or digital job orders.

SQ Label presents its customizable barcode and labeling software. It supports various printer models, allowing for advanced printer features and settings.

Stahl discusses its new packaging coatings division after the acquisition of ICP Industrial. The company shows Nicoat, MinusNine Technologies and Hi-Tech Coatings now under the Stahl Packaging Coatings umbrella.

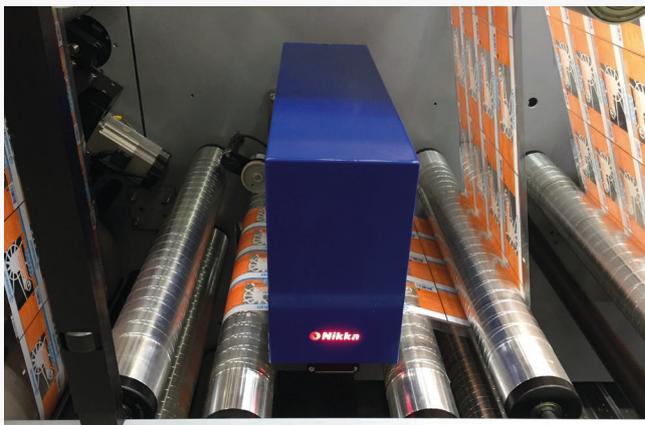
Starfoil Technology presents the Value Line 1300SXL spooling/slitting machine featuring a higher speed of 250m/min and larger diameter rolls up to 350mm. The machine can unwind from 1in, 3in, and 6 into master rolls on 1in and 3in cores using shear slitting or razor slitting with a maximum unwind roll diameter of 700mm. The company also introduces the CLC-600XLR, a cantilevered, compact model designed to slit 3in rolls to 1in or three hot-stamping (rest) rolls to 1in or 3in rolls using shear slitting or razor slitting and runs up to a speed of 300m/min. Maximum diameters are 650 mm for unwinding and 550mm for rewinding.

Sun Chemical presents its portfolio for the packaging and narrow web, tag and label markets. Sun Chemical uses its '5Rs' framework (reuse, reduce, renew, recycle and redesign) to develop the eco-efficiency and sustainability of packaging that uses its inks, coatings and adhesives. Sun Chemical also provides products under its SunEco portfolio, which are bio-renewable, compostable and recyclable.

Synthogra introduces its new film, SYN-BOPP transparent



Muhlbauer



Nikka Research



Prati



Re SpA

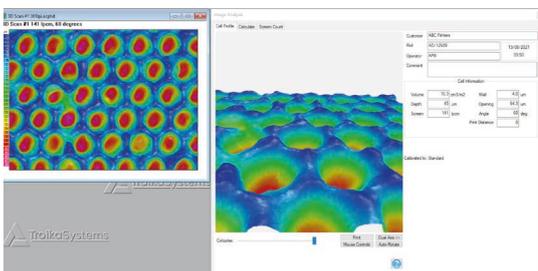
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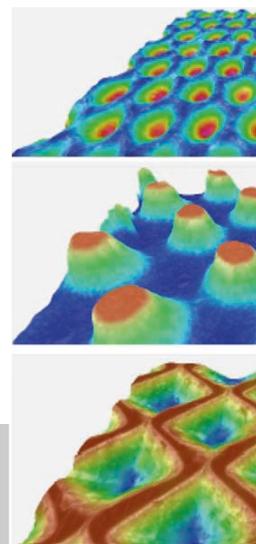
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Comax 5476 [16]				
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C2 [20]				
PRESS LINE 3 [25]				
PRESS LINE 4 [20]				
PRESS LINE 5 [5]				
PRESS LINE 6 [20]				
PRESS LINE 7 [4]				
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PRESS LINE 9K [2]				
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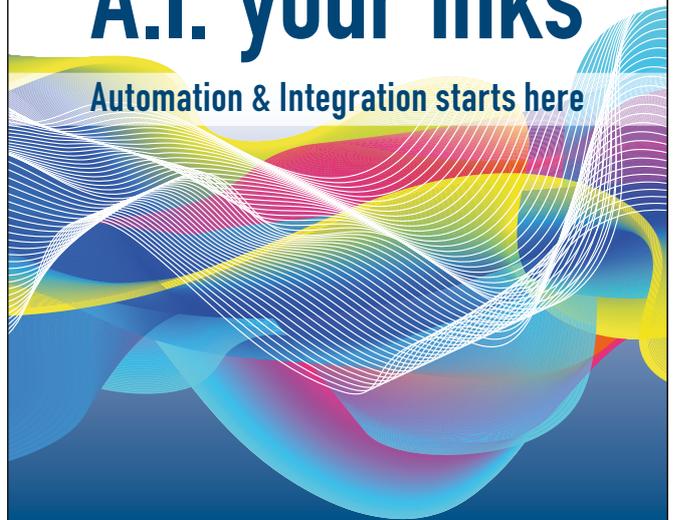


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Rotocontrol EMT

HB top coated 70 percent REC UCO, made with 70 percent used cooking oil and available in 26 and 32 microns. The product is produced sustainably from bio-based feedstock that is unsuitable for consumption and is animal-free and in no direct competition with the human food chain. The film is suitable for direct food contact and is designed for use in horizontal and vertical form fill and seal flexible packaging, as well as in overwrapping applications.

Taghleef Industries presents its advancements in film products for shrink sleeve, pressure sensitive, in mold, and wrap-around labels. The latest developments include biobased PP films and reLIFE films with recycled content. Taghleef also unveils Shape360 TDS, a floatable shrink sleeve label film, new coated substrates for pressure-sensitive labels, a new substrate for wrap-around films and an ultrahigh-yield film for in-mold labels.

TEG Technologies introduces the Sitexco Label L20 anilox cleaning system, a laser system designed using the Sitexco Plus technology for the narrow web industry. The Sitexco laser cleaning technology is designed to be fast, safe and cost-effective.

Tresu introduces a variant of the third-generation L-series coating circulator: Tresu H5i G3. Designed for high-performance circulation, it allows for high flow, high viscosity, high speed, high temperatures and high pressure. The H5i G3 is designed for the automation of special coating applications, offering operators control and avoiding micro-foaming and blisters. The H5i G3 also offers data logging capabilities for Industry 4.0 operations using an Ethernet connection.

Troika Systems presents the AniCAM HD and SurfaceCAM 3D scanning microscopes, which facilitate accurate measurements and data management. This data can be recorded into inventory management software to improve processes and make-ready times. Quality control management can provide up to 15 percent savings in make-ready waste and a 55 percent reduction of ink waste.

Teknova offers the NP series water-based flexo inks suitable for printing on HDPE, LDPE and polypropylene. These inks are compatible with all types of films used in the label industry.

Teknek will present the Tek-NW3, a web cleaner designed to deliver defect-free production. Made from 70 percent recyclable aluminum, it meets the OECD Sustainable Manufacturing

Framework guidelines. The Tek-NW3 incorporates the new cleaning roller guard feature, preventing the machine from running without adhesive and protecting the cleaning rollers. This helps prolong its own service life.

Tecnocut presents the E-Diffsystem, an electronically adjustable anvil. Alongside, Tecnocut will also be showcasing the Pit Stop quick-change cylinder system and a waste matrix removal system. The latest model of the Label Mover unit - which moves the web by a few millimeters for more efficient waste removal - and a motorized slitting station.

Tootech showcases the TTE-72FK laser label printer and its patented laser labels LSG01, LSG02, LSG04 and LSG05. The TTE-72FK can penetrate the surface layer of the label and print on the middle layer. It features powerful laser printing technology, up to 2000 DPI using vector printing technology and a scanner path algorithm for faster, more precise printing. It can connect to a user's PC via USB. When printing, the scanner calculates the shortest path of movement for the laser. In addition, TTE-72FK is equipped with a fly marking function, where the laser follows the moving product and prints at the same time.

T-Trade presents its new line of thermal transfer ribbons, the GWC, made in Italy.

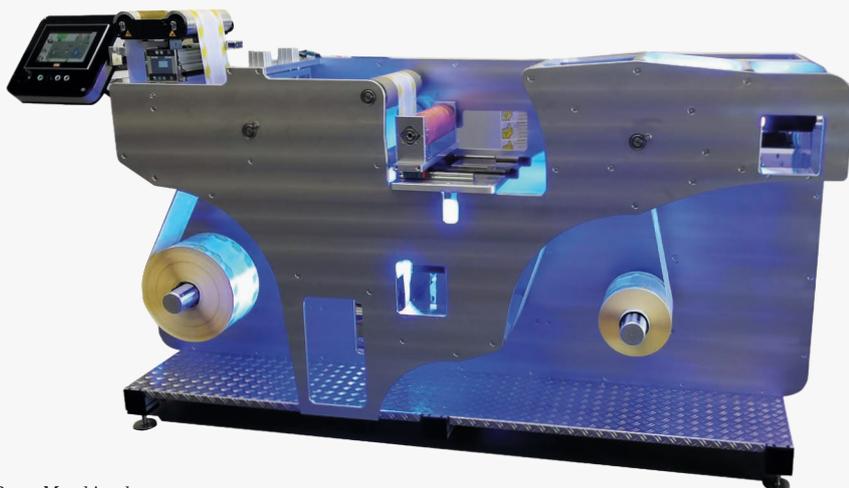
Toyo Ink showcases the company's UV-LED flexo and packaging inks.

Toyobo offers a wide range of film grades to support eco-friendly packaging and labeling. These include VE707 and VP001 (PET and PP high barrier retortable film), Olyester (PET-based heat sealable films), Extop (high heat resistance and high rigidity BOPP), Lesire (PET and BOPP-based laser printable film without the use of any ink), and Crisper and Kamishine (white PET films for label applications with up to 25 percent PCR recycled content).

TSC Printronix introduces a range of printers including a RFID printer fleet, desktop printers and mobile printers. The RFID printer fleet, including the T6000 ODV, T4000 RFID, T8000 and T800 models, enables RFID printing to improve supply chain management. The desktop printers, including the DA-Linerless, TE, TX210 and TC models, meet a range of printing requirements.



Rhyguan



Rosas Maschinenbau

The mobile printers, including the TDM, Alpha30R and Alpha40L models, enhance productivity and flexibility with on-the-go printing. For industrial needs, the MB-Linerless printer with media and the MH model is offered. The PEX 2000 print engine with an applicator is also featured for small-scale applications.

Unilux presents UniPrint, a web inspection system designed for high-quality performance and user-friendly operation. UniPrint features touch-screen operation and users can choose between a standard software package or an upgraded Pro version with advanced inspection features. Unilux also offers over 45 models of stroboscopic lights for surface inspection, ranging from portable battery-powered units to wide-area fixed-mount units.

Univacco showcases its ultra-thin transfer foils, which provide unique decorative embellishments for labels.

UPM Raflatac introduces materials and services for labels that enable reduction, recycling, renewal and reuse. Highlights include the Ocean Action Labels, made from ocean-bound plastic waste, and the PureCycle paper wash-off labels that cleanly separate from primary packaging in PET and HDPE recycling streams. The RAFNXT+ paper label material range is certified as carbon neutral, and the company's linerless label materials provide a way to reduce waste.

Uteco exhibits OnyxGO, a compact 8/10-color center drum flexo machine that maximizes ergonomics and energy savings. Capable of reaching 400m/min maximum speed, it features a range of automation features aimed at maximum reduction of material waste. Uteco also introduces the SleeveBOT, an anthropomorphic robotic arm designed to automate sleeve changes during new print setups. It can safely perform a complete sleeve change in less than 10 minutes and provides strong flexibility and repeatability of the process.

UV One is showing EvoLED, a UV curing system designed for industrial printers. It offers high UV power with minimal energy consumption and can adapt to flexo and offset presses. The EvoLED system includes the EvoCure cassette, EvoPower power supply unit, EvoTouch panel and EvoChill chiller. The latest UV LED technology provides environmental and economic benefits.

UV Ray unveils the PowerMaxx suite of power supplies. This line includes three versions: Pure, Hybrid and LED. These feature high energy efficiency and compact design. In addition, UV Ray will display its MaxLED lamps. These adaptable lamps are suitable for various UV applications, featuring a modular configuration and accurate power management. The lamps can switch between conventional UV and LED technology and are available in three wavelengths. Lastly, UV Ray will showcase Atom and Maxwell reflectors. These reflectors use borosilicate glass and are tested for narrow web printing applications.

Vellerino introduces a heat-resistant

water-based primer for flexo and offset printing. It offers temperature resistance between -18 deg C and +40 deg C.

Valco Melton is featuring its Akura hot melt inspection system for label manufacturing. The system ensures uniform coating across the web width, improving product quality and reducing production errors. The Akura Solution combines this with quality assurance tools, offering real-time error detection and auto-adjustments for adhesive flow. Valco Melton will also present the BrailleChek Label vision inspection system, which uses high-speed camera technology to detect errors in Braille dot embossing on labels.

Valloy unveils a white color kit for the Bizpress13R digital label press with professional rip software for color management and white conversion. The company also shows new roll and sheet-cutting devices, Duoblade WX II and DuoBlade WS. The Duoblade FX, a sheet-fed device, is also shown.

VIPColor introduces VP500 and VP600 series of desktop color label printers. The VP500 series supports labels up to 8.5in wide with a 1600 x 1600 dpi and can print up to 1,200 6x4in labels in 10 minutes. The VP600 series offers faster print speeds, larger ink cartridges and water-resistant inks, ideal for labeling chilled and refrigerated products.

Vicut will release a series of roll label cutters and a new model DTF cutter VFC90 with an auto-feeding conveyor table. It is compatible with Cadlink RIP software and offers cutting solutions for the DTF industry.

Voyantic demonstrates Tagsurance 3, an inline quality testing system for RFID tag and label production lines. The system offers full visibility into the RF performance of labels and measures the performance of UHF and HF RFID inlays, tags and labels at



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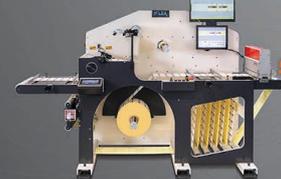
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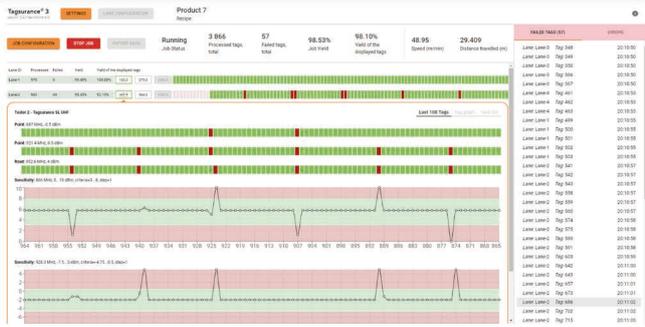
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different production stages. The modular system scales to various production volume needs from one to eight lanes with one to five stations per lane, handling lane speeds up to 200m/min.

Wampolet Hi-Tech Co offers 68gsm – 185gsm direct thermal face paper, 54um – 195um direct thermal face film, 54um – 195um matte synthetic paper/quick-drying matte synthetic paper, 38/60um pearlescent film, 50um transparent BOPP film, 40G, 50G, 57G white/blue glassine release liner.

Xeikon introduces Cheetah 3.0, a new iteration of the company's successful Cheetah technology. Xeikon premieres its new Titon toner technology, developed for paper-based flexible packaging applications. The first press featuring Titon technology is the Xeikon TX-500, which prints in up to five colors at a resolution of 1200 dpi. The press will also be showcased running live in line with a digital embellishment module from Kurz. Xeikon also shows its food-safe Eco toner is formulated with over 60 percent high-grade recycled PET, ideal for environmentally conscious packaging. This toner will be available for the Xeikon CX300 and Xeikon CX500 presses. The company also has developed Quality Measurement Module (QMM), which ensures high-quality printing output while reducing waste. Xeikon has enhanced the capabilities of its Panther Series of inkjet presses with new PantherCure LED inks, which offer improved image quality, lower energy use and reduced ink consumption.

X-Rite Pantone, in collaboration with Esko and AVT, presents an ecosystem of color measurement hardware and software. This includes the eXact 2 handheld spectrophotometer, the first color measurement instrument to use X-Rite's patented video targeting technology.

The device's speed, 10x zoom capabilities and ease of use help printers and converters increase efficiency, reduce production time and improve color accuracy.

XSYS presents products including Catena platemaking, ThermoFlexX imaging equipment, plates, sleeves and adapters. For the tag and label market, the company offers flat-top dot flexographic plates, the nyloflex FTV solvent washable plate, the nyloflex XVH thermal plate, and the nyloprint WF Sharp 80 letterpress plate. Its ThermoFlexX TfxX Imagers combined with Woodpecker Surface Screening can help increase quality and efficiency while reducing costs.

YG Group brings experts in adhesive labels who will present popular products like wood-free paper labels and direct thermal labels. The company's offerings are compatible with both inkjet and laser printers. In addition, the company's expansive product line features adhesive papers, films, tapes and stretch films.

YuanMingjie Technology presents its RDSR20 RFID label quality assurance system, which detects HF and UHF chips in finished label reels, replacing bad labels with good ones and checking for appearance defects. It can work with different thicknesses and widths of reel labels.

Zeller+Gmelin presents an expanded ink product range for LED-UV applications. It has launched two new offset ink series: Uvalux U540 LED UV and Uvalux LED FCM U581 for food packaging printing. The company has also introduced Uvaflex UV-LED FCM Y581 and NON-FCM Y580, two ink series for flexographic printing, and the latest generation UV and UV-LED inkjet inks for packaging and industrial applications.

Zhejiang Fulai New Materials showcases its label facestock materials such as PP/BOPP/PE/PET, base film series, water-based inkjet series, UV inkjet series, direct thermal Series and Recycling series.

Zhejiang TNME will be available to discuss its stamping foils.



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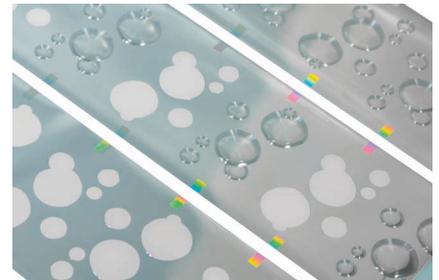
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Conservation and connectivity in e-commerce

Consumer shopping habits have evolved since the pandemic, playing strongly in favor of e-commerce. Conservation and connectivity have become more crucial than ever to sustain the e-commerce packaging industry, Akanksha Meena reports

Andoni Rodriguez, business segment director of logistics, retail, office and linerless at UPM Raflatac



UPM Raflatac RAFNXT+ label material is verified by the Carbon Trust and is sourced from sustainably managed FSC-certified forests



Avery Dennison's Eco Portfolio products such as DT Eco are claimed to offer 33 percent more labels per roll than standard thermal papers



According to a survey by United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) conducted on approximately 3,700 consumers across nine economies, the pandemic has brought about lasting changes in online shopping habits. The survey examined the impact of the pandemic on consumer behavior in countries such as Brazil, China, Germany, Italy, South Korea, Russia, South Africa, Switzerland and Turkey.

The results revealed that over half of the respondents now shop online more frequently.

Even though life across the world has gone back to what it was before the pandemic, consumers seem to be satisfied with their online experience and are shopping online more than before the pandemic. UNCTAD reports that worldwide e-commerce was 17.9 percent of total retail sales in 2020. This figure grew to 19 percent in 2021 and 20.3 percent in 2022.

Naturally, the consumption of e-commerce and logistics labels and packaging multiplied.

“Improving the recyclability and therefore the sustainability of packaging within the e-commerce and logistics sector is only going to grow in importance in the coming years, as the world of e-commerce is only going to grow”

Yara Ghossoub, strategic project manager, paper, at Avery Dennison, says that in recent years, the demand for e-commerce and logistics labels has increased, driven by a range of factors. 'The pandemic has changed online shopping behavior forever. More consumers have shifted to online retail due to the convenience to shop online and return merchandise when needed.'

James Orford, global product manager digital printing at Domino, agrees: 'E-commerce was the saving grace for many brands during the Covid-19 pandemic, with more people than ever before opting to order consumer goods on the internet. The effect was far-reaching, with everyone – from small e-commerce

startups to big players such as Amazon – feeling the effects. The explosion in e-commerce naturally led to a huge growth in demand for e-commerce and logistics labels, and Domino saw significant growth in our e-commerce labels business, as well as logistics and reverse logistics (return labels), during this period.'

Conservation

Such large-volume e-commerce activities are leading to the accumulation of significant amounts of discarded packaging and labels, creating a significant impact as the industry eyes more sustainable initiatives.

Oceana, an organization advocating



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Hall 9, Booth B38

Products require labeling

Information printed on labels provides the conditions for correct distribution, traceability, smooth workflows and economic calculability. Printing operations are individual. Print volumes and widths are directives, so are label sizes and print image quality. cab offers solutions in printing, dispensing and applying labels, with or without liner material.

Fully automatic printing and applying

When applying printed labels onto goods, industrial companies demand equipment capable of high processing speeds. Processing variable data and goods succeeding each other at short intervals on a conveyor each play a role. Whether goods are in motion or at rest at the time of label transfer is another factor, so is the direction from which the labels are applied.

cab print and apply systems have proven their worth in this respect. **SQUIX** print units, but in particular **HERMES Q**, can be added by applicators. Depending on an operation, labels may be pressed onto goods, rolled on along a belt or blown onto a surface from a distance by compressed air. Labels can as well be wrapped around cylindrical items, attached to lab samples, or applied as flags to cables. cab has just developed a table tray for depositing printed labels. These may be picked up by a robot, for example. In cases of an operation changing, the applicator can be replaced. The modular concept is worldwide due to standardization. Adding an UHF RFID read/write module and a RFID antenna to a printer enables Smart Label operations.



Smart, highly flexible, future-proof

cab print and apply systems are designed for a wide range of operations, highly adaptable and integrable to automation plants. All necessary interfaces, Industry 4.0 protocols included, are provided for this purpose. cab has digitally modeled an interface that enables cab equipment be used immediately in automation and robotics solutions. cab printers, or print and apply systems, are therefore integrated to the development software of a German startup company. They thus comply with other modules of the marketplace kit. Individual integration to process technology requires minimum effort.



cab Produkttechnik GmbH & Co KG
Wilhelm-Schickard-Str. 14
76131 Karlsruhe, Germany
info@cab.de, www.cab.de



“The pandemic has changed online shopping behavior forever. More consumers have shifted to online retail due to the convenience to shop online and return merchandise when needed”

for the restoration of biodiversity in the world's oceans, found that Amazon generated 599 million pounds of plastic packaging waste in 2020. This is a 29 percent increase over Oceana's 2019 estimate of 465 million pounds.

However, consumers are not oblivious to multiplying e-commerce waste. A DHL survey in Europe reveals that more than half (53 percent) of e-commerce shoppers expressed a desire for online retailers to prioritize sustainability in their operations, including delivery and packaging.

Furthermore, over 20 percent of Swedish shoppers stated that they are willing to pay a higher price for eco-friendly deliveries.

Additionally, the survey observes that 58 percent of European shoppers are willing to wait longer for their deliveries if it means supporting more sustainable practices, even when same-day or next-day delivery options are available.

Consequently, brands are actively moving to more sustainable means of packaging in their e-commerce activities. Online fashion and cosmetics retailer ASOS has modified its black and white flexible packaging mailer bags by reducing their thickness by 10 to 20 microns. The brand has also integrated a closed-loop system with its packaging manufacturer Pregis Performance Flexibles to gather all the returned packaging and roll them back into making new mailing bags.

Leading Indian fashion e-commerce brand Myntra has shifted to eco-friendly recycled paper shreds to replace bubble wrap and air-filled plastic packing pouches for the packaging of products. All the other plastic that it cannot avoid using, it recycles. The brand's Myntra for Earth products also get delivered in outer packaging made of paper for its

eco-conscious shoppers.

Fashion brand H&M Group has developed a multi-brand packaging system with bags made of forest-certified paper. Once opened, the bags are recyclable.

The new branding labels now allow H&M brands to be more relevant with messaging, while the bags have a cleaner look. This in turn prevents packages from having outdated messages on them, preventing another waste risk.

Easier said than done

Andoni Rodríguez, business segment director of logistics, retail, office and linerless at UPM Raflatac, says the e-commerce sector must be more focused on helping deliver sustainability.

‘This is easier said than done as the sector has to deal with challenges such as deploying more logistical solutions to meet enhanced demand, producing more packaging to ensure products are delivered to customers safely, and the challenge of dealing with returned goods and packages. In short, driven by global consumption, today's e-commerce and logistics industries are changing the way we package, label and ship products.’

Rodríguez adds: ‘We work together with e-commerce players to fulfill their targets in using recycled content packaging materials and help them to promote the circular economy. We have brought to market a wide range of labeling solutions that follow the principles of reduce, recycle, renew and reuse.’

The solutions have been proving popular with printers and converters, as they help brands meet virgin-material reduction targets, reducing the pressure on using such feedstocks and combatting climate change.’

Sustainability considerations have significantly influenced the purchasing decisions of e-commerce and logistics businesses when it comes to label materials. Label manufacturers are facing both new challenges and opportunities to meet the ever-changing needs of the logistics space.

Avery Dennison's Ghousoub says that label manufacturers are developing labeling products that use recycled materials, offer biobased options, or reduce waste during production. Linerless also offers sustainability benefits via waste reduction, resource conservation and lower carbon footprint.

Avery Dennison has launched a carbon footprinting tool created in collaboration with the Carbon Trust to continue its drive towards transparency and continuous improvement in environmental impact measurement and reporting on label products. The footprinting tool is intended to provide information on the greenhouse gas and water footprint of an expanding array of Avery Dennison's label and packaging materials products globally including faces, liners and adhesives.

‘Improving the recyclability and therefore the sustainability of packaging within the e-commerce and logistics sector is only going to grow in importance in the coming years, as the world of e-commerce is only going to grow,’ Rodríguez says.

‘As a result, it's important to remember that the power of the label extends far beyond functionality and can directly affect the sustainability of a product.’

Rodríguez concludes: ‘Through our products and services, including our RAFNXT+ product range, RafCycle recycling service and Direct Thermal (DT) OptiCut linerless labels, we are well



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“As e-commerce and logistic demand evolves, there is a rising need for labels to play a part in helping to streamline the logistics process, enhance product security and for returns labels to be smaller in size and digitally integrated”

Avery Dennison offers a portfolio of Linerless products designed to meet the different needs in the market



Logistics businesses losing weeks to faulty labeling

A study by Brother UK found that logistics businesses are losing weeks at the hands of faulty labeling equipment. More than half (59 percent) lost more than seven days of productive employee time in the last year, with 15 percent losing a month or more.

Just 14 percent experienced less than a day lost in productive time last year due to labeling-related disruption.

The findings show that more than half said that unscannable labels were a major cause of sapped time (57 percent) while organizing repairs (50 percent) and waiting for new equipment (47 percent) were also widely cited as disrupting the sector.

To remedy time and money lost to poor-quality labeling, the research found that most firms are looking for better integration between software and printers (63 percent) from their labeling systems. Easy repair and replacement services (51 percent), and reliable equipment (47 percent), also fell highly on firms' labeling wish lists.

Annually, downtime is also costing a third of logistics businesses between GBP 1,001-2,000, with 6 percent hit by more than GBP 3,000 in costs. Just 15 percent said the cost impact was typically under GBP 500, according to the findings.

Research of 126 warehouse professionals conducted by Delineo on behalf of Brother UK, and distributed via Logistics Business in November 2022.

positioned to help our customers choose the right label for their logistics needs that maintains scanning and traceability.'

New developments

UPM RAFNXT+ label material is verified by the Carbon Trust and is sourced from sustainably managed FSC-certified forests. UPM also has CarbonNeutral certified RAFNXT+ options.

Its DT OptiCutLinerless Label portfolio is customized for different applications. These include retail and weigh scales; logistics for transport and warehousing; to-go orders for hospitality; and cold environments for industrial food.

UPM DT OptiCut Linerless products reduce the need for roll changes and lower storage and transportation costs due to 50 percent more labels per roll.

The RafCycle recycling service uses liner waste to create new label materials, with UPM arranging pickup from its customers.

In North America, Avery Dennison has launched a family of recycled non-top-coated and top-coated FSC-certified direct thermal papers containing 15 percent recycled content. The new rDT portfolio not only provides a facestock made with recycled content but is paired with its C4500 hot melt adhesive, which contains 45 percent renewable content and is a USDA-Certified Biobased product.

The company's Eco Portfolio products TTC Eco and DT Eco are claimed to offer 33 percent more labels per roll than standard thermal papers, 33 percent less freight costs with more material in one truckload and about 40 percent landfill waste reduction from liner waste.

Avery Dennison Direct Thermal BOPP film portfolio has been recognized by the Association of Plastic Recyclers for PE Film recycling.

Connectivity

In the era of e-commerce, consumers have become increasingly mindful about the products they purchase. The convenience of online shopping has empowered them to seek more information about the origin, sourcing, shipping and credibility of the items they buy.

The demand for variable data continues to grow, as brand owners are seeing the huge benefit of adding more granular information to everyday products to allow for brand protection, consumer loyalty programs and engagement campaigns, and product traceability through supply chains.

'While in the past, the cost associated with adding variable data may have stood as a barrier to adoption, options are now increasingly available at lower price points. As such, we are now seeing variable data used on a whole range of consumer goods, including everyday household products, and not just high-value luxury items,' says Domino's Orford.

Domino sees a move towards the more general use of 2D codes, including QR codes – these are much more robust than standard linear barcodes and can hold more data in a smaller footprint.

'As 2D codes are typically quite small in size, they can be easily added to packaging, and provide a good option for brands looking to explore short-run customer engagement campaigns,' Orford explains. 'We are also seeing some brands look to move towards more complex and encoded 2D code formats, for brand protection and anti-counterfeit applications. These are typically more secure and can be read and activated by smartphone devices.'

Additionally, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) and the Internet of Things (IoT) are bringing about a revolution in e-commerce logistics: the ability to 'see' a product at every

“Online shoppers expect fast and efficient delivery. Therefore, the streamlining of labeling and tracking processes, efficient routing and package delivery has become more important than ever”



stage of the journey — from source to recipient. Driving efficiency across the supply chain, intelligent labels (pressure-sensitive materials embedded with RFID tags) are doing everything from helping manufacturers work in greater lockstep with suppliers, to helping shippers optimize truckloads, to helping customers be confident in the authenticity and safety of the products they buy.

Domino has a wide range of high-resolution printing technologies, including both color and monochrome options, that can be integrated into existing converting and finishing lines. This means that variable data can be added to existing analog printing equipment. It has also developed vision technology to ensure the correct information and variable data are printed and validated before being released into the supply chain.

The demand for automation and efficiency in e-commerce and logistics operations will continue to grow. Avery Dennison is offering linerless products that are compatible with automated application systems to help improve productivity and efficiency. Avery Dennison is also collaborating with printer manufacturers to develop integrated labeling and tracking technology and explore advancement in equipment.

Durability ensures authenticity

Logistics and e-commerce labels are prone to significant wear and tear during their lifespan. Labels can also experience fluctuations in temperature and humidity when stored both indoors and outdoors. Over time, such conditions can damage the label and make them unreadable.

Therefore, Rodriguez, of UPM Raflatac, emphasizes selecting the right label material is crucial to protecting the information and keeping the package flowing efficiently along the chain until the destination, as well as reducing the impact that package has on the environment.

‘As e-commerce and logistic demand evolves, there is a rising need for labels to play a part in helping to streamline the logistics process, enhance product security and for returns labels to be smaller in size and digitally integrated,’ Rodriguez says. ‘In addition, labels not only secure the packaging’s performance but also bring the supply chain better functionality.’

Technological advancements have played a crucial role in shaping the demand for logistics labels. For example, the adoption of linerless technology is increasing, leading to more efficient labeling application processes, adds Avery Dennison’s Ghoussoub.

‘Online shoppers expect fast and efficient delivery,’ Ghoussoub says. ‘Therefore, the streamlining of labeling and tracking processes, efficient routing and package delivery have become more important than ever. To further improve operational efficiency, Avery Dennison is leveraging linerless technology to boost productivity and reduce downtime allowing logistics operations to maintain uninterrupted processes.’

Effective tracking and identification of packages in e-commerce require label durability and legibility throughout the supply chain. Material selection plays a crucial role in ensuring label durability. For example, topcoats can be used on direct thermal labels to enhance durability and increase the resilience of label materials.

Avery Dennison offers a portfolio of linerless products designed to meet the different needs in the market. Specifically, its AT-20 adhesive is purposefully designed to perform in extreme temperature conditions.

Lab testing and validation are also key. Before full-scale production, Avery Dennison conducts thorough testing of print quality and adhesion under different environmental conditions (temperature, humidity, pressure) to ensure the quality and durability of its materials.

UPM Raflatac offers DT OptiCut Linerless products that combine repositionability with adhesion properties including resistance to high temperatures, moisture, and extreme cold. Its RH9L hotmelt adhesive, part of the RAFNXT+ range, is specifically designed for challenging logistics applications. It offers adhesion, even on challenging cardboard and fiber-based packages, and provides efficiency due to less bleeding and good cuttability.

As we navigate the challenges of increased waste and environmental concerns, there is hope in the industry’s dedication to sustainable practices and innovation. The industry is actively working towards minimizing its impact on the planet. The industry also has a unique opportunity in developing robust connectivity throughout the supply chain for higher consumer confidence in e-commerce.



All sources quoted in this article will be on hand at Labelexpo Europe 2023 to talk more about e-commerce labels. For more information, visit www.labelexpo-europe.com

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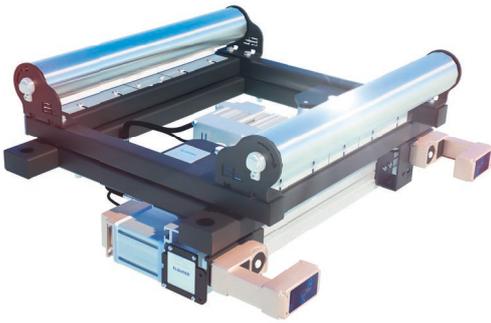
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Lucky Saint's iconic label design

Lucky Saint, UK's dedicated alcohol-free beer brand, seeks to stand out in the market by offering a product that excels in taste and craftsmanship. Akanksha Meena reports on behind-the-scenes of how the brand's bold and iconic label design came to life



Megan Taylor, head of creative at Lucky Saint, a Bavarian-style alcohol-free lager, shares the story behind the iconic blue label design of the lager.

The company worked with design agency Otherway, which has a strong background in branding. The primary goal of the design was to create an iconic brand that stood out in the crowded alcohol-free beer market. The agency looked at brands for inspiration such as Guinness, which excels in doing one thing exceptionally well. Lucky Saint wanted to create a modern and contemporary design that reflected the product's traditional brewing methods and heritage.

Modern design for modern product

The label's colors were inspired by the alcohol-free beer market, where blue is a dominant color. The company wanted to incorporate blue into its label while maintaining a modern and contemporary look.

'I think it's because it's psychologically more of a "clean" color. But we obviously wanted to sit alongside, rather than do something completely different,' Taylor adds.

The label also includes a mission statement on the reverse side that highlights the brand's philosophy of moderation. The company wants to create a sense of pride in drinking alcohol-free beer.

'Even though we're brewing with heritage and traditional methods, it's a modern product that is solving a problem for modern times,' she explains.

'Because it's a Bavarian beer, it's just brewed exactly the same as any other full-strength Bavarian lager. And then we use a process called vacuum distillation to take the alcohol out at the end. And so I think we definitely wanted to mention that on the label as well because it's super important to us. Some other alcohol-free beers are not really brewed, they're carbonated water with flavorings added.'

The brewing process sets the product apart from the rest. Being a premium product, embellishments such as foiling for example were non-negotiable for the brand.

The company's target audience is foodies and tastemakers, people who care about the quality of their food and drink. The company wants customers to feel proud to have Lucky Saint in their fridge.

One of the most interesting parts of the Lucky Saint brand story is the inspiration behind its logo. When Luke Boase, the founder, was first brewing the beer, a ladybug flew onto the bottle he was working on. After researching, he discovered that a ladybug is a sign of good luck. Lucky Saint has since used the ladybug with gold foiling as a premium touch, featuring it prominently on its label.

"It's making a statement with the logo sideways instead of straight. We are launching a new product which is about being brave and bold enough to be the way it is"

The brand's logo is placed sideways on its bottles and cans. 'It's making a statement with the logo sideways instead of straight. We are launching a new product which is about being brave and bold enough to be the way it is. So we need to be confident in the conviction that we think it looks really great. And it seems to work. There are instances where we do use the logo the other way around, but on product packaging, it's always this way,' Taylor says.

There is definitely a consideration for having a front label and a back label. Since the product is unfiltered for more flavor, the brand wants customers to be able to see the clarity of the liquid through the bottle.

The bottle currently features a neck label with a ladybug logo. The choice of bottle shape reflects the brand's desire to stand out and offer something unique, rather than just sticking with the standard 330ml bottle shape. The label contains quite a bit of text. As a new product, it's important for consumers to learn as much as they can about it.

'However, it can be challenging to strike a balance because we have a lot to say but there is limited space. Prioritizing the most important information becomes crucial. Furthermore, as we expand our exports to Europe, there will be additional limitations on what we can include on the label due to legal requirements and restrictions. We may need to reevaluate the amount of tone, voice and copy we can incorporate,' Taylor adds.

'Nevertheless, we believe that having some extra copy on the label adds a touch of fun and helps consumers better understand and connect with our brand. It allows us to showcase our personality and what we stand for. Having all the relevant copy on the bottle label contributes to this overall experience.'

Replicating Lucky Saint blue on cans

Trying to replicate the blue on Lucky Saint labels on cans was not easy.

'I think you always have the silver shining through, which is nice. We've done like a lot of work and to be honest, we're still working on it now to try and make it feel a bit more punchy on the shelf.'

“We believe that having some extra copy on the label adds a touch of fun and helps consumers better understand and connect with our brand. It allows us to showcase our personality and what we stand for”

The can was developed as an on-the-go product variant while bottles were more suited to be placed in a restaurant or a fridge at home.

Taylor has previously worked with breweries that use printed cans and so she is aware of the limitations of this format. 'I think there's a lot of things you can do with applying more ink onto the can, but obviously, that has its own issues such as cost. It's something that we're definitely still working on now. But I'd say the color is the number one thing that's the most difficult about can printing. Also making tiny, tiny type is a lot harder. So, when we have to increase the amount of information on the can, that's going to become slightly more difficult.'

The typography employed is striking, ensuring that the name catches attention before revealing the nature of the product. Standing out on store shelves is crucial, and the bold contrast of blue and white creates a visually impactful presence. Features such as foiling and a distinctive bottle silhouette help it stand apart from the rest.

With the lager brewed and bottled in Germany, the market response has been great.

When it comes to Lucky Saint's brewing process, the brand prioritizes the creation of a delicious alcohol-free lager rather than attempting to replicate the exact taste of a traditional lager without alcohol. This approach has resonated well with its customers, as the brand is actively catering to a market that has often been overlooked.



The brand's logo is placed sideways on its bottles and cans



The brand prioritizes the creation of a delicious alcohol-free lager rather than attempting to replicate the exact taste of a traditional lager without alcohol



To learn more about Lucky Saint, visit luckysaint.co

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This brand new Label Academy guide is a must-have resource for label converters, brand owners, designers and the wider label supply chain.

The chapters in this book will specifically look at:

- + Introduction to the self-adhesive label market
- + Silicone release liner technology
- + Pressure-sensitive adhesive technologies
- + Identification and characteristics of PS label materials
- + Test methods for pressure-sensitive labels

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Fable Whisky blends art and storytelling with scotch

Scotland-based spirits brand Fable Whisky brings the mesmerizing legend of the Ghost of Clanyard Bay to life with its whimsical design strategy, Akanksha Meena reports

Opening the Fable Whisky website is like entering a world of enchanting tales, mystical folklore and playful imagination. The first thing visitors see on the website is a captivating black and white animation of Clanyard Bay legend in an art style suited for the Harry Potter movie.

Fable Whisky brand story centers on the Scottish legend of the Ghost Piper of Clanyard Bay, weaving that narrative into the whisky brand experience.

“We always felt when we working on large campaign it was the brand manager who took all the credit, when it was the agencies that are up until 10 pm to deliver on time”

The story is set in a small Scottish settlement near Stranraer where eerie screams echoed on stormy nights by a sea cliff. A hollow cave stood untouched until an old piper and his dog ventured inside. As the piper played, the sound faded, and only the dog returned. Deep underground, the piper persisted despite the fairies' curses. He reached the cave's center, still playing. Enraged, the fairies trapped him with mazes. The piper vanished, the cave's entrance disappeared, but a faint melody of pipes can still be heard from the depths at the cliff's edge.

The animation fades to black leaving visitors with one question: What happened next to the Ghost Piper of Clanyard Bay?

Single-cask and blended malt whisky bottler, Fable Whisky brings together artists to breathe new life into Scottish myths while offering hand-selected single malts. To know what happened next to the piper, customers have to buy chapters or ranges of whisky.

With each range of whisky customers buy, they unlock a new chapter of the Clanyard Bay story. The labels feature characters and references from each chapter.

Old tale with a new twist

Founders and scotch whisky industry veterans Calum Lawrie and Andrew Torrance worked with London-based design agency gpstudio and collaborated with an exceptionally talented collection of artists to tell the story of The Ghost Piper of Clanyard Bay. The story is woven seamlessly through the brand, marketing and label designs.

Each of the bottle's labels features illustrations from chapters or whisky ranges expertly curated by the brand and artists. Each collection takes customers further in the adventures of the Ghost Piper.

Chris Poulton, partner and chief brand director at gpstudio says: 'We wanted to enhance the idea of sitting around a campfire and telling stories together, every time somebody told a story, it always gets slightly embellished. So, we quite like the idea in terms of, well, why don't we tell a story about a Scottish myth? But why don't we then put our own spin on it? We did a lot of research on

Scottish myths and we found The Ghost Piper of Clanyard Bay.'

The story was reimagined by brand writer, Des Waddy.

The design agency collaborated with visual artist Hugo Cuellar living and working in London, having arrived from Santa Cruz, Bolivia, via Edinburgh College of Art.

Gpstudio spent around six weeks refining character designs. Actor Jeff Rawle who plays Amos Diggory, in 'Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire' provided the voiceover for the brand's home page animations.

The agency also worked with composer and sound effects engineers Salvatore Schiano and Simolab Creative AV to create a captivating story that resonates with consumers while making the experience of drinking whisky more engaging. Each chapter of Fable's corresponds to different distillery releases and stories. The brand strives to disrupt the market, create collectible products and engage customers in conversation about its labels.

Rich storytelling with simple designs

In terms of packaging, the story is printed on an A5 paper that goes around the bottle. The paper appears as if it was ripped out of a





(L-R) Founders of Fable Whisky Calum Lawrie and Andrew Torrance

“We have this understated, cool product. And I think a simple label can be more powerful than something that’s over embellished”

book.

The printed monochrome label on the whisky bottles features characters from each of the Chapter or range. Fable Whisky’s labels are simple in design and color, a deliberate choice.

Lawrie explains: ‘We have this understated, cool product. And we had pulled out a few different Japanese labels, for instance, that are quite simple in form, and I think that can be more powerful than something that’s over-embellished.’

Poulton says that when he started working with Fable, the team had to learn a lot about labeling. The agency reached out to different converters to understand production possibilities and cost limitations. It wanted the labels to have an impactful design while being mindful of the fact it was a startup brand entering a new market. Too many embellishments had to be avoided to manage costs.

However, the design team prioritized design over finishing and incorporated spot foils and QR codes to enhance communication and storytelling through the labels. They aimed to strike a balance between delivering the message effectively without overdoing embellishments. This approach made the story stronger and aligned with the brand’s goal of storytelling.

‘We did not want to deviate from the story and characters. They are what brings the label together. I think when you add all that embellishment, it’s lovely and adds value, but the [website] animation is black and white and we wanted to recreate that on the label, so you felt like you had part of the story in your hand,’ Poulton explains.

Credit where credit is due

Fable, as a brand, is all about promoting the artists and people that put the effort into the product. Everyone involved in the project gets a mention on the website.

The brand releases limited edition prints on labels that are signed and numbered.

‘It’s more about trying to promote a community,’ Poulton says. ‘We believe that everybody should be recognized for what they do. So that’s why we said “Hugo, you have to sign the labels. Because that’s unique to you and we don’t have any issues in promoting who you are.”’ Poulton adds.

Lawrie and Torrance have worked with some of the leading whisky brands. ‘We always felt when we were working on large campaign it was the brand manager who took all the credit, when it was the agencies that are up until 10 pm to deliver on time,’ Lawrie

highlights.

The label has a QR code with a call to action that takes customers to the website. The complete brand experience is like a spider’s web woven around the Scottish myth and everything ties back to it in digital and printed form. The retelling of the story by individuals creates engagement and interest, sparking conversations and intrigue.

Creating from a blank slate

When gpstudio embarked on its first whisky label project for Fable, there were no boundaries for the agency. ‘Looking at other brands and their labels, we see their beauty and embellishments, but they are constrained by their established style and framework. It was refreshing for us to have a blank slate and consider packaging from a different perspective, drawing on our experience with fashion labels, food products, and the retail space,’ Poulton explains.

Fable’s brief was open-ended: they simply wanted to make a whisky. With that freedom, gpstudio brainstormed and presented its ideas, which were enthusiastically embraced.

The brand originally wanted to create five to six labels for its whisky but as it developed, it now has more than 15 label designs.

The packaging design and illustration used for the brand’s messaging are both simplistic and content rich. Whether they are displayed on a large billboard or as an Instagram post, the design elements seamlessly work across various media platforms.

As the complete branding process took place during Covid, the whole team found creative ways to get the work done.

‘During Covid, we were contacting suppliers and having packaging materials sent to everybody’s home addresses. Everyone involved had to have the same set and we would hold online meetings with an array of bottles, papers and stoppers then decide which ones we liked. I was quite glad to clear out my house when the project was finished because we accumulated a lot of materials,’ Lawrie recalls.

The team took each decision with care when it came to label type, materials and bottles. The labels are digitally printed with screening varnish and foiling. The Fable cartons are printed in two runs, first, the standard design is printed and variable data is printed in the second run.

Due to the impact of Covid, the release of Fable whiskies were launched at different times in different geographies.

‘It’s interesting to observe how the social media response varies in different regions at different times,’ Lawrie says. ‘It’s like a moment of excitement when we see the brand gaining popularity in specific countries. We realize that they are experiencing it for the first time, whereas we have been involved with it for a while.’

‘Recently, we’ve noticed a surge in interest from places like Korea and Japan, particularly in the independent cocktail bars of Osaka. Witnessing our brand resonate in such locations is truly remarkable, and it speaks to the exceptional presentation by gpstudio. While the quality of the liquid itself is excellent, I’ve worked with other brands that haven’t achieved such rapid growth, even with outstanding products.’

The fusion of brand identity and storytelling in Fable has resonated well with customers, Lawrie says. It is appealing to a wide range of demographics. The unique approach has made Fable stand out in the whisky market, and the brand’s visually attractive packaging has garnered attention and interest. The customers’ positive response has led to inquiries about collecting the full set of Fable whiskies. Overall, the brand has been well-received and has found success in several venues, including high-end establishments and airports in UK, US and Asia.



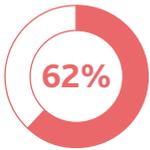
To learn more about Fable Whisky, visit fablewhisky.com

Label trends

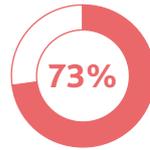
Facing rising material costs and sustainability challenges, the labeling industry is at a crucial point of transformation. In response, the numbers show adoption of digital tools and automation technologies are reshaping the process of label conversion.

Automation's impact

According to recent surveys:



of suppliers cited automation as the most positive influence on their business



of suppliers surveyed predicted automation will make the biggest impact on their business in 2023.

Why digital? Margin pressures mounting

63% of suppliers and 73% of brands

said shrinking margins due to rising costs of materials are their biggest challenge for 2023

Rising costs in 2023:

(Material, percentage increase in 2023)



16%

Wood



22%

Steel



15%

Concrete & Masonry



12%

Electrical conduit

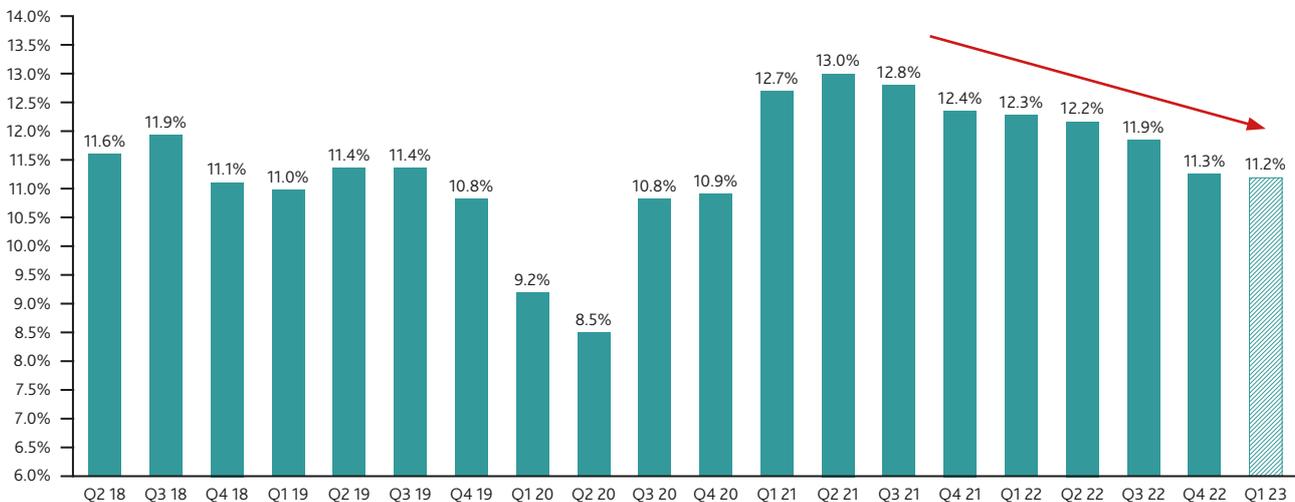


11%

Insulation

Profit margins are declining across the S&P 500, which covers a variety of industries, as shown:

S&P 500 Net Profit Margin: Q2 18 – Q1 23



Source: FactSet, Gordian, 2023 Packaging Trends by Esko

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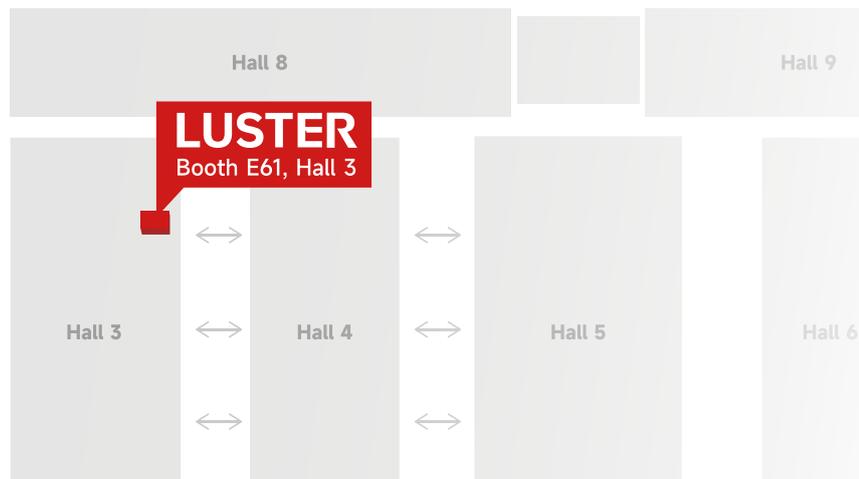
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