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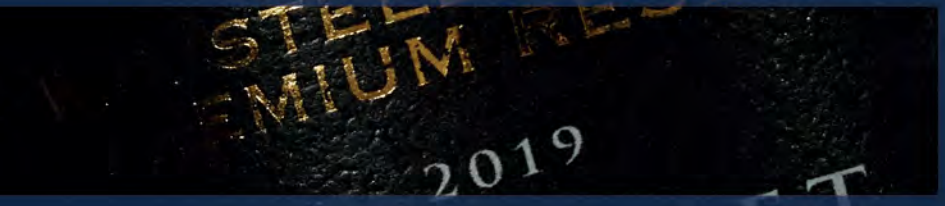

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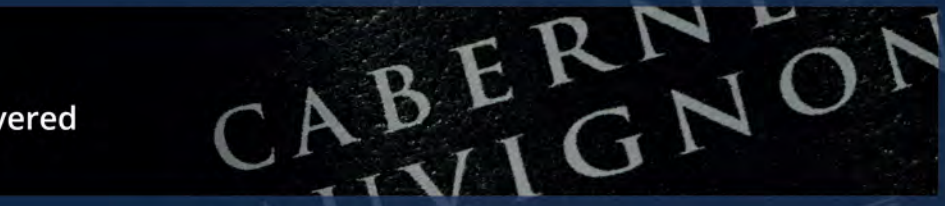

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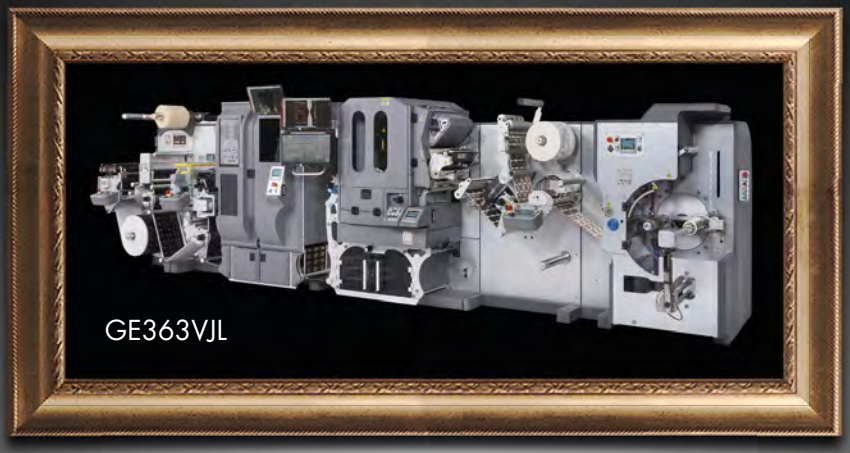









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Chelsea McDougall
Managing Editor



Andy Thomas-Emans
Strategic director



Piotr Wnuk
Senior digital editor



Akanksha Meena
Global brands editor



Selah Zighelboim
North America editor



Adyasha Sinha
India editor



Yolanda Wang
Head of content, China



James Quirk
Latin America correspondent



Yukiko Suzuki
Japan correspondent



Anton Pretorius
South Africa correspondent



Vicki Strull
Branding and design columnist



Rosalyn Bandy
Sustainability columnist



Lois Ritarossi
Sales and marketing columnist



Jade Grace
Managing director



Tasha Ventimiglia
Group director, L&L and Americas



Tim Gordon
Account director

Editorial

Chelsea McDougall, *Managing editor*
Andy Thomas-Emans, *Strategic director*
Piotr Wnuk, *Senior digital editor*
Akanksha Meena, *Global brands editor*
Selah Zighelboim, *North America editor*
Adyasha Sinha, *India editor*
Yolanda Wang, *Head of Content, China*
James Quirk, *Latin America correspondent*
Yukiko Suzuki, *Japan correspondent*
Anton Pretorius, *South Africa correspondent*
Lois Ritarossi, *Sales and marketing columnist*
Vicki Strull, *Branding and design columnist*
Rosalyn Bandy, *Sustainability columnist*

E: *editorial@labelsandlabeling.com*

Advertising

Randy Kessler, *Digital advertisting director*
Tim Gordon, *Account director*
Alexa Rode-Hilbert, *Account director*
Mirco Mazzarella, *Account director*
Richard Quirk, *Account director*

E: *advertising@labelsandlabeling.com*

Design

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

E: *design@labelsandlabeling.com*

Production

James Wenman, *Design and production manager*

E: *production@labelsandlabeling.com*

Marketing

Yvonne Nartey, *Marketing director*
George Kontos, *Head of digital marketing*
Stefani De Abreu Pinto, *Marketing executive*
Alice Kosse, *Marketing executive*

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

Management

Jade Grace, *Managing director*
Chelsea McDougall, *Group content director*
Tasha Ventimiglia, *Group director, L&L and Americas*
Andrew Galloway, *Group director, EMEAA*
Kevin Liu, *Group director, China*

Publishers

Informa Markets,
240 Blackfriars Road, London, SE1 8EF,
United Kingdom

Other offices

USA: Informa PLC, 6300 N River Road,
Suite 301 Rosemont, IL 60018, United States

China: Informa Markets
29/F,K11 Atelier, 300 Middle Huai Hai Road
Huangpu District, Shanghai, 200021 China

India: Informa Markets, Private Limited, 9th Floor,
Sood Tower, Plot No. 25, Barakhamba Road,
Connaught Place, New Delhi 110001, India

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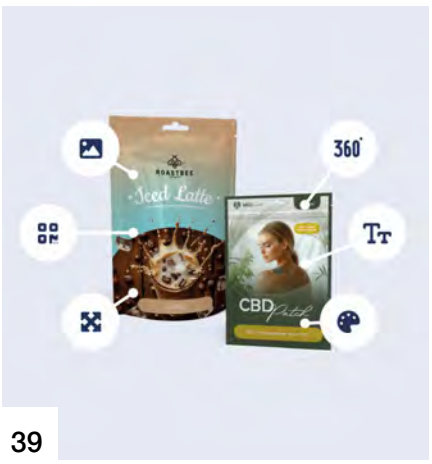

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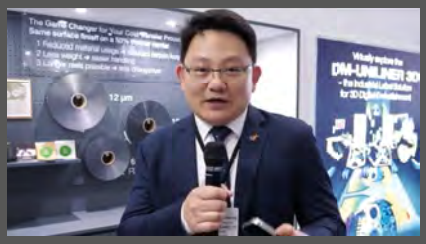

Labelexpo Southeast Asia (video)

Listen to 10 suppliers that participated in the Spotlight on Sustainability trail



Read L&L Issue 2 online (magazine)

The previous issue of L&L magazine is now available to read online



Folding carton evolution (feature)

Labelexpo Europe 2025 will include folding carton technology



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L&L looks back (L&L issue 5, 2006)


The Label Industry Global Awards Gala Dinner

And the big winner is...

At a gala dinner for the Label Industry Global Awards, The R. Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award was awarded to Calvin Frost, CEO of the Channeled Resources Group.

James Quirk reports

P35 During a gala dinner at Labelexpo Americas 2006, dedicated to the Label Industry Global Awards, The R Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award was awarded to Calvin Frost, CEO of the Channeled Resources Group. Turn to page 64 to read more about how this family-owned business has expanded beyond its initial role as a recycling company and how sustainability still forms a key part of its ethos.


Manter leads the way with digital label collection

The success of HP Indigo's 'ws' press series has justified the decision of Spanish materials supplier Manter to develop a range of specialty, value-added digital papers. James Quirk reports

P73 James Quirk reported about the culmination of three years of collaboration between Manter and HP Indigo, which came to fruition as Manter's HP-certified Digital Label Collection of exclusive papers that were specially treated and certified for digital printing with HP Indigo technology that hit the market for the first time. This followed a huge success of HP Indigo's WS press series at Labelexpo.


PLA: The future of plastic in a post-petroleum world

Can corn-based films ever replace petroleum plastics?

Sandra Boga reports on the latest developments in PLA films and their application in the labels field

P79 L&L reported on the latest developments in PLA films and their applications in the labels field, including a corn-based film that utilizes the sugar in corn known as dextrose, which is fermented and distilled into lactic acid, then transformed into pellets to become NatureWorks PLA. The entire corn-to-resin production process is claimed to use 68 per cent less fossil fuel than conventional plastics.


An inspector calls

Label converters are increasingly prepared to invest in sophisticated inspection systems previously the domain of wide-web converters. Andy Thomas reports on the latest inspection solutions for press and rewinder

P104 Andy Thomas reported on the latest inspection technologies for printing presses and rewinders, as label and packaging converters were increasingly prepared to invest in sophisticated inspection systems previously the domain of wide-web converters. This trend was driven by decreasing run lengths and the use of more complex and expensive substrates, as well as end users' demand for zero defects.

What's new?

Editor's note

Ask any Labelexpo exhibitor the most common question they receive from visitors, and they will all have the same answer.

'What's new?'

I'm here to tell you that when the doors open for Labelexpo Europe 2025 from September 16-19, there's one thing you can count on: new. A whole lot of new.

On the surface of our Labelexpo Europe preview (page 108), the newness of the technology is a bit more subtle. But believe me, there is plenty of new technology to explore. Flexo is finding new ways to automate. Software companies are exploring innovative new AI tools, and substrate suppliers are developing new materials for a world increasingly aware of its environmental footprint.

"When the doors open for Labelexpo Europe 2025 from September 16-19, there's one thing you can count on: new. A whole lot of new"

Finishing OEMs are launching new technology to improve speed, quality and versatility. Robotics is playing a bigger role in automating repetitive tasks and improving throughput.

The show itself has a lot of newness to boast about.

In the event's 45-year history, Labelexpo Europe 2025 will move to Barcelona. But that's old news by now. What's really been stealing the headlines lately is the show's expansion into new markets, especially the wider embrace of folding cartons and flexible packaging.

There is also a new awards ceremony, which Labels & Labeling has taken under our umbrella for the first time. We will honor the winners at a co-hosted ceremony and opening party with Labelexpo called Festa Barcelona, which will offer a taste of everything the show's new host city has to offer. That event promises to shine a spotlight not only on Barcelona, but also on the industry's best in innovation, sustainability and the Converter of the Year.

New education opportunities have been added to the already successful Label Academy Master Classes. For the first time, Labelexpo will host a showfloor conference program at The Pulse. Sessions there cover the hottest themes facing the industry today, including flexible packaging, sustainability, AI and automation and folding cartons.

Use this issue as your guide to Labelexpo Europe. Turn to page 108 to read our comprehensive Labelexpo preview and plan your visit to Barcelona.



Chelsea McDougall
Group managing editor

Installations



Bobst Digital Master 340

Tomex, Poland

Polish label converter Tomex invested in a Bobst Digital Master 340 all-in-one label press, aiming to enhance its printing capabilities and maximize profitability across various applications and run lengths. Tomex is celebrating its 15th anniversary by embarking on a new venture with the investment. The company is familiar with Bobst, having installed two 10-color Master M5 flexo presses in 2021. Bobst's agent in Poland, Rotary, facilitated the purchase. 'This achievement is the result of our decade-long effort and strategic planning. Thanks to this investment, we can now print all types of quality labels with digital precision and serve every customer's needs,' said Tomasz Woźniczko, owner of Tomex.

Mark Andy Evolution Series E5

Ravi Print Pack, India

Delhi-based Ravi Print Pack invested in a Mark Andy Evolution Series E5 to increase its label production and expand its flexible capabilities. This latest investment is the company's second Mark Andy press supplied and installed by Flexo Image Graphics. Ravi Print Pack has been running the 8-color Mark Andy 2200 press for several years. 'We have been closely associated with FIG for years. It is not only about the machines but also about cordial cooperation and post-sales support with which we are quite satisfied in teaming with the company. That's the major reason why we further bolstered our partnership with and went for another Mark Andy Evolution Series E5,' said Vidit Singla, director of Ravi Print Pack.





Nilpeter FA-17

VR Print, South Africa

Durban, South Africa-headquartered VR Print has invested in Nilpeter's FA-17. 'We see incredible potential in Sub-Saharan Africa,' said Hilton Van Rensburg, VR Print managing director. 'But to grow sustainably, we need the right partners. That's why Nilpeter is so important, it understands our market, our constraints and our ambitions.' The Nilpeter FA-17 has enabled VR Print to accelerate the production of multi-layer labels and easily navigate a wide range of ink and substrate combinations. 'The FA-17 press offers print quality that's as sharp and consistent as any digital print, but with the robustness and speed needed for flexo,' Rensburg explained. 'It's a workhorse, and it's helped us cut down makeready time, reduce waste and train new operators faster than ever.'

Omet iFlex

Indolabel, Indonesia

Indonesian label printer Indolabel added two new Omet iFlex presses, marking a significant step in the company's evolution from traditional letterpress to flexo printing. Jet Technologies Indonesia, the exclusive dealer for Omet in Indonesia, Vietnam, Singapore and Malaysia, delivered the latest acquisition. 'The simplicity and efficiency of the Omet iFlex made it the right machine for our team and our production needs,' said Benny Kartarahaja, Indolabel's managing director. 'But just as important has been the strong, ongoing support from Jet Technologies. Its service didn't stop at installation; it has been a true partner throughout our transition from letterpress to flexo. This partnership has empowered us to chase our ambition of becoming one of the top label printers in Indonesia.'



Installations



Lombardi Smartline

Print Panache, India

Print Panache invested in India's first Lombardi Smartline press, installed by Vinsak, the distributor of Lombardi presses in the region. The press is equipped with servo-driven unwinder and infeed modules, eight UV flexo printing stations, a die-cutting station and an outfeed/rewinding station. The Smartline's flexible configurations allow Print Panache to tailor production processes according to client specifications. Its rail-mounted system includes modules such as delam/relam, air-assisted turn bar, and cold foil units, expanding the range of label finishes available. 'This marks our third Lombardi installation with Vinsak, and with each new addition, our trust in their technology and support continues to grow,' said Anuj Kumar Gupta, partner at Print Panache.

Hontec FlexiCon350-12C

TPY Korean, South Korea

TPY Korean, one of the largest label printing companies in South Korea, installed a Hontec FlexiCon350-12C flexo press. The newly installed press is Hontec's most advanced model to date, offering 12-color high-speed printing and a 350mm web width. The press handles a broad range of materials, including self-adhesive labels, unsupported films and laminated substrates. It features dual servo motors for each station to ensure precise tension control and registration accuracy, along with EtherCAT-based motion control technology that enhances automation and responsiveness. The investment reflects TPY's commitment to technological leadership and improvement. With it, TPY is positioned to further expand its capabilities in delivering premium, multi-color labels.





Spande S7

Citrus Packaging, India

Hyderabad, India-based Citrus Packaging invested in a Spande S7 8-color flexo press. The press will be displayed at Labelexpo Europe 2025 in Barcelona before being installed at the company's plant in the last quarter of 2025. The 8-color press features two die-cutting stations and a lamination unit. It will also have a sheeter for carton production. Each print unit has eight servo motors, intelligent auto-registration (iVision) and automatic pressure adjustment (iPressure). 'Even a layman can operate this press,' said Citrus founder Chenga Reddy. Citrus' investment in this new flexo technology aligns with its upcoming expansion into RFID labels and tags for premium retail, pharmaceutical and luxury segments.

Dantex Picojet 1200

B S Labels Limited, UK

UK converter B S Labels Limited invested in Dantex's flagship PicoJet 1200 Hybrid press to meet increasing demand for high-impact labels and faster turnaround times. 'We looked at several competitor presses, but the combination of extended gamut, outstanding white ink and the fact that it's made in Britain gave Dantex the clear edge. The company's long-standing reputation for quality and service only reinforced our decision,' said Dan Pole, B S Labels studio and digital print manager. The PicoJet's extended color gamut enables the company to shift more flexo work to digital while maintaining Pantone-level color accuracy. Additionally, features such as in-line finishing and a 100 percent inspection system increase efficiency, reduce waste and open up new market opportunities.



Label & packaging showcase

01



02



03



04



05



Winners of the Dieline Awards 2025

01 Interact Brands

Category:
Designalytics Design Effectiveness Award

Designer: Built Redesign

02 Nazionale – Spirito Italiano

Category:
Best of Beverage

Designer: Auge Design

03 Diana's Seafood

Category:
Best of Brand Identity

Designer: Wedge

04 ABC 360 Daily Nutrition Bars

Category: Food; Breads, Cereal Pasta

Award: Third place

Designer: Atlas Branding

05 Nectar Honey

Category: Food; Sauces, Oils & Spices

Award: Third place

Designer: Dessein

06



07



08



09



10



06 Joon Foods

Category: Food; Savory Snacks

Award: First place

Designer: Governess and Padraic Gilligan

07 Hartridges Traditional Soft Drinks Rebrand

Category: Beverage; Soft Drinks

Award: Second place

08 Breuckelen Distilling – 77 Whiskey

Category: Beverage; Dark Spirits

Award: Third place

Designer: Thirst

09 Gota

Category: Beverage, Wine & Champagne

Award: Second place

Designer: FAENA Studio

10 Cliff Barnes

Category: Beverage; Clear Spirits

Award: Third place

Designer: Pond Design

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Andy Thomas-Emans: Lights out?

Labelexpo Europe 2025 will see suppliers talking about the future of 'lights-out' manufacturing, and not only in digital, but also in flexo production, writes Andy Thomas-Emans

Labelexpo Europe 2025 will be an exciting show for those with a keen interest in smart automation.

We have reached a point where flexo technology has reached something of a plateau in terms of speed and basic automation.

We have seen full integration of servo motors into flexo presses, even in 'entry level' machines, allowing automation of key press parameters like tension control, registration and print pressure, along with the ability to store and recall these parameters. Automated sensing and closed-loop pressure adjustment is also being applied to die-cutting. Narrow and mid-web press speeds are unlikely to increase significantly due to the need to run multiple processes and properly cure/dry the running web.

The next major leap forward is integrating these technologies into smart automation networks, driven by machine learning and sector-specific AI datasets.

Nilpeter is now talking openly about its 'Darkroom' project for flexography, and during a recent fascinating day spent at the company's demo center, we discussed how that might develop.

Nilpeter already has its 'Digital Shadow', a virtual, real-time representation of the press, which means the press can be remotely monitored and even stopped and started remotely. Add to that the ability to carry out a completely automated job change while the press is running, with zero operator intervention, and we can see that, although it is the same FA-17, its smart automation capabilities have advanced dramatically.

Where might robotics come into the equation? LemuGroup, also nominated for an Innovation Award in the first L&L Label Awards, has already demonstrated automated end-of-line automation, taking inspected rolls from turret rewinds, packing, stacking and labeling transit boxes.

But what about the press itself? Could a robot remove a complete flexo printing or converting group and replace it with a pre-loaded group while the press is running?

Meanwhile, smart, AI-driven inspection technology is driving forward, as we will see at Labelexpo, with the ability to predict issues in print and converting and suggest troubleshooting steps. But as discussed with Nilpeter CTO Carsten Clemensen, the next stage is for the cameras to directly and autonomously control press settings in real time. These cameras would need to be compact and cheap enough to fit into every print and converting unit of the press and converting line with sufficient resolution and networkable, adaptable intelligence.

Interestingly, Clemensen's last job before joining Nilpeter was MD at B&R, a division of industrial automation specialist ABB, which already develops AI-driven camera systems for other industrial segments. So, he speaks with some authority here.

Not so sci-fi

The idea of a 'lights-out' flexo operation would have sounded like science fiction just a few years ago, but all the technology elements are in place in different parts of the high-tech industrial landscape.

"When we look back at Labelexpo Europe 2025, I believe we will see it as a pivotal event"

These same advances will also apply to converting machines. We have already seen how ABG, Cerm and Screen came together at Mercian Labels in the UK to automate a fully servo-driven ABG Digicon with all programming carried out remotely via JDF/JMF. This meant the only operator intervention was loading the flexible die. And at the last Labelexpo Europe Automation Arena, Grafotronic demonstrated how camera systems can monitor die-cutting and slitting quality. When linked to print inspection, this allows fully checked rolls to be packed for a customer or put into stock without the need for an extra step of moving to an inspection-rewinder.

The final link in the chain is integration of the press or converting line into wider factory networks, working closely with pre-press and MIS specialists to allow the press to seamlessly deliver real-time production, quality assurance and machine monitoring data to a network and to be able to download new jobs directly from the MIS.

This latter stage is important to prevent the need for an operator double-keying jobs at press side, which is currently the way flexo presses are set up.

In the future, label converters will not only be concerned with gathering real-time production data, but also the energy consumption and carbon footprint for every job that runs through the press, including measurements for substrates, inks and coatings.

Labelexpo Europe visitors can see how this works in practice at the Label Trail feature, where CarbonQuota is working with partners Xeikon, Esko, Cerm, GM and Kurz to demonstrate the collection and reporting process for carbon emissions.

When we look back at Labelexpo Europe 2025, I believe we will see it as a pivotal event. Not only because of the move to Barcelona, and not only because the show stretches out in a natural evolution toward short-run flexible packaging and folding cartons, but because it addresses absolutely key issues for the long-term sustainability of the converting industry.

How can we function without a regular supply of skilled machine operators coming into the industry? How can we leverage AI and automation to reduce waste, increase efficiency, increase machine uptime and satisfy the demands of end users for real-time information on sustainability metrics?

I look forward to seeing you in Barcelona!

Turn to page 102 for more on Labelexpo Europe 2025

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Practical AI wins for label and print providers

Artificial intelligence is reshaping the sales process by automating tasks, uncovering insights and helping teams close deals faster, and a successful AI program is not out of reach for small and medium-sized businesses, writes Lois Ritarossi

Artificial Intelligence is the buzz at every industry conference and webinar these days, and for good reason. It impacts many areas of business across all sectors.

AI adoption is no longer limited to Fortune 500 enterprises with massive IT teams. Medium-sized label and packaging providers can implement AI tools with minimal technical lift. From cloud-based software to embedded AI in pre-press, quoting and customer service platforms, there are affordable, user-friendly technologies that deliver measurable impact quickly.

Start small

Everyone can crawl, walk and run, but crawling needs to start now.

AI tools and platforms automate tasks that are repetitive or require analyzing large amounts of data. On the sales and customer communication front, AI can generate personalized messages, respond to common inquiries and provide real-time job status updates through integrated platforms.

For sales teams, AI enables better prospecting. Tools can analyze vast amounts of customer data to identify the most promising leads and suggest content or offers tailored to each buyer's profile. Successful AI use cases in print and label sales include automating email responses, creating draft quotes or proposals, standardizing internal documentation, and providing research and content summaries for follow-up meetings.

Why AI feels out of reach

Many small and mid-sized service providers assume AI means big budgets and IT departments. AI is already embedded in tools you're likely using, or should be using. Reach out to your key vendors and partners and find out how they are embracing AI.

The hard part is changing the mindset of key managers. Managers and leaders at every level can assess the obstacles in their department and learn how to improve and streamline tasks and functions. By embracing change, managers can learn how to leverage AI in small steps to improve sales, production, billing and customer communications.

> "Success with AI depends on defining a strategy, committing to research and trying new approaches"

There should be caution with new and rapidly evolving technologies. AI is a significant turning point. Take steps now to embrace tools and find opportunities for improvement. Or you may wake up to find that your services are not competitive and you have new and stronger competitors calling on your customers.

Practical use cases for AI

There are a few ways companies of all sizes are using AI in their sales process:

AI for RFP and proposal automation: I don't know any salespeople who relish writing RFP responses or preparing proposals. It's time-consuming and repetitive. It requires attention to detail. And writing is daunting for many people. AI is a great tool for organizing content. Smart B2B service providers have invested in creating a structured database of past sales content to generate accurate, brand-consistent responses to RFPs and proposals. This enables a faster turnaround for better communications to potential customers. One service provider shared their success in reducing RFP responses from two days to 20 minutes with an AI content tool.

Workflow and production optimization: In many label and print production facilities, there are too many touchpoints, outdated legacy tools and multiple disparate workflows. This negatively impacts production, hiring, training and onboarding new customers. Many industry-leading hardware and software suppliers now provide AI-enhanced tools. AI tools enable automating imposition and scheduling, which improve inventory management, job routing and shop floor data collection. Leveraging AI to re-engineer workflows eliminates manual touchpoints. Production teams can spend less time figuring out what is going to be completed during their shift, and more time on higher-value tasks. The result is increased efficiency and reduced labor, leading to higher profits.

AI governance and strategy matter

Success with AI depends on defining a strategy, committing to research, and trying new approaches. Leaders need to communicate their vision for why and how AI will be used. There are many considerations for data security, privacy and compliance. Defining and communicating what data will and will not be uploaded into AI tools and platforms is a critical step.

Success starts with defining a core team to document, communicate and research tools and use cases. Sharing knowledge with a wider team will foster learning and reduce fear. I advise clients to protect their IP and customer value by defining AI guardrails for customer data, brand and IP content while adhering to compliance procedures.

Strategic planning and operational reviews must now include goals and strategies for AI. It is no longer optional. The winners will not be the largest providers in each sector.

They will be the smartest companies with leaders that embrace change and create a vision for their teams. Empowered teams will determine how to leverage AI to remain relevant and competitive.



Lois Ritarossi is a certified management consultant and president of High Rock Strategies, an independent management consulting firm focused on sales and marketing strategies and business growth for firms in the print, mail, communications and B2B sectors. You can read more about sales strategies at www.highrockstrategies.com. Email Lois at Lritarossi@highrockstrategies.com

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Sustainability starts here: Actionable steps for the label industry

As brands face growing pressure to meet sustainability goals, the label industry has a key role to play and can drive meaningful change starting in their own facilities, writes TLMI's VP of sustainability, Rosalyn Bandy

Without strong federal leadership on climate and sustainability, the label industry has a chance to step up where policy falls short. The label and narrow web printing sector is a critical link in the packaging ecosystem, influencing material selection, product recyclability and sustainability communication. With industry associations like TLMI championing environmental stewardship, the sector is uniquely positioned to drive progress, even while regulatory momentum in Washington stalls.

Where to start

There are ways the label industry can rise to the challenge. Here's how:

- **Adopt sustainable materials:** Label converters can help drive demand for responsibly sourced substrates such as Forest Stewardship Council (FSC)-certified paper, bio-based polymers and linerless constructions. These materials reduce dependency on virgin fossil resources, promote biodiversity and decrease life-cycle greenhouse gas emissions. Research shows that switching to renewable or recycled feedstocks can reduce material carbon footprints by 20–60 percent, depending on the substrate. TLMI members are already piloting such transitions, but wider adoption across the industry is needed to yield systemic environmental gains.
- **Improve label-recyclability compatibility:** Labels often act as contaminants in recycling streams, particularly when incompatible adhesives, inks or facestocks are used. Innovations such as wash-off adhesives and recycling-friendly facestocks, compatible with PET and HDPE, preserve the integrity of the base material during processing. TLMI's support of the Association of Plastic Recyclers (APR) Design Guide is instrumental in disseminating these best practices. Label recyclability is more than an add-on; it's a prerequisite for circular packaging design.
- **Minimize waste in production:** Waste reduction must be addressed both upstream and downstream. In production, label facilities generate matrix waste, release liner and energy-intensive byproducts. TLMI's Liner Recycling Initiative has helped create closed-loop systems that divert thousands of tons of waste from landfills. Furthermore, technologies like digital printing and lean manufacturing principles minimize setup waste, reduce overproduction and increase yield efficiency. These improvements not only lower environmental impact but also cut operating costs, offering a clear business case for sustainability.
- **Boost energy efficiency and renewable use:** Energy consumption remains a primary source of carbon emissions in printing facilities. Implementing energy-efficient technologies, such as LED UV curing and automated HVAC controls, can reduce operational emissions by up to 30 percent. Some converters have already installed solar arrays or procured renewable energy credits (RECs) to meet Scope 2 carbon reduction goals. TLMI can further empower its members by providing access to energy benchmarking tools and incentive programs that support decarbonization.

> **"With industry associations like TLMI championing environmental stewardship, the sector is uniquely positioned to drive progress, even while regulatory momentum in Washington stalls"**

- **Educate clients and brands:** Labels serve as both functional components and storytelling tools. In addition to branding, they can communicate recyclability, certifications (such as the Sustainable Green Printing Partnership (SGP) or ISO 14001), and responsible sourcing practices. TLMI's engagement with brand owners and consumer goods companies can foster alignment on sustainable design choices, particularly around extended producer responsibility (EPR) and post-consumer recovery. Increasingly, informed brands demand sustainable labeling, and the industry must be prepared to deliver it with credibility and precision.
- **Track, report and certify sustainability progress:** Data transparency is fundamental to credibility. TLMI has made significant strides in promoting lifecycle assessments (LCAs), carbon accounting and SGP certification. By encouraging the adoption of environmental management systems (EMS) and standardized sustainability metrics, the association facilitates peer benchmarking, continuous improvement and third-party validation. These mechanisms help build trust with brands, investors and consumers alike.
- **Engage in policy and infrastructure advocacy:** Beyond factory floors, the label industry must engage in shaping the circular economy. Advocacy for policies that support advanced recycling infrastructure, standardized labeling regulations and EPR legislation is crucial. TLMI's Regulatory Affairs Committee can help coordinate these efforts, ensuring that the label industry has a seat at the table in developing the sustainable supply chains of the future.

In short, the label industry isn't just tagging products; it's also tagging along on the journey to a cleaner, smarter and more sustainable future. With TLMI providing the roadmap, converters can stay competitive and climate-conscious. In an administration that might ignore the environment, this industry can still choose to label itself a leader.

Rosalyn Bandy is VP of sustainability for TLMI. For more information about TLMI sustainability, contact Rosalyn.bandy@tlmi.com. For information about TLMI membership, contact the engagement director, dale.coates@tlmi.com, or scan the QR code

The touch advantage

New data confirms what we've always suspected about premium packaging, writes branding and design columnist Vicki Strull

You're about to go down a scientific and ultimately satisfying rabbit hole with me. That's because I'm geeking out on the latest research study about the competitive advantages of touch and its impact on consumers' buying behavior. So, hold onto your substrate, things are about to get real.

The 'Touch Advantage' study is a collaboration between Sappi and Clemson University. As a packaging designer and strategist, I co-authored the study, along with Dr Andrew Hurley, professor of packaging science at Clemson, and Sahil Bhayani, a master's student, who wrote his thesis based on this research.

The study takes a deep dive into shoppers' behaviors as they engage with packaging. It sets a new standard for a comprehensive understanding of the influence that packaging has on consumer actions and purchasing.

While many of us in the industry know intuitively that touch is important to shopper engagement, sales and post-purchase satisfaction, it has been just a hypothesis — until now. This study set out to prove this hypothesis, so that when we go to our stakeholders — to brands, to converters, to our clients and our clients' clients — we can speak to measurable, quantifiable research about the return on investment of haptics and premium packaging.

Let's dig into the details.

The research

The 'Touch Advantage' study sought to answer three overarching questions:

1. What is the correlation between touching a package and sales?

2. How does premium packaging affect consumer perceptions of product quality?

3. How does sensory marketing affect post-purchase experiences, customer satisfaction and reviews? *(My next column in Labels & Labeling will cover the methodology, exploration and results of this question.)*

We brought 60 participants into a staged retail space. We gave them a shopping list and asked them to buy a variety of products. The items included things like health and beauty items, confectionery foods and electronics.

We observed, counted, compared and measured to collect a variety of quantitative data, and compile statistics that can be used for ROI validation.

We asked the participants for their opinions about their shopping experiences, packaging and premium materials throughout the study to inform the qualitative data. That enabled us to compare the quantitative data (what we observed them doing) with the qualitative data (what they think and say they do). Oftentimes, the two contradict each other.

The third type of data that we collected is biometric data, which allowed us to measure and understand participants' unconscious responses. When people checked in for the study, they were outfitted with eye-tracking glasses that enabled us to see exactly where the participants' attention was, what each person was looking at, and for how long. Additionally, we could track what they touched and the amount of time they spent touching an item. We also looked at facial expressions in order to record and analyze participants' emotional responses.

The fourth type of data we collected is sales data. We took the biometric data and cross-referenced it with what each participant bought, so that we could see how a person's attention and what they touched impacted their purchasing behavior. Further, we plugged that information into statistical models to determine repeatability. That is, would we get the same results if the study were conducted again? This part of the study enabled us to soundly predict various likelihoods of repeat behaviors and actions.

And thus, the hypothesis and theories were proven: The more people engage with packaging, the more likely they are to purchase the item. The data further showed that attention is the essential first step to a sale. That is, seeing starts the sale, and touching closes the sale. If you think about it, we cannot purchase an item in a store without touching it.

At this point, it's important to review the neuroscience of touch, as I've written about in past articles. More than half of our brain is devoted to processing sensory experiences — our sense of sight, sound, smell, taste and touch. Our hands and fingertips have more touch receptors than any other place on our body. Psychologically, when you touch an item, it triggers a series of feelings, such as perceptions of quality and emotional attachment.

When you're shopping and you reach out and touch an item, you activate a phenomenon called psychological ownership. This means that simply touching an item increases our feeling of ownership. It's the sense that 'this is already mine', even before you buy it. Once psychological ownership is activated, it triggers a second phenomenon: the endowment effect. The endowment effect refers to our willingness to pay more for an item that we either own or that we think we own.

Whether you're a packaging designer, converter, finisher, substrate manufacturer or any other participant in the packaging supply chain, think about it this way: When shoppers reach out and touch a product's packaging, they activate psychological ownership and start to think that it's already theirs. That triggers the endowment effect, and they're willing to pay more for it. Even before they reach the checkout, they have already decided to purchase the item and consider it theirs.

Comparing premium and plain packaging

To connect these phenomena regarding touch to our study, we examined the differences in behavior between premium packaging and non-premium packaging. We defined premium packaging as being produced on the highest grade of substrate, Solid Bleached Sulphate (SBS). We further defined premium as having at least one embellishment, such as an embossing, a spot gloss or a foil.

For the non-premium packaging, we printed it on coated recycled board (CRB), a recycled board that is backed by a kind of chipboard and has a coating on the outside for four-color printing.

In the study, we codified the nuances of how people touch. Do they touch but leave the package on the shelf? Do they touch and turn it to read a side or back panel? Do they pick it up by itself, or do they hold two items and compare them? Then we looked at touch frequency (the number of times someone touches a package) and touch duration (how long someone touches a package). In our study, people touched a package anywhere from three seconds to three minutes.

Here's what we found: When a shopper touches a premium package two times, they are 50 percent more likely to purchase it. Just two times, and that product is halfway to its new home. If a person touches it four times, it's 90 percent likely to be purchased.

Do you think that non-premium packaging had the same results?

It didn't.

What we found is that a shopper needs to touch plain packaging three times to be 50 percent more likely to purchase it. That might seem negligible, but when consumers want to get in and out of a



"The key takeaway is untouched is unsold"

store quickly, when there are thousands of items competing for their attention, brands know they need to convert people from shopper to buyer as fast as possible. And if they want shoppers to choose their products as fast as possible, premium packaging has the competitive advantage.

Similarly, our research found that when someone touches a premium packaging for 17 seconds, they're 50 percent more likely to purchase it. However, if that package is on CRB, it takes 41 seconds for them to be 50 percent more likely to purchase it. Again, premium packaging has a competitive advantage to conversion, when every second counts.

And that's how the study led us to this principal understanding: While capturing attention is instrumental to starting the sale, touch is pivotal in closing the sale.

So, when it comes to the study's overarching question: What is the correlation between touching a package and sales? The key takeaway is untouched is unsold.

On to the second question of our study: How does premium packaging affect people's perceptions of quality? In this part of the study, we used a simple A/B testing method. We asked participants to purchase earbuds, but they weren't the Apple brand. One product was sold in premium packaging and the other product was packaged in CRB. What we found is that people preferred the premium packaged earbuds three times more than the plain.

To examine this more deeply, we did a second test. We selected a category that people would be less familiar with, CBD serum, and we created three different brands, each with the same ingredients and claims. That way, when participants were comparing brands, the copy on the packaging was not a differentiator. Then, within each brand, the participant had four choices: three premium packages on SBS, with either a spot gloss, an embossing or a foil; and a non-premium CRB package.

Here's what we found: people purchased the CBD serum in the premium packaging 13 times more than the plain packaging. In fact, 98 percent of our participants touched premium packaging, and 93 percent of them purchased the premium. Meanwhile, only 63 percent of people touched the plain package, and only 7 percent of our participants purchased it.

When you unpack that further, 37 percent of people did not even touch the plain packaging; 56 percent of the people touched the plain packaging but didn't purchase it.

An intriguing data point that we hadn't thought to research actually surprised us: When given the choice between the different types of premium packaging, nearly 60 percent of our participants purchased the one with a foil embellishment.

The key takeaway from the study's second overarching question is clear: premium outperforms plain.

A quick recap

If I were going to make T-shirts with the study's prime insights as they pertain to the overarching questions #1 and #2, the first shirt would say: Untouched is Unsold. Remember the data? When someone touches a premium package just twice, they're 50 percent more likely to purchase it. The second T-shirt would say: Premium Outperforms Plain. Think about the CBD serum. It sold 13 times more when it was premium packaged. One thing is clear: the power and nuances of touch as it relates to shopper engagement, sales and post-purchase satisfaction are much more than a hypothesis; it's science.

Stay tuned for a follow up to this article. I'll cover the research, methodologies and results of the study's third overarching question: How does sensory marketing affect the post-purchase experience, customer satisfaction and reviews? We'll dive into ecommerce purchasing and consumers' post-purchase thoughts, behaviors and actions.



Vicki Strull has over 25 years of experience in the marketing and design industry as a brand strategist, creative director, and packaging designer. She is recognized for her expertise in brand positioning, creative leadership, and consulting with organizations on leveraging design to drive sales and build brand loyalty. In addition to her innovative approach to branding and packaging, she serves as an adjunct professor at Tulane University and frequently speaks at industry conferences in the US and internationally. Join fellow trendsetters at vickistrull.com or follow Vicki on LinkedIn @vickistrull

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Extended content labels can maximize communication

In a world where shelf appeal and information dissemination are paramount, extended content labels are becoming powerful tools for branding, marketing, compliance and consumer engagement. Adyasha Sinha reports

It all began with a pressing challenge: how to fit more information on a product label without compromising branding or shelf appeal?

In the 1970s, as regulatory frameworks in pharmaceuticals and agrochemicals became more complex and international markets expanded, manufacturers needed to provide multilingual instructions, dosage details, safety warnings and compliance information, often within limited packaging space. The answer? Booklet labels.

Pioneered in Europe and quickly adopted by global pharmaceutical and chemical companies, the first booklet labels were small printed leaflets attached to containers. Early innovators, such as CCL Industries and Denny Bros in the UK, played a key role in this development. The latter patented the Fix-a-Form label, a multi-page booklet label that combined adhesive labeling with printed literature in a single, space-efficient format. These labels allowed manufacturers to wrap crucial information around bottles, cans and vials, opening like a book, yet securely attached to the product throughout its lifecycle.

Over the decades, this concept evolved, driven by improvements in materials, adhesives and printing technology. What started as a necessity in the pharmaceutical sector soon expanded to other industries, giving rise to the broader category of extended content labels (ECL).

Market size does matter

ECLs are any type of label that creates additional space, often through the use of extra panels or pages. Traditionally, labels are printed on one side of a piece of material, but ECLs typically utilize additional sides and panels to hold more information.

This format can take many shapes: intricate booklet labels that unfold like miniature guides, eye-catching instant redeemable coupons (IRCs), clever multi-layer ECLs packing information into tight spaces, and labels embedded with digital triggers. They've become indispensable tools in the modern marketing and packaging toolkit, shaping how products are presented, understood, consumed and purchased.

'The ECL market has been rapidly evolving as consumer demands for detailed, transparent and easily accessible information on packaging increase,' notes Richard Miedema, global sales director of MPS Systems.

These aren't just a niche corner of the industry but a significant force. The market size of extended content labels was valued at 15.59 billion USD in 2023 and is projected to reach 45.6 billion USD by 2031, according to Verified Market Research. The market is expected to grow at a compound annual growth rate (CAGR) of 16.3 percent from 2024 to 2031, according to the market research agency.

Sharing her experience on the rising demand for ECLs, Cristina Arcos, general manager at US-based Blue Line Labels, observes: 'We have seen an increase in orders for ECLs from customers expanding internationally. The need to include multiple languages on packaging has led brands to adopt ECLs as a solution for adding additional languages and regulatory information without cluttering the label.'



Booklet label developed by Schreiner MediPharm for Sanofi's needle protection system

"The need to include multiple languages on packaging has led brands to adopt ECLs as a solution for adding additional languages and regulatory information without cluttering the label"

The label industry is experiencing robust growth in ECLs across a broad spectrum of sectors, including automotive, healthcare, telecommunications, electronics and industrial manufacturing. This wide-ranging applicability is encouraging manufacturers to tailor offerings to sector-specific needs, fueling innovation and product diversification.

Manon Van Der Linden, sales manager at Belgium-based Asteria Labels, says: 'We expect a rise in the adoption of multilayer labels and booklet labels to meet the rising demand for enhanced customer information such as multilingual usage guidelines, culinary instructions, safety precautions, exclusive discounts and exciting competitions. The booklet label offers a compact solution for presenting extensive information within a confined space.'

Asteria Labels has over 35 plants across Europe, providing a range of labels, flexible packaging and folding cartons for the pharmaceutical, food and beverage, animal care, personal care and FMCG industries and beyond.

Key industries targeted

The applications of ECLs span numerous industries, but

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Tombstone-shaped IRC designed by Resource Label Group

"The marketing department is rightfully selfish. They are fighting for consumer eyes on the shelves or retail stores"

pharmaceutical and nutraceutical markets are obvious places for extended content labels to thrive.

According to Future Markets Insights, the pharmaceuticals segment is expected to record the fastest CAGR of 6.8 percent from 2025 to 2035 in the ECL market. This growth is characterized by the stringent requirements imposed by regulatory bodies such as the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the European Medicines Agency (EMA), and the World Health Organization (WHO).

This emphasis on regulatory adherence has propelled the demand for innovative specialty label techniques that effectively convey vital drug information to healthcare professionals and patients. Leading the innovation arena in this segment is Schreiner MediPharm.

Part of the Germany-based Schreiner Group develops and produces innovative specialty labels for the healthcare industry. Its 32-page booklet label for the French multinational pharmaceutical and healthcare company, Sanofi, with medical information in 22 languages, is a classic case in point.

'When Sanofi conducted an international phase III clinical trial, it sought a label for its needle protection system that provided complete information in several languages. The label also had to firmly adhere to the plastic needle protection system without impairing its functionality,' shares Dr Jens Vor der Brüggen, head of research and development at Schreiner MediPharm.

He continues further: 'Among the most complicated ECL applications we encounter is when a client needs to place a large number of pages around a small diameter vial or syringe. This is akin to wrapping a small book around a curved surface. Try it, it's not easy. Even if the paper used is exceedingly flexible, when the booklet is wrapped, the pages on top become shorter than the pages on the bottom. This discrepancy requires systems designed to cut each page properly to get the correct wrap of the label on the container. We have to continually develop new cutting, folding and gluing technologies to yield a perfect ECL fit.'

The company developed a compact booklet label tightly wrapped around the needle protection system. The label adheres to the plastic substrate of the needle protection system. Due to the flexible construction of the thin booklet paper and film layers, it can be easily wrapped around the quadrangular device. A starter tab allows for easy opening and re-closing of the label.

'The booklet label is partially affixed to the device, allowing the pre-filled syringe and its contents to be readily visible after opening. The booklet features perforations, allowing for its removal before an injection; only a small part of the label remains on the device. The label material is suitable for custom overprinting using thermal transfer printers to support the processes during the clinical trial,' informs Vor der Brüggen.

Serving looks

Labels are instrumental in fitting both regulatory requirements and branding information all on one label. However, adding all the content can clutter the label, affecting the overall design. ECLs provide a more elegant alternative, allowing one to design around legally required statements without compromising visual aesthetics.

Talking about how extended content labels have given a fresh look to brands trying to balance between content and design, Jeff Bertrand, founder of JH Bertrand, says: 'Our client, SK Floor Cleaner, wanted to revamp the product label where the regulatory copy overshadowed the brand identification and benefit statements. In the 'before' product, SK's label doesn't stand out. There is too much copy with no white space. It 'looks dangerous' to use, given all the legal copy screaming for attention. As a consumer, I might walk right past this product because it doesn't look friendly.

'However, the 'after' product shows great improvement. The non-selling, intimidating regulatory copy is inside the booklet label. The label has a more prominent brand name and logo. More copy space has given the company designers a chance to add a beautiful color pattern. Additionally, the benefit statements are in larger fonts, helping to explain why the customer should purchase the product. The use of a booklet label has enabled SK to change its image, allowing it to stand out above the competition.'

ECLs also play a vital role in impacting how consumers perceive a product. Regardless of industry, brand identity is essential in labeling to ensure authenticity.

'The marketing department is rightfully selfish,' says Tom Spina, president and CEO of Luminer, a label manufacturer from Lakewood, New Jersey. 'After all, the marketing and sales departments are fighting for consumer eyes on the shelves or retail

Know your labels

Booklet labels, also known as multi-page, multi-ply, multi-layer, or onserted labels, are among the most commonly used labels to pack extensive information into a small label area. These labels print separately from the product label and can be added later to optimize your branding efforts.

Instant redeemable coupons are among the best-known marketing strategies. Usually constructed with a clear, adhesive-backed liner that serves as the base label, a coupon is printed on a separate piece of paper and is attached to the liner, creating a 'peel-away' or 'peel here' style label.

Peel-and-reseal labels are designed to enable the end-user to open and seal the label multiple times. They can take three to five panels of information within the confines of the regular prime label size.

Peel-back labels are similar to peel-and-reseal labels. These labels feature either a hinged top layer that remains connected when peeled or a peel-away top layer that can be applied to another surface.

Piggyback labels are a type of label construction where one label is placed on top of another in a single-use manner. The top label is removed and either used or discarded, and the bottom layer is either clear or contains information.

stores. By using an extended content label, both the marketing department and the regulatory department can be satisfied, giving both the room they need on the package.'

Accelerating retail action

Coupons have been a powerful tool to drive sales, support marketing initiatives, and boost visibility since 1887, when Coca-Cola co-owner Asa Candler conceived the brilliant idea to distribute handwritten tickets to consumers that could be exchanged for a complimentary glass of Coke. That marketing strategy resulted in Coca-Cola being served in every US state by 1895.

Today, these coupons have taken the shape of instant redeemable coupons (IRCs), serving an effective role in the marketplace.

Throwing more light on the role of IRCs in influencing consumer behavior, Kim Hensley, product manager at US-based Mactac Roll Label, says: 'If a consumer is looking at several products side-by-side, the one with the promotional offer will move off the store shelves faster than the products without. If it is a coupon label, the consumer feels good about their purchase because they received an additional saving. It sets you apart from the competition.'

IRCs will always be a leading force in product marketing. Due to the retail space being a competitive marketplace, IRCs are a crucial final piece of a marketing strategy to capture the consumer's attention and sway purchasing decisions.

Talking about how critical IRCs can be, Mike Apperson, CEO and president of US-based Resource Label Group, recalls: 'We had a personal care brand that wanted to run an on-package promotion using an IRC. However, there was a challenge. The product came in a small tube with limited design real estate. Our client requested that we engineer and print an IRC label that would maintain the existing space visibility and seamlessly integrate with the product packaging.

'Due to the special nature of the challenge, we printed and designed a custom label that used a tombstone-shaped tube flag. Instead of taking the well-worn approach and placing the IRC on the tube's backing, we increased the product's visual height by adding the IRC to the top. Normally, an underused area became a billboard that served a functional purpose and seamlessly accented the product design.'

Navigating the challenges

Despite the excitement for extended content labels, the path to growth isn't without its bumps. Stakeholders face several ongoing challenges.



Peel and reseal label example

> **"If a consumer is looking at several products side-by-side, the one with the promotional offer will move off the store shelves faster than the products without"**

The rise in raw material prices seriously discourages market growth in ECLs. Since producers depend on several materials, including paper, synthetic paper and plastics, to produce labels, any increase in the cost of these raw materials affects total production costs. This can make end products more expensive, making them less competitive.

Furthermore, higher expenses can compel producers to downsize the quality or functionality of labels in order to preserve profit margins, thereby lowering consumer satisfaction and confidence. The higher raw material prices thus present a difficult situation for producers to innovate and grow, constraining the market's growth for specialty labels.

Cost is another factor that hinders the growth of specialty labels. Due to the complexity of their construction, the use of advanced materials, and potentially slower production speeds, specialty labels often cost more than standard ones. 'Design can impact costs. Some brands just want coupons that help products move and deliver messages like "Save 50 cents". Others want a premium piece that conveys the brand's value,' shares Aaron Kilgore, regional vice president for Resource Label Group.

The rapid pace of technological change also puts financial strain on companies that must continuously update their equipment and processes. Adding sustainability goals to the mix further complicates this equation, as eco-friendly materials or processes may sometimes carry a cost premium, although this gap is narrowing. Finding the sweet spot that delivers performance, sustainability and value is key.

The specialty labels market faces challenges related to consumer awareness and perception. Despite the advantages of ECLs, many consumers may not fully understand the benefits or functionalities of extended labels. This lack of awareness can limit the market's growth, as consumers may not seek products with specialty labels. Additionally, ensuring consistency in labeling standards across different regions remains a challenge, as variations in regulatory requirements can complicate the production and distribution of ECLs.

In recent years, supply chain vulnerabilities have also been highlighted as a threat to those in the labels industry. Shortages or delays in specialized films, papers or adhesives can halt production.

However, where challenges exist, there are also tremendous opportunities.

Significant growth opportunities exist in emerging markets, where the adoption of advanced packaging continues to accelerate. Specific industry segments, like nutraceutical, cannabis or craft beverage markets, present fertile ground for innovative labeling techniques.

Additionally, technological advancements such as faster digital presses, smarter sensors, more sustainable materials and new interactive possibilities open doors for creative design and new applications that were previously impossible or impractical.

The next chapter

As brands look to do more with less — less packaging, less waste and less confusion — extended content labels provide the extra space, storytelling capacity and intelligence needed to meet today's packaging challenges and tomorrow's consumer expectations.

The message is clear for brand owners, converters, suppliers and technologists alike: The label matters more than ever. Investing in future-ready labeling practices isn't just about keeping up; it's about unlocking new ways to connect, inform, persuade and, ultimately, succeed in tomorrow's complex and competitive marketplace.

Scan the QR code to read about an installation at All4Labels of an HP Indigo PageWide press for extended content labels

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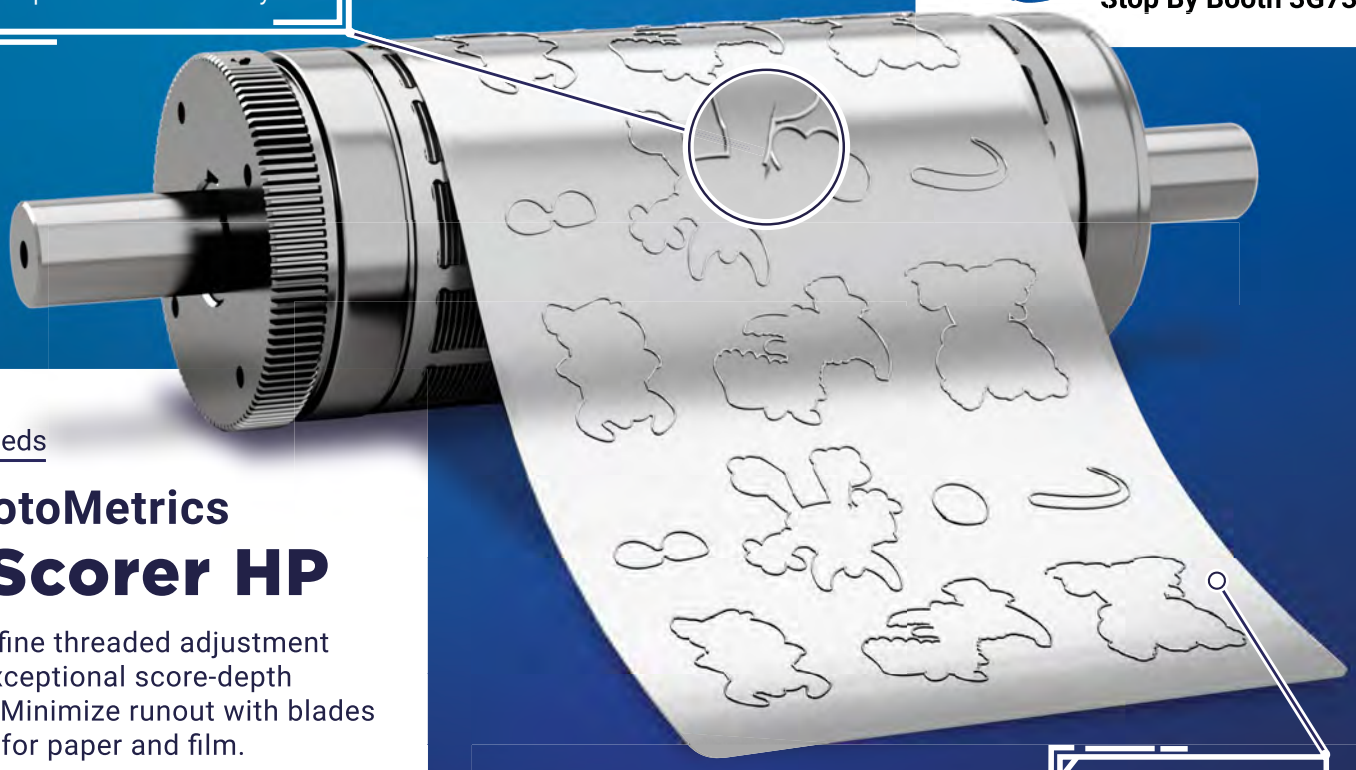

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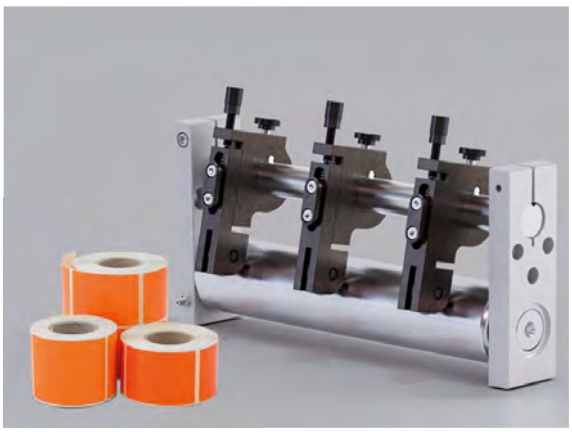

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THE AGE OF AUTOMATION

AI technology, automated presses and robotic machines are making label production more efficient, streamlined and precise, leading to a future of fully automated print facilities. Selah Zighelboim reports

A collaborative automation demonstration will return to Labelexpo this September, when the trade show opens in Barcelona for the first time.

There, Martin Automatic, ETI Converting, LemuGroup and Lundberg Tech will partner to showcase how their technology can function together as part of an integrated, automated converting line — from unwinding rolls of material, to coating, laminating and die-cutting; through matrix handling; and finally rewinding, packing the rolls into boxes and palletizing them. This demonstration, first showcased at Labelexpo Americas 2024, will be a live job for Spanish label converter Mirmar.

'The companies collaborating in this project have known each other for a long time,' says Eider Lizarbe, group marketing manager at LemuGroup. 'We complement each other perfectly and have worked together on multiple occasions. Each company is highly specialized and competent in its area, so by joining forces we can create one of the most productive label converting machines on the market.'

Automated label production processes like this one are becoming increasingly common at converter facilities around the world, as companies look to increase efficiency, reduce errors and operate with smaller workforces. At the same time, suppliers are meeting demand for these technologies by introducing new machinery with increasingly higher levels of automation.

Additionally, the rapid adoption of artificial intelligence, particularly in inspection and workflow management technology, is further advancing and deepening the possibilities for automation in the labeling industry.

It is this combination of automation and AI that experts say could one day produce 'lights-out' print facilities, where AI directs workflow, while machines run jobs automatically and robots move products across facility floors.

'It's not a question of if,' says Diego Diaz, product manager of automation for Indigo at HP. 'It's a question of when.'

THE BENEFITS OF AI AND AUTOMATION

Though they often complement each other, automation and AI are not the same thing. Automation is the use of machinery to perform tasks without human intervention, while AI is software that mimics human intelligence to solve problems, analyze data and adapt to new circumstances.

For many converters, workforce challenges are a major driver for adopting these technologies. Many companies struggle to hire skilled press operators, especially those required to operate flexo presses. Automation enables converters to hire fewer press operators, while the workers they do have often require less training. Additionally, automation allows workers to spend less time performing repetitive tasks and instead focus on more innovative and value-added work.

"EVEN THE FINEST OF MOTOR TASKS CAN BE DONE WITH ROBOTS. GENERALLY, ROBOTS CAN DO THEM MORE CONSISTENTLY AND MORE ACCURATELY THAN A PERSON CAN DO THEM. BUT IT COMES DOWN TO ROI"

'Not just for big companies, but also for smaller ones, it's getting harder and harder to find and retain those skilled workers,' says Lemu's Lizarbe. 'With automation, we can handle manual processes with no manual intervention.'

Automation and AI also boost productivity and reduce downtime. Unlike human workers, they don't need breaks. This greater efficiency will be particularly beneficial as the industry trends toward faster turnaround times and shorter runs, which also means increasing numbers of orders.

Automation and AI can also perform tasks with greater precision than human workers, increasing accuracy and reducing errors.

These technologies can also advance sustainability goals by helping converters comply with sustainability regulations and collect data on sustainability metrics and carbon emissions. Their precision can assist with using resources more efficiently and reducing waste.

AUTONOMOUS WORKFLOW

Suppliers across the entire production workflow offer products that use AI and automation. These companies are launching new technologies almost every day.

For labeling, the potential of AI and automation begins before printing. In addition to receiving the order, AI can help designers brainstorm artwork ideas and assist pre-press operators in putting together packaging and labeling specifications. Esko has a range of products that use AI to optimize pre-press operations. This includes Esko Comply, which reviews artwork for regulatory compliance; Esko Print Clone for color matching; and Esko Phoenix, which optimizes the layout of labels on webs to reduce waste.

'AI is effectively changing our world and changing the way we do things,' says Jan De Roeck, Esko's marketing director, industry relations and strategy. 'It's effectively solving real-world problems. If you validate that with customers, they will adopt it.'

For the printing process, presses can include nonstop unwinding and turret rewinders for continuous printing, or check color and quality automatically, reducing the number of operators needed.

Automation enhances flexographic presses. Flexo presses can now automatically adjust web tension, registration and print pressure. Automation features are also reducing makeready time and waste, allowing flexo to become increasingly suitable for some short-run jobs.

Finishing equipment also provides more automation capabilities that can streamline the setup process, reduce changeover time and allow direct connection to factory networks.

AI can enhance inspection systems throughout the production process. At EyeC, for example, AI is improving the accuracy of defect detection, increasing efficiency and reducing waste.

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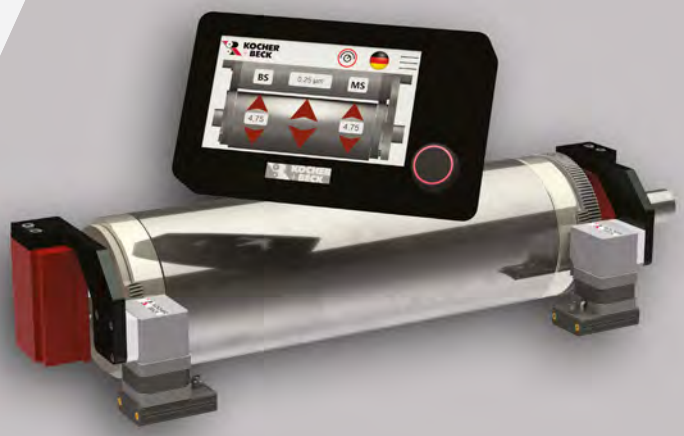

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The Sharko5 autonomous mobile robot, provided by MoviGo Robotics and HP, is able to transport pallets in print facilities

ROBOTS ON THE PRESSROOM FLOOR

Robots are increasingly being used to perform mundane and repetitive tasks, such as packaging boxes and moving pallets.

This technology includes LemuGroup's UltraCompact end-of-line automation system, which uses robotics to take a roll directly from converting equipment, package it in a box and palletize it without manual intervention.

LemuGroup has also partnered with an inspection systems company to integrate quality control technology into its UltraCompact system. If this technology detects a defect, the system can alert the rewinder and mark the defective roll. The UltraCompact is then able to identify the roll as defective and discard it before it is packed.

'Our goal is not only to automate the process, but also to guarantee quality through automation,' Lizarbe says.

HP also offers customers robotic machines through partnerships with robotics companies. These include machines that can do core cutting, loading and offloading rolls, and moving pallets. For example, the Sharko5, in partnership with MoviGo Robotics, is an autonomous mobile robot that can transport pallets indoors.'We do have sales in the labels and packaging space,' Diaz says of HP's robotics offerings. 'Those sites are just coming online now.'

AI is also powering MIS and ERP technology, such as at Cerm. The company's AI-based Scheduling Optimizer can help improve workflows and efficiency.

CASE STUDY: MERCIAN LABELS

UK converter Mercian Labels has achieved a high level of automation with non-stop digital printing. This initiative earned the company the Team Achievement Global Label Award at Labelexpo Europe 2023.

Nonstop digital printing has transformed Mercian Labels since going live with ABG Connect in September 2022. In the first two years of its implementation, the converter saw a fivefold increase in profitability, while turnover per employee improved by 22 percent, as productivity increased due to faster finishing automation. Accuracy in its products has also improved.

'Manufacturing is a leveraged business, so it doesn't take very much productivity improvement to significantly increase your profitability,' says Dr Adrian Steele, managing director at Mercian Labels.

The most critical components of Mercian's automation project are its Cerm software and ABG technology. By replacing its own ERP system with Cerm MIS and learning how to use it effectively, a three-year process that began in 2016, Mercian laid the foundation for building an automation strategy. Automation at Mercian started ramping up in 2019 with the integration of an automated ABG converting line. Connecting the Cerm MIS, ABG's Connect, and ABG's Digicon machine enabled the Digicon to run nonstop for complex, multi-SKU jobs.

To fully connect the hardware and the software, Mercian prints a QR code with instructions at the start of each SKU.

This process integrates with Mercian's digital Screen and Xeikon presses, which connect with the Cerm MIS to receive the Job Definition Format (JDF) description and then print the QR codes.

The goal of this process was to achieve as close to light-out manufacturing as possible. However, Steele says the company has not quite achieved that, as Mercian has not been able to automate die-changing and core-loading due to practical and ROI considerations. These are the only two components of Mercian's nonstop digital printing process that still require operator intervention.

For other converters looking to implement automated, nonstop digital printing, Steele's advice is to have a good ERP system, a culture of continuous improvement and strong relationships with print technology providers. Developing a culture of accuracy in the order processing function is also key, as it's easy to automate waste.

Mercian Labels plans to continue adding automation in the future.

'The team is very proud,' Steele says. 'They know that they are leading their field and doing things that are genuinely new and improving the business.'

LIGHTS-OUT MANUFACTURING

True lights-out automation, where an operator could turn the lights off, walk away and return to a completed product, may very well be coming to label converter facilities one day.

In fact, HP's Diaz believes that lights-out manufacturing is inevitable across manufacturing in all industries globally.

AI is a key component in transforming facilities from simply having a lot of automation to achieving true lights-out manufacturing.

'The AI component is very important, particularly when we're talking about scheduling, batching and things like that, when you're looking at so many orders that are more than a person can make decisions on,' Diaz says. 'You need AI to make the decisions, and the person can guide the AI on what we want to favor, do



The AI-powered Esko Print Clone in action



LemuGroup's GTU and UltraCompact

"AI IS EFFECTIVELY CHANGING OUR WORLD AND CHANGING THE WAY WE DO THINGS"

we want to favor smaller batches, larger batches, this particular type of work or this particular type of customer?'

Connecting the hardware and the software in automated changeovers is a challenge to achieving true lights-out automation. Diaz says that he's starting to see some companies implement processes to address this, but there's still more to be done.

At present, Diaz agrees that die-cut changeovers remain a challenge, as this is a process that requires a large number of variable, physical actions with fine motor skills. This could be achieved with robotics, but doing so is currently cost-prohibitive.

'Even the finest of motor tasks can be done with robots,' Diaz says. 'Generally, robots can do them more consistently and more accurately than a person can do them. But it comes down to ROI. The more complex the task is, the more expensive the robot usually is.'

De Roeck uses the analogy of a factory-wide robotic cell. He envisions a future where automation and AI power each department, such as invoicing, sales, prepress, and floor planning and then integrate these departments.

'Everything in between can and will be automated at some point,' De Roeck says. 'Why would you still have press operators if robotics can, today, feed the plates and also the raw materials into the press? Why would you need somebody to conduct the press?'

THE HUMAN TOUCH

The World Economic Forum's Future of Jobs Report 2025 identifies technological change as one of the most significant trends for the labor market for the rest of this decade. Of the nine technological trends named in the report, employers ranked AI and information processing technologies as the most transformative, with 85.7 percent of employers expecting them to transform their businesses. Robots and autonomous systems ranked second, with 57.8 percent of employers saying this would affect their business.

In the labeling industry, hiring is often cited as one of the biggest challenges, if not the biggest challenge, facing businesses. Automation today is helping companies face this challenge. But with a potential future of fully autonomous print facilities and AI-powered workflows, what role do humans play in label printing in the future?

'I tend to believe that when you have knowledgeable people in our industry, the last thing that you do is get rid of them,' Diaz says. 'We need more knowledgeable people in this industry. Automation allows you to move people to higher-value positions. Especially when I look at mobile robotics, the number of people that I see towing around pallet jacks behind them with rolls on them, or driving a forklift with rolls back and forth, going from point A to point B. That is not the best use of the human mind. People are so much more sophisticated than that.'

Diaz says that when he ran his own commercial printing companies, he never reduced his workforce due to automation. Instead, automation enabled his team members to take on different roles. For example, a person who had been moving pallets could instead apply their knowledge of the shop floor to a role in logistics and planning.

De Roeck says that companies will still need people to build relationships with customers, to figure out applications for specific products and come up with and test new ideas. AI may play a role in this, but De Roeck believes that it will likely happen in collaboration with humans.

'We must excel at what we're really good at as humans, and that is being human,' De Roeck says. 'It's the logic behind the why and how we do things. The execution of tasks is something that, whenever it can be automated, will be automated. That's not new. That's been the case since the advent of the steam engine, to the very first Industrial Revolution. That mantra has remained unchanged. It's just the technology that we use is continuously evolving and becoming faster and faster. But ultimately, society is built with people, not machines.'

AUTOMATION EDUCATION AT LABELEXPO

Labelexpo Europe 2025 will feature educational sessions on automation and AI. At The Pulse education area on the exhibit floor, attendees will be able to learn about how label converters are implementing these technologies. On Sept 18 at 11 am at The Pulse, Steve Metcalf, chief AI officer at Imagine AI Live, will speak about how AI and automation are helping converters increase efficiency and reduce waste. That same day, from 10 am-2:45 pm, Labelexpo will also host a Label Academy Master Class on automation, providing an in-depth look at the technologies and trends driving this transformation.

Scan the QR code to learn more about automation and sustainability at Labelexpo Europe 2025



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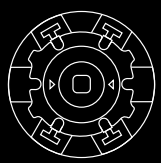
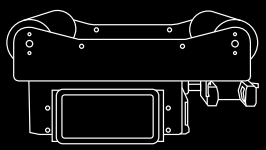
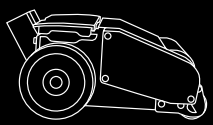

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All4Labels launches flexible packaging division

Production facilities are strategically located in Germany with materials readily available through established supply partnerships

All4Flexibles brings digital innovation and sustainable materials to the growing flexible packaging market. Piotr Wnuk reports

The global flexible packaging market is experiencing unprecedented growth, projected to jump from 260 billion USD in 2024 to 406 billion USD by 2032, a growth rate of 5.80 percent annually. This dramatic expansion reflects changing consumer preferences, particularly in the food industry, where flexible packaging offers enhanced convenience, extended shelf life and improved product protection compared to traditional rigid packaging formats.

Recognizing this substantial market opportunity, All4Labels has strategically launched All4Flexibles, a dedicated B2B platform that leverages the company's established expertise to address the specific demands of the flexible packaging sector. The new division represents more than a simple product line extension; it embodies a comprehensive approach focused on digitalization, automation and sustainability in flexible packaging production.

Strategic expansion builds on core strengths

All4Labels' move into flexible packaging represents a calculated expansion built upon decades of specialized expertise in digital printing and label production. The company has established itself as one of the leaders in pressure-sensitive labels, which form the foundation of its business model and provide the technical knowledge base for this strategic diversification.

Dr Günther Weymans, CEO of All4Labels, provides context for the strategic decision: 'PSL accounts for approximately 65 percent of our 1 billion EUR annual revenues, and we are committed to increasing this share in the years to come. Moreover, we have developed a high specialization in healthcare labels and innovative categories in smart labels. Beyond these core competencies, we are actively investing in the online business, with All4Flexibles serving as a key pillar and perfectly fitting with the company's focus on innovation, digitalization, and sustainability, which guides everything they do.'

The new division capitalizes on All4Labels' quarter-century of digital printing expertise while expanding into sustainable materials and advanced printing technologies, including digital, flexographic and gravure processes. This multi-technology approach enables All4Flexibles to serve diverse customer requirements across various industries, from food and beverage, pharmaceuticals to consumer goods.

Speed and efficiency define operations

Stefan Harder, CEO of All4Flexibles, emphasizes the platform's competitive advantages, particularly its rapid turnaround times, which address a critical industry pain point. Digital orders are typically ready in just 10 working days, a significant improvement over traditional flexible packaging lead times that can extend weeks or months depending on complexity and volume requirements.

"'We have plans to expand our flexible packaging online business into Austria, Switzerland, France and the UK in the short to mid-term"

This accelerated timeline reflects the broader industry trend toward shorter production cycles and more agile supply chains. Modern brands increasingly require packaging that can adapt quickly to seasonal campaigns, product launches and market changes, making speed a crucial differentiator in the competitive landscape.

The online shop features sophisticated 3D preview functionality and user-friendly design tools, democratizing packaging creation for both seasoned professionals and newcomers to flexible packaging procurement. These digital tools eliminate traditional barriers to entry, enabling smaller companies to access high-quality, flexible packaging without requiring extensive technical expertise or large minimum order quantities.

'Indeed, digitalization and automation are pivotal to our success in fulfilling these demands,' Harder emphasizes, highlighting how technology enables the company to maintain quality while accelerating production timelines.

With production facilities strategically located in Germany and materials readily available through established supply partnerships, All4Flexibles ensures shorter delivery times across European markets while maintaining consistent quality standards.

The company's advanced digital processes and automated production methods enable the efficient handling of small and medium-sized runs, significantly reducing human error risks and ensuring that each order meets stringent quality requirements, which are particularly crucial in industries like food packaging, where safety and integrity are paramount.

Sustainability drives material innovation

Environmental responsibility has evolved from a marketing consideration to a fundamental business requirement, and All4Flexibles has positioned sustainability as a core operational principle rather than an afterthought. Gabriela Neves Ferri, global vice president of R&D and sustainability at All4Labels, emphasizes how environmental considerations shape every aspect of the business strategy.

'Sustainability is at the core of our operations, and also All4Flexibles aligns with the group's commitment to the

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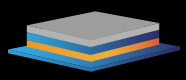	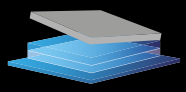
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3-P (product, planet, people) sustainability model, offering sustainable alternatives to traditional materials, including recyclable mono materials such as OPP/CPP and MDO-PE/PE,' says Ferri.

The platform's material portfolio reflects extensive research and development investment in sustainable alternatives. Beyond conventional recyclable mono materials, All4Flexibles offers innovative paper-based options suitable for direct food contact, providing genuine plastic-free alternatives while maintaining the high barrier properties essential for product protection and extended shelf life.

'We optimize material thickness based on specific packaging size requirements,' adds Ferri. 'We also offer innovative papers suitable for direct food contact, as a plastic-free alternative, while maintaining high barrier properties and compatibility with existing packaging lines.'

This materials optimization represents a sophisticated approach to sustainability that goes beyond simple material substitution. By tailoring thickness to specific applications, All4Flexibles reduces material consumption while maintaining performance, demonstrating how environmental responsibility and operational efficiency can align.

Ferri notes that while traditional materials remain important for certain applications, 'the advancement of innovative materials is showing promising results, with highly encouraging feedback from our customers.' This customer validation suggests that sustainable materials are increasingly meeting or exceeding performance expectations across diverse applications.

Market adoption of sustainable materials has accelerated significantly due to improved cost competitiveness. Harder notes: 'Pricing for our sustainable materials is now only minimally different from conventional options, which has facilitated the market adoption of sustainable products. To stay competitive, we are optimizing material volumes, implementing innovative printing and finishing techniques, and exploring cost-reduction strategies. This enables us to offer high-performance, cost-effective packaging approaches that align with our sustainability goals and meet customer demands.'

"We are observing a movement toward smaller batch sizes and shorter lead times and this market niche is what we are targeting at All4Flexibles"

Personalized service

Despite operating primarily online, All4Flexibles prioritizes human connection through personalized customer service. Harder's team consists of experienced FlexPack specialists who provide support via phone, email and in-person consultations at the Zeithain, Germany, facility and other global locations.

'We engage with customers from the initial project phase to create tailored methods that meet their specific needs. Given our product complexity, effective communication and personal service are vital to help customers make informed decisions,' Harder explains.

The platform strikes a balance between customization and convenience through curated material selections. 'In the FlexPack market, we operate with a 10-day lead time and initially provide a curated selection of printable materials,' says Harder. 'We acknowledge that many customers know what they need, so we offer suitable alternatives and keep the preferred materials in stock. For those who need specific product advice, our team is dedicated to helping identify the right materials based on their product requirements. Our customer service team supports clients throughout the entire process, from material selection to production oversight, ensuring a seamless experience.'

European expansion

All4Flexibles has ambitious growth plans across Europe. 'We have plans to expand our flexibles packaging online business into Austria, Switzerland, France and the UK in the short to mid-term,' says Weymans. 'We are focused on understanding market dynamics and customer preferences in each country, establishing strong local partnerships, and ensuring efficient logistics as key components of our expansion strategy. This new brand will perfectly fit into the group's multi-products business structure, which encloses PSL as a core competence, shrink sleeves, smart labels and more, and will enhance its assets by emphasizing online sales and e-commerce.'

The Zeithain facility represents a significant strategic asset, equipped with state-of-the-art machinery and positioned for continued expansion as market demand grows. All4Flexibles has invested in advanced production equipment that enables diverse packaging format production while maintaining the flexibility to accommodate varying order sizes and specifications.

'At our Zeithain facility, we utilize two machines for bag production, one of which has been recently installed, with plans for additional machines to accommodate the increasing demand,' says Harder. 'The new machine provides us with exciting capabilities, such as producing die-cut stand-up pouches. Additionally, upcoming material innovations will allow us to create oversized packaging, ideal for refill applications, and we will soon be able to offer stand-up pouches with spouts as well. Some of our customers just need printed films and they finish the product on its lines, and this is also a possibility.'

This production flexibility caters to diverse market segments, ranging from companies requiring finished packaging ready for immediate use to those requiring printed films for in-house finishing operations. The ability to serve both models demonstrates All4Flexibles' understanding of the varied operational requirements and supply chain preferences of its customers.

The facility's expansion plans reflect confidence in market growth projections and commitment to meeting increasing demand without compromising delivery timelines or quality standards. Strategic equipment investments enable the production of specialized formats, such as die-cut and spouted stand-up pouches, addressing premium market segments where differentiation and functionality command a higher value.

Material availability represents a significant operational challenge. Harder acknowledges: 'One of the major challenges we face is the short-term availability of materials, which can often be limited in the market. To address this issue, we are actively exploring various methods to ensure that we can maintain 100 percent availability and meet our customers' needs on short notice, keeping the 10 days of lead time.'

Digital transformation drives innovation

All4Flexibles leverages the All4Labels Group's 25 years of digital expertise to revolutionize packaging production beyond traditional printing. Harder explains:



All4Flexibles aligns with the group's commitment to the 3-P (Product, Planet, People) sustainability model

"Pricing for our sustainable materials is now only minimally different from conventional options, which has facilitated the market adoption of sustainable products"

'Our commitment to digital thinking extends beyond printing as we re-engineer the entire production process with a focus on digitalization and automation. At All4Flexibles, we emphasize that innovative technologies are essential for reducing lead times. Digital printing, for example, enables us to create a diverse range of print designs without the costs and delays associated with tooling. We expect ongoing innovations in this field and plan to make incremental investments to enhance our capabilities further.'

Looking toward the future, market dynamics suggest continued evolution in packaging material preferences, with sustainability considerations increasingly influencing procurement decisions across industries. Harder predicts these trends while highlighting All4Flexiles' strategic positioning to capitalize on emerging opportunities.

'The flexible packaging industry will likely continue to rely heavily on plastic materials; however, we expect paper packaging to significantly increase its market share,' he says. 'From our perspective, ensuring product protection and extending shelf life will remain the top priorities. Additionally, similar to trends in other packaging sectors, we are observing a movement toward smaller batch sizes and shorter lead times, and this market niche is what we are targeting at All4Flexibles.'

This market trend toward smaller batches and accelerated timelines reflects broader changes in consumer behavior, retail strategies and supply chain management. Brands increasingly require packaging that supports agile marketing campaigns, seasonal promotions and rapid product iteration cycles, creating opportunities for suppliers capable of delivering flexibility without sacrificing quality or cost-effectiveness.

The industry's gradual shift toward paper-based materials presents both opportunities and challenges for flexible packaging producers. While paper offers enhanced sustainability credentials, maintaining barrier properties and production compatibility requires significant technical expertise and material innovation, areas where All4Flexibles' research and development capabilities provide competitive advantages.

Scan the QR code to find out more about All4Flexibles



All4Labels restructures operations with new organizational model

All4Labels Global Packaging Group announced a comprehensive reorganization designed to better serve evolving customer needs through a new end-market-driven organizational model focused on profit and loss accountability and market proximity.

The company restructured its operations around four dedicated end-market segments: food, including beer, beverages, wine and spirits; home and personal care; healthcare; and industry, covering chemicals, agrochemicals, automotive and tobacco sectors.

'This industry is evolving faster than ever. Packaging and labels have become a strategic asset for brands, expected to embody brand values, meet regulatory demands and elevate the consumer experience,' said Harald Schulz, chairman of the advisory board at All4Labels. 'Our role as industry pioneers is to shape an organizational model that is forward-looking and closer to our customers.'

The restructuring aims to enable faster response times, deeper industry expertise and more reliable end-to-end delivery by aligning internal structure with external market dynamics. The company has expanded its multinational client scope under chief sales officer Guido Iannone to identify cross-country business opportunities and convert them into long-term value.

'This new organizational model will strengthen our ability to anticipate market shifts and to enhance proximity and cross-functional collaboration and create conditions to accelerate growth, foster innovation and unlock new business opportunities,' said Iannone.

All4Labels has also introduced a new Specialties Division focused on digital and sustainable packaging, incorporating existing vertical competencies, including online businesses, intelligent and secure packaging from Integritag, and the group's patented sustainable labeling alternatives, such as StarDirect.

'At All4Labels, we draw strength from our deep industry heritage while executing a bold, forward-looking strategy to ensure long-term success,' said Guenther Weymans, chief executive officer of All4Labels. 'Our ambition is clear: to lead with purpose, drive sustainable growth, and build an agile, future-ready organization that creates lasting value for all stakeholders.'

The reorganization reflects the company's commitment to creating a more agile, customer-centric and performance-driven organization that can deliver integrated market solutions tailored to each sector's unique challenges while maintaining operational excellence.

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Edale demonstrates in-line carton workflow

With in-line folding cartons now taking center stage at Labelexpo Europe 2025, Edale has previewed the press it plans to bring to the show. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

Canon-owned Edale recently held an open house called 'Rethinking Carton Production' at its UK production facility. The event provided an opportunity not only to see the press the company plans to bring to Labelexpo Europe 2025, but also to discuss the wider future of in-line flexo production.

The 600mm (24in)-wide 8-color FL5 single-pass carton press demonstrated during the open house was configured with jumbo unwind, turnbar for reverse printing, Edale's EZFoil cold foil unit, a final cast and cure module to add a holographic finish, an in-line FDC-600 flatbed cut and crease module and a shingling conveyor.

The FL5 press is configured with both UV and IR lamps, the latter for water-based inks and coatings. The press runs up to 180m/min on substrates up to 700 microns (24pt). Web inspection is provided by a BST TubeScan 4000.

The FDC-600 module runs at 13,000 impressions per hour and applies 120 tons of cut pressure. In addition to cut and crease, the FDC-600 can also provide embossing and braille.

For fast job changeover, it incorporates a quick-release chase and pre-register, which automatically positions the print cylinder based on job recall data. Delivery is via a de-nesting system that allows easy collation of finished blanks. Waste is collected on a separate conveyor and chopped, ready for disposal.

Whether converters choose the in-line flatbed configuration or rotary cut/crease tooling depends largely on the profile of jobs.

Explains Gary Roberts, head of sales EMEA at Edale: 'A simple profile cut is more suited to rotary. Flatbed is better for short runs, with a changeover time of just 20 minutes per die, and makeready is faster and with less waste than rotary. Also, flatbed tooling is much cheaper, and these tools can be made in-house. But flatbed is limited by speed to around 80m/min compared to 130m/min for full rotary, so it all depends on the kind of job.'

Cost calculator

Edale demonstrated its Carton Cost Calculator tool, which compares in-line flexo with multi-stage litho folding carton production. The calculator takes into account a range of factors, including capital costs and depreciation, power, uptime, labor, operating speeds, run length, carton size and stepping, makeready, waste, plates and tapes, die tools and consumables. One insight, according to Roberts, is that it costs 5 to 10 percent less to buy carton stock on the roll than to buy sheets. The calculator assumes printing and converting a 286 x 257mm (10 x 11in) carton. Calculations are based only on machine operating times, so they do not include work-in-progress time, which would tend to skew the results further toward in-line production.

Using the calculator, the first example job looked at simple 4-color surface printing. This shows in-line flexo with a significant production cost advantage at run lengths from 5,000 up to 75,000 cartons, with the economic transition point at 76,900. Most striking is the production time savings for in-line flexo: 222 minutes compared to 407 minutes for the litho job. Negatives for in-line include higher overall waste, mainly accounted for by higher makeready waste, and lower annual print capacity.

The second example looked at a 4-color surface and reverse print. This showed an even greater advantage for in-line flexo on shorter runs, and a 6.91 percent cost advantage even at runs of over 1 million cartons. Production time savings are even greater, at over 58 percent of the overall litho job time. The annual print capacity is over 17 percent higher than for the litho operation.

'When reverse print is included, there is no economic crossover because it would need another press run on sheet-fed,' says Ryan Barrett, head of sales at Edale-Canon.

The third example was surface print, reverse print and foiling. This showed a wider production cost advantage for in-line, even at run lengths of over 1 million cartons. Total production time is one-third that of the litho operation.

Summarizing the results, Barrett says: 'For short, medium and long runs, one of the greatest strengths of the in-line solution is small format, embellished, high quality cartons.'



Edale FL5 carton press with in-line flatbed die cut/crease unit

"For short, medium and long runs, one of the greatest strengths of the in-line solution is small format, embellished, high-quality cartons"

All change at the top

Canon acquired Edale just over three years ago as part of an ambitious program to establish itself as a major player across multiple labels and package printing segments. It was clear from this event that Edale is central to that strategy. After 20 years as managing director of Edale, James Boughton has moved to Canon Production Printing (CPP), Edale's parent company, to take on the role of director of regional sales and operations development - labels and packaging. His key role will be integrating the Edale brand and equipment into Canon's global sales and support operations across the Americas, EMEA and APAC.

Into Boughton's shoes as managing director steps Lachlan Buirds, who joined Edale as general manager.

For a case study of Edale's carton press in action at Tamar Packaging, turn to page 35


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Tamar Packaging Solutions blazes trail in folding carton

Tamar Packaging Solutions has shown how in-line converting and problem-solving for customers can create a powerful niche in the highly competitive folding carton market. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

Paul Baker in front of Edale FL5 carton press with in-line flatbed cut-crease module

Located in the stunning Tamar Valley in Southwest England, Tamar Packaging Solutions has carved a successful niche in the folding carton market using Edale in-line flexo technology.

The company specializes in direct food contact carton board products for the FMCG market, including printed U-cards, base cards, tray inserts and folded/glued cartons and sleeves, primarily for the bakery markets.

Privately owned Tamar Packaging Solutions is run on a day-to-day basis by technical operations manager Paul Baker.

Baker has a long history in the labels industry. Before joining what was then Tamar Labels in 2011, he had worked for 12 years at Chesapeake's Yatton, Bristol site, working his way up from rewind department to pre-press, then Mark Andy operator.

In 2014, Tamar Labels sold off the labels side of the business and stripped out the Mark Andy, Nilpeter and HP Indigo presses, leaving only a solitary 4-color Edale Sigma press, which mainly produced U-cards for pastry products.

Tamar Packaging then found itself with a unique opportunity to start the business again, 'pretty much from scratch', Baker says.

Focusing only on paperboard and carton products, by 2017, the business was strong enough to install a new Edale FL5-510 press.

Covid proved a turning point. 'We grew through Covid by taking on a lot of new customers,' recalls Baker. 'We took risks by purchasing board materials we had no orders for, but soon started to roll through it.'

At the height of the pandemic in 2020, Tamar purchased a 2-color Edale FL5 mainly for blank card work, and an Edale slitter-rewinder to slit down master rolls. In 2022, Tamar added another 8-color Edale FL5 carton press.

Flatbed in-line

Tamar Packaging's most recent acquisition is an Edale FL5 equipped with in-line flatbed die-cutting/creasing. The new FL5 has a wider web width of 530mm and can handle thicker board materials up to 700 microns.

Like Tamar's other FL5 presses, the machine is equipped with Edale's full automation package, including AiiR autonomous inking, auto impression and print registration, along with jumbo unwinds, rail-mounted turnbars, UV and IR drying/curing capability, BST monitors and shingling delivery tables.

Where Tamar's existing FL5 presses are equipped with rotary die-cutting, the new machine is configured with an in-line flatbed die-cutting/creasing module.

'The only problem we found with rotary tooling is getting the high level of crease,' explains Baker. 'Rotary is great for perfing and creasing U-cards, but not for folding cartons. You can only achieve a high level of creasing with solid male and female dies, but these can be very expensive for a set, which means you need a very long running job to make it cost-effective. Up to now, we have potentially been missing out on a lot of folding carton work. So, the purchase of the flatbed die-cutter opens up new markets for us.'

"Tamar Packaging Solutions' real super power is the ability to solve customers' performance and sustainability challenges using coating technology"

Finding a niche

The folding carton market is dominated by highly consolidated groups using sheet-fed offset technology and multi-stage finishing. Tamar Packaging Solutions has thrived by working out where in-line flexo can, and cannot, compete.

Explains Baker: 'It's been a big learning curve for us. Initially, we were trying to quote on everything. We found that we couldn't compete on the bigger blank sizes when going up against the litho guys because we can only get two to three blanks on one repeat. But, if you start to find the sweet spots where the format size fits and where we can print and coat in-line, we can take the edge back. But it took a long time to get there.'

Tamar Packaging's key competitive advantage against litho is the ability to coat, print and crease/die-cut in one pass. 'On the Edale FL5 presses, we can coat and then print up to seven colors on the other side at speeds up to 150m/min.

'Working to customer forecasts, we can forward plan raw materials three to four months ahead whilst normally holding one to two weeks finished stock, therefore being able to react quickly to changes on demand or the need for promotional designs without having to wait for large quantities of old stock to be used up,' says Baker.

'With our larger customers, they place forward orders, which we print when it makes most sense for us, then we hold stock that they can call off at 48 hours' notice. We work in a similar way with our board suppliers, so we can call stock off, including mixed loads.'

In 2023, Tamar Packaging acquired its first Vega off-line straight gluing machine, allowing the company to take this critical process step in-house. The Vega can handle a wide variety of box sizes and styles, from cartons to sleeves.

Coatings expertise

Tamar Packaging Solutions' real superpower is the ability to solve customers' performance and sustainability challenges with coating technology.

In the bakery sector, for example, grease migration traditionally requires the use of a plastic barrier to protect the board from contamination.

Working with its coating suppliers, Tamar now offers a selection of grease and moisture-resistant varnish barriers specifically designed for direct food contact, eliminating the need to use plastic.

'Coatings and specialist barriers which we apply in-line are an absolute game-changer for us,' says Baker. 'Where coatings also have to work as a heat seal layer, we can make sure our coatings match the heat-sealing properties of PE.'

Tamar used to buy barrier materials for these applications. 'But now we apply our own coatings and come up with levels of coating that work with different products. We know which anilox to use for which application. So, every product has its own level of coating.

On our Edale presses, we put barrier coating on one side, flip the web over and print on the other side and then die-cut all in one pass.'

Coatings suppliers have collaborated with Tamar Packaging to test their new technologies.

'We work closely with our board and coating suppliers, which often involves a lot of trial and error, to get the best products for our customers. We have found that some customers are buying boards that are over-specified for their products, where we can apply coatings to just the level they need. Once customers have successfully tested a particular coating, we record that information, so each individual customer has their own specification.'

Continues Baker: 'Our main push is toward using natural barriers, which do not impact recycling. Our customers are also asking us to test for compostability. There is still a lot of work to do on certain products to make them fully recyclable, but we will get there.'

In 2022, Tamar Packaging became FSC-accredited for the supply of boards suitable for direct and indirect food contact.

While bakery packaging is at the core of Tamar Packaging's business, other end-use markets are also growing rapidly. These include frozen foods, where water-resistant coatings and high-quality graphics are required, and 'hot food on the move', with hot cabinet displays becoming more common in supermarkets, forecourts and even vending machines. Tamar tailors the combination of inks, varnishes and carton board to allow the packaging to withstand high temperatures.

The future

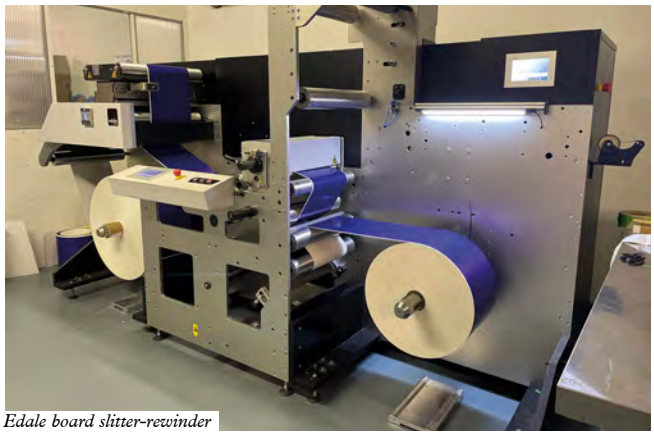
It is worth pointing out that the workforce at Tamar Packaging is just 12 production staff.

Such a lean workforce can be largely attributed to the automation on the Edale presses.

'Automation has taken a lot of the fun out of printing,' laughs Baker, 'and servicing has become more difficult.'

Following the installation of the new Edale FL5, Baker has taken on a new production supervisor and is in the process of adding new production staff.

With its unique combination of in-line flexo production, product diversification and coatings expertise, Tamar Packaging Solutions looks set for a bright future in one of print's most competitive markets.



Edale board slitter-rewinder

"Tamar Packaging Solutions has thrived by working out where in-line flexo can, and cannot, compete"



Edale machine park at Tamar Packaging

Food-safe and sustainable

Tamar Packaging's plant and production operations are optimized for food safety applications, built around an AA-grade BRC accreditation.

The company selects either water-based or low-migration UV inks, depending on the food-contact sensitivity of each job. Says Baker, 'We select the inks, DFC inks and coatings on a case-by-case basis because of the wide range of scenarios such as length of time the product comes into contact with the card, types of food and the moisture levels within the product. We only use UV inks on non-direct food contact surfaces. All our coatings are water-based, so they are perfect for direct food contact.'

Tamar Packaging also prides itself on being a highly sustainable business. The company has implemented a ducted waste removal system on its carton presses and rewinder. This guarantees the efficient removal of all carton board process waste from the factory, which is then processed by a chopper fan and the waste is subsequently directed into a recycling skip, promoting a zero-to-landfill approach. Additionally, all plastic waste is recycled.

'Our dedication to minimizing our environmental impact and contributing to the sustainable growth of flexographic printing remains unwavering,' Baker says.

Edale will demonstrate its FL5 carton press with in-line flatbed die-cutting at Labelexpo Europe 2025. Scan the QR code to learn more

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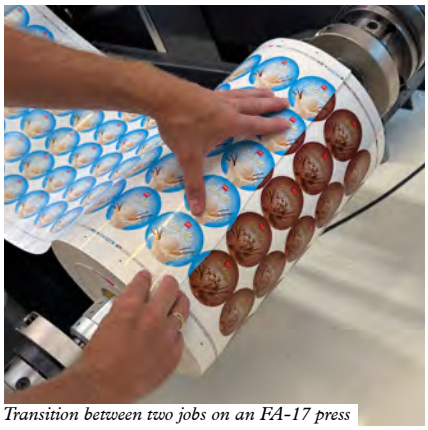
Nilpeter to show next-level automation at Labelexpo

At Labelexpo Europe, Nilpeter will demonstrate for the first time a 4-color makeready on a running press with seamless changeover between jobs. Andy Thomas-Emans reports



Transition between two jobs on an FA-17 press

Nilpeter will demonstrate its next-generation automation system on an FA-17 press at Labelexpo Europe 2025, making-ready a 4-color job while the press is still running, then switching seamlessly between jobs with minimal waste.

'This is the next level of flexo,' states Carsten Clemensen, chief technology officer at Nilpeter. 'Our ambition is to match digital performance parameters while maintaining flexo cost efficiency and flexibility. We are achieving this by moving the job change from when the press is stopped to when the press is running. On-the-fly changeover between the two 4-color jobs is handled fully automatically with no operator intervention.'

At a recent demo at its Slagelse, Denmark headquarters, Nilpeter demonstrated a live changeover between two jobs on an 8-color Nilpeter FA-17. One 4-color job ran at 150m/min on print units five to eight, while a new job was set up on print units one to four, with all job information entered from a single keypad.

At the changeover, units five to eight disengaged, and units one to four engaged. The new job started running automatically in perfect register with only a few meters of waste.

'In this configuration, we are simultaneously running and making ready two 4-color jobs,' explains Steffen Vahlkvist, technology center manager at Nilpeter. 'But we could also configure a 12-color press to run two 6-color jobs, or any other combination. Or, for example, you could just change the black plate for a language change. On some jobs, you may only be changing two colors. It is entirely flexible.'

> **"On-the-fly changeover between the two 4-color jobs is handled fully automatically with no operator intervention"**

Vahlkvist says it would be possible to change the die-cut format between jobs by using two die stations, which automatically engage and disengage at job changeover. In this scenario, the second die unit can be made ready while the press is running, in the same way as with the print station.

Nilpeter believes its next-level automation project allows flexo printers to match the capabilities of digital and hybrid without having to leave the flexo world.

'Project Darkroom'

Fully automated job changeovers on a running press is described by Clemensen as a giant leap forward toward Nilpeter's future 'Darkroom' concept. Clemensen describes it as: 'the press runs itself by AI and machine learning. That is the goal, and this is uncharted ground.'

Clemensen says the goal of the Darkroom project is to further increase uptime compared to a digital/hybrid press, increasing productivity and sellable output. 'How can we operate at higher speeds and make it a less demanding task for the operator? We want to minimize the time the printer spends walking up and down the machine.'

Clemensen sees AI-driven camera technology as the next major step toward Darkroom.

'We already have an enormous amount of data, but no way of connecting that to real-time press performance. The key to the Darkroom will be camera technology replacing the operator's understanding of what is going on in the print.'

Nilpeter is currently researching new camera technology with the right resolution and cost to fit it into every print and converting station on the press, and with the ability to feed back to press control systems.

In his last role before joining Nilpeter, Clemensen was the managing director of B&R Industrial Automation, a subsidiary of ABB Group, already a strategic partner to Nilpeter. Among other things, B&R develops AI-driven smart cameras, giving Clemensen a strong background in how this technology can drive automation and digitization.

'This camera technology will be integrated into systems that adjust the press in real time. So, whenever we see an error, we are able to correct it instantly. Current inspection systems are very good, but not connected to the machine, and that is the problem. This is one of the key things to change. One hundred percent inspection and the ability to react instantly become the key for us to move forward.'

Press operators will need to be educated on how to get the best from automation and move to more supervisory roles; for example, remotely monitoring multiple presses from a central control point.

'We are already a step towards that with our Digital Shadow technology,' Clemensen says. 'But currently this is purely for monitoring, with no feedback to machine control systems.'

Over the past two years, Nilpeter has been developing new in-house automation skills with a core team of six highly skilled software engineers. The company is also cooperating closely with universities, hosting interns on a regular basis.

'We cannot differentiate anymore between mechanical and software,' says Clemensen. 'We are becoming a software engineering force. It needs a different programming skillset to make a camera interact with a machine.'

Labelexpo Europe 2025 will give visitors the chance to see just how far down the road toward 'lights-out' manufacturing Nilpeter has come.

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Nilpeter demonstrates next-level automation on an FA-17 press at Labelexpo Europe. Scan the QR code to learn more

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Industry 5.0 roadmap unveiled at Sistrade anniversary

The impact of quantum computing, AI-driven manufacturing and the future of the print industry were discussed at Sistrade's 25th anniversary event. Andy Thomas-Emans reports

Sistrade has celebrated its 25th anniversary with a conference looking ahead to the challenges and opportunities presented by Industry 5.0 automation.

Sistrade develops factory management and workflow automation systems for every sector of the packaging industry, including labels, flexible packaging, folding cartons, corrugated and security printing.

In his keynote address, Sistrade founder and CEO António de Sousa Ribeiro noted that the company was one of the first ERP/MIS developers to go fully web-based in 2000, at a time when the wider IT infrastructure was still at an early stage of development.

Looking forward, Ribeiro predicted that quantum computing will be a transformative technology, allowing the development of new neural networks, which will lead to a new way of living and working. 'A lot of things will change. It will mean fewer people, more automation and more smart machines. Although automation is very important, it is still people making the strategic decisions.'

The next generation of AI-driven planning systems will be 'predictive and autonomous', capable of large-scale optimization of management processes.

'This will be the era of cyber-physical systems, true intelligence and hyper-automation. Supply chains, scheduling, planning and logistics will be dynamically optimized. Human-AI collaboration will redefine productivity in Industry 5.0. We will see a shift from MIS/ERP being a system of record to an intelligent decision-making platform. The focus will be on real-time data being used in autonomous workflows. Smart software will be able to detect anomalies and patterns in vast amounts of data.'

These observations were echoed by Sante Conselvan, president of FTA Europe, who described how AI-driven automation will transform the flexographic workflow. 'Print process operation will be by digital sensor and in-line cameras without manual monitoring, with remote makeready, start and stop.'

Sistrade ecosystem

Sitting at the center of numerous packaging-related industrial sectors, Sistrade is well-positioned to understand the challenges and realize the benefits of Industry 5.0.

The company's software modules connect the full packaging workflow from design, approval and pre-press, to tooling management, communication with production machinery, and online and off-line quality inspection systems.

Sistrade is also heavily involved in the automation of complex, large-scale packaging operations, coordinating robotics, AGVs, automated assembly, packaging and palletizing.

A presentation from Eckhard Braun and Holger Ochel from Falcon Concept Solutions explained the lessons learned from a project to develop a large-scale, fully automated folding carton plant.

Ochel echoed earlier speakers by insisting that people are still the key. 'Shopfloor machine operators are now analysts, supported by AI to take the right decisions.'

Fabio Coelho, head of development at Sistrade, laid out the guiding principles for Sistrade's software development teams: predictive OEEE insights; predictive machine maintenance; automatic optimization of production based on historical and real-time data analysis; algorithms that learn from production history to suggest efficiency improvements; real-time decision making such as redirecting production orders, adjusting machine parameters or reorganizing tasks; integrating augmented reality and virtual reality (AR/VR) for maintenance, training and production monitoring; and increased data security and compliance.



Sistrade founder and CEO António de Sousa Ribeiro

"Although automation is very important, it is still people making the strategic decisions"

Coelho described how Sistrade's Scheduling as a Service tool already makes use of machine learning based on historical data and integrates with other ERPs and MIS through APIs to deliver fully automatic planning without human intervention.

Trends

The conference attendees learned how software is evolving with key industry trends. For example, increasing consolidation in the labels industry has led to the development of software to handle multi-site operations. This works from a set of master data and workflow rules, including CRM and price tables, and automatically handles inter-company transactions and delivery notes.

With the increasing need for converters to generate sustainability data, Sistrade's energy management module now delivers real-time information on the consumption of electricity, gas, water, pressurized air and CO2 footprint. These tools allow historical comparisons to be made by job order.

This information can also be integrated into Sistrade's Digital Product Passport module, along with relevant information from other parts of the Sistrade ecosystem, such as materials and inks traceability.

This writer came away from the Sistrade event with a much firmer grasp of the opportunities presented by the transition to Industry 5.0, and the continued drive of founder and CEO António de Sousa Ribeiro to lead the industry down that path.

For more on how automation is transforming the label industry, turn to page 26

Abbey Labels' transformative journey with Xeikon

From cautious beginnings to industry-leading innovation, a UK-based converter demonstrates how strategic digital investment drives growth and sustainability. Piotr Wnuk reports

For a company that spent its first two decades specializing in flexographic printing, Abbey Labels' transformation into a digital printing powerhouse represents one of the UK label industry's most compelling evolution stories.

What began as a tentative step into digital technology in 2013 has blossomed into a decade-long partnership with Xeikon, which continues to push the boundaries of productivity, quality and sustainability.

This year marks a significant milestone in that journey, with Abbey Labels becoming the first UK converter to install Xeikon's new LX3000 digital press, affectionately known as 'The Lion', featuring cutting-edge Eco toner technology.

For chairman Tom Allum, the installation represents the culmination of years of strategic investment and forward-thinking.

'As expected, the Lion has quickly settled into our label operation. This new beast gives us fantastic speed, excellent 1,200 DPI print quality and industry-leading sustainability in one high-productivity package,' says Allum. 'As the first full installation in the UK, the Lion is another great opportunity for Abbey Labels to bring more value for our customers.'



L–R: Xeikon's Ser van de Graaf, Abbey Labels' Tom Allum and Xeikon's Hans Gerinckx shake hands on the UK's first Xeikon Lion

"We have invested in what I truly believe is one of the most, if not the most, environmentally friendly and sustainable digital label printing technology on the market today"

The digital leap

Looking back to 2013, Abbey Labels' entry into digital printing wasn't made lightly. The company had spent 'two or three years' researching digital options before finally committing to the Xeikon 3300 press.

'Question marks about speed of digital devices, print quality and the space required to set up a digital operation were constantly on our minds,' Allum recalls of that period. 'The latest range of equipment from Xeikon did seem to solve our speed queries, and the dramatic improvements in print quality in recent years ticked all of the boxes in that area of concern.'

What ultimately sealed the deal, according to Allum, was Xeikon's business model: 'What really made up our minds in favor of the Xeikon product was the lack of click charge, which simply made costing and quoting for jobs a lot easier, and the fact that the Xeikon people seemed to speak our language.'

That initial digital press was supported by an AB Graphic Digicon 2 converting line, allowing Abbey Labels to offer a wide range of embellishment options. Crucially, the special die-cutting system on the Digicon allowed the company to use its existing stock of over 5,000 cutters from its flexo operation, creating immediate flexibility for new and existing customers.

According to Allum, the results were immediate and impressive: 'I would say that 90 percent of the job were new, some from existing customers, but most from new clients.'

Local food producers were early beneficiaries, with Abbey Labels' British Retail Consortium registration for food production and the ISO 14001 environmental certification proving to be a significant advantage in that market.

Expanding digital capabilities

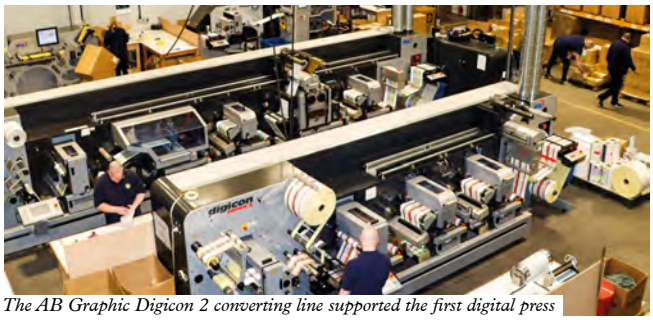
Following that successful initial foray into digital, Abbey Labels didn't stand still. In 2015, the company added another Xeikon press, demonstrating its commitment to the technology. But the real acceleration came in 2016, when digital sales grew to become a major portion of the company's turnover.

By late 2022, Abbey Labels was ready for another significant digital upgrade, investing in two high-end Xeikon CX300 presses. Having taken delivery of the UK's first CX300 in late 2021, the company was so impressed with the productivity and consistency of quality that it installed a second machine less than 12 months later as part of an ambitious 1 million GBP (1.3 million USD) investment plan.

'As the most productive press at the 330mm width at the time, not only did the Xeikon CX300 retain the highest print quality on a broad range of challenging substrates and delivered in terms of speed, but it also minimized the environmental impact of label manufacturing by not emitting any harmful substances (VOCs) or generating water pollution and by using only a minimal amount of electricity,' Allum explains.

The speed advantages were substantial. The advanced Xeikon CX300 ran at 30m/min, with each full-color machine offering a production capacity of over 50,000sqm per month in a single shift. Thanks to the LED imaging head, which operates at 1,200 x 3,600 DPI, the print quality is equivalent to that of gravure and offset.

'The speed and automation on the CX300 delivered 25 percent more efficiency compared to our existing Xeikon CX3s, allowing us to operate the business in a very agile and responsive manner,' notes Allum. 'We added 50 percent more capacity in less than a year, whilst retaining a similar footprint and the same operators, so the implementation was very smooth.'


The AB Graphic Digicon 2 converting line supported the first digital press

"As expected, the Lion has quickly settled into our label operation. This new beast gives us fantastic speed, excellent 1,200 DPI print quality and industry-leading sustainability in one high-productivity package"

The Lion roars

Abbey Labels' most recent Xeikon investment represents its most ambitious digital move yet. In January 2025, the company became the first in the UK to install the new Xeikon LX3000 at its Suffolk facility.

This high-speed press prints at speeds of up to 42m/min, significantly improving over previous models, and features Cruise Control inspection to ensure the highest quality labels. But perhaps most significantly, the LX3000 takes advantage of Xeikon's new Eco toner technology, which reportedly reduces the carbon footprint of the process by more than 10 percent.

'Not only does the impressive 40 percent speed increase provide more printing capacity, it also reduces the energy consumption per linear meter,' notes Allum, highlighting the dual benefits of the new technology.

The Eco toners represent a major leap forward in sustainability. Made with 60 percent recycled plastic materials, free from PFAS and certified vegan, they maintain the food-safe characteristics of Xeikon's older toners while significantly reducing environmental impact.

'Our brand owner clients demand proven sustainability to help reduce their carbon footprints, so we're particularly pleased to be able to offer all the green benefits of Xeikon's new Eco toners. This was a definite selling point for us,' Allum explains.

The deal was sealed in at drupa in June 2024, fulfilling a long-held ambition for Allum.

'Ever since I first started visiting drupa as a teenager with my dad, I've dreamt of signing for a new press at the world's largest print show,' he recalls. 'We'd only just agreed to invest in the LX3000 the day before the show closed, so we had to make quick arrangements for the trip to Düsseldorf. It was well worth it, though, because it's so much better to finalize these deals in person.'

A balanced approach

While Abbey Labels' digital journey with Xeikon has been remarkable, the company hasn't abandoned its flexographic roots. Indeed, a key part of its success has been knowing when to use each technology for maximum effect.

Since 2016, the company has made significant investments in state-of-the-art flexographic printing machines alongside its digital expansion.

'The combination of flexographic and digital machinery offers our clients an unrivaled all-around package to produce their label orders in the best and most efficient ways possible,' notes the company's history section.

This balanced approach also extends to the company's finishing capabilities. In May 2023, Abbey Labels installed three new finishing machines from AB Graphic International, including a Digicon Series 3 line dedicated to peel-and-reveal and multilayer labels, an automatic Vectra turret rewinder for faster changeovers, and a flatbed screen-printing unit for added-value embellishments.

'We already have rotary screen-printing in our flexo department, but it is better suited to longer runs,' says Allum. 'We needed to add flatbed screen capabilities to make further headway into the beverages, vape and supplements markets, plus existing customers in other industries have been requesting it for a while.'

Digital benefits

For Abbey Labels, the advantages of its Xeikon digital presses have been numerous. The high-definition output ensures sharp images and perfect registration regardless of run size or material type. The technology has allowed the company to serve markets previously out of reach due to volume or cost constraints, particularly in the food sector, where its BRC certification gives it an additional edge.

The environmental benefits have become increasingly important as well.

'We have invested in what I truly believe is one of the most, if not the most, environmentally friendly and sustainable digital label printing technology on the market today,' says Allum regarding the latest Xeikon installation.

Danny Martens, marketing manager at Xeikon, notes the strength of the partnership: 'Abbey Labels has built up a very strong digital label printing business based on Xeikon dry toner technology, going right back to 2013 when the first Xeikon 3300 press was installed, and we are proud to continue this great partnership.'

Ser van der Graaf, sales area manager of labels, graphic arts and carton packaging for Benelux, United Kingdom and Ireland at Xeikon, adds: 'Abbey Labels is a progressive, growing business, and Xeikon is proud to be their partner. It's great to be supporting the company in their investment decisions and play a part in their future success.'

The road ahead

With the new Xeikon LX3000 now fully operational, Abbey Labels is positioned for continued growth.

'Just a few weeks in, we've seen a big change in our turnaround times and output speeds, as the Lion is literally eating label job after label job in no time at all,' Allum reports. 'With this press and the new Eco toners, we're ready for the next chapter in our history.'

That next chapter promises to build on the foundation of innovation, sustainability and customer-focused products that have defined Abbey Labels' journey from a general printing business in the 1980s to one of the UK's top label converters.

Having accelerated digital printing capacity by 50 percent over the past couple of years and made significant investments in new converting capabilities, Abbey Labels appears well-positioned to maintain its upward trajectory in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

For Allum and his team, the transformation from flexo specialist to digital innovator might be complete. Still, the evolution continues with Xeikon technology likely to remain at the heart of the operation for years to come.

'This is not the end,' as the company's history section concludes, 'just the beginning of the next chapter in the Abbey Labels Story.'

Scan the QR code to find out more about Abbey Labels



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FlexON's bold leap into digital printing with Gallus One

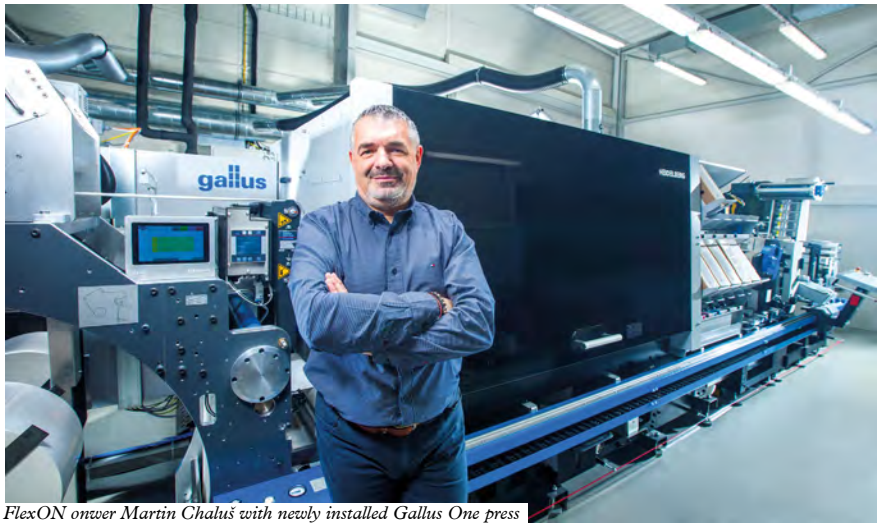
From flexo specialists to digital innovators, Czech converter demonstrates how a strategic investment in hybrid technology drives efficiency and growth in an evolving label market. Piotr Wnuk reports

For a company that began as a small label specialist in 1994, FlexON's transformation into one of the Czech Republic's leading self-adhesive label manufacturers represents a compelling story of technological evolution and strategic investment. What began as a modest printing operation founded by two partners has grown into a 60-employee enterprise with a 3,000 sqm production facility on the outskirts of Prague, driven by a philosophy of continuous technological advancement and customer-focused service.

The company now serves a diverse client base across multiple industries, with approximately 85 percent of production serving the domestic Czech market and the remaining 15 percent exported throughout the European Union. FlexON's emphasis on quality, speed and staying ahead of the technological curve has positioned the company as industry leaders in a competitive landscape where adaptability is increasingly essential to success.

This commitment to innovation was further cemented in late 2024 with FlexON's installation of a Gallus One digital press, a move that owner Martin Chaluš admits would have seemed unthinkable just a few years earlier.

'As a previous enemy of digital technology, if someone had told me that I would have two powerful digital machines by 2024, I wouldn't have believed it,' he reflects. 'But today, it's clear that smart, connected printing is key.'



FlexON onwer Martin Chaluš with newly installed Gallus One press

"As a previous enemy of digital technology, if someone had told me that I would have two powerful digital machines by 2024, I wouldn't have believed it"

A history of firsts

FlexON's relationship with Gallus stretches back many years. In 2008, it became the first in the country to install a Gallus RCS 330 press, setting a pattern for pioneering investments that would continue through the decades.

'We've always believed in being early adopters of technology that can give us a competitive edge,' Chaluš explains. 'Being first means we can offer capabilities to our customers that others simply don't have yet.'

The company's growth trajectory has been closely tied to these strategic technological acquisitions. From its official establishment in 1994, FlexON expanded steadily, constructing its own production facilities in Vestec in 2003 and extending with another production hall in 2008, the same year it installed a Gallus RCS 330.

This expansion wasn't merely about increasing square footage but creating a production environment optimized for efficiency and quality control. The company also obtained ISO 9001:2008 recertification in 2011, demonstrating its commitment to maintaining the highest standards of quality management throughout its growth phases.

The company's willingness to embrace new technology reached another milestone in 2021 with the installation of a Gallus Labelfire 340, once again marking the first such installation in the Czech Republic. This hybrid digital press represented a significant shift in Chaluš's thinking about digital printing technology.

'Five years ago, I wouldn't have bought this kind of machine, because at that time the quality wasn't there yet,' Chaluš says of the Gallus Labelfire. 'Nonetheless, I went on, and now Gallus has digital machines where the quality meets the needs and demands of the market.'

The digital evolution continues

The successful integration of the Gallus Labelfire into FlexON's production capabilities laid the groundwork for further digital expansion. By November 2024, the company was ready for its next significant investment: the installation of the Gallus One digital press, equipped with an additional flexo unit and a semi-rotary die-cutting module.

The Gallus One, launched in 2022, represents the latest in Gallus's digital portfolio, featuring the System to Compose modularity concept. This approach allows converters to customize their press configuration based on specific market needs and production requirements. This level of flexibility aligns perfectly with FlexON's diverse client base and varied label applications.

What makes this installation particularly notable is how quickly the press was put into production. According to Gallus Group, FlexON was printing customer jobs even during the operator training period, showcasing both the user-friendly nature of the technology and the company's ability to rapidly adapt to new equipment.



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In 2021, the company installed Gallus Labelfire 340, marking the first such installation in the Czech Republic



After extending its factory in 2008, FlexON invested in the Gallus RCS 330

"We've always believed in being early adopters of technology that can give us a competitive edge. Being first means we can offer capabilities to our customers that others simply don't have yet"

'The learning curve was surprisingly short,' says Chaluš. 'Our operators were already familiar with the Gallus ecosystem from our previous installations, which meant we could focus primarily on mastering the digital aspects rather than starting from scratch.'

For Chaluš, the decision to invest in the Gallus One was driven by evolving market demands. 'Given increasingly shorter orders and frequent changes in artwork, the importance of digital printing is growing, which is why we looked at installing a digital label press,' he explains. 'We're seeing average run lengths decrease year after year, while the frequency of design updates continues to increase, particularly in the food and beverage sectors, which make up a significant portion of our business.'

The press's custom configuration, with an additional flexo unit and die-cutting capabilities, has created significant production efficiencies. 'The custom composition of this new solution means that we now have a finished label that "falls out" of the press needing only to be cut, saving us time, streamlining production and increasing profitability,' notes Chaluš.

The impact on FlexON's production capacity has been immediate and substantial. 'The Gallus One has now replaced up to two of our conventional presses,' Chaluš reports, a testament to the productivity gains achieved through digital technology.

The Gallus partnership

FlexON's choice of Gallus technology for its digital transformation wasn't made lightly. When discussing the 2021 Gallus Labelfire investment, Chaluš highlighted several factors that guided his decision-making process, considerations that likely influenced the subsequent Gallus One investment as well.

'From the practical viewpoint, in the first place, I wanted a machine with a big corporation behind it,' he explains. 'Another reason was our good relationship with the Gallus and Heidelberg suppliers, which provide us with first-class support and service. Moreover, our mutual relationship long ago grew from mere business to a friendship.'

The design and integrated nature of Gallus's digital technology also played a key role. 'I really liked the design of the Gallus Labelfire, the integrity of the whole solution. It's actually a hybrid machine combined with other technologies,' Chaluš noted. 'It's great that just one printer can run the whole unit, and at the end comes a finished product, including refinements.'

These advantages appear to have carried through to the experience with the Gallus One. Dario Urbinati, CEO of Gallus Group, comments: 'FlexON is a dynamic and thriving business, and we look forward to partnering and supporting its activities over the coming months and years.'

The business case for digital

The rapid return on investment expected from the Gallus One installation highlights the business case for digital technology in today's label market. Gallus reports that FlexON has 'seen significant success within just a few months of installation, with the presses already demonstrating promise of achieving ROI and breakeven within an impressive timeframe.'

This experience mirrors that of other early Gallus One adopters. US-based PrintFlex reported that the technology had significantly reduced its production costs, with CEO Liz Pecha-Poelker describing the investment as offering 'the lowest total cost of ownership for digital label production.'

For FlexON, conducting a thorough ROI analysis was essential before committing to such a significant investment. 'We evaluated not just the upfront costs, but the total cost of ownership including consumables, maintenance and labor,' Chaluš notes. 'The calculations showed that for our specific mix of work, the Gallus One would provide substantial cost advantages compared to our conventional presses for runs under certain lengths.'

The advantages of digital printing extend beyond simple productivity gains. When discussing its earlier Gallus Labelfire installation, Chaluš emphasized the benefits of very short preparation times compared to conventional presses: 'On conventional machines, preparation often takes much longer than printing itself. Preparing complex orders on the Gallus Labelfire takes about 10 minutes, and then you're producing.'

He also noted particular advantages for orders with variable content but the same parameters: 'This might involve labels in more than one language or labels where only the graphic varies. For Gallus Labelfire, these variations are one order with one preparation process. Then, the time savings are enormous. Not to mention savings on printing forms and start-up material.'

The elimination of printing plates represents a significant cost reduction, especially as material costs continue to rise across the industry. 'Previously, we would need to create new plates for every design variation or color change,' Chaluš explains. 'With digital, those ongoing costs are eliminated, making even very short runs economically viable for both us and our customers.'

These same advantages apply to the Gallus One, with its digital workflow and rapid changeover capabilities, which are perfectly suited to the trend toward shorter run lengths and more frequent

design changes that Chaluš has observed in the market.

A balanced approach

Despite its embrace of digital technology, FlexON maintains a balanced approach to its production capabilities. The company still operates both flexo and offset printing equipment, allowing it to match the production method to the specific requirements of each job.

'Different technologies have different sweet spots,' Chaluš explains. 'For very long runs with minimal variations, flexo still makes economic sense. For mid-range runs with multiple variations or frequent design changes, digital becomes the clear choice. By maintaining capabilities across technologies, we can always choose the most efficient production method for each job.'

This philosophy echoes Chaluš's current view of the industry: 'Anyone who wants to stay in the market will need an appropriate combination of both digital and conventional technologies; it's just a matter of proportion.'

This balanced approach also extends to its finishing capabilities. The Gallus One installation, with its integrated die-cutting module, allows for a finished product directly off the press, while still maintaining flexibility for more complex finishing operations when required.

The company's production mix has evolved significantly since its founding. Where once long-run flexo jobs dominated its production schedule, today's order board includes a much higher percentage of short to medium runs with faster turnaround requirements. The label market in the Czech Republic has followed global trends toward greater product personalization, regional variations and seasonal promotions, all of which favor digital production methods.

'Today's brand owners want flexibility,' notes Chaluš. 'They might need 10,000 labels today, then a quick revision for a product launch next week. Our conventional equipment simply couldn't keep pace with these changing demands without significant cost implications. The Gallus One helps us say "yes" to these requests while maintaining healthy margins.'

Looking forward

With the Gallus One now fully operational, FlexON appears well-positioned for continued growth in the competitive Czech label market. The company's history of technological leadership, coupled with its strategic approach to digital integration, suggests it will continue to evolve in response to changing market demands.

'We are delighted to report the success of Gallus One customer in digital label printing: a powerful example of how our ongoing innovation efforts in this strategic growth segment are continuing to deliver transformative solutions to market and creating a meaningful real-world impact,' comments Urbinati of Gallus Group.



FlexON is now a 60-employee enterprise operating a 3,000 sqm production facility on the outskirts of Prague

"Anyone who wants to stay in the market will need an appropriate combination of both digital and conventional technologies; it's just a matter of proportion"

The Gallus One technology itself continues to evolve, with Gallus showcasing an expanded version at drupa 2024 featuring a wider 430 mm print width and expanded color gamut for superior color fidelity. The company's System to Compose modularity concept allows customers like FlexON to potentially upgrade and expand their press capabilities as new modules become available, future-proofing their investment against evolving market requirements.

For Chaluš and his team, the transformation from conventional print specialist to digital innovator represents not just a technological evolution but a fundamental shift in business strategy. Their willingness to embrace new technology, coupled with a practical approach to implementation, has positioned FlexON at the forefront of the Czech label industry.

'The label industry never stands still,' reflects Chaluš. 'When we started in 1994, no one was talking about digital printing for labels. Now it's becoming the dominant technology for many applications. Who knows what the next major technological shift will be? What I do know is that by maintaining our philosophy of quality, speed and technological progress, we'll be ready to embrace whatever comes next.'

FlexON's evolution mirrors broader industry trends toward more automated, connected and flexible production systems. The company has gradually shifted from being primarily a manufacturing operation to becoming a solutions provider, helping brand owners navigate the increasingly complex world of packaging decoration with expertise that spans both conventional and digital technologies.

As the label market continues to evolve toward shorter runs, faster turnaround times and more complex designs, FlexON's investments in digital technology, particularly the Gallus One, appear well-aligned with these trends. For a company that has built its reputation on being first to adopt new technologies in its market, the Gallus One installation represents not just another 'first,' but a strategic positioning for future success.

With sustainability becoming increasingly important to brand owners, the reduced waste and energy consumption of digital production may provide further advantages.

Though Chaluš doesn't specifically mention environmental benefits in his assessment of the Gallus One, the elimination of plates, reduced make-ready waste and more efficient production processes all contribute to a smaller environmental footprint, another factor likely to drive continued digital adoption across the industry.

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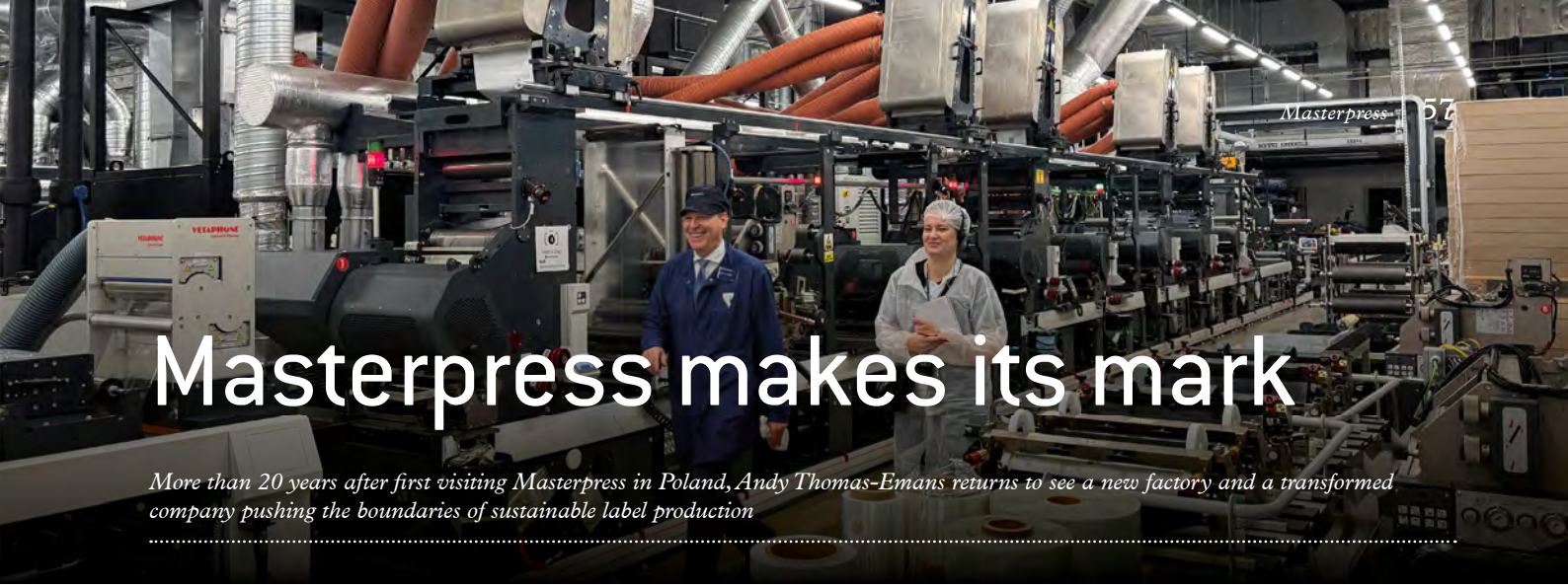

Masterpress makes its mark

More than 20 years after first visiting Masterpress in Poland, Andy Thomas-Emans returns to see a new factory and a transformed company pushing the boundaries of sustainable label production

Masterpress SA is today one of Europe's leading privately owned label converting companies, doubling its turnover to 50m EUR (57m USD) over the last 10 years and pursuing a relentless focus on innovation and sustainability.

Since 1998, Masterpress has invested over 70m EUR (approximately 80m USD) in capital machinery and plant, and is currently preparing for its next phase of expansion, moving into a new production hall next to its existing 12,000 sqm production facility in Białystok, Poland.

Origins

The origins of Masterpress are closely tied to the demise of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s. Waldemar Zdrodowski had moved to the US in 1988 to pursue his studies, returning to post-independence Poland in 1992. As Poland underwent a crash course in capitalist development, Zdrodowski and university friend Miroslaw Zywicki saw an opportunity in commercial print. They set up a new company using sheet-fed offset equipment. This was registered as Masterpress SA in 1996.

Spotting an increasing demand for self-adhesive rolls in the dairy and other food sectors, in 1998, Masterpress installed its first narrow web presses, two water-based 10in Propheteers. With the PSL business growing rapidly, Masterpress began a long partnership with Gidue in 2002, installing a total of seven 370mm-wide Combat UV flexo presses.

By 2004, shrink sleeves were experiencing rapid growth in Poland. Masterpress installed a 630mm-wide Gidue Athena and made its first move into shrink sleeve labels.

Three years later, Masterpress embarked on a new partnership with Omet, installing a 10-color 670mm Varyflex with a reversible rotogravure unit for laying down a first white, metallic or overvarnish. Masterpress went on to install six Omet presses, each uniquely tailored to the company's evolving requirements. This fleet included two Varyflex lines, two 10-color XFlex 430mm lines, and two hybrid offset XFlex X6 presses, 430mm and 670mm wide.

Shrink sleeve specialist

Today, shrink sleeve labels account for some 70 percent of Masterpress' output, with self-adhesive labels accounting for around 25 percent. Masterpress also manufactures a full range of shrink sleeve machinery, including applicators, hot steam shrink tunnels, air-knife dryers and robotics handling equipment. Additional options include perforation modules, label positioning devices and duopack modules.

Masterpress sells these machinery systems to its sleeve label customers, along with servicing and training, and also offers an in-house sleeve application service for customers who do not want to invest themselves.

Gabriel Magdaleno, strategic product management and marketing director at Masterpress, points out the advantages of controlling the entire shrink sleeve process from design through printing, converting and application.

"Masterpress worked closely on the development and testing of Siegwerk's first UV flexo deinking primer, launched onto the European market in June 2024"

'We can be confident that what we print will run on our own shrink tunnels. That is the advantage of controlling the whole process from design to application, including artwork distortion and materials. This is particularly important when we are dealing with complex-shaped containers.'

Masterpress utilizes Esko workstations for 3D conceptualization of sleeve designs and distortion of flat artwork. The Esko Automation Engine drives all prepress workflows at Masterpress.

In 2023, Masterpress added 16 million sqm of capacity with two new presses dedicated to shrink sleeve printing, expanding the company's production capacity by nearly 40 percent. The two 12- and 14-station presses can handle a variety of materials and varnishes in the same pass, enabling UV flexo printing, embossing and Braille as well as web perforation. The presses are LED-UV equipped and can print on films down to 12 microns.

Sustainability focus

Sustainability is at the core of Masterpress's strategy. The company collaborates closely with a range of supply chain partners to bring sustainable innovations to market in the shortest possible time.

In April 2024, Masterpress became a member of the Polish Committee for Standardization (PKN), part of the 34-country European Committee for Standardization (CEN), putting the company at the heart of developing guidelines for design-for-recycling as PPWR looms on the horizon.

Masterpress recently renewed its EcoVadis Silver certification, which covers reduction of overall environmental footprint, ethical labor and business practices and prioritizing sustainable procurement. Masterpress scored among the top 8 percent of companies rated by EcoVadis.

Masterpress works with its supplier partners to test and trial new sustainable ink and material technologies before they enter the commercial market. Explains Katarzyna Wasilewska, research and development manager at Masterpress, 'We are dedicated to advancing innovation within the shrink sleeve and self-adhesive label industry and are well positioned to help accelerate the commercialization of new, sustainable, recyclable products and materials.'

Wasilewska explains how Masterpress carried out field tests of Cirkit Clearprime, printing on PE85 PS labelstock and adding bleed-resistant UV flexo inks and a UV flexo OPV.

Masterpress tested Ink removal in accordance with the QT 507

washing protocol of the European PET Bottle Platform (EPBP). The primer layer was found to dissolve residue-free in the hot washing process, while the non-bleeding ink formulations ensured a clean and reusable washing solution.

'Our tests confirmed an impressive recyclability of the UV-printed PE labels,' says Wasilewska. 'Compared to other labels with no deinking technology, we could observe that contaminations of plastic recyclates due to discoloration could be massively reduced by using Siegwerk's UV deinking primer.'

Masterpress has also worked closely with materials supplier Taghleef on multiple sustainability projects. One example is a 300g shrink-sleeved cup produced for TINE dairy products by SuperFos Lidkoeping.

Masterpress used a Taghleef LDPE (low-density polyolefin) shrink sleeve to create a mono-material pack that can be easily identified and recycled in the correct polymer stream.

An additional aspect was downgauging. The sleeve material was originally a 50-micron polyolefin, but through close collaboration with Berry Superfos and Taghleef, this was successfully downgauged to 42 microns. At the time of commercializing this project, it was the thinnest PO sleeve project on the market. The cups also highlight Masterpress' expertise in selecting low-migration inks, varnishes and adhesives.

This project, carried out in accordance with RecyClass design-for-recycling guidelines, won an AWA sleeve award.

Masterpress has also run trials on shrink films incorporating over 50 percent post-consumer waste (PCR). 'There is no doubt that PCR is more difficult to work with, and they are currently an additional cost, which could be a barrier to wider adoption,' says Kasia Wasilewska.

R&D press

One reason Masterpress is such an excellent testbed for new materials and inks is its dedicated R&D press and extensive laboratory testing facilities.

In December 2023, Masterpress invested heavily in the R&D lab adjacent to its manufacturing operation and dedicated a bespoke Omet Varyflex press exclusively to R&D.

The Varyflex is configured with gravure, screen, flexo, with four extended dryers for water-based inks and coatings, lamination and die-cutting.

When Labels & Labeling visited, the R&D press was running conductive ink trials to print RFID antenna on shrink sleeves and paper substrates. 'This will allow us to print an antenna shape which is optimized for individual applications,' says Kasia Wasilewska.

The hybrid configuration of the R&D press is typical of the other press lines installed by Masterpress, allowing the company to make full use of multi-process in-line printing techniques combining flexo, offset, rotogravure, digital and screen.

The next press investment at Masterpress will be a Mark Andy Performance Series dedicated to growing the company's pressure-sensitive label business.

To support its flexo press fleet, Masterpress has its own in-house repro department using an Esko CDI Crystal 4835 platemaking system and Evo plate processor with in-line drying.

Conclusion

Masterpress has been on an amazing journey since this writer first visited the company two decades ago. The converter maintains an impressive focus on practical innovation, driving forward the development of new sustainable materials, inks and smart label processes in close collaboration with partners up and down the supply chain. And behind this remains the remarkable Waldemar Zdrodowski, still very much engaged as the driving force behind Masterpress.

"Masterpress also manufactures a full range of shrink sleeve machinery, including applicators, hot steam shrink tunnels, air-knife dryers and robotics handling equipment"



L-R: Gabriel Magdaleno, Masterpress; Diana Dedeic, Taghleef; Alina Marm, Siegwerk; Marc Lavor, Siegwerk; Kasia Wasilewska, Masterpress

Sustainability panel discussion

An extremely interesting panel discussion on the implications of the EU's PPWR directive brought together expert speakers from Masterpress, Siegwerk and Taghleef.

The panellists agreed that PPWR's circular economy ambitions conflict with cost factors, with recycled content remaining more expensive than virgin materials. Consumers cannot be expected to solve this dilemma by paying more for recycled/recyclable products, particularly in developing countries.

Another potential conflict is between rapidly expanding use of PCR materials and food contact regulations, as well as PCR chain of custody to guarantee consistent quality.

Other uncertainties include incompatible recycling infrastructures and how deposit schemes and the digital product passport (DPP) will be implemented.

The panel agreed these challenges are best met by designing for recycling now, despite the PPWR guidelines not being available until 2028.

Marc Larvor, head of technology for narrow web at Siegwerk, said that PPWR at least guarantees a market for sustainable packaging by 2030.

'We may not know exactly what it looks like, but investment is a safe space, so we can push the transformation of our portfolios,' Larvor said. 'If we start the work in 2028, it is already too late.'

On a positive note, the panelists noted how the German Ink Ordinance, with its 'aggressive' deadlines, has shown how supply chain collaboration can work effectively. Larvor explained how Siegwerk had prototyped its GIO inks with Masterpress. 'GIO was a threat three years ago, and now it is an opportunity.'

Masterpress has been nominated for two L&L Global Awards in the Sustainability and European Converter of the Year categories. Turn to page 111 for more information

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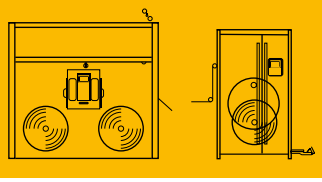

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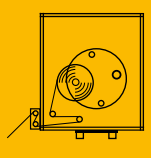

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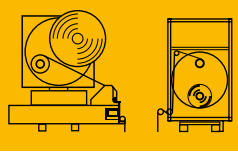

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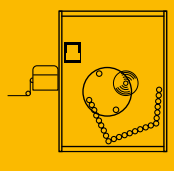

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Masterpress develops magnetizable inks for shrink

As packaging moves into a new era of sustainability, the finer details, including the ink used on labels, are becoming critical to the recyclability of the entire packaging, Akanksha Meena reports.

In response to increasing regulatory pressure, Poland-based Masterpress, in collaboration with Magnomer and ink suppliers, has developed retentive inks and magnetizable inks for shrink sleeve applications. These inks aim to solve challenges in PET bottle recycling, where label separation and contamination hinder recycling and circularity.

Retentive inks

The development of retentive ink was driven by a challenge of ink bleeding during the caustic wash stage in the PET bottle recycling process. Conventional inks tend to dissolve into the washing solution, contaminating the water and making it harder to reuse or treat.

To combat this, Masterpress collaborated with ink suppliers to engineer an ink series that resists dissolving in caustic wash. These retentive inks are designed to remain adhered to the label surface even when exposed to high temperatures and chemical friction during the wash.

In the PET recycling system, when a bottle with a polyolefin label enters the caustic wash, the label and bottle can be separated due to their different densities. This separation is crucial for achieving a clean PET stream.

'If the ink remains on the label, it's much easier to remove the entire label cleanly,' Masterpress's research and development manager Katarzyna Wasilewska explains. 'That way, the PET flakes are not contaminated, and they can be reused, even in applications like food-grade packaging.'

However, if the ink detaches from the label, it can behave unpredictably. 'In theory, those ink particles should float and be removed. But sometimes they sink, creating a risk of contaminating PET flakes. The best solution is for the ink to adhere to the label throughout the entire washing process,' Wasilewska explains.

Masterpress emphasized that retentive inks are being developed for all label types and printing technologies.

Magnetizable inks

Magnetizable inks offer better label separation, particularly for PET-on-PET shrink sleeves, where both bottle and label are made from the same material and have the same density. Because they share identical densities and chemical properties, conventional flotation-based sorting techniques are inadequate.

Patented by Indian startup Magnomer, with Masterpress collaborating to optimize it for industrial use, magnetizable inks aim to solve this issue.

Wasilewska says: 'Magnomer started developing a special magnetic coating for shrink sleeve labels used on PET bottles. The problem is that when both the bottle and label are made of PET, they cannot be separated in the recycling stream. They just behave the same way in the wash.'

If the PET label has a magnetic layer, it can be separated from the PET bottle flakes using a magnet.

'Since magnets are already part of existing recycling lines, used to extract steel or other metallic contaminants, recyclers don't need any new infrastructure or investment. They just apply the same magnetization step to remove the labeled material,' Wasilewska adds.



Masterpress, in collaboration with Magnomer and ink suppliers, has developed retentive and magnetizable inks for shrink sleeves

"If the ink remains on the label, it's much easier to remove the entire label cleanly"

While recyclers primarily focus on recovering clean PET from the bottle itself, improving the label's recyclability is a major bonus. 'With this magnetic coating, we can ensure clean separation, enabling better recycling yields and less contamination,' she notes.

The magnetizable layer remains adhered to the shrink sleeve label throughout the recycling process. The magnet pulls out the label flakes, leaving behind clean PET bottle flakes ready for reuse.

The magnetic layer is printed as a coating, either before or after the graphic artwork is applied. According to Wasilewska: 'You wouldn't be able to see the magnetic layer with the naked eye. It doesn't affect the look, feel or print quality of the label.'

However, achieving the right magnetic force without compromising shrink performance was a challenge.

'The strength of the magnetic properties depends on the ink layer's thickness,' Wasilewska explains. 'Too thick, and the label won't shrink properly. Too thin, and the magnetic effect is lost. So, we had to find that balance.'

For the magnetic sleeves to function effectively, the magnetic particles must be properly transferred to the PET substrate, which requires Masterpress to optimize the printing process.

The magnetic coatings are commercially available and have already been recognized by APR (Association of Plastic Recyclers) in the US as a recycling-friendly innovation. Europe has yet to adopt the technology formally, but with PPWR pushing the industry towards design for recycling, Masterpress is optimistic that adoption is not far off.

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Chinese flexo specialist looks to Labelexpo Europe

Spande has built on 15 years' experience of high-end decoration and press manufacture to showcase its automated flexo technologies at Labelexpo Europe 2025. Yolanda Wang reports

Founded in 2010 and headquartered in Minhang District, Shanghai, Shanghai Spande is a high-tech enterprise specializing in the R&D, production and sales of printing equipment and intelligent factory systems. The company's goal has been to become a world-class brand in the field of automated flexographic printing.

Innovation

Since 2010, Spande has been the China representative of Swiss packaging decoration specialist Pantec. In this role CEO and chairman Ye Keqin focused strongly on high-speed web-fed post-processing of tobacco packaging, including hot foiling, embossing, die-cutting as well as application of holograms and security elements. Pantec claims more than a 90 percent market share in this sector today.

In 2015, Spande started researching automation of flexo technology. After four years of intensive research and development, the S7 series was launched in 2019. The S7 integrates a range of automation technologies including dynamic print pressure adjustment, an AI-driven visual registration system and electronic pressure-setting of the die-cutting unit.

Keqin says that these intelligent process controls saved 60 percent in machine setup times compared to manual flexo presses, and increased printing plate lifetime by 30 percent by correct management of print pressure.

The S7 series won the Innovation Award at the first China Label Industry Awards ceremony held at Labelexpo Asia.

After more than five years on the market the S7 series has evolved to its fifth generation and been extended to a maximum printing width of 670mm. The press has found application across multiple fields including labels, flexible packaging, tobacco packaging and other specialist packaging materials. 'The S7 series flexographic printing machines have become the first choice for domestic high-end label customers,' says Keqin.

In response to a growing market demand for wider-web in-line flexo presses, Spande next launched the AC series of mid-web flexo press lines, available in widths of 700, 800 and 900mm (27.5, 31 and 35in). The



AC series converting line

"Spande's mid-term strategic plan aims to increase its production capacaty by at least five times and expand into the global market"

AC series presses have a maximum repeat length of 32 inches and maximum printing speed of 250m/min (830ft/min) with a materials range from 12 to 800 microns.

Representing everything Spande has learned about flexo automation and in-line processing over the last 10 years, the AC series is available in both roll-to-roll and roll-to-sheet format. It integrates in-line processes, including UV/WB flexo, gravure and Pantec hot stamping, allowing the press to play across multiple package printing fields where the wider press width is an advantage.

Spande has also launched the S5 series at a lower cost of entry than the S7, while still retaining much of the latter's automation capabilities. The S5 is available in 370, 450 and 520mm widths and a substrate range between 12-300 microns.

Hybrid technology

Faced with the rise of hybrid printing technology, Shanghai Spande has actively collaborated with both international and domestic suppliers of digital equipment, integrating the advantages of both technologies.

After developing its first hybrid press with Domino in China, in 2024 Spande extended its cooperation with General Inkjet Products (GIP) to build a hybrid press which combined GIP's 1,200 DPI digital engine with Spande's S5 flexo platform.

The first Label Modular 330 HD was installed at Suzhou AP Label. After three months of use, AP Label purchased a second press line. Spande expects to install 10-15 units by the end of 2025 in China.

Future plans

Over the next three years, Spande's mid-term strategic plan aims to increase its production capacity by at least five times and expand into the global market. At the same time, a new modern headquarters is scheduled to be completed and put into operation in the middle of 2026, with a total area of approximately 38,000sqm, covering R&D, assembly and office space. The new headquarters is located in Minhang Development Zone, Shanghai, one of China's leading industrial centers.

Keqin says the development of the S-series and AC-series presses is only possible because of the wider development of Chinese manufacturing expertise. He wants to create a new narrative about China's industrial development based not on low price, but cutting-edge innovation: 'Leveraging the continuous upgrading of China's manufacturing capabilities, of hardware and software, and strong support by global industry leaders such as Siemens, we are dedicated to exploring the international market while deeply rooted in the local market, aiming to secure a more significant position in global competition.'

The company's globalization strategy will be showcased at the upcoming Labelexpo Europe 2025 where Spande has the biggest stand at the show. It will showcase the S7 and S5 series, as well as the AC mid-width flexographic packaging production lines.

'Six years ago, we made our debut at Labelexpo in Europe; this return marks Spande's largest investment yet at Labelexpo,' says Keqin.

Spande will be exhibiting at Labelexpo Europe 2025. Scan the QR code to learn more

The evolution of Channeled Resources Group

The family-owned business has expanded beyond its initial role as a recycling company, but sustainability still forms a key part of its ethos. Selah Zighelboim reports

In 1978, Calvin Frost founded Channeled Resources Group (CRG) as a traditional paper recycling company, buying wastepaper and selling it to paper mills. Over the decades, the company's mission changed, as it persevered through challenges and seized new opportunities.

CRG is no longer a paper recycling company. Instead, it operates in three primary markets, selling pressure-sensitive roll labelstock, blank labels and release liners.

Frost is also no longer the CEO of CRG. He has taken a step back and is now chairman, while his eldest daughter, Cindy White, serves as president and CEO, a role she assumed in 2007. Frost's younger daughters, Sarah Frost Hoffman and Debbie Frost Shepherd, also work at CRG, serving as the label division coordinator and office manager, respectively. Ownership of the company is split evenly between Frost's three daughters. Rich Hoffman, Sarah Frost Hoffman's husband, is the COO.

Over the past few years, the third generation of the family has become more involved with the company. White's daughter, Ginnie Gandy, is the sales manager for the release liner division, and Hoffman's son, Alex Hoffman, is the market manager in the label and PS division.

CRG's release liners are the fastest-growing segment of the company, making up approximately 45 percent of the business. Blank labels make up about 35 percent. The labelstock, which CRG produces from offcuts acquired from major manufacturers, accounts for about 20 percent of the business. CRG's label and PS customers are primarily converters, with some packaging companies as well. The release liner business sells to tape, medical, industrial and other applications.

'Though we've moved away from recycling, sustainability is still a core part of who we are, and it drives a lot of things that we do, whether it's finding an alternative solution to polycoated craft material like BCK, or getting FSC-certified material for customers,' Alex Hoffman says. 'Even though we've transcended our origins in recycling and sustainable solutions, we still offer them to customers.'

CRG is headquartered in Chicago, with facilities in Marathon City, Wisconsin, Indianapolis and Toronto. The company has grown from its modest beginnings to now employing more than 160 people. CRG has a goal of becoming a 125m USD company in the next several years.

Changing mission

CRG began expanding beyond its original mission in the 1980s. Interest rates had surged, reaching a peak of 19-20 percent, and the wastepaper industry at the time was also a volatile one.

That motivated Frost to steer the company into recycling nonrecyclable materials, specifically, coated and treated laminated paper, which is difficult for paper mills to process.

'That transition in the early '80s, from getting out of the recycling of recyclables and into the recycling of nonrecyclables, was critical to the success of Channeled Resources,' Frost says.

That transition began with a partnership with a facility in Iowa City, Iowa, where Frost discovered some rolls of material that had been discarded behind the plant. Despite not knowing what those rolls were made of, Frost offered to take them away.



The Frost family, L-R: Ginnie Gandy with baby Emmett, Cindy Frost White, Calvin Frost, Debbie Shepherd, Sarah Hoffman, Alex Hoffman and Rich Hoffman

"We must have saved millions of tons of material from going to the landfill in the years that we've been doing this"

Over the next six months, CRG collected hundreds of tons of material from this plant, eventually learning that they were release papers with a polyethylene coating and silicone on top. CRG was able to find a market to resell this material, both domestically and internationally. Soon, CRG began diverting other companies' coated substrates, primarily pressure-sensitive label materials, away from landfills and selling them.

White joined the company in 1987. At the time, there were just three employees: White, Frost and a secretary.

'We must have saved millions of tons of material from going to the landfill in the years that we've been doing this,' White says. 'Before we did it, all pressure-sensitive waste went to the landfill, and now very little of it does.'

In the early 1990s, the company started producing silicone-coated release liners.

Around 1990, CRG also began diverting its waste from landfills by partnering with other companies to convert it into fuel. This has proven to be an effective avenue to repurpose matrix waste. CRG has changed partners for this over the years, but since the mid-2000s, the company has consistently been a supplier to Convergen Energy in Green Bay, Wisconsin. This partnership allows CRG to achieve a 96 percent landfill-free status.

'That hasn't changed and will never change,' Rick Hoffman says of this side of the business. 'That's our commitment to the market and the industry.'

CRG expanded into blank labels because of interest from converter customers.

'A lot of our customers for blanks are also our pressure-sensitive customers who don't want to waste press time making things that don't add value,' White says. 'So, they get their blanks from us, and they do all their high-quality, high-color print with their own machines.'

Technology

Today, for the PS segment of the company, CRG acquires off-cuts and seconds from major PS manufacturers, which CRG slits and rewinds to each customer's requirements. These rolls are upcycled for customers at reduced prices. Most of this material is paper, though film makes up a significant and growing percentage. This area of the business is particularly valuable for smaller converter customers, who may be more price-sensitive and benefit from smaller rolls.

'It helps so many converters that want to buy a small quantity,' says Marie Casillas, sales manager for PS.

To upcycle this material, CRG has 13 slitter-rewinders from various suppliers: Stanford, Elite Cameron, Catbridge and Kampf.

'Every slitter is different to do the different types of materials that we're slitting and rewinding,' White says. 'We can slit narrow widths with the small Stanfords, to wide widths with our Catbridges and Kampfs.'

For its blank labels, CRG manufactures the entire end product. The company silicone-coats the release liner, applies the adhesive coating, laminates the product, then converts and finishes the labelstock into rolls. CRG produces its large blank label jobs on ETI Converting machinery and the smaller, custom jobs on die-cutters.

'We've gotten into different substrates when it comes to the blank label side,' says Nick Negulescu, CRG's business development manager.

'Traditionally, it was just direct thermal and thermal transfer paper. We've added synthetics to that portfolio as well, such as a more durable film and base stock that's thermal transfer printable or direct thermal printable. We've also expanded into inkjet-printable labels for those markets that require them.

'That's the cool thing about our label process,' he adds. 'Since we're manufacturing the substrate ourselves, if a customer comes to us and says, "Hey, I need this kind of particular substrate or something similar to it", we have the relationships to be able to go out and source that material, to put it into our process, to be able to produce that for them as a finished product at the end of the day.'

CRG's newest piece of equipment is a Domino printbar. This machine attaches to a die-cutter and prints marks on the backs of labels.

'We had a lot of customers who wanted this, to do numbering of labels, just tick marks on the back of a label,' White says of the Domino machine. 'We kept getting the inquiries, so it was just handling a need that we were being asked about.'

CRG produces its release liners using four silicone coaters at its facilities in Toronto and Marathon City. One of CRG's most significant and recent investments has been a 70in wide coater from SAM North America, capable of running up to 1,500 ft/min.

New initiatives

In the spring, CRG launched a new website. This site is designed to be more intuitive and provide a simpler user experience.

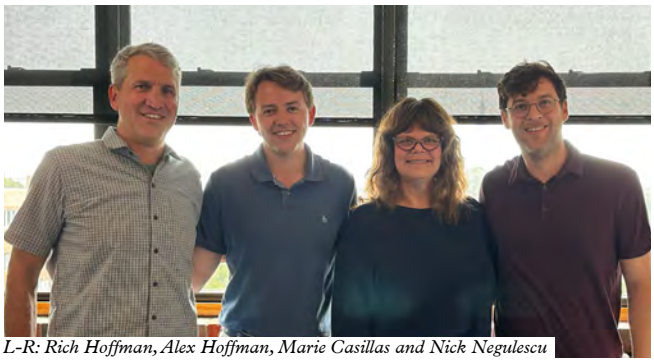
For the first time, the website allows users to view CRG's PS inventory. Because the products in this inventory are obtained as offcuts from various manufacturers, they are constantly changing. Customers can now use the website to learn what is in stock.

In 2024, CRG also became the first sponsor of TLMI's Liner Recycling Initiative.

CRG had previously attempted to start a liner recycling program by collecting spent release liners from end users, repulping them, and reselling the pulp. CRG also sold the used liner to China, where it was repurposed. However, collecting the spent release liner was challenging and expensive, and the program didn't last.

Rich Hoffman hopes that the market is more ready for such an initiative now.

'Calvin is a pioneer,' Rich Hoffman says. 'He's the first one who started pushing for liner recycling and who pushed the industry toward that.'



L-R: Rich Hoffman, Alex Hoffman, Marie Casillas and Nick Negulescu

"It's a big team, and it's a wonderful environment to work in"

Industry challenges

Like most manufacturers, CRG has faced workforce challenges. In Marathon County, Wisconsin, where CRG has a facility, the unemployment rate is under 3 percent, underscoring this difficulty.

CRG has invested in automation to ease that challenge, such as in its tapers, unwinders, turrets and more. The company offers bonuses for employee referrals and provides cross-training for staff.

Moreover, CRG faced challenges with tariffs, pricing pressure, and an influx of low-cost imports from China. The company's supplier relationships, as well as its continued emphasis on quality, flexibility and value as differentiators, have helped CRG navigate these challenges.

A family business

Frost started CRG in the 1970s because he no longer wanted to work in a corporate environment. Today, CRG remains a family-owned business where everyone knows each other.

'You're not a number; you're a person,' says Casillas, who isn't related to Frost, but says she feels like part of the family. 'You can go right to the president. You can go right to the COO and ask questions. We all work together as a team from the top all the way down. It's a big team, and it's a wonderful environment to work in.'

White says: 'We have 160 employees, and I know every one of them, which is fun. It's a big responsibility, though.'

As chairman, Frost remains a part of the company. He regularly visits the office and is heavily involved in the waste energy side of the company, as well as its international business.

'I'm older now, and I don't have the same energy level, and I don't think the same way as everybody else does, and I understand that,' Frost reflects. 'I think you have to be willing to give up, and I think I've done a reasonably good job at that. No ego in that regard. Cindy and Rich found a little corner for me to stay active, which I love.'

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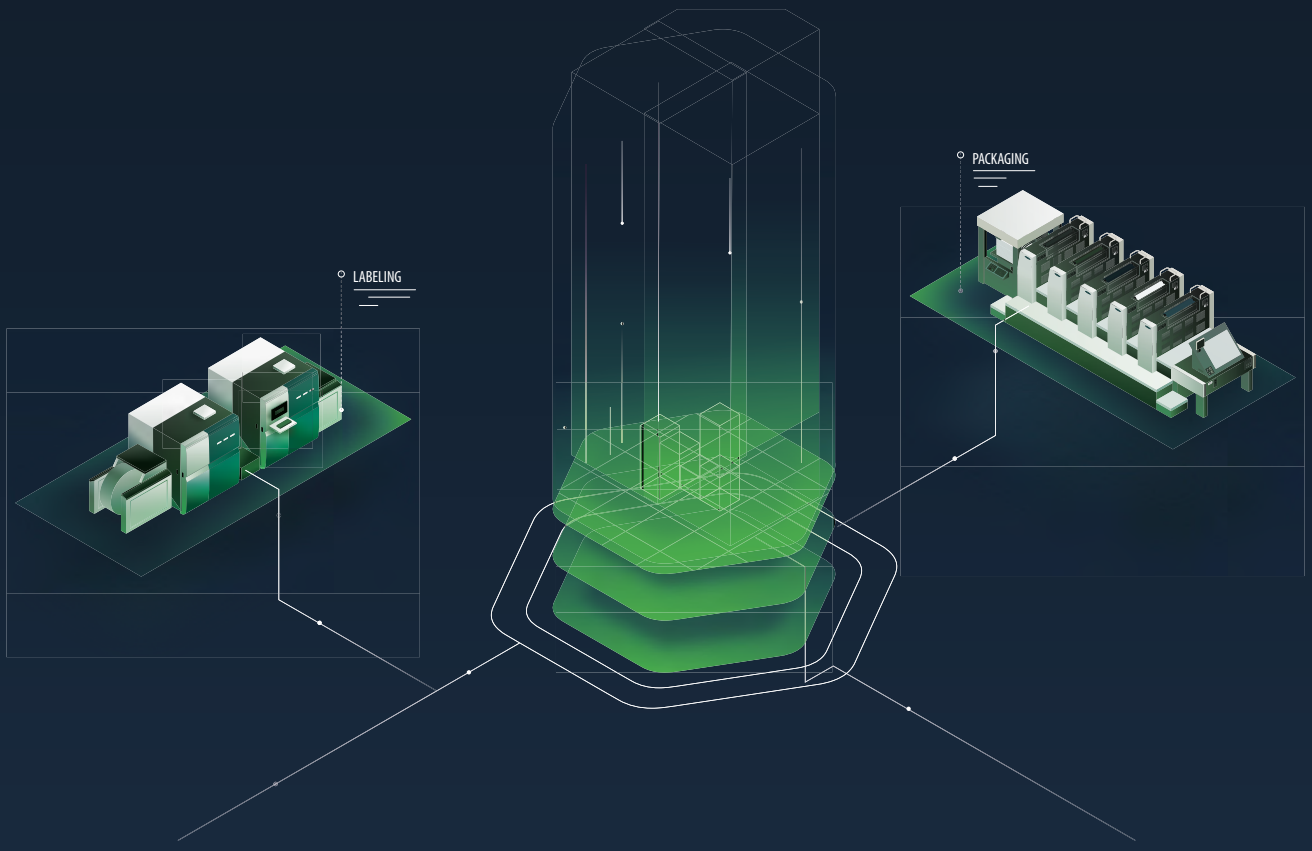

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Xeikon showcases digital embellishment capabilities

At an open house at its Global Innovation Center in Elgin, Illinois, Xeikon demonstrated how its TX500 press integrates in-line with Kurz's digital metallization technology. Selah Zighelboim reports

"You're still going to get that 1,200 x 1,200 sharp resolution, sharp detail, sharp edges capability, fine text in an in-line finished product"

Xeikon hosted an open house at its North American headquarters and Global Innovation Center in Elgin, Illinois, on June 9, just one day before the Amplify Print 2025 finishing and embellishment show in nearby Rosemont.

Xeikon used the proximity to the Amplify event to demonstrate its technology to converters, partners and other interested parties, who could visit at their convenience, examine the machinery in the demo room and converse with Xeikon team members.

A setup in the demo room showcased Xeikon's digital embellishment capabilities, with Xeikon's TX500 press integrated with a Kurz module for in-line, food-safe digital metallization.

'This is really kind of a launch for this year,' said Kent Wolford, Xeikon's marketing director labels North America. 'We've introduced the Titon [toner] but not the Kurz formally.'



Xeikon's TX500 and Kurz's metallization module can integrate for in-line digital metallization

Open house

The open house began with a presentation by Rob Welford, Xeikon's president, and Wolford. After the presentation, attendees moved to the demo floor, where they saw Xeikon's PX3300HD Panther LED inkjet press, as well as the in-line digital metallization performed with Xeikon's TX500 press and Kurz technology.

Welford began the presentation by discussing Xeikon's financial performance. Despite the uncertainty caused by US tariffs, Xeikon is doing well and has seen an increase in demand for toner this year, while ink sales remained stable, Welford said.

Wolford provided a history of Xeikon, which began more than 35 years ago in the dry toner technology field. Flint Group acquired the company in 2015. Seven years ago, it entered the inkjet market and quickly grew by acquiring Jetrion. Xeikon continues to support Jetrion presses, while introducing its own. Xeikon's PX UV inkjet press is now in its third generation, the PX 3300HD.

Wolford highlighted how Xeikon's technology has been proven to be food-safe and compliant with FDA and Swiss Ordinance regulations.

He also noted Xeikon's focus on sustainability. The company's inks are suitable for recycling and are made from recycled content. Additionally, the toner manufacturing plant is 100 percent powered by green electricity.

'It's not just the technology,' Wolford said. 'As a company, we're very focused on the environment and being sustainable, even with our manufacturing facilities.'

Titon toner

The open house showcased Xeikon's Titon toners. These dry toners are more durable and heat-resistant than Xeikon's traditional toners, making them suitable for UV curing, according to the company. The toners can also print on a wide variety of substrates and are food safe.

'There's actually a photo initiator in this toner that makes it more durable,' Wolford said. 'That toner, when it's secured, when it's sealed, it's going to stay there. It's not going anywhere.'

Xeikon's website lists its potential uses in producing wine labels that don't require varnishing and paper-based flexible packaging that doesn't require an additional functional barrier for food safety.

Digital embellishment

Titon toners run on Xeikon's TX500, a crucial component of the digital in-line metallization collaboration with Kurz. The two companies will bring this demonstration to Labelexpo Europe 2025 in Barcelona.

The TX500 is a 20in roll-to-roll digital press, capable of running at 98 ft/min (30 m/min) and 1,200 DPI. Compared to previous models, it has additional automation in its registration and inspection technology.

For the in-line metallization application, the press uses Xeikon's traditional toner for the metallic elements, in addition to the Titon toner. Unlike the Titon toner, the traditional toner melts in the curing process, adhering to the metallization components. The label designer has full creative control over the metallized components that can be included in the final product.

Wolford explained: 'You're still going to get that 1,200 x 1,200 sharp resolution, sharp detail, sharp edges capability, fine text in an in-line finished product.'

The uses for this metallization go beyond wine and spirit labels. Embellishment can add value for other end-markets and serve as an anti-counterfeit security measure. This setup enables variable printing, including for the metallized components. Xeikon's target prospects for this application include label converters, flexible packaging converters, wall deco printers and more.

'Every label can be different, even with metallization,' Wolford concluded.

LABELS & LABELING

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First Cartes embellishment line installed in Mexico

The landmark installation at Etiquetas y Formas vindicates Cartes' focus on the market and reflects rising quality demands from local brand owners. James Quirk reports

Mexican label converter Etiquetas y Formas has installed the country's first GT360 converting and embellishment line from Italian manufacturer Cartes.

The Guadalajara-based converter has added the system, which it describes as the 'top machine in its field', to its production arsenal to add high-end embellishment to labels for tequila and other premium products.

For Cartes' global sales director, Virgilio Micale, the installation (which was followed swiftly by a second at the Juarez site of Codiflex) represents immediate vindication of the company's recent investment in a sales and service office in Guadalajara, which it announced at Labelexpo Mexico in April this year. Furthermore, it reflects the increasing quality demands of a local market that has seen strong growth in recent years.

Opportunity

Etiquetas y Formas was founded in Guadalajara in 2001 by siblings Martha, Roberto and René García. The trio had no background in printing or the label industry, but 'spotted an opportunity in the market', recalls Martha García, who took charge of sales for the fledgling company. They installed a 3-color Mark Andy press and began producing labels for small local businesses for products such as snacks and soap. Roberto García handled production, and René focused on administration and sales.

'At the beginning, the learning curve was very tough,' recalls Martha García. 'It was a real challenge. We studied hard and received a lot of great support from our suppliers, including Mark Andy, Avery Dennison and UPM Raflatac.'

The business grew quickly and added a 6-color Nilpeter flexo press the following year. The additional capacity, greater number of colors, and ability to use different material options allowed Etiquetas y Formas to expand its product range and move into larger markets such as pharmaceuticals, personal care and tequila.

The pivot to Nilpeter presses continued with the addition of 8- and 9-color flexo machines in subsequent years, which can run water-based flexo or UV flexo inks as required by the job. 'The plan originally was to continue with Mark Andy machines,' says Martha García. 'But we saw Nilpeter presses running at a Labelexpo Americas and were very impressed.'

The presses from the Danish manufacturer also allow Etiquetas y Formas to produce folding cartons for pharmaceutical and cosmetics applications. 'It's a small part of the business,' says Martha García. 'Labels are the main focus. But shrink sleeves could also be a possibility in the future, as the Nilpeter presses can handle the filmic materials.'

As its name suggests, the company also produces continuous forms, although the market has declined, and this is only a small part of the business today.

Its labels serve a wide variety of markets. Food and beverage is Etiquetas y Formas' largest end-use sector, followed by the pharmaceutical sector. The company also sells to the cosmetics, veterinary, wine and spirits, cleaning products and clothing sectors, as well as to chemical and biological laboratories. Production is all consumed domestically, although some clients export to the US, Canada, Europe and elsewhere.



Martha García with the new Cartes GT360 at Etiquetas y Formas

"After looking at many different options, we felt the Cartes GT360 was the top machine in its field"



The tequila market is a key focus for Etiquetas y Formas

Cartes to expand into new facility

Cartes will open a new production facility in Mantova, Italy, after Labelexpo Europe in September, which will add 2,000 sqm of machine-building space to its operation.

The site, located near Cartes' headquarters and other facilities in the local area, will be dedicated to producing the company's flagship converting and embellishment line, the GT360 platform.

The additional space will take the company's total production footprint to 12,000 sqm, all located in Italy.



The Cartes GT360 embellishment line

"The tequila market is where we are seeing the strongest growth and the most opportunity"

Quality

The decision to install the Cartes GT360 came after the company studied numerous different options at various Labelexpo shows. 'What stood out was its innovation and the quality of the labels it produces,' says Martha García. 'After looking at many different options on the market, we felt it was the top machine in its field.' It arrived the day after Labelexpo Mexico, which took place in Guadalajara in April.

The GT360 converting and embellishment line installed at Etiquetas y Formas features an unwinder module with Vetaphone corona treatment, a 3-color simultaneous hot foil stamping unit, semi-rotary flexo printing and varnishing, flat-bed screen printing, semi-rotary die-cutting incorporating Air Gap System (AGS) and Image Distortion System (IDS), dry embossing and flat-bed die-cutting, and a rewinding module with longitudinal slitting and unwinding separation.

'It will allow us to produce labels with more advanced finishes,' she continues. 'The tequila market is where we are seeing the strongest growth and the most opportunity, so looking for high-level embellishment was a key factor in the decision. It can also bring added value to products such as premium olive oils and shampoos, for example.'

There is a burgeoning wine market in Mexico, which began in the north of the country, with many vineyards selling to the US, and has since spread elsewhere. 'We do produce some wine labels,' says Martha García. 'It's not as strong for us as tequila, but it's a growing market and one where there will be opportunities for us, particularly with the new Cartes machine.'

Cartes' new sales and service office in Guadalajara, which provides technical support and spare parts, was a further advantage. 'It's so important to have that local support. They have been hugely helpful,' says Renée García, her uncle's namesake, but part of the second generation of the family working at the company.

As elsewhere, the label market in Mexico dipped following a boom period during Covid. But growth and optimism have returned. 'Challenges happen. We have seen recessions in the past, good times and bad times. But you never give up, you keep going,' says Martha García.

The company employs 45 staff at its 1,200 sqm factory. It trains its employees in-house. 'It can be a challenge to recruit the younger generation,' says Martha García. 'But we are lucky to count on a workforce with people who have been with us for many years. We have a very family-oriented atmosphere in the company, which has helped us to grow.'

Etiquetas y Formas remains a family business. The three founding siblings are still directors and in charge. From the second generation, Renée, Roberto's daughter, works in quality control, and Martha's daughter Andrea is part of the sales team.

Renée García is in her 20s and qualified as an industrial engineer. Her passion for the label industry is clear. 'It's a noble and beautiful industry,' she says. 'It is gratifying work. It's really cool to put the design and vision of a product into reality.'

The company is unfazed by increasing consolidation in the market. 'We are loyal to our clients and our clients are loyal to us,' says Martha García. 'Some of our small clients from the early days have grown alongside us over the years and are still our customers.'

'The quality of our service and our quick delivery times are what our clients value,' says Renée García. 'This differentiates us from our competition.'

Potential

Cartes sees such potential in the Mexican market that it opened a sales and service office in Guadalajara, an epicenter of the local label printing industry, in April. The installation at Etiquetas y Formas, Cartes' first embellishment system in the country, took place at the same time, just after Labelexpo Mexico that same month. A second embellishment system was recently installed at the Juarez site of Codiflex (the converter also has factories in Monterrey, Chihuahua and the US). Before these installations, the Cartes' sales into the country had been limited to laser die-cutting machines. Sales of these have also continued, with two more installed in northern Mexico since Labelexpo Mexico, at converters selling labels into the US market.

'We are targeting the Mexican market with a lot of dynamism,' says global sales director Virgilio Micale. 'It's a big focus for us, with the new office, technical service staff and spare parts.'

Micale continues: 'We see big potential in the Mexican market, particularly in applications such as tequila, which require high-end embellishment. The local wine industry, much of which is based in the north of the country and targets the US market, is also forecast to grow significantly over the next five years.

'There are a couple more embellishment installations which should be completed before the end of the year. We are just confirming the specifications of the machines. And I expect five or six more machines to be installed over the next 18 months.'

The fact that Cartes, which produces some of the most technologically advanced converting and embellishment systems available, is selling these machines in Mexico and investing in an office in the country reflects the growth and increasing quality demands in the local market.

This was evident at Labelexpo Mexico 2025 in Guadalajara, where many converting equipment manufacturers told L&L that high-end embellishment was increasingly sought after by local brand owners, particularly in applications such as tequila and other spirits. A B Graphic's recent success in the country is further evidence of the trend. Since appointing Renew Solutions as its agent in Mexico three years ago, it has sold more than 25 machines, with around half of these being its flagship Digicon Series 3 advanced converting systems.

Scan the QR code to learn more information on Etiquetas y Formas

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Eadec's expansion blueprint pays dividends

The Spanish converter has successfully expanded into Chile and Peru, and now has its sights set on Mexico. James Quirk reports

Multinational label converting groups are usually formed through a familiar blueprint. Companies from different countries join forces, either through acquisitions or mergers, motivated by serving multinational brands with the same technology and quality in different geographic markets, or by the economies of scale achievable through sharing resources and bulk-buying consumables.

Yet in Latin America, family-owned Spanish converter Eadec is following a different path.

The company opened a facility in Chile in 2004, and LATAM manager Javier Ibero, son of Eadec's founder Ildefonso Ibero, who was running the Chile operation since 2012, then relocated to Peru in 2017 to set up a site.

Eadec Peru has put a difficult two years following the pandemic behind it to achieve double-digit growth so far this year. And now Ibero has his sights set on further expansion, with an ambitious plan to inaugurate a company in Mexico in the next two years.

Unlike some multinational groups, the Spanish, Chilean and Peruvian operations under the Eadec umbrella don't sell to the same clients, but they share a focus on market niches. 'My vision is of a multinational group of label printing companies that serve small and medium-sized clients rather than global brands, focusing on market niches,' explains Ibero.

Nor does Ibero, a driven man clearly passionate about his work, envisage selling out to a larger converting group. 'I don't want to stop. I like to compete,' he emphasizes. 'I come to a country, I install myself, I start a business, and I grow that business. That's what I love to do. But I am keen to attract investment into our burgeoning group, for example, from private equity. It would allow us to expand our footprint even further.'

Expanding horizons

Eadec was founded in 1994 by Ildefonso Ibero and three business partners in the small town of Cascante in Navarra, northern Spain. Employing digital and flexo technology, it serves the food and beverage, cosmetics and personal care, pharma, industrial, wine and spirits, and transport and logistics markets.

By the early 2000s, the company felt that in Spain's mature label industry, the only way to gain market share was to lower margins. Instead, Ildefonso Ibero and his partners decided to expand Eadec's footprint and open a facility in another country. They identified

> **"My vision is of a multinational group of label printing companies that serve small and medium-sized clients, focusing on market niches"**

Latin America and Eastern Europe as the most promising options, and during a tour organized by the government for Spanish business professionals in Chile, Ildefonso Ibero was able to make some contacts and begin the project's development.

Eadec Chile was opened in 2004. 'Despite the distance, and the fact that the project was complex and costly to get off the ground, by 2007 the company was already seeing the benefits,' says Javier Ibero. 'In 2012, I was offered the chance to enter the business and take on the challenge of the project in Chile. At the time, I had already finished a degree in industrial mechanical engineering and was working in the energy sector. I had also spent time at a food company. The project seemed interesting to me, so I decided to go to Chile and accept the challenge. The company in Chile had a great deal of investment and growth. In the first five years, we doubled the size of the business and installed a whole new set of equipment.'

Long a highly competitive market — Chile has more HP Indigo presses per capita than any other Latin American country — the business landscape has become even tougher in recent years, says Ibero. 'The Chilean label market is overserved. There are too many converters and too much competition,' he explains. 'Capacity is double the size of the market itself. This has caused a price war. Prices have dropped 30-40 percent in the last five years.'

Ibero admits that Eadec Chile suffered 'bad years' following the pandemic, but growth returned to 11 percent in 2024 and has already reached an impressive 48 percent so far this year. 'Some of that is recuperating previous losses,' he says. 'But it shows we are back on the right track.'

Growth potential

Before settling on Peru as the next destination for a new factory, Ibero looked closely at Argentina and Colombia. 'Ultimately, we decided that, as more developed markets, there was less



Javier Ibero at Eadec's factory in Peru



Wine labels printed by Eadec Chile

opportunity for us,' he says. 'The decision was made because of the growth potential of the Peruvian market and because we saw that we could add value in certain products and sectors.'

Ibero's first visit to Peru took place in 2016. 'I arrived with a suitcase full of labels and started showing them around,' he recalls. Through a contact at Spain's Chamber of Commerce, he was introduced to Arnau Casasus, a Spaniard from Barcelona who was living in Lima. A similar age to Ibero, the pair became friends and Casasus helped the fledgling operation navigate Peru's business landscape.

The factory was opened in 2017. The company installed an HP Indigo digital press and a Grafotronic converting system, as well as a flexo press and Lombardi finishing line to tackle longer runs. The initial focus was on the wine and spirits sector, with local alcoholic beverage pisco, a particularly strong market in Peru.

'Next to our factory is a restaurant, and when I first started going there, I noticed shelves with lots of bottles of pisco,' says Ibero. 'We learned about local pisco and wine producers, and now around 70 percent of the bottles on those shelves are labeled by Eadec.'

Eadec Peru has achieved 'consistent double-digit growth' since its foundation, according to Ibero. Its staff and factory space have both doubled too, while a new flexo press will soon treble flexo production and double the company's overall production capacity. The new press, ordered at Labelexpo Mexico in Guadalajara in April, is wider and faster than Eadec Peru's existing flexo machine.

The wine and spirits market remains a key focus for Eadec. Labels produced for that sector are usually printed on the HP Indigo digital press and feature high levels of embellishment. 'The pisco market is showing strong growth,' says Ibero. 'The success of Peruvian gastronomy attracts tourists who can discover the drink, and has also led to more Peruvian restaurants opening abroad. This helps the pisco market to grow.'

But Eadec Peru's largest end-user market is now agro-industry, to which long-run flexo printing is better suited. 'The new press is a mid-web machine which will bring us some different characteristics and the ability to handle a wider range of materials,' says Ibero. 'We will be able to handle longer runs that we previously could, and it will allow us to produce shrink sleeves, wraparound labels and flexible packaging.'

The company also sells label applicators. 'We started representing some European applicator brands and installed our first batch of machines in 2018,' says Ibero.



Pisco label printed by Eadec Peru

"I arrived with a suitcase full of labels and started showing them around"

'We've now sold more than 25. They are double the price of locally made machines, but quality demands are rising in the local market. We often sell to agro-industrial companies, who we are also serving with labels, so it helps to create a closer relationship with the customer.'

Javier Ibero aims to replicate Eadec's success in Chile and Peru by setting up an operation in Mexico. He intends to begin the project in earnest next year, with the aim of inaugurating a new plant in 2027. 'Mexico is a much bigger market. A country of 130 million people, compared to Peru's 34 million and Chile's 20 million,' he says. 'We are looking for a partner to help navigate the local market. We want to replicate the Peru project, while tweaking certain things to adapt to the local industry. It is important to adapt to the needs of the customer.'

Should the project come to fruition, it would mean a fourth facility in as many countries, with a presence on three continents: Europe, North America and South America. Ibero is excited about the prospect of another new project in another new country. 'You have to be predisposed to adventure,' he says. 'I am that type of person. I love it.'

Scan the QR code to learn more about Eadec Peru

News in Brief

Multietiquetas installs Nilpeter FB-14 press

Multietiquetas has invested in a new Nilpeter FB-14. Multietiquetas, a Mexican label manufacturer founded in 1979, and Nilpeter have been partners for generations. Mexico, and especially Guadalajara, is a key market for Nilpeter. Over the years, Nilpeter has installed more than 250 presses in Guadalajara.

E-magen acquires Hybrid Software products

E-magen, a pre-press specialist in Argentina, has acquired a suite of Hybrid Software products to offer greater transparency and precision at every stage of the printing process. The suite includes Packz, a native, open-standard PDF editor tailored for the label and packaging market with the Packz Connector for GMG Color; CloudFlow, a secure, cloud-based platform that streamlines editing and approval; Packzflow, designed to optimize workflow across all Packz-related tasks; and Proofscope, an HTML-based technology for creating digital proofs and enabling collaborative review.

Stahl inaugurates Customer Center of Excellence

Stahl, a manufacturer of specialty coatings for flexible materials, has relocated and opened its enhanced Center of Excellence in León, Mexico. The new facility features offices, application laboratories and testing capabilities. With a larger footprint than the previous León facility, the upgraded center provides a more comprehensive customer experience.

Mark Andy honors Etipress with Legacy Award

Mark Andy presented a Legacy Award to long-time customer and partner Etipress, and its founder, Juan Carlos Arroyave, for their continued partnership with Mark Andy printing technology.'Juan Carlos and the entire Etipress team exemplify what's possible when a business fully leverages the technology and support we provide,' said John Vigna, LATAM sales manager at Mark Andy.

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S Kumar sees strong momentum in offset-flexo hybrid technology

With over 350 Zonten equipment installations across India, S Kumar Multiproducts is witnessing strong growth for hybrid printing technology tailored to the evolving needs of India's label and flexible packaging industry. Adyasha Sinha reports

Established in 1981 in Ahmedabad, India, S Kumar Multiproducts began its journey as a converter before partnering with Zonten, based in China, as its distributor in India. This journey started in 2004, and since then, it has continued without pause.

The company experienced a groundbreaking year, achieving the highest number of flexo and intermittent offset Zonten installations in 2024.

Driving force

According to S Kumar, intermittent offset and flexo printing are gaining popularity due to their versatility, cost-effectiveness and ability to handle a wide range of substrates. Flexo printing, in particular, is seeing increased adoption for packaging and labeling applications due to its speed, adaptability and suitability for both short and long print runs.

'We believe the short-run flexible packaging market is undergoing a shift,' says Manish Hansoti, managing director at S Kumar Multiproducts. 'The new standard for presses is now between 450 and 680mm web width, with large repeat sizes, particularly suited for 12-micron film printing. While gravure still dominates this segment, accounting for nearly 95 percent of the market, the shift has begun. More players are now exploring offset, flexo and digital technologies for short- to medium-run jobs such as pouches, sachets, shrink sleeves and other film-based applications.'

According to Hansoti, the reason for the recent increase in demand for offset is that as the width of the material increases, flexo costs increase substantially, making it unviable for small to medium runs, especially in flexible packaging and IML products. Digital printing also becomes expensive after a certain small quantity is reached.

Zonten and S Kumar's recent successes include the installation of an offset-flexo hybrid press at Avon FPP in Ahmednagar. This government-funded organization selected Zonten via S Kumar after evaluating several vendors. The press features delam-relam capabilities, turn bar, cold foil, lamination and die-cutting. The machine has a width of 560mm, enabling it to print a wide variety of jobs, and offers production speeds of up to 150m/min.

S Kumar has also sold a 9-color 680mm full rotary offset press to Sprinpack in Delhi. The export-oriented company already had a rotogravure unit. For its small to medium runs, Sprinpack chose the latest Zonten machine, as cylinder costs were not viable, and it wanted to produce small quantities of pouches and sachets.

'The unique selling point of our press lies in its speed and precision,' shares S Kumar's Hansoti. 'Running between 120 and 150m/min, this full rotary offset press uses 10 servo motors per station, no gears or shafts, just advanced electronic controls. The press comes equipped with auto-inking systems and automatic registration controls.'

S Kumar has also recently completed installations of intermittent offset presses at Janus International in Thane, Vikram Printers in Pune and Moldtek in Hyderabad.



The S Kumar team

"We are bullish about the Indian market. As India's economy continues to grow at a rapid pace, the packaging machinery sector is reaching new heights"

The differentiating factor

What sets S Kumar Multiproducts apart is that it is also a user of Zonten machines and can vouch for its efficiency. Converters planning to purchase Zonten presses can visit the S Kumar facility to observe the machines' performance and make an informed decision before finalizing their purchase.

The company's popularity was evident even at Labelexpo India. S Kumar recorded over 30 new installations of Zonten machines following the show, including 15 high-speed slitter-rewinders, 12 flatbed and intermittent die-cutters, three flexo presses and four hybrid presses.

'We rely on word-of-mouth,' Hansoti says. 'Being printers ourselves, we understand the pain points and focus on building trust.'

He further adds: 'We have a high repeat customer rate, and many of our machines have been running efficiently for over 20 years. After-sales service is a top priority for us. Our team of eight service engineers brings deep technical and printing expertise, and is supported by Zonten's training programs.'

Another factor that gives the company an edge is that it hosts multiple open houses, in partnership with other converters, who have bought Zonten machines from S Kumar.

It hosted an open house with Avon FPP in June, targeting



Zonten machine at S Kumar demo center in Ahmedabad

"Being a one-stop solution for customers' packaging needs is becoming increasingly important to ensure consistency of print across various formats"

gravure users who are considering offset as an alternative for short- to medium-run jobs.

It also organized an open house at Dinson Labels in Navi Mumbai, in July, where a latest-generation flexo press was showcased. The press featured dual servo motors on each station and a large chilled roller specifically designed for printing on filmic substrates.

Expansion strategy

In terms of expansion, the company is not only looking to increase its geographical reach but is also developing its portfolio to include other equipment.

'Expanding beyond India, we have made inroads into the Kenyan and Sri Lankan markets,' shares Aarjav Hansoti, director at S Kumar Multiproducts. 'In collaboration with HP Indigo Africa and Smart Printers Nairobi, we have installed a Zonten ZMQ digital finishing machine that combines screen printing, intermittent flexo, hot foil, IML cutting, embossing and slitting, all in a single-pass operation. We have sold a 9-color ZTR 450 press, featuring three servo motors on each station and 10in chilled rollers, to Sri Lanka-based IML leader Jayasinghe Industries for its in-house label production.'

In terms of new equipment, Aarjav Hansoti tells Labels & Labeling about a new, cost-effective inspection camera system that S Kumar launched in 2025.

It is available in both 4K and 8K resolutions and is priced between 23 lakh INR and 31 lakh INR (approximately between 26,000 USD and 36,000 USD). Live demonstrations are available at the company's demo center in Ahmedabad, India.

Additionally, Aarjav Hansoti reveals that Zonten is poised to enter the digital realm with a UV inkjet press, slated for launch later in 2025.

S Kumar is also expanding into folding cartons. Sharing more details about the development, Aarjav Hansoti highlights: 'Being a one-stop solution for customers' packaging needs is becoming increasingly important to ensure consistency of print across various formats. Our printing division is expanding into folding cartons with a demo Komori press from Switzerland, targeting the pharma and personal care sectors with short-format jobs.'

The company aims to close FY26 with revenues of 100 crore INR (11.6 million USD), up from 70 crore INR (8.14 million USD) in FY24.

'We are bullish about the Indian market. As India's economy continues to grow at a rapid pace, the packaging machinery sector is reaching new heights,' Manish Hansoti concludes.

S Kumar at Labelexpo India 2024

S Kumar reported 21 deals made at Labelexpo India 2024.

The company sold three flexo presses in four days. New Mumbai-based Dinsons Self Sticks has purchased a Zonten 370mm flexo 8-color, fully loaded, two-servo machine with cold foil, as well as a multi-substrate press equipped with lamination and die-cutting capabilities, along with a stacker conveyor featuring LED and UV properties. The machine incorporates flower-type technology along with delam-relam capabilities. This is Dinsons' third Zonten flexo press as the company expands its involvement in the labeling business.

Another 8-color 430mm dual servo, fully loaded flexo press was picked by Sayona Labels.

Hindustan Labels of Nashik and Shri Om booked an HFQ 450 servo-driven, high-speed slitter rewinder with tension and web-guide control.

Hapur-based Aroosh Stickers booked a high-speed HFQ 350 slitter rewinder for its new digital plant.

Ideal Seal Tape acquired a high-speed HMQ 350 die-cutter with a reversible hot foil and a sheeter conveyor.

S Kumar sold another three high-speed HMQ 450 die-cutters with reversible hot foil, lamination, sheeter and conveyor. It also sold three more slitter rewinders.

One intermittent, full rotary die-cut, sheeter and slitter conveyor was sold to Shri Om Printers in Maharashtra.

S Kumar also sold two HMQ 450 flatbed die-cutting machines with lamination, reversible hot foil, and a conveyor with sheeting and slitting capabilities, featuring single-pass technology. One was sold to Hyderabad-based Vimal Packaging, which also bought a high-speed HFQ 450 slitter-rewinder. The other machine was sold to Ahmedabad-based Prakash Printers and Coaters.

Two more HMQ 450 machines were sold to Surat-based Krutika Coatings and Hyderabad-based JK Labels.

Another high-speed HFQ 450 slitter-rewinder was sold to Accur8 Bizcom, based in Ahmednagar. It also bought a ZMQ 450 intermittent/full rotary multifunctional converting machine for labels and IML. Mohali-based United Labels also picked this machine.

Commenting on the company's success at the show, Manish Hansoti, managing director, S Kumar Multiproducts, says: 'We had a tremendous time at Labelexpo India. We are extremely proud of our performance. We booked a large number of machines, which is a first for our participation in Labelexpo. The show has exceeded our expectations, and we hope to come back bigger and stronger in the next edition.'

Scan the QR code to learn more about S Kumar Multiproducts

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Holosafe goes digital

Sowing the seeds of interest at Labelexpo India in November 2024, the Noida, India-based converter buys its first digital press, Adyasha Sinha reports

Holosafe Security Labels, one of India's leading manufacturers of holograms and high-security labels, has expanded its production capabilities by installing the Jetsci KolorSmart+ UV inkjet label press. The system, designed and manufactured in India by Monotech Systems, was commissioned by the converter to tap into consumer brands and startups in the Delhi-NCR region.

The intention to invest in Jetsci KolorSmart+ was sparked after seeing the equipment at Labelexpo India 2024.

Spotlight on digital

Founded in 2008, Holosafe offers holograms (2D/3D and 4 Picoh), tamper-evident and multi-layer security labels, prime and functional self-adhesive labels, garment tags, shrink sleeves and flexible packaging pouches. The company serves more than 600 clients across more than 15 countries, including market leaders in pharmaceuticals, FMCG, electronics, automotive, cosmetics and various government projects.

Despite being a growing company, Holosafe struggled to meet the evolving needs of its customers, especially for small and mid-sized brands that required high-quality packaging in smaller volumes.

'We saw good growth in the Indian startup market and wanted to cash in on the opportunity,' says Preeti Mishra, manager, business development at Holosafe. 'These brands often require short runs with high customization, and that's where the digital technology gives us a significant edge.'

She further adds: 'Digital technology allows us to reduce setup time, tooling costs and wastage, which aligns with our sustainability goals as well. More importantly, it empowers us to offer variable data printing, personalization, and serialization all on the same print run. With digital capability, we can prototype faster, respond to market changes more quickly, and enable shorter go-to-market timelines for clients without compromising on security or aesthetics. It has opened up new possibilities in terms of flexibility and efficiency for short-run, high-customization jobs.'

According to Mishra, digital adoption has grown across the board, with brands now demanding more security labels due to a rise in counterfeiting that costs Indian businesses over 1 lakh crore INR (1 trillion USD) annually.



Preeti Mishra with the newly installed Jetsci KolorSmart+ UV inkjet label press

"Digital empowers us to offer variable data printing, personalization, and serialization, all on the same print run"

The chosen one

With the need for short- to long-run adaptability, frequent job changeovers and variable data printing, the KolorSmart+ emerged as a perfect fit for Holosafe's evolving business needs.

'We chose Jetsci Kolorsmart+ after evaluating several digital presses designed explicitly for label applications,' Mishra says. 'The machine delivers 1,200 DPI resolution with high-quality color vibrancy. It is powered by UV LED inkjet technology, making it suitable for pharmaceutical and FMCG applications where both safety and print quality are critical.

'The press also features a built-in UV pre-flexo station that allows us to produce clear-on-clear labels efficiently. Additionally, the Jetsci Kolorsmart+ offers 6-color printing (CMYK + orange + white), which expands our color gamut and enables highly opaque and vibrant brand designs. It handles substrates up to 350mm wide and leverages high-opacity UV LED-curable inks.' she adds.

In addition to the Jetsci machine, Holosafe's 50,000sqft facility houses more than 35 advanced machines, enabling it to deliver end-to-end secure packaging options. Its key equipment includes four Multitec 8-color flexo printing machines and a Nilpeter FB-Line 10-color UV flexo press. It also has Jetsci D-Spark+ finishing press that allows adding embellishments such as cold foiling, varnishing and embossing. The company also runs rotary die-cutting machines, hot stamping units, lamination lines, automated inspection systems and an in-house hologram mastering and electroforming unit.

Future milestones

Driven by intelligent scaling, automation and market diversification, Holosafe plans to expand its production capacity by 25 percent year-on-year through strategic investments in automation and digital infrastructure.

'We're also entering the smart labeling space, incorporating NFC, RFID and blockchain technologies for next-gen traceability and consumer engagement,' states Mishra.

The KolorSmart+ supports Holosafe's foray into smart packaging with embedded variable data, critical for authentication and anti-counterfeiting.

In 2025, Holosafe is set to launch a range of innovations that blend security with technology and sustainability. Telling more about the innovations, Mishra shares: 'We're developing hybrid QR + RFID embedded labels, enabling both digital identity and proximity-based interaction. Our TraceGuard+ platform is being upgraded to offer plug-and-play dashboards for serialization, product tracking, and consumer engagement, beneficial for micro, small and medium enterprises.

'On the material innovation front, we are working on eco-friendly holograms made from recyclable PET films and water-based adhesives. To showcase these technologies, we're launching a Sample Innovation Kit targeted at pharma, electronics, automotive, cosmetics and personal care segments.

'Through these initiatives, we aim to position Holosafe as a global leader in intelligent, secure, and sustainable packaging,' concludes Mishra.

Scan the QR code to read about how Holosafe is combating counterfeiting with Nilpeter FB-Line

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Maxcess plots growth for India

The company is strategically strengthening its Indian operations through two significant initiatives that will increase its local presence. Adyasha Sinha reports

India is currently a hub for many global firms seeking opportunities in its rapidly growing industrial sector. The government's 'Make in India' initiative, which offers significant advantages in cost efficiency and supply chain resilience, is another key driver why companies are significantly increasing their investments in Indian manufacturing facilities.

Maxcess, a global supplier of automated web handling products and customization services, is poised to capitalize on the opportunities in the Indian market.

The India story

Maxcess is launching two significant initiatives that will increase its local presence. 'First, the company will commence domestic production of its Fife Guiding systems in 2025. This local manufacturing move aims to serve India's growing web converting industries better while reducing lead times and import costs,' shares Niraj Muni, general manager of Maxcess India.

He further adds: 'Concurrently, Maxcess is establishing an R&D center in India that will have dual strategic importance. Beyond supporting APAC regional needs, this center will serve as a global innovation base, leveraging India's strong IT talent pool to develop next-generation web handling technology.'

The facility will focus on industrial IoT integration, predictive maintenance algorithms and automation software that will enhance Maxcess products worldwide.

These investments demonstrate the company's long-term commitment to the Indian market, while also enhancing its global competitiveness. By combining local manufacturing with R&D capabilities, the company positions itself to capitalize on both India's domestic growth and the worldwide demand for smarter web handling technologies.

Speaking about what they foresee for the Indian market, Muni emphasizes: 'India represents a rapidly expanding market, particularly in the printing and packaging industries. Both end-users and OEMs are witnessing substantial growth, showing transformative shifts and promising opportunities in the future.'

Keen eye on technology

Founded in 1939 as Fife, the company strategically expanded through key acquisitions, beginning with Tidland in 1995 and Magpowr in 1996. This growth trajectory culminated in 1998 with the establishment of Maxcess Group. Operating from over 30 manufacturing and sales sites worldwide, the company currently employs more than 2,000 professionals.

Maxcess enables its customers to maximize productivity through innovative products and services worldwide by combining global service and support across the RotoMetrics, Fife, Tidland, Magpowr, Webex, Valley Roller, Componex, ICD and Maxcess Vision Systems brands. It now provides a diverse range of web handling technologies, encompassing rotary dies, guiding, slitting and winding, tension control, precision rolls and vision inspection products.

Muni shares: 'Over the past five years, RotoMetrics has merged its legacy with Maxcess, positioning itself to introduce innovative solutions. Automation and digital technology are at the core of this innovation.'

For instance, in 2022, RotoMetrics unveiled the AccuAdjust Dual Adjust Anvil, followed by the RotoAdjust automation system in January 2024. This plug-and-play automation system, paired with



Maxcess India team at Labelexpo India 2024

"By implementing AI technology in manufacturing, we have operationalized numerous processes, with more developments in the pipeline"

IoT software, offers greater operator control, enhanced productivity and Industry 4.0 analytics for smarter operations.

Talking about some of the upcoming products and the technology involved, Muni comments: 'The upcoming RotoScan, described as the industry's first fully automated intelligent die station, will be launched in 2025. This is the future of adjustable anvils. It leverages AI to offer in-line real-time adjustments for material variations. This requires minimal operator assistance because of initiative-taking monitoring, significantly reducing scrap and waste.'

He adds: 'By implementing AI technology in manufacturing, we have operationalized numerous processes, with more developments in the pipeline.'

AI technology continues to unfold new possibilities at Maxcess. VisionMax, its intelligent vision inspection system, is a highly AI-integrated machine. It utilizes this technology to design systems for detecting and removing defects, even at speeds exceeding 700m/min. VisionMax can precisely identify and address these issues, enabling rewind and inspection processes.

'These are just a few examples of how we are leveraging AI technology moving forward,' shares Muni.

What's new at Maxcess

Maxcess is also focusing on enabling customers through its training programs. In the die-cutting segment, Maxcess is the only supplier offering over 20 training programs, resulting in reduced die damage and extended die life.

'Our training programs are designed to simplify processes, provide expertise and gain profitability. We have collaborated with many customers to conduct exclusive training for end-users. Our technical expertise is unmatched by competitors,' concludes Muni.

Maxcess will exhibit at Labelexpo Europe 2025. Scan the QR code for more information

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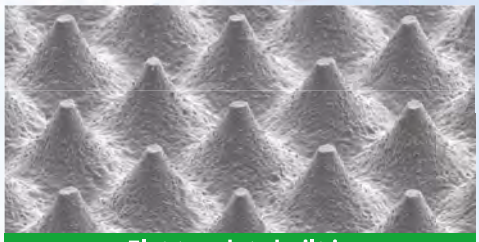

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Epson opens India demo center

Targeted at label printers, converters and manufacturing businesses, Epson opened a demo center that offers hands-on exposure to the advanced features of Epson's SurePress L-6534VW. Adyasha Sinha reports

Epson opened the doors of its first Digital Label Press Solution Center in New Delhi, India, in June 2025. Through a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony, the center welcomed label printers, converters and manufacturing businesses to experience the company's flagship SurePress L-6534VW. The new center will enable visitors to engage in live demonstrations, substrate testing and technical consultations, leading to informed decision-making in real-world production conditions.

The center is designed for training Epson India engineers as well as customers and their operators. It also helps label converters develop and show go-to-market strategies to prospective brand owner customers.

This initiative underscores Epson's commitment to strengthening its presence in India's digital label printing ecosystem.

Say hello to SurePress

Epson's SurePress L-6534VW is a UV inkjet digital label press, capable of speeds up to 50m/min (164ft/min). The company claims that the press is designed for production volumes of up to 1 million linear meters per month.

The press is capable of printing in the basic CMYK color mode, with the option to customize it by adding either a high-opacity white or an orange color to enhance the color gamut.

'With the addition of the high-opacity white, we can achieve up to 88 percent Pantone coverage, and with the inclusion of orange, we can get up to 92 percent Pantone coverage,' explains Jitamitra Bagchi, presales specialist at Epson India, while demonstrating the machine.

With its digital varnish capability, the press can print on multiple labelstocks and film substrates, including textured papers ranging from 18 to 320 microns with matte, glossy and spot UV varnish printing in a single pass. The press transport can reverse and execute subsequent passes for increased color saturation and a higher build-up of varnish, achieving tactile, haptic and security effects with great accuracy.

Bagchi explains: 'This press is powered by Epson's PrecisionCore printheads that can deliver print at 600 x 1,200 DPI resolution using the company's variable-sized droplets starting from 3.2 picoliters. Additionally, the heads are equipped with self-cleaning technology, featuring a cleaning chemical tank integrated within the machine.' There are dual tanks for all the inks and varnish that automatically hot-switch when needed.

Paired with high-opacity white ink, UV pinning and a drum platen system, the Epson digital label press produces vibrant, durable labels suitable for various industries, including food and beverage, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, industrial products and more.

Epson's India road map

Marking 35 years in India, with headquarters in Bengaluru, Epson India has a presence in 40 cities in the country.

Sharing more about the company's history and its footprint in India, Okuzono Kazuomi, general manager, IIJ, sales and marketing, Epson, says: 'India continues to be one of Epson's most strategic markets, particularly in the heavy-duty industrial printer segment. The Digital Label Press Solution Center reflects our strong commitment to the Indian label industry. Through this facility, we aim to deepen direct customer engagement and showcase the value that Epson brings to the table.'



Eisuke Morishita of Epson and LK Vasudevan of Epson India with Epson's SurePress L-6534VW

"India continues to be one of Epson's most strategic markets, particularly in the heavy-duty industrial printer segment"

Prabagaran S, senior general manager, sales and marketing, Epson India, adds: 'The launch of our Digital Label Press Solution Center in Delhi is a strategic step toward shaping the future of digital label printing in India. This initiative is not just about presenting a new technology; it is about empowering label printing businesses to rethink their operations, enhance efficiency and unlock greater creative potential.'

The SurePress L-6534VW was also showcased at Labelexpo India in 2024. Epson expressed great optimism about this machine for the next two to three years. With two presses already installed in the Delhi NCR region, the first one at Prateek Graphics and the second one at Print Mart, and the third one in the pipeline at Chandigarh, Epson seems committed and hopes to install about three or four presses a year to eventually achieve a 25 percent market share of the fast-growing digital label press market in the country.

Europe debut

Epson will showcase its newly developed water-based inkjet label press, the SurePress L-5034, at the upcoming Labelexpo Europe in Barcelona this September. The concept of the machine was first demonstrated at drupa last year.

The machine employs a high-speed single-pass system, rather than the multi-pass system used in Epson's existing water-based inkjet models, which enables approximately four times the printing speed.

It is powered by Epson's newly designed 1,200 DPI print head. The AQ Optimizer and Hybrid Dryer, both newly developed, are intended to achieve offset print quality in a single pass.

The machine will be available for sale in India from mid-2026.

Scan the QR code to read about Epson's Innovation Center in Leicestershire

Cultivating creativity through design competition

Print technology supplier Rotocon has transformed youth development from a corporate responsibility buzzword into a tangible industry impact through its annual wine label design competition. Piotr Wnuk reports

South Africa's label printing industry faces a familiar challenge: how to bridge the gap between academic learning and real-world application while nurturing the next generation of creative talent. For Rotocon, the answer lies not in traditional internship programs or graduate recruitment drives, but in a unique partnership that challenges students to think beyond their comfort zones.

Since 2023, the company has collaborated with Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) to create what has become one of the most anticipated events in South Africa's design calendar. The annual wine label design competition, now in its third year, has evolved from a simple contest into a comprehensive skills development program that demonstrates how industry-academia partnerships can create meaningful opportunities for emerging designers.

Beyond the brief

Rather than simply requesting design submissions, Rotocon and its partners have developed a comprehensive learning experience that mirrors real-world client relationships, from initial briefing through final production.

Banie Stafford of B Creative, who spearheads the competition, delivers specialized lectures covering everything from printing processes and embellishments to typography and target market analysis. These sessions provide insider knowledge typically gained only through years of industry experience. 'This isn't just about creating visual displays,' explains Schalk van Staden, an integrated communication design lecturer at TUT. 'It's a potential launchpad for careers.'

The educational component includes crucial business skills. Students learn to present comprehensive design pitches, articulate their creative decisions and defend their choices. This presentation component, introduced in the competition's second year, reflects real-world client relationships in which designers must justify their concepts and demonstrate an understanding of production constraints.

The 2025 competition saw 60 students participate, nearly doubling the number of participants in the inaugural year and reflecting a growing awareness of the program's value. The theme 'Cultivate a life worth tasting' challenged participants to consider both aesthetic appeal and production feasibility while developing designs that could realistically enter commercial production.



The winning trio of the 2025 competition (from left) runner-up Katlego Madikane, overall winner Mufaro Ncube and second runner-up Lesedi Sephadi

Students must factor in contemporary printing processes considerations that distinguish professional label design from general graphic design. These requirements force participants to understand how creative vision translates into physical products, bridging the gap between artistic expression and manufacturing reality.

Winner Mufaro Ncube's 'The Point' design exemplifies this sophisticated approach. His topographical map concept of Cape Town, complete with die-cut elements and embossed finishes, demonstrates a nuanced understanding of how design and production technology intersect. The design also incorporates a hidden element, the Rotocon name topographically embedded into Cape Town's map, showing how students learn to layer meaning and complexity into their work.

Runner-up Katlego Madikane's 'Two Distal' designs for cabernet sauvignon and sauvignon blanc demonstrate another sophisticated approach, creating coordinated product families that maintain brand coherence across multiple wine varieties. Third-place winner Lesedi Sephadi's 'Ilanga' pinotage and chardonnay designs showcase cultural authenticity combined with commercial viability.

"This competition is more than a design challenge. It's a reminder that, like great wine, a meaningful life takes time, integrity and collaboration to craft"

Real-world exposure

The competition's value extends beyond prize money, though the financial incentives are substantial. Winners receive up to 30,000 ZAR (1,700 USD), while runners-up earn 15,000 ZAR (850 USD). However, the program's true value lies in providing exposure to industry professionals and production processes that would typically remain inaccessible to undergraduate students.

SA Litho Label Printers joined the partnership in 2024, fundamentally expanding the program's scope by printing the winning designs and providing comprehensive factory tours for winners. General manager Dawrian Salies sees this as an essential investment rather than corporate charity: 'Investing in youth and education is crucial for South Africa's future.'

The partnership demonstrates how industry collaboration can enhance educational outcomes. When SA Litho's desktop publishing interns led the production of winning labels, it created a cascade of learning opportunities. University students saw their designs come to life in commercial production, while entry-level professionals gained project management experience.

This hands-on production experience proves invaluable for students who may understand design principles but lack exposure to the constraints of manufacturing. Watching their concepts navigate pre-press preparation, color matching and finishing processes provides insights impossible to replicate in classroom

"This isn't just about creating visual displays. It's a potential launchpad for careers"

settings. Students learn how their design choices impact production timelines, costs and quality outcomes.

The factory tours include detailed explanations of different printing technologies, substrate options and finishing techniques. Students observe how their theoretical knowledge applies in practice, understanding why certain design elements work while others create production challenges. These experiences frequently influence students' subsequent design approaches, making them more industry-ready upon graduation.

National reach, fresh perspectives

Strategic geographic considerations have enhanced the competition's impact in ways that might not have been anticipated during initial planning. By partnering with a Gauteng-based institution rather than Western Cape universities closer to the wine industry's heartland, Rotocon deliberately sought fresh perspectives from students with limited exposure to the wine industry.

This decision initially raised questions about whether students unfamiliar with wine culture could create authentic designs. However, the results have consistently exceeded expectations, with participants producing innovative concepts that challenge industry conventions.

'If you consider that most of these students have never set foot outside of Gauteng, let alone in the Cape Winelands, I was blown away by the research-driven designs that they implemented,' notes Stafford of B Creative. This geographic separation has yielded unexpected creative benefits, allowing students to approach wine label design without preconceived industry conventions or stylistic limitations.

Herman Botes, head of TUT's department of visual communication, confirms this advantage: 'These students are not wine consumers at all and have no experience of the wine industry. The competition took them out of their comfort zones and exposed them to a different world.'

The research component becomes crucial when students lack direct experience with their design subject. Participants must investigate wine industry culture, understand consumer demographics and study existing market trends before developing their concepts. This research-first approach often produces more thoughtful, strategically grounded designs than purely intuitive creative responses.

Structured for success

The competition's integration into TUT's curriculum demonstrates how industry partnerships can enhance rather than disrupt academic programs. Planning begins a year in advance, with the project embedded from the beginning of the academic year rather than treated as an add-on activity.

This structured approach includes multiple revision cycles, development of presentation skills and comprehensive design pitches to industry judges.

Program coordinator Mohammed Jogie highlights the broader educational value: 'This project allowed us to push innovation in the thought and design process and creative output. Another valuable lesson for the students was the real-world exposure they got.'

Industry impact and career development

The competition's influence extends to broader industry transformation, creating pathways for career advancement while addressing skills shortages in specialized areas like label design. The program has become a recognized talent pipeline, with industry professionals now monitoring competition results to identify emerging designers.

The competition creates networking opportunities that often translate into internships, freelance projects or full-time employment. Several past participants have secured positions within the printing and packaging sector, leveraging competition exposure and industry connections gained through the program.

For the wine industry itself, the competition provides access to fresh design perspectives that can differentiate products in increasingly competitive markets. Wine producers seeking distinctive label designs now have visibility into emerging talent.

Michael Aengenvoort, CEO of Rotocon, sees this as part of the company's broader commitment to industry development: 'Despite the challenges that the youth of this beautiful country are facing, there's incredible potential that can be unlocked.'

The program's success has attracted attention from other industry sectors, with some companies exploring similar partnerships for packaging design, textile printing and related creative fields.

Mutual benefits

Successful industry-academia partnerships require mutual value creation, a principle that has guided the development of the competition. Universities gain access to industry expertise and real-world project opportunities, while companies identify emerging talent and contribute to skills development in their sector.



First place was awarded to Mufaro Ncube (Integrated Communication Design: 3rd Year) for his The Point label

'It shouldn't be a situation where one party benefits more than the other,' explains Botes. 'We all got what we wanted out of the project, and it presented our students with valuable real-world learning opportunities.'

For Rotocon, the competition showcases its technology capabilities while demonstrating corporate citizenship.

Looking ahead

As the competition enters its fourth year, organizers are focused on maintaining quality while expanding impact. The increase from 30 participants in the inaugural year to 60 in 2025 demonstrates growing enthusiasm among students.

Stafford emphasizes continuous improvement: 'Our aim is not just to organize a run-of-the-mill, nice-to-have competition. We'll continue to step it up and provide students with a platform for recognition and growth.'

Rotocon's approach offers a replicable model for other printing companies seeking to address skills development challenges. The key elements, such as advanced planning, curriculum integration, industry mentorship and tangible career opportunities, can be adapted across different educational institutions and market segments.

As Aengenvoort concluded in his 2025 keynote address: 'This competition is more than a design challenge. It's a reminder that, like great wine, a meaningful life takes time, integrity and collaboration to craft. The future of our industry and our world depends on the creativity and character you bring to the table.'

Rotocon marks its Labelexpo Europe debut, where it will be exhibiting together with HS Machinery on stand 4D21. Scan the QR code to find out more about Rotocon

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Everyday essentials: How PZ Cussons meets Africa's evolving needs

PZ Cussons East Africa balances sustainability with affordability and stays ahead of regional packaging trends by working closely with technology providers. Akanksha Meena reports

PZ Cussons, an international consumer goods business originating in Africa since 1884 and headquartered in the UK, owns several well-known FMCG brands, including Carex, Childs Farm, Cussons Baby, Imperial Leather, Original Source, Premier, Sanctuary Spa and St Tropez.

Labels & Labeling visited the PZ Cussons East Africa facility in Nairobi, led by managing director Sekar Ramamoorthy, for an in-depth look at the brand's competitive strategy and evolving packaging trends across the region.

'Kenya is truly a hub of innovation,' says Ramamoorthy. 'But it's also a tough environment for multinationals. One of the leading skincare brands, for example, shut down one of its best factories in Africa in December 2024 and is now sourcing its products in the region from factories in Spain and Egypt. The cost of manufacturing in Kenya has been rising, discouraging manufacturing in the region.'

In Kenya, consumer buying power continues to shrink due to rising costs and inflation. This, combined with high compliance and operational costs for multinationals, makes doing business in the country challenging.

Start-up companies are seizing this opportunity and growing fast by offering competitive pricing and challenging legacy brands.

Kenya is the second-largest retail market in Africa, after South Africa. Its modern retail sector is comparatively more evolved than in West Africa or neighboring countries, helping drive consumer sophistication. The country's open trade policy also supports fast-paced innovation. Brands can import any product within 48 hours, provided duties are paid.

While West Africa is more influenced by the US, East Africa is shaped by European, Middle Eastern and Asian markets.

Sustainability measures

As a multinational brand, PZ Cussons has implemented several sustainability measures at its production facility in Kenya.

The brand has reduced plastic in its product packaging by 25 to 30 percent, replacing it with fillers such as talcum powder. The next step for the company is moving to recycled plastic.



PZ Cussons engages closely with local converters and material suppliers to stay at the forefront of labels and packaging technology

"Sustainability comes at a cost, and in Africa, that cost can't be passed to the consumer yet. The continent is still in the early stages of consumer evolution, and pushing sustainability too hard, without support or scale, can actually backfire. So why burden it with sustainability costs it can't absorb"

'We are the first soap manufacturer in Africa to operate entirely without fossil fuels. Instead, we use biomass from macadamia nut shells, a seed grown in only three countries: Kenya, Australia and Colombia. The steam from macadamia seeds can replace fossil fuel in producing high-energy products, such as soap,' Ramamoorthy says.

PZ Cussons is also the first chemical company in East and parts of West Africa to achieve zero effluent discharge, says Ramamoorthy. All water used in the factory is fully recycled, a major milestone given the high water demands in cosmetics and personal care manufacturing.

The brand has not yet mandated sustainable label materials in the region, but it engages closely with local converters and material suppliers to stay at the forefront of technology.

'While label consumption is low, 90 percent of our labels are now paper-based, the East African climate is extremely harsh, with intense UV and heat posing durability challenges for label materials,' Ramamoorthy adds.

Cost implications of sustainability

However, Ramamoorthy explains that sustainability comes with some tradeoffs.

'Sustainability comes at a cost, and in Africa, that cost can't be passed to the consumer yet. Despite comprising 15 percent of the world's population, Africa uses less than 1 percent of the global labels and plastics. The continent is still in the early stages of consumer evolution, and pushing sustainability too hard, without support or scale, can actually backfire. So why burden it with sustainability costs it can't absorb,' he asks.

'In Europe or the US, consumers may pay a premium for sustainability, but in Kenya, they won't. Most of us follow global frameworks under pressure, but telling a Kenyan consumer, "Pay more because we're sustainable", simply doesn't work.'

According to Ramamoorthy,



Imperial Leather soap carries iconic red and gold foil labels meant to help the soap last longer (image sourced from insider.co.uk)



Around 90 percent of PZ Cussons' labels are now paper-based



The brand has reduced plastic in its product packaging by 25 to 30 percent, replacing it with fillers such as talcum powder

"That's how innovation works here. If I can prove scale, partners are willing to invest and grow with us"

sustainability will not become a concern in the region for another 15 to 20 years unless the local government mandates it. He points to the example of the Kenyan government banning plastic bags. 'It happened almost overnight, and they disappeared,' he says.

In Kenya, plastic is considered a luxury product; therefore, PZ Cussons and other brands are required to pay a 10 percent luxury tax on plastic bottles. The same applies to paper and folding cartons. These materials are all taxed as luxury items, which indirectly increases packaging costs. There are no incentives for switching to eco-friendly materials unlike markets such as India that have developed scalable, cost effective sustainable solutions.

Still, efforts for recycling are being made in the region. PZ Cussons' factory waste is under 1 percent, and all materials, including plastic and paper, are sent to local recyclers.

'Kenya's recycling ecosystem, especially for paper and [folding] cartons, is gradually evolving with decent collection infrastructure already in place. The government is also pushing to phase out single-use plastics, encouraging a shift toward paper-based alternatives, such as cups.

'Scale remains a challenge. Kenya's packaging industry can't yet match European standards because the market size doesn't justify those investments. That said, Kenya is unique; 93 percent of its electricity comes from sustainable sources, primarily geothermal and hydroelectric, with minimal reliance on coal,' Ramamoorthy adds.

Innovation

In Kenya and parts of West Africa, purchasing power remains low, but aspirations are high, driven by a connected world. Despite this gap, the market remains highly innovative.

'Innovation is essential in Kenya. Businesses can't survive here on price alone. East Africa, especially Kenya, demands constant evolution. I visit Uganda monthly, and while the market is growing, Kenya leads in innovation,' notes Ramamoorthy.

Local converters largely drive innovation in labels and packaging technology in Kenya. PZ Cussons works closely with partners, such as Skanem, which regularly conducts technical workshops on label and packaging trends.

'The beauty is, local label and flexible packaging converters stay ahead of the curve, both in product and machinery innovation,' Ramamoorthy says of his suppliers.

Importing packaging isn't a viable option for many local brands, because import duties are around 50 percent. Consequently, brands have to rely on what local converters can offer and how they can co-develop packaging together.

'For example, I introduced single-use spout pouches for dishwashing and handwashing liquids. I brought in the first batch from India, and once volumes picked up, a local supplier invested in the machinery to manufacture flexible packaging with a spout. That's how innovation works here. If I can prove scale, partners are willing to invest and grow with us,' Ramamoorthy explains.

He adds that appreciation for packaging as an industry is low in East Africa. While leading converters in the region are flagbearers of technical knowledge and innovation, end users and brands often lack the understanding needed to drive innovation. Unlike in India, Europe, or the UK, where FMCG companies work hand-in-hand with converters to shape the industry, here, it is the converters who push innovation on their own. As a result, the overall packaging knowledge base remains limited.

In October 2024, Flint hosted an innovation workshop during Skanem's factory launch, which helped the brand explore new materials and print techniques.

'That's the core challenge here. There is a lack of technical packaging knowledge and limited effort from large suppliers to educate or support the local industry. I reached out to Flint through my network and brought in its representatives to give my team a session on ink technology,' Ramamoorthy recalls.

'And they were completely spellbound. They had no idea how much science and technology go into creating color. The Flint team explained everything from ink curing and UV-safe formulations to responsible consumption. It was eye-opening.'

With limited packaging knowledge in the region, PZ Cussons supports skills development and has partnered with Mount Kenya University to launch a master's program in cosmetic technology, with the hope of expanding into packaging education.

Another interesting trend is the move toward QR codes, which are now becoming mandatory in Kenya. PZ Cussons sits on the technical committees of both the Kenya Bureau of Standards and the East African Bureau of Standards. These two bodies set the most widely accepted packaging and labeling standards in the region, and PZ Cussons works closely with them to support the evolution of barcode and traceability regulations. The barcodes will become mandatory in the next two to three years.

The future of packaging in East Africa will not be driven solely by global mandates but will also rely on efforts by the local government and technology providers. With increased education, innovation from local converters and support from brands, the region's packaging and labeling industry is poised for growth.

Scan the QR code to learn more about PZ Cussons

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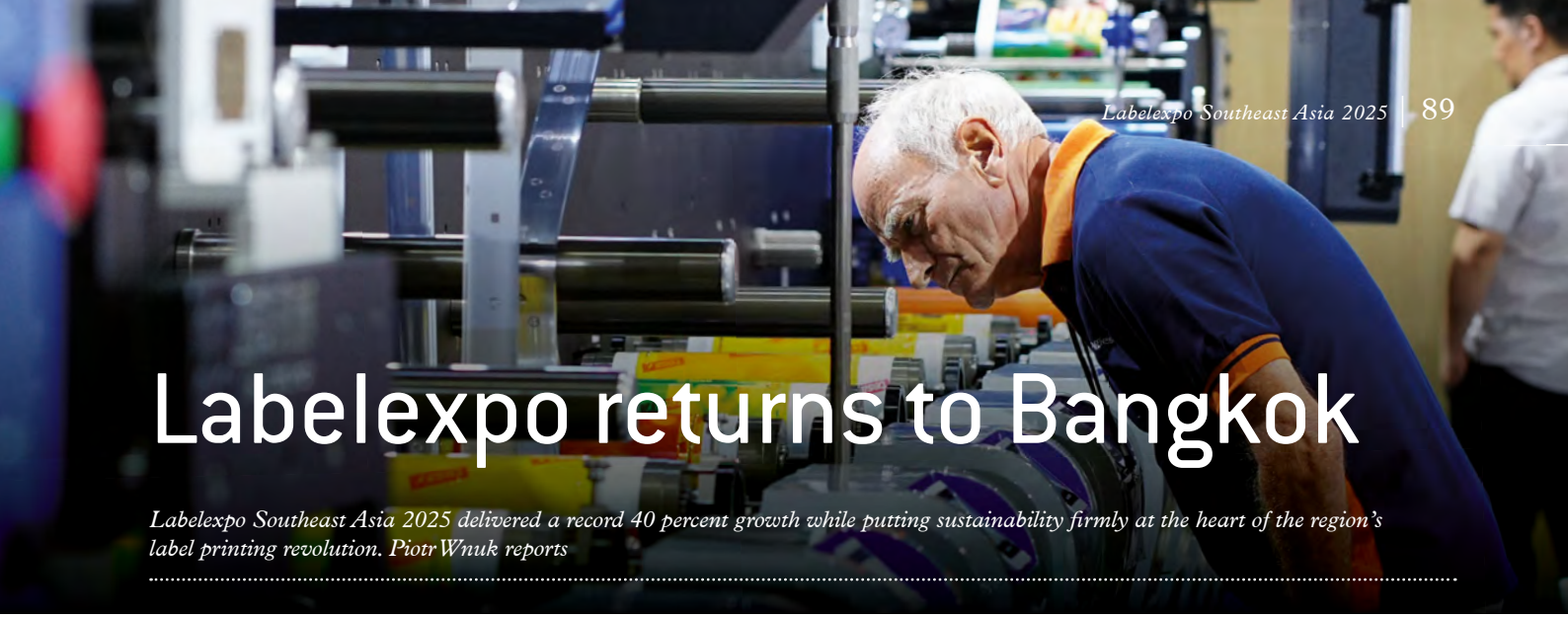


Labelexpo returns to Bangkok

Labelexpo Southeast Asia 2025 delivered a record 40 percent growth while putting sustainability firmly at the heart of the region's label printing revolution. Piotr Wnuk reports

Labelexpo Southeast Asia 2025 wrapped up on a triumphant note, consolidating its position as the region's premier label and package printing event with a 40 percent growth over its 2023 edition.

Held at the Bangkok International Trade & Exhibition Centre (BITEC) from May 8 to 10, the show attracted over 195 exhibitors across 5,459sqm of floor space, demonstrating the robust health and expansion of Southeast Asia's label printing sector.

The 2025 edition marked a significant milestone for the Labelexpo Global Series' youngest regional show, which first launched in 2018. The event expanded to 5,459sqm of floor space representing a 40 percent increase from the previous edition in 2023.

Among the exhibiting companies were industry heavyweights including Domino, Jet Technologies, Konica Minolta, Durst and Nilpeter, alongside emerging technology providers and regional suppliers.

The growth trajectory reflects the increasing importance of the Southeast Asian market for global label and packaging suppliers, as well as the region's expanding manufacturing base and consumer markets. Growing regulatory pressure and brand owner requirements for sustainable packaging are accelerating the adoption of eco-friendly materials and processes. Regional converters are increasingly investing in sophisticated printing technologies to meet evolving market demands.

Sustainability takes center stage

A defining characteristic of this year's show was its unprecedented focus on environmental responsibility. The event featured a dedicated Spotlight on Sustainability initiative aimed at helping visitors discover sustainable materials and innovative operational processes. This strategic emphasis addresses growing consumer and legislative demands for environmentally-conscious packaging technologies across the region.

"Despite the price-sensitive market, there is a growing demand for higher quality labels, leading to investments in European machinery"

Event organizers partnered with BITEC, a sustainability multi-award-winning venue whose commitment is guided by the UN's Sustainable Development Goals, including energy saving and resource conservation. The organizers have committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030, implementing various sustainability measures across venue selection, catering and accommodation recommendations.

A new show feature, Spotlight on Sustainability Trail, highlighted products, technologies and materials that move the needle on sustainability in Southeast Asia and across the globe. Companies at Labelexpo Southeast Asia showcased various sustainability initiatives focused on waste reduction, material innovation and energy efficiency.

Lundberg Tech demonstrated automated waste handling systems that make production leaner and more efficient by managing label and flexible packaging waste, while **Armor-IIMAK** introduced thinner thermal transfer ribbon films that allow customers to use 12 percent less plastic PT film per roll.

Material innovations included **Kurz** Thailand's 'Slim Program' featuring foil with 50 percent thinner PET carrier to reduce waste while extending roll length, and **K Laser Technology**'s sustainable cold foil and hot stamping products that remove plastic film while maintaining holographic effects. **Yupo** showcased in-mold labels without backing paper that enable bottle and label recycling together, with its 'Clean Sort' technology allowing label separation during grinding for ink-free recycled resins.

Recycling advances were demonstrated by **Materials in Works**, which upcycles label liner waste into pulp for paper product manufacturing to address a major regional landfill waste stream, and **Cosmo Films**, which focuses on post-industrial recyclable and post-consumer recyclable films plus sustainable laminated structures using compatible materials. **Press Systems Group** promoted energy efficiency through **Asahi** water-washable plates requiring no detergent and UV LED technology for lower energy consumption. The common theme emphasized resource reduction, waste elimination and circular economy principles across the label and packaging supply chain.

Beyond product showcases, the event's comprehensive approach to sustainability extended to visitor wellbeing, providing a mindfulness lounge and a prayer room in a fully accessible venue.

Technology highlights and machinery demonstrations

The show floor buzzed with live machinery demonstrations spanning the complete label and packaging value chain. Labelexpo Southeast Asia event manager Richard Quirk notes that the show floor was 'filled with machinery demonstrations, from advanced digital and hybrid presses to innovative finishing solutions'.

Digital printing innovations were prominently featured, with several exhibitors showcasing next-generation UV-inkjet and variable data printing technologies.

Arojet promoted its X6 high-speed variable data UV digital printing machine, boasting printing speeds of up to 300m/min with a nozzle frequency of 50KHZ. The system delivers 600 DPI lengthwise resolution and crosswise resolution adjustable from 200 to 1,200 DPI.

Domino delivered a performance boost with the newly launched high-speed productivity mode for its N730i digital label press, responding decisively to surging customer demand for faster, more efficient label printing capabilities. The revolutionary feature propels maximum print





"Southeast Asia represents a remarkably untapped market when it comes to flexo, because this market was traditionally rooted in letterpress technology"

speeds to an impressive 90m/min, delivering a substantial 20 m/min leap from the standard 70m/min performance.

The company is expanding its presence in Asia's rapidly growing digital printing market, emphasizing cutting-edge high-resolution capabilities and strategic local service initiatives that put output-driven technologies at the forefront.

'Asia is very driven towards high quality because of its history with offset printing. So, having a 1,200 x 1,200 DPI machine here for the major areas in Asia is really quite important,' says David Ellen, digital printing director at Domino. 'We are very pleased with the interest we've had in this machine here at the show. Its high-resolution printing capabilities are really important in the entire region, including Japan, Korea and Australia.'

The N730i press on display featured Domino's advanced R-Scan monitoring and inspection system, which automatically stops the press when defects are detected. This intelligent technology enables operators to remedy errors immediately, dramatically reducing label rejection rates while maximizing efficiency and minimizing waste.

'I'm very pleased that we're exhibiting with our parent company, Brother, and we see Southeast Asia as a growth market. If you look at the figures globally, clearly, Asia is growing,' says Ellen. 'As the adoption of digital printing increases, we aim to be a part of it and drive our brand recognition. This way, when the adoption level rises, we'll be a key player in the industry. We've taken the opportunity to use our parent company, Brother, to provide service in the region. We need to make sure that we have local service, which is supported by a global company. And I think that is absolutely fundamental.'

Meanwhile, **Durst Group** promoted its powerhouse Tau 340 RSC E, featuring a versatile 6-color configuration (CMYKW+orange) that delivers production speeds of up to 52m/min, with an upgrade potential to 80m/min. The press achieves true 1,200 x 1,200 DPI resolution through its advanced Dimatix Samba G3L printhead, offering a precise 2pl minimum drop size that creates smooth gradients and razor-sharp images. Automated nozzle compensation technology boosts uptime while slashing service costs.

Durst promoted this machine alongside its comprehensive integrated software ecosystem: Durst Workflow Label, Durst Analytics and the newly introduced Durst Hawk AI. This intelligent camera-based system detects and corrects issues such as missing nozzles in real time, requiring zero operator intervention.

The company highlighted its dynamic engagement with customers across Asia, including Japan, Southeast Asia and Australia. The company emphasized how healthy competition drives innovation and accelerates investment in inkjet technology.

'We had a lot of good conversations, I must say, not only with Thai customers, but also with business from across the entire region. We spoke with customers from Australia, India, Sri Lanka, Dubai, Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia,' says Thomas Macina, sales director for labels and flexible packaging at Durst.

Macina notes the exciting proliferation of inkjet printing technologies at this year's Bangkok event:

'I think digital labels and packaging are growing quickly in Asia. I believe that with inkjet technology, we can offer significant value to our customers by migrating jobs from flexo to inkjet. We had several discussions with our customers who are in between these two technologies and wonder whether to move, still maintain with the analog or move to digital. All of them are trying to figure out what else they can do in terms of applications and how to increase their efficiency. We can support this with a combination of our software and machinery. We make substantial investments in our R&D. We have introduced LED technology to support our sustainability commitments, aiming to use less energy, reduce downtimes, and decrease consumables.'

'Customers are also looking beyond that for other added value. That's one of the things we're showcasing in a booth, especially in software development, workflow, and the entire ecosystem. We are also going beyond that to showcase with customers more and more applications and business possibilities Durst machines bring to any printer,' adds Bernard Sun, head of business development for Asia at Durst Group.

Flexographic technologies also remained a strong focus, with first-time exhibitor **Jet Technologies** showcasing the **Omet** iFlex press in a 10-color configuration, featuring servo-assisted pre-register and register setting devices that enable machine setup in just one to two minutes for 10 flexo units.

'Omet is a very well-known brand throughout Europe, North America and Australia, but in Asia, we had an exciting opportunity to introduce it from the ground up,' says Jack Malki, director of Jet Technologies and the regional distributor of Omet machinery. 'The iFlex is perfectly positioned as an entry-level press, and we identified it as the ideal gateway to bring printers from the letterpress market into the flexo revolution. We are enthusiastically rolling that out to other parts of Southeast Asia, and it's been incredibly well received and remarkably easy to service.'

'I think it is a truly fascinating machine, particularly for this dynamic region, because it delivers powerful simplicity,' says Marco Calgagni, sales and marketing director at Omet. 'This versatile machine opens up tremendous possibilities for small companies and growing businesses to enter exciting new markets, as it can produce self-adhesive labels plus shrink sleeves and small packaging. We believe there is enormous potential in the Southeast Asian region. Some countries, such as Indonesia, boast populations





"Regional, forward-thinking printers are now eagerly embracing flexo and exploring innovative technologies to dramatically improve their capabilities, capacity and efficiency"

of nearly 300 million people, creating a massive demand for packaging and price-sensitive labels. While the current volume per square meter remains relatively low compared to other countries, the demand is growing dramatically. What we see as particularly exciting trends in the region is soaring demand for pouches, especially here in Bangkok, and also in the Philippines, China and Indonesia.'

According to Calgagni, Southeast Asia represents a remarkably untapped market when it comes to flexo, because this market was traditionally rooted in letterpress technology. However, forward-thinking printers are now eagerly embracing flexo and exploring innovative technologies to dramatically improve their capabilities, capacity and efficiency.

He notes that the energetic involvement of the young generation brings a fresh approach to production and demonstrates genuine readiness to embrace new technologies.

Finishing and converting technology electrified the show floor with breakthrough innovations.

Portuguese manufacturer Lemorau made a spectacular debut at Labelexpo Southeast Asia 2025, proudly showcasing its Smart-L Premium die-cutting machine, masterfully engineered for pre-printed labels and delivering a high-quality combination of precision, flexibility and efficiency through both full rotary and semi-rotary die-cutting capabilities. The company celebrated a triumphant show with exciting sales to Singapore and Canada.

'Despite the price-sensitive market, there is a growing demand for higher quality labels, leading to investments in European machinery,' notes Susana Teixeira, CFO and sales manager at Lemorau. The company highlighted a fascinating shift in the market's preference for digital over analog technology, emphasizing the remarkable efficiency and cost-saving benefits of its advanced finishing processes.

Jet Technologies generated excitement with the dynamic debut of the JetiQ brand, a powerful collaboration between Jet Technologies and Polly Automatics, featuring the JetiQ M370 finishing machine. The M370 model boasts a range of innovations, including two semi-rotary flexo stations, a robust flat-bed die-cutting station and the Versatex Digital Print Bar, specifically designed for digital varnish and high-build varnish applications.

'The Xaar's print bar is capable of digital embellishment up to 200-micron high Braille,' says Malki of Jet Technologies. 'It can also print 20 to 30 micron embellishments at 70m/min, so it's been a wonderful addition, and added tremendous value to finishing. Everyone loves it. Whatever label you have, whatever packaging you have, it does look dramatically better with embellishments such as a high build or a digital foil. There's incredible interest and installations happening throughout the region.'

Strong exhibitor sentiment

Exhibitor feedback was overwhelmingly positive, with many companies reporting successful on-site business transactions and valuable networking opportunities.

Aegean He from Weigang says that 'the event exceeded our expectations. Not only did we finalize on-site machinery sales, but we also held highly productive meetings with clients and potential agents from Japan, India, Thailand, South Africa, Australia and beyond.'

The quality of attendees was particularly notable, with exhibitors highlighting the strong concentration of decision-makers and buyers who have immediate purchasing authority. This reflects the maturation of the Southeast Asian market and the growing sophistication of regional label converters.

The robust attendance and exhibitor participation underscore several key trends in the Southeast Asian label printing market. The region continues to attract global brands establishing local production facilities, driving demand for high-quality label printing capabilities.

Looking ahead

Labelexpo's Richard Quirk emphasizes that the show 'has cemented its position as the ASEAN region's premier stop for label and package printing technology', noting that sustainability represents 'the next pillar of change in the industry'.

Jade Grace, managing director for Labelexpo Global Series, highlights the event's delivery of 'an innovative and sustainable event, which has grown both in business and quality of visitors commanding real buying decision power'.

The success of Labelexpo Southeast Asia 2025 positions the show as an increasingly important fixture in the global label printing calendar, reflecting the dynamic growth and technological sophistication of the Southeast Asian market. With sustainability emerging as a central theme and exhibitor confidence remaining high, the foundation has been laid for continued expansion in future editions.

The next Labelexpo Southeast Asia is expected to build upon this momentum, further cementing Bangkok's role as a crucial hub for label and packaging innovation in one of the world's fastest-growing regions.

Turn to page 112 to see what new technologies will be on show at Labelexpo Europe 2025

Shrinkflex embraces flexo to capture SME growth

Thai label giant adds Nilpeter FA-22 press as it targets small and medium enterprises with a cost-effective printing approach. Piotr Wnuk reports

Shrinkflex is betting big on flexo printing as the publicly listed label manufacturer seeks to capture a lucrative, but underserved market segment in Southeast Asia. The company's installation of a Nilpeter FA-22 flexo press marks a strategic pivot toward serving small and medium enterprises (SMEs) with more cost-effective printing options.

Founded in 2007, Shrinkflex (Thailand) Public Company Limited has built its reputation primarily on gravure printing, which accounts for nearly 90 percent of its business. The company started with shrink sleeve labels for the beverage market before expanding into cosmetics, household products, personal care and pharmaceutical segments. However, the company's leadership sees flexo as the key to unlocking new growth opportunities in a region where SMEs represent the vast majority of businesses.

The journey to flexo began with a simple observation about market gaps.

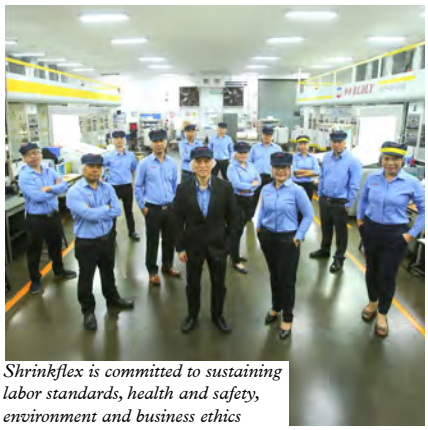
'In Southeast Asia, more than 85 percent are small and medium enterprises,' explains Michael Tsoi, CEO of Shrinkflex. 'This is the biggest market. Everybody has already forgotten this market, and everybody's using stickers or pressure-sensitive labels for the medium market.'

Strategic market positioning

The mathematics of this market opportunity are compelling. While multinational companies dominated the high-volume gravure segment and digital printing served short-run needs, a substantial middle market remained underserved. This segment requires medium-volume runs with cost-effective pricing; precisely the opportunity that drew Shrinkflex into flexible packaging three years ago.

The challenge for SMEs has been economic rather than technical. Gravure printing requires expensive cylinder setup costs that only make sense for large-volume runs, while digital printing becomes expensive for medium-volume orders. Flexo printing bridges this gap with faster setup times than gravure and better economics than digital for medium runs.

'Flexo printing technology focuses on delivering cost-effective approaches to SME clients as well as building customer confidence toward environmental consciousness,' notes Tsoi.



Shrinkflex is committed to sustaining labor standards, health and safety, environment and business ethics

"Flexo printing technology focuses on delivering cost-effective approaches to SME clients as well as building customer confidence toward environmental consciousness"

The Nilpeter FA-22 installation comes as part of Shrinkflex's investment strategy, which totaled 83.8m Thai Baht (2.58m USD) in 2024. The flexo press joins other new equipment, including plate-making machinery and pouch bag-making machines, all designed to enhance the company's production capabilities and serve diverse customer needs.

This investment represents the latest phase in Shrinkflex's aggressive expansion program. Over the past three years, the company has invested 188.6m Baht (5.8m USD) in machinery alone, building production capacity that now includes 175.5m meters per year of gravure printing capability and 4.5m meters of digital printing. The flexo addition creates synergies across all three technologies while opening new market opportunities.

Danish partnership deepens

The relationship between Shrinkflex and Nilpeter extends well beyond a simple vendor-customer arrangement. The Thai company has designated its facility as an 'open house' location, welcoming both national and international visitors to witness its operational excellence of one of Southeast Asia's most successful packaging companies.

'This relationship is not just enduring; it's evolving and strengthening,' says Erik Blankenstein, sales director of Nilpeter Asia Pacific. 'The collaboration extends beyond business transactions, involving strategic cooperation concerning technological developments.'

Shrinkflex's decision to partner with the Danish press manufacturer stems from Nilpeter's century-long heritage in the printing industry.

'We chose Nilpeter because they have 100 years of reputation and history in Denmark,' Tsoi explains. 'We are happy with the Danish sincerity of the people. We trust we can make a partnership with Nilpeter.'

Comprehensive technology strategy

For Shrinkflex, the addition of flexo printing completes a comprehensive technology portfolio addressing different market segments: gravure for high-volume mass production, digital for short runs and personalization and flexo for the crucial middle ground serving SMEs. This three-pronged approach creates synergies across technologies while also opening up new market opportunities.

'Our collaboration with Nilpeter is not just about adding a press to our floor,' Tsoi emphasizes. 'It's a strategic alliance that brings technological innovation to the forefront. The Nilpeter FA-22 flexo press stands as a symbol of our commitment toward increased automation and digitalization, driving us forward in the competitive packaging industry.'

The flexo addition supports multiple strategic objectives simultaneously. Beyond addressing the SME market gap, the technology offers environmental advantages through reduced carbon emissions compared to traditional gravure printing. The company has focused on UV LED technology, which reduces energy



L-R: Erik Blankenstein, sales director of Nilpeter Asia Pacific; Michael Tsoi, CEO of Shrinkflex; and Peter Eriksen, COO of Nilpeter

consumption and carbon emissions compared to traditional UV systems.

Shrinkflex's broader commitment to sustainability includes joining SEDEX in 2024, a global platform for sharing ethical supply chain data, and obtaining SMETA 4 Pillars certification covering labor standards, health and safety, environment, and business ethics. The company also participates in environmental initiatives, such as the Care the Bear and Care the Whale projects, while disclosing its annual carbon footprint information. These initiatives demonstrate how the flexo investment aligns with comprehensive ESG objectives rather than representing an isolated equipment decision.

Market expansion strategy

The timing of Shrinkflex's flexo investment aligns with broader industry trends favoring sustainable packaging approaches and the continued growth of e-commerce, which has increased demand for smaller, customized packaging runs. The company sees significant opportunities in helping local businesses expand into export markets, where smaller initial orders are often required to test international waters. Export market development represents a particular strength for Shrinkflex. The company's digital capabilities have proven successful in this area, creating a pathway where customers use short runs to establish market presence before scaling up.

'We use digital to help our customers explore the market, and then they come back with big volumes to gravure,' explains Tsoi. 'So, we are very successful with digital. Every month, we have many new projects, therefore, digital and gravure continue to increase.'

The flexo press strategically fills the gap between these technologies, offering better profit margins than digital while requiring lower setup costs than gravure. This positioning attracts medium-run jobs that were previously either too expensive for digital or too small for gravure while enabling faster turnaround times that

"Our collaboration with Nilpeter is not just about adding a press to our floor. It's a strategic alliance that brings technological innovation to the forefront"

brands increasingly demand from packaging providers.

Regional leadership ambitions

Shrinkflex's flexo investment supports its vision of leading Southeast Asia's packaging industry with smart and sustainable approaches. The company achieved revenue of 978.8 m Thai Baht (30.14 m USD) in 2024, representing 6.4 percent year-over-year growth, with an ambitious target of exceeding one billion Baht in revenue for 2025.

This growth reflects the successful diversification strategy execution. While gravure shrink labels dominate at 89.8 percent of revenue, flexible packaging has grown to 3.3 percent, digital shrink labels account for 4.3 percent, and gravure cylinders contribute 2.3 percent. The flexo addition creates new revenue streams while strengthening existing business lines across beverages, cosmetics, household products, personal care, pharmaceuticals and food products.

'Our vision is to lead Southeast Asia's packaging industry with smart and sustainable approaches,' states the company's mission. The flexo installation directly supports this goal by providing technology that balances cost-effectiveness with environmental responsibility.

Open house concept

Perhaps most significantly, Shrinkflex's role as a Nilpeter open house facility positions the company as a knowledge hub for the regional printing industry. This arrangement benefits both partners: Nilpeter gains a high-profile showcase for its technology in a key Asian market, while Shrinkflex enhances its reputation as an industry leader and innovation center.

The open house concept allows other printing companies to observe real-world applications of flexo technology, potentially accelerating adoption throughout the region. For Shrinkflex, hosting these visits reinforces its position as a thought leader and can lead to valuable industry connections and partnerships.

This educational role aligns with Shrinkflex's industry leadership aspirations. As one of Southeast Asia's most successful packaging companies in terms of revenue and growth, the company has a significant influence on regional industry development. The open house facility demonstrates practical applications of multi-technology printing strategies adaptable to various market conditions, while creating opportunities for collaborative technology development where Shrinkflex participates in strategic cooperation concerning technological developments, potentially influencing future Nilpeter innovations for Asian market requirements.

Future outlook

The Nilpeter FA-22 flexo press represents a strategic tool for capturing market share in an underserved but substantial customer segment. Shrinkflex's comprehensive three-technology approach positions it to serve virtually any customer requirement while maintaining operational efficiency.

The company's 2025 strategy encompasses four key areas: enhancing efficiency through growing orders, staying ahead through premium products, optimizing production and managing costs efficiently to drive profitability. The flexo press contributes to all strategic pillars by enabling new customer acquisition, offering premium flexible packaging options, optimizing production through technology diversification and improving cost management through better capacity utilization.

This flexo initiative could influence broader regional industry trends, where many printing companies have traditionally focused on either high-volume gravure work or small-run digital jobs. Shrinkflex's demonstration that flexo can profitably serve the middle market may encourage other regional printers to adopt similar strategies, potentially transforming SME access to professional packaging printing that was previously out of reach.

Looking ahead, Shrinkflex's public company status provides additional advantages in executing growth strategy through transparent financial reporting and governance structures that build customer confidence while providing capital market access for future expansion. The successful flexo integration could support additional investments in capacity and capability expansion throughout Southeast Asia.

Scan the QR code to learn more about Shrinkflex Thailand

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Colink installs first Domino N730i in China

Leading anti-counterfeit specialist Colink has added to its digital capabilities with its first UV inkjet press from Domino. Yolanda Wang reports

In the dynamic landscape of anti-counterfeit label printing, Chinese converter Colink has always stood at the forefront. Now, with an investment in China's first Domino N730i digital label press, Colink is poised to redefine the anti-counterfeit sector. Let's explore the secret of Colink's success in the anti-counterfeit label market over the past 23 years.

Established in 2019, Colink Guangdong is a wholly owned subsidiary of Colink Guangzhou, located in Heshan City, Guangdong Province, with a production plant covering 60,000sqm and employing over 300 staff. The company specializes in variable information labels, RFID tags and flexible packaging, offering end-to-end solutions from design to production of anti-counterfeiting, traceability and personalized packaging.

Company founder Lan Qiang's journey began in 1999, fresh out of South China University of Technology. After three years in the print industry, he spotted considerable potential in anti-counterfeit labels and founded Colink Guangzhou in 2002. Starting with label printing, and barcode printer sales and maintenance services, the company hit its stride in 2008 when it became a top supplier of CITC electronic identification codes, which opened up broader markets and new clients in the label printing industry.

Building on this success, in 2009, the company expanded into the anti-counterfeit label market, enhancing its technical prowess and competitiveness in this complex field and establishing a strong reputation in the brand protection industry.

Tech-driven growth

For anti-counterfeit label converters, technology is the name of the game. Colink has built a top-notch R&D team that has dug deep into the anti-counterfeit label space, filing multiple patents along the way.

When it comes to production, the company was an early adopter of digital printing, becoming the first converter in South China to use multiple HP Indigo machines, which helped lock in its lead in the digital printing arena.

> **"We'll accelerate equipment upgrades to enhance smart manufacturing capabilities, implement phased capacity expansion to meet rising demand, and ramp up R&D"**

After years of honing its business in anti-counterfeit labels, Colink has racked up rich production experience and a loyal customer base.

As business boomed, 2019 saw the company set up a wholly owned subsidiary in Heshan, Colink Guangzhou, to further focus on anti-counterfeit label printing, while ramping up investments in equipment and R&D.

Lan Qiang, with his keen insight into industry trends, remarks: 'Modern anti-counterfeit labels have evolved from single-functional anti-counterfeit tools into multi-functional "information carriers". Variable data codes are the core of this evolution, and digital printing serves as the pivotal enabler for this core functionality.'

Digital print technology and anti-counterfeit are therefore inherently complementary, driving each other's growth. As market demand for anti-counterfeiting continues to escalate, digital printing will play an increasingly vital role in the anti-counterfeit label sector, while the growth of the anti-counterfeit label market will, in turn, spur innovation and advancement in digital printing technology.

To address the diverse market demands, Colink has achieved seamless integration of digital printing with traditional processes, such as flexo and offset, supplemented by dedicated anti-counterfeit technologies, including laser and optical solutions. This technological versatility enables the company to handle both high-precision customized printing and large-scale industrial production.

Simultaneously, the company has kept pace with market trends by expanding into RFID tags and digital flexible packaging, building a highly diversified product portfolio. Its market reach spans food, cosmetics, apparel, electronics, tobacco and alcohol industries.

Domino investment

At a pivotal stage in the evolution of digital printing technology, Colink made a strategic leap by becoming the first converter in China to install the Domino N730i label digital press, positioning itself to capitalize on what Qiang calls the emerging 'embossed' UV digital printing sector, a burgeoning market frontier. When discussing this investment, Qiang radiates both resolve and enthusiasm.

He explains that digital printing can be categorized into 'flat' and 'embossed' based on the printing performance. 'Flat' digital printing has matured and scaled now, and Colink has achieved significant success in this domain. Meanwhile, 'embossed' UV digital printing technology is developing fast, particularly with the rise of domestic UV digital presses, signaling an imminent surge in market scale. Any delay in investing in this area could mean missing out on a pivotal growth opportunity, he believes.

'UV digital printing technology has reached an inflection point where the decision for enterprises is no longer about whether to invest, but rather which supplier or brand to select,' he emphasizes. 'The market momentum has already been established; the segment is rapidly maturing.'

Qiang points out that escalating industry competition has made printing companies more cautious about investing in new equipment.

However, he insists that true cost savings lie not in skimping on equipment investment, but in reducing subsequent production costs. Colink's investment in the Domino N730i followed a rigorous comparison and assurance process.

'Domino is a trusted name in the digital label printing market, and we were interested in assessing the capabilities of the N730i and whether it would suit our needs,' said Qiang. 'Its high quality and resolution (1,200 DPI), speed (70m/min), and ultra-stable production capacity will significantly lower our operational costs and boost production efficiency.'

Recalling a pivotal visit to a Domino customer in South Korea, Qiang says: 'During a two-hour observation of the N730i printing shampoo labels, the machine operated continuously without any malfunctions or maintenance requirements besides routine material changes. This exceptional stability fundamentally altered my perception of UV digital printing technology, prompting an immediate decision to choose it.'

He adds: 'UV inkjet printing is different from HP Indigo digital printing technology. Our investment in this new equipment is not aimed at replacing our existing production systems but using this new digital printing technology to explore new applications, serve new markets and sectors, and achieve strategic business expansion.

'We intend to leverage the N730i to access new customer segments, harnessing our differentiated technological edge to forge a new growth trajectory,' Qiang elaborates. 'The N730i will not only drive down production costs and elevate operational efficiency but also allow us to differentiate our offering into premium labels and meet evolving market needs.'

He dispelled any doubts about Domino's ongoing maintenance and after-sales service after contacting their local agent, Beijing Jetrun Technology.

Yajuan Liu, general manager of Beijing Jetrun Technology, adds: 'The Chinese label printing market is facing unprecedented changes and challenges, and the Domino N730i press holds many advantages for forward-thinking converters like Colink.'

Liu provided coding services for the Colink company for many years before she became the distributor of Domino equipment.

The future

Looking back on 2024, Qiang's eyes sparkle with pride as he reflects: 'Colink achieved double-digit growth last year, maintaining a steady upward trajectory amid industry fluctuations.'

This consistent performance, he emphasized, stems from the company's relentless pursuit of technological innovation and uncompromising commitment to quality standards. This dual pillar has become the cornerstone of its resilience.

Like any growing enterprise, Colink has navigated a landscape of intensifying market competition while capitalizing on emerging opportunities. The next big move on the horizon is the upcoming launch of its new production facility, which will not only alleviate capacity constraints but also create a state-of-the-art manufacturing ecosystem to support diversified business expansion.

Outlining his strategic vision for the year ahead, Qiang articulates a clear roadmap: 'We'll accelerate equipment upgrades to enhance smart manufacturing capabilities, implement phased capacity expansion to meet rising demand, and ramp up R&D investment to fast-track the commercialization of our pipeline products. This three-pronged approach will strengthen our market responsiveness and solidify our technical leadership.'

Looking forward, Colink will remain driven by technological innovation, deepening its expertise in the anti-counterfeit label sector to deliver new products and services. Lan Qiang also issues an appeal to industry peers: 'In today's fiercely competitive environment, only by adhering to innovation and selecting suitable equipment can we drive the industry forward.'

From a small workshop to an industry benchmark, Colink is stepping firmly toward a bright future in the anti-counterfeit label industry.



Colink's Guangong factory

"UV digital printing technology has reached an inflection point where the decision for enterprises is no longer about whether to invest, but rather which supplier or brand to select"

Sidel's Beijing plant advances rooftop solar system

Sidel's Beijing plant has achieved full grid connection for its rooftop solar photovoltaic system, marking a significant step forward in the company's decarbonization.

With an installed capacity of 2.1 MW, Sidel Beijing's solar system is expected to generate 4,394,700 kWh annually, meeting 60 percent of the plant's daily operational electricity needs and reducing CO2 emissions by 2,452 tons per year.

Through its 'self-consumption with surplus feed-in' model, 35 percent of the clean energy generated will be fed back into the municipal grid via smart power networks after fulfilling on-site demand. This enables optimized allocation and efficient utilization of green energy.

As a signature project to China's 'Dual Carbon' strategy implementation, the installation features industry-leading LONGi Hi-MO7 high-efficiency modules with 615W panel power and a top-tier conversion efficiency of 23.1 percent.

Since establishing operations in Beijing in 2008, Sidel's Beijing plant has embedded sustainability into its core strategy. Continuous environmental investments and innovations culminated in 2025 certifications, including ISO 50001:2018 Energy Management System, ISO 14064-1:2018 Zero Carbon Factory and GB/T 39257-2020 / GB/T 33635-2017 5-Star Green Supply Chain Management.

As a Beijing-certified Green Factory, Sidel's environmental efforts go beyond solar energy, encompassing an intelligent Energy Management System and Building Automation System for precise energy control, a retrofit program for equipment frequency conversion to reduce consumption, low-temperature distillation technology to minimize effluent from acid-wash passivation and more.

Domino and HP Indigo will be exhibiting at Labelexpo Europe 2025. Scan the QR code to learn more

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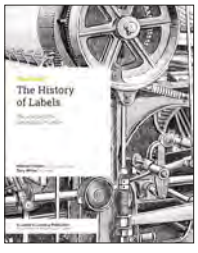

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Polilux is the youngest player of BOPP production industry. The company was established in 2018 and its main purpose has been to focus special products such as IML, PSL so far. Polilux has been performing production with specially designed Brückner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

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AP Label invests in Spande

This latest hybrid investment allows a leading Chinese label converter to offer fast response and innovation to its brand customers. Yolanda Wang reports

With 25 years of deep roots in the label printing industry, Suzhou AP Label has transformed from a traditional label converter to a modern high-tech company that has integrated high-powered R&D and sustainable production.

Founded in 2001, AP Label has consistently adhered to the service philosophy of 'delivering what you need, anticipating what you haven't thought of'. Its products include self-adhesive labels, track-and-trace anti-counterfeiting labels, and shrink sleeves, all of which are widely used in a range of industries, including household chemicals, food and beverages, healthcare, chemicals, electronics and cigarette packaging.

Three technical updates

As a veteran enterprise in China's label printing industry, developments at Suzhou AP Label have always been followed closely by the wider industry.

During its 25-year journey, every step has been in harmony with the technological changes in China's printing industry. From an initial small-scale printing factory to a modern enterprise in Suzhou today, AP Label has built a production workshop covering an area of 11,000sqm, with over 190 employees and a monthly production capacity of more than 200 million labels.

This transformation was driven by three key technology investments.

In 2008, when the domestic label market was still dominated by 4-color letterpress printing, AP Label was the first to introduce an imported web-fed flexo press, expanding its capabilities to 8-color printing. Over the following 10 years, the company installed 10 more flexo presses, making this technology its main production force.

The second transformation occurred in 2013 when AP Label seized the opportunity to invest heavily in developing short-run label capabilities with Xeikon, Domino and HP Indigo.

This new capacity not only significantly shortened the company's response times to customer orders but also, through the innovative combination of digital and flexo printing technology, allowed the development of a variety of innovative functional labels targeted at supporting new product launches by brand owners.

The third transformation came in December 2024, when AP Label signed a contract for the first General Inkjet Printing (GIP) Spande 1,200 DPI digital and flexo hybrid press in China.



GIP and Spande hybrid press- Label Modular 330 HD

"The company became the first supplier to pilot a new initiative to reduce the carbon footprint of L'Oreal in the North Asia region"

The GIP Spande Label Modular 330 HD allows flexible integration of UV inkjet printing with highly automated flexo printing modules. The digital module is suitable for short-run orders, with a speed up to 80m/min; the flexo printing section is competent for larger production runs, operating at 200m/min. It takes just 15 minutes to switch between these two modes.

'The combination of digital and flexo printing is not a brand-new concept for us,' says Zhong Liang, marketing director of AP Label. 'After the introduction of digital presses, we have combined the two technologies offline. A few years ago, when hybrid devices appeared on the market, we also conducted an investigation. We found at that time, the technology was not yet mature, so we chose to postpone the investment.'

The equipment has been in production for six months and is primarily used to produce high-end household chemical labels. Its adoption has streamlined the converter's production workflow, significantly boosted efficiency while reducing the risk of human error.

Quality and innovation

Consistent with its investment in equipment upgrades, AP Label has maintained an unwavering commitment to product quality and innovation throughout its development journey.

'A label accompanies a product throughout its entire lifecycle; this is why brands hold strict quality standards,' notes Zhong Liang. 'Our clients have multifaceted requirements. A high-quality label is more than just a reflection of product quality; it serves as a critical bridge between brands and consumers; it helps products stand out on shelves through detailed craftsmanship, becoming a pivotal touchpoint that resonates with consumers.'

To strengthen its quality procedures, AP Label has built a full chain of quality control procedures and obtained multiple certifications.

AP Label has also excelled in innovation, holding 36 industry patents covering hardware and technical solutions across production and process control, testaments to its strong innovation capabilities. This has earned the company 'Jiangsu High-Tech Enterprise' status.

It is precisely this dual commitment to quality and innovation that has propelled the company's business expansion. From its initial focus on household chemical labels to gradual entry into more diverse sectors such as food and beverages, industrial chemicals and healthcare.

Sustainability

Leading brands now want more from labels than just quality print. They expect labels to integrate seamlessly into overall packaging and meet pressing sustainability needs. AP Label leads the industry in green development, with a full-chain system to address brands' environmental requirements.

AP Label's sustainability efforts have earned recognition, including carbon neutrality certification from SGS, a CDP A rating, and designation as a 3A Green Factory in Suzhou (2024).

The company also became the first supplier to pilot a new initiative to reduce the carbon footprint of L'Oreal in the North Asia region.

Spande and General Inkjet Printing will both exhibit equipment at Labelexpo Europe 2025. Scan the QR code to learn more



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Honggan Packaging chooses HP for flex pack growth

Chinese converter has invested in an HP Indigo 200K and multiple pouch-making machines to drive growth in its short-run flexible packaging business. Yolanda Wang reports

Honggan Packaging, a 27-year-old converter, has officially embarked on its transformation from a traditional packaging manufacturer to a digital service provider with the installation of an HP Indigo digital press. The installation was HP's 100th digital flexible packaging system in the Asia-Pacific region.

Founded in 2003 and based in Dongguan, Guangdong Province, Honggan Packaging specializes in the production of flexible packaging. It supplies a comprehensive range of plastic bags, aluminum foil bags, aluminum-coated bags and kraft paper bags. These offerings cater to domestic and international clients across various sectors, including food, electronics, apparel, cosmetics, pharmaceuticals, agricultural products and hardware.

In November 2024, the company relocated to its current facility, a 10,000sqm production space that houses its technology and a workforce of over 80 employees.

27-year history

Chen Weifeng, founder and general manager of Honggan Packaging, stepped into the printed packaging business by chance. At that time, she received an order for plastic bags. The following year, a semi-automatic manual bag-making machine marked the start of her entrepreneurial journey. Subsequently, the company purchased second-hand film blowing equipment and began producing and selling single-layer plastic bags.

As the business expanded, Weifeng relocated the company from Shenzhen to neighboring Dongguan in 2003, officially renaming it Dongguan Honggan Packaging. Later, the company shifted its focus to the composite plastic bag business and invested in gravure printing machines, laminating machines and pouch-making machines.

'Back then, the entire flexible packaging industry was still a market dominated by large-volume orders, which was highly compatible with traditional printing equipment like gravure. Moreover, the profit margins were quite substantial, with such high demand,' Weifeng continues.

Digital investment

As the number of competitors in the industry increased, overall profit margins shrank significantly. During this period, through interactions with customers, Weifeng identified new opportunities in the short-run flexible packaging market. Around seven years ago, the company began to pay attention to the development of digital flexible packaging printing technology.

'At that time, we considered investing in a digital press,' Weifeng says. 'After research, we found that only HP digital machines were capable of printing flexible packaging. However, the cost of such equipment was prohibitive for us. Moreover, the short-run and small orders coming to our company were not sufficient to support an HP machine'. At that time, Honggan Packaging used industry suppliers to print its small-run orders.

Subsequently, Honggan Packaging invested in pouch-making equipment for short-run flexible packaging. 'Our plan is to invest in the whole production line from downstream to upstream,' she explains. In 2024, the company invested in a digital embellishment machine from DMS, and in April 2025, Honggan invested in its first HP Indigo 200K.



From left: Yolanda Wang, Honggan Packaging owner Chen Weifgang and Jenny Wang from Labelexpo

"HP Indigo's 200K digital printing technology helps us transform from a packaging producer to a business that delivers a full digital experience for our customers"

To match the flexibility of this new digital press, Honggan Packaging has invested in four pouch-making machines. Now, digital accounts for half of Honggan Packaging's total business.

Future outlook

In Weifeng's opinion, overcoming industry competition should never rely on price wars. Instead, Honggan Packaging has built its core competitiveness around 'stable quality and fast delivery'.

The company has also established a 48-hour urgent order response service for digital businesses, specifically targeting small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) that seek to integrate agile packaging technology into their production workflows.

The company began expanding into overseas markets quite early on. At its peak, foreign trade accounted for as much as 80 percent of total business. In response to the 2025 China-US trade war, Honggan Packaging quickly adjusted its strategy. Currently, the proportion of foreign trade in its business stands at 60 percent. Over the next three to five years, Honggan plans to extend its digital printing capabilities to Southeast Asia and Eastern Europe.

Regarding immediate plans, Honggan Packaging has an ambitious digital transformation strategy for 2026, which includes acquiring a second HP digital press, implementing HP Smart Stream to automate the workflow from order placement to production, and adopting an AI-driven order scheduling system to enhance efficiency and reduce changeover time.

For a preview of flexible packaging equipment and materials at Labelexpo Europe 2025 turn to page 106

LABELEXPO EUROPE 2025

This special Labelexpo Europe 2025 section is compiled by Akanksha Meena, Chelsea McDougall, Adyasha Sinha, Andy Thomas-Emans, Yolanda Wang, Piotr Wnuk and Selah Zighelboim

Before the doors of the Fira Gran Via open, Labelexpo Europe 2025 is already shaping up to be one for the history books.

Before exhibitors welcome their current and future customers, before eager attendees can ask questions to the technology experts, the first bell rings, announcing a showfloor sale, and the anticipation is already building.

For the first time in the event's 45-year history, Labelexpo Europe has a new host city, and when doors open from Sept 16-19, there will be plenty of technology to see, networking to be experienced and knowledge to be shared.

In this comprehensive technology preview, it is clear that innovation is everywhere. There's more automation, more digital integration, more sustainability-driving solutions and more crossover between labels, flexible packaging and carton production.

Read on to discover the complete lineup of educational sessions, get the latest on the awards ceremony, and explore a detailed preview of cutting-edge technology.

ABOUT THIS COVER

The front cover of this issue of Labels & Labeling was produced in conjunction with hot stamping specialist Kurz.

The Kurz products used on this cover were a combination of Lumafin and Silver Line transfer products and H&M dies.

Lumafin is a coating for underprinting that enables brilliant, flickering color effects, iridescent light, and translucent gradient effects without aluminum, while Silver Line provides a silver-metallic effect.

'The translucent hot stamping formulation gives packaging and label designs a new coloring and a fascinating visual depth. Lumafin allows underprinted designs to shine through,' said Elke Andersch, senior marketing manager at Kurz. 'Silver Line, on the other hand, captivates with silver-metallic effects, paired with fascinating 3D effects. The interplay of diffractive effects and reflective surfaces gives surfaces a very stylish and effective finish.'

The flat stamping dies used for this project were produced by Hinderer + Mühlich (H+M).

'Flat stamping dies may not always take center stage, but without them, even the most brilliant foil can't shine,' Andersch says.

'On the L&L cover, the elegance of the design relied entirely on the synergy between high-quality transfer products and clean, flawless foil application.'

KURZ

H+M a KURZ company

LABELEXPO AMBASSADORS

Renowned label and package printing leaders have joined Labelexpo Europe as ambassadors in folding carton, flexible packaging, materials, sustainability and automation and AI.

As prominent industry experts, Labelexpo ambassadors will share their knowledge across the label and package printing ecosystem, targeting their specific areas of expertise and addressing the industry's current trends both online, via Labelexpo's platforms, and in person, at Labelexpo Europe 2025.

The ambassadors include Chris Ellison, managing director of OPM Labels and Packaging Group, focusing on flexible packaging; Corey Reardon, president and CEO of AWA Alexander Watson Associates, covering materials; Marius Tent, founder of ViaPackaging UG and 360 PackMastery, addressing sustainability; Will Parker, senior packaging executive, specializing in folding carton; and Steve Metcalf, founder, CEO and chief AI officer of Imagine AI Live, handling automation and AI.

The ambassadors will lead dedicated keynote, meet-and-greet, and Q&A sessions at The Pulse Arena.

"THERE'S MORE AUTOMATION,
MORE DIGITAL INTEGRATION,
MORE SUSTAINABILITY-DRIVING SOLUTIONS,
AND MORE CROSSOVER BETWEEN LABELS, FLEXIBLE
PACKAGING AND CARTON PRODUCTION"

EDUCATION AT LABELEXPO EUROPE 2025

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EDUCATIONAL CONTENT AT LABELEXPO EUROPE

Through Master Classes and The Pulse, Labelexpo Europe 2025 will provide opportunities for attendees to learn about trends and innovations in the labeling industry. Selah Zighelboim reports

Every day at Labelexpo Europe 2025 will feature educational content, covering automation, flexible packaging, folding cartons and more.

This educational content will take place in two locations: at The Pulse education area at Booth 7B15 on the exhibit floor, and at the Label Academy Master Class conference sessions. The Pulse will feature different themes every day, with sessions and networking events guided by industry thought leaders. This year, Labelexpo has also appointed ambassadors, experts with specific knowledge of that day's theme, to lead programming at The Pulse. Meanwhile, Labelexpo will present three Master Classes, each providing an all-day, in-depth exploration of either RFID, folding cartons or automation.

'We want attendees to walk away with pragmatic knowledge they can use,' says Katie Chapman, Labelexpo's conference coordinator. 'Our goal is for everyone who sits in a session to discover at least one new approach or technology that could make a real difference in their business, whether it's learning how to expand into flexible packaging or understanding how to future-proof their operations through automation.'

DAY ONE

On Sept 16, the first day of Labelexpo, the theme at The Pulse will be 'sustainable labels and packaging'. Corey Reardon, president and CEO of AWA Alexander Watson Associates, and Marius Tent, founder of ViaPackaging UG and 360 PackMastery, will serve as the day's ambassadors, lending their expertise on materials and sustainability, respectively.

Programming at The Pulse begins at 11 am, with keynote speaker Dr Leyla Acaroglu, founder of Disrupt Design, who will address circular strategies. At 1 pm, sustainability ambassador Tent, who also serves as project manager at Celab Europe, will provide practical information on PPWR for the packaging industry. Then, at 2 pm, Reardon will present a briefing on AWA's most recent research on global label and packaging markets. The final Pulse session of the day, at 3 pm, will be a panel on PPWR.

Meanwhile, Sept 16's Master Class will focus on folding cartons.

"OUR GOAL IS FOR EVERYONE WHO SITS IN A SESSION TO DISCOVER AT LEAST ONE NEW APPROACH OR TECHNOLOGY THAT COULD MAKE A REAL DIFFERENCE IN THEIR BUSINESS"

The Master Class will feature 30-minute sessions exploring a range of topics related to the folding carton space: its business opportunity, flexo technology, converting equipment, materials and more. Speakers include James Boughton, director of regional sales and operations development for labels and packaging at Canon (Edale); Tiziano Albanese, EMEA packaging category manager at HP; and Ludovico Frati, sales and marketing director, digital, printing and converting folding carton at Bobst.

DAY TWO

The Pulse will explore flexible packaging on Sept 17.

Chris Ellison, managing director at OPM Group and Labelexpo's flexible packaging ambassador, is the first keynote of the day. At 11 am, he will share how OPM expanded from pressure-sensitive labels into flexible packaging. At 1 pm, Steve Baker, managing director of Baker Labels, will discuss pouching systems. At 2 pm, Ryan Chai, strategic account solutions specialist at Nobelus, will speak about sustainability in flexible packaging. The final Pulse session of the day will feature Jose 'Pepe' Gorbea, global head of brands, agencies and sustainability innovation at HP, who will present case studies demonstrating how flexible packaging can advance brand storytelling, consumer engagement and shelf appeal.

The Master Class this day will focus on RFID technology and integration.

The morning session's topics will cover RFID chip technology, real-world use cases, RFID label production technology, and quality control. Afternoon sessions will be on RFID chip programming, systems integrators and more. Speakers include Gustav Sandstrom, director of intelligent labels sales and business development EMENA at Avery Dennison; Vlad Sljapic, chief commercial officer at Graphimecc Group; and Louise Scott, senior supplies product manager at Zebra Technologies.

DAY THREE

On Sept 18, The Pulse will examine future technologies, with Steve Metcalf, chief AI officer at Imagine AI Live, serving as automation and AI ambassador.

The first session of the day, at 11 am, will focus on the Digital Product Passport legislation. Graphimecc Group's Vlad Sljapic and Avery Dennison's Sophia Savvides will explore DPP and its benefits. At noon, Metcalf will speak about how label converters are using AI and automation, and what the label factories of the future might look like. At 2 pm, GS1 UK's Camilla Young will cover the retail industry's transition from 1D barcodes to 2D barcodes, an initiative known as Sunrise 2027. The Pulse will wrap up the day with a session on how labels and packaging connect brands and consumers.

The third and final Master Class will explore automation in label production.

Sessions will delve into how automation can enhance various aspects of label manufacturing, such as real-time monitoring, finishing and palletizing. The Master Class will also address how automation improves quality, increases efficiency and streamlines workflows. Speakers include Andrew Strand, business development manager at Cerm; James Brennan, ABG Connect product manager at AB Graphic International; and Iñaki Larrea, CEO of LemuGroup.

DAY FOUR

On the last day of Labelexpo, The Pulse will explore folding cartons. Will Parker, managing director of DataSpike, is the folding carton ambassador. At 11 am, Parker will speak about why label converters are increasingly entering the folding carton space. At 1 pm, The Pulse will hold its final session on adding value to folding carton manufacturing.

Scan the QR code to learn more about Labelexpo's ambassadors

FOLDING CARTON AND FLEXPACK ENTER LABELEXPO

As the industry moves more into flexible packaging and folding cartons, Labelxpo Europe exhibitors already supply a wide range of products catering to those markets, Andy Thomas-Emans reports

Labelexpo Europe 2025 will be the first in the event's 25-year history to focus on folding cartons as well as labels and short-run flexible packaging.

Given how much print, converting and embellishment technology is shared across all package printing sectors, it is perhaps not surprising that over 25 percent of existing exhibitors at Labelexpo Europe 2025 have portfolios that reach across labels, flexible packaging and folding cartons.

FOLDING CARTONS

INKS AND COATINGS

In the inks and coatings sector, suppliers to the folding carton industry include Sun Chemical, Flint Group, Eckhart, HuberGroup, INX, Paragon Inks, Toyo Inks and Zeller+Gmelin. GSE focuses on liquid ink logistics, where traceability is a key requirement.

These exhibitors span sheet-fed/rotary offset and flexo technologies across a range of chemistries, including UV and LED-UV, as well as water-based inks and coatings. The show also features a strong lineup of UV and LED-UV lamp technologies from companies such as GEW and Excelitas.

Barrier coatings are a key technology for both flexpack and folding cartons, and are well represented at Labelexpo Europe 2025 by companies such as Archroma Packaging Technologies and Triwill Group. Adhesives suppliers with specialist folding carton grades include Bostik and Eukalin.

FOILING AND EMBELLISHMENT

Foiling also spans labels and folding cartons. Kurz, for example, is a key supplier to the folding carton sector, both for in-line cold foil application on sheet-fed presses and in off-line hot stamping configurations.

Pantec's Cheetah W850/1060 rotary stamping technology is available for both in-line and off-line folding carton applications and is a strong performer in the tobacco packaging market.

Other foiling suppliers at Labelexpo Europe, spanning both sectors, include API, Univacco, and Gietz, with Leonardus demonstrating its holographic foils.

Digital embellishment is gaining increasing traction for both label and folding carton converters and this technology can be seen at Labelexpo Europe 2025 from suppliers like JetFX and Konica Minolta, which demonstrated its MGI AlphaJET single pass B1/B2 digital print and embellishment system at drupa.

ANCILLARY AND CONSUMABLES

Since wet glue labels remain the dominant technology for primary labels, Labelexpo Europe 2025 showcases suppliers of various ancillary technologies and consumables for offset presses.

These include suppliers like Continental showing offset blankets and Felix Boettcher displaying its offset pressroom chemicals.

In-line flexo coating units are standard equipment on offset presses specified for folding cartons, and the complete flexo ecosystem can be seen at Labelexpo Europe 2025. This includes varnishes, plates, anilox rolls, doctor blades, enclosed chambers, double-sided tapes, anilox cleaning systems and ink and varnish pump dispensers.

> "FLEXIBLE PACKAGING MATERIALS SUPPLIERS ARE RECOGNIZING THE NEW MID-WEB IN-LINE TECHNOLOGY AS A DISTINCT MARKET SECTOR AND OPPORTUNITY"

Inspection companies also span the three main package printing applications. Suppliers exhibiting at Labelexpo Europe include AVT and Luster Lightech, a Chinese AI-based inspection system developer. EyeC supplies the ProofRunner Carton 100 percent quality control system, which sits directly on the folder gluer.

DIE-CUTTING/CREASING

Die-cutting and tooling suppliers use Labelexpo to promote their label die-cutting plates and cylinders; however, these companies are also active in the folding carton market, particularly with male-female die sets for cutting and creasing on rotary flexo and offset presses. These exhibitors include Kocher + Beck, Wink, Sysco, Maxcess/Rotometrics and Lartec.

Laser die-cutting is an area of increasing importance at Labelexpo Europe, and laser cut/crease has also been a focus of development for the folding carton industry. Lang Laser, for example, has developed the Cartos Singular laser cutter, which allows for the production of folding carton samples, scalable up to full production runs. The Cartos system can also be used for intricate cutouts.

Among the new exhibitors is Technifold, whose retrofittable Technicrease cassette is designed to replace custom male and female creasing dies.

PRE-PRESS

Automation of key pre-press processes, including preflight, imposition and color management, is common to all package printing processes. Both Esko and Hybrid Software specialize in full folding carton workflows, including structural design and 3D visualization. GMG offers its color-accurate prototype proofing system for folding cartons, while Hamilroad promotes its Belissima DMS screening technology for both litho and flexo applications.

PRINTING PRESSES

Edale showcases its CartonLine folding carton press, demonstrating fully in-line print and converting of folding cartons. The press is configured with six LED-UV flexo units, a rail-mounted turnbar, lamination and Edale's EZ foil unit with an in-line flatbed die-cutter.

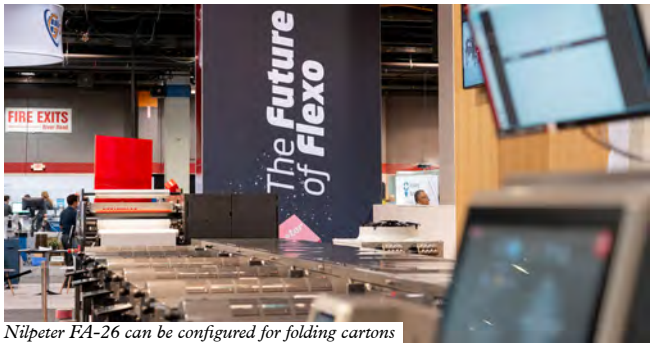
Although this is currently the only folding carton press confirmed for the event, a wide range of presses at the show can be configured for in-line folding carton production. This is particularly the case for the 'mid-web' (26in/670mm) presses displayed at the show by Nilpeter, Mark Andy, Lombardi and Chinese supplier Spande.

Omet has a long history of building dedicated folding carton presses based around its Varyflex platform.

Rotatek demonstrates a print unit from its Universal 850 press



Edale FL5 carton press with in-line flatbed die cut-crease module



Nilpeter FA-26 can be configured for folding cartons

"OVER 25 PERCENT OF EXISTING EXHIBITORS AT LABELEXPO EUROPE 2025 HAVE PORTFOLIOS THAT REACH ACROSS LABELS, FLEXIBLE PACKAGING AND FOLDING CARTONS"

configurable for folding cartons, along with an AI project that models ink-water balance on offset press platforms.

Mark Andy recently announced that its MAPP division, which supplies consumables and plate-making equipment to packaging converters, will now add folding carton consumables.

There is also great potential for digital printing of folding cartons among exhibitors. Xeikon has demonstrated digital print and embellishment of folding cartons at previous Labelexpo shows, while HP Indigo has a portfolio of digital sheet-fed solutions. Fujifilm has the JetPress 750 sheet-fed press configured for folding carton production.

FLEXIBLE PACKAGING

While folding cartons are new to Labelexpo, flexible packaging has been gathering momentum at the show for at least the last decade. Increasing numbers of label converters are adding flexpack to their portfolios, and wide-web flexpack converters are visiting Labelexpo to meet co-suppliers and to investigate short-run options using in-line or digital technology.

Because conventional flexible packaging presses primarily use flexographic technology, whether in-line or central impression (CI), all suppliers of flexo pre-press, plates and platemaking, inks and varnishes, anilox and doctor blades are relevant to flexible packaging converters.

The growth in the use of LED-UV curing systems is highly relevant to in-line printing of flexible packaging, as they significantly reduce the amount of heat transferred to the web compared to a standard arcUV lamp system.

GEW demonstrates its water-cooled LED LeoLED2 and E4C combination, which the company recommends for flexible package printing, although in some situations, GEW says its air-cooled AeroLED2 and E2C are sufficient

Surface treatment is an absolute must for the flexible packaging converter working primarily with filmic substrates, and IEEC and Vetaphone are among the suppliers demonstrating these systems.

Label converters moving are finding profitable niches in short-run, value-added flexible packaging work. However, what is considered a short run for flexpack is still a long run in labels, and may justify investment in the kinds of automated, non-stop unwinds and rewinds demonstrated by Martin Automatic.

INKS AND VARNISHES

Where FMCG labels are mostly affixed to containers with a functional barrier against ink migration, flexible packaging is the direct container of the edible or drinkable contents. Apart from pouch materials which incorporate an aluminium barrier layer, this makes the ink and coatings choice a more critical factor. UV or LED-UV inks need to be specified as low-migration and often need to be encapsulated in a water-based coating. In other cases, brands may specify the use of water-based or solvent inks.

Among ink suppliers that can advise on these choices are Flint Group, Huber Group, Pulse, Toyo Ink Europe, Sun Chemical, VPF Ink Technologies, Frimpeks, Siegwerk, Zeller+Gmelin and Super Color.

Along with inks, barrier coatings and packaging adhesives are other key topics of interest to flexible packaging converters. At Labelexpo, first-time exhibitor Archroma highlights its adhesives for flexible packaging while RK Print Coat Instruments demonstrates R&D and QC test equipment for coating, inks, adhesives and barrier coatings.

MIS AND WORKFLOW TOOLS

As noted for folding cartons, MIS suppliers to the labels industry generally also have modules covering other packaging types, including flexible packaging.

Conics demonstrates an automated production workflow and planning tool for flexible packaging producers; Sistrade shows its dedicated flexible packaging MIS module, and Theurer showcases its C3 Flexible Packaging & Converting, which is the pre-configured business template for flexible packaging, film manufacturing and converting within theurer.com C3. Design, 3D visualization and workflow tools specific to flexible packaging can be viewed on the Esko and Hybrid Software stands.

DIGITAL PRESSES

While HP has long dominated the digital flexible packaging sector (although the company does not show the 200K at Labelexpo Europe), water-based inkjet is increasingly the technology of choice for digital flexible packaging.

Arrow Systems shows its ArrowJet Hybrid Pro M printing on UPM Confidio barrier papers, along with sample pouches printed on the ArrowJet Aqua 800.

Screen promotes its Truepress PAC 520P water-based inkjet press for paper-based packaging. The company also shows samples from its Truepress PAC 830F water-based inkjet press for flexible packaging films.

But WB is not the only digital process on view at Labelexpo. Valloy launches the toner-based Rollio Xpress, a compact 330mm (13in)-wide 4-color press which can print on thin BOPP, aluminum foil, paper or composite film at resolutions of 1,200 x 2,400 DPI.

Durst demonstrates its latest LED-UV inkjet Tau press, specified for surface printing on barrier lamitubes and pouches. The press uses low-migration LED-UV inks.

IN-LINE CONVENTIONAL

Mid-web presses (26-30in / 670-800mm) are ideally suited to the format sizes of flexible packaging and are well represented at the show. The ability to hold register on thin and extensible substrates is a must, along with 'soft' tension control systems.

Mid-web machines at the show capable of handling flexible



Giave LED-UV CI press

"BARRIER COATINGS ARE A KEY TECHNOLOGY FOR BOTH FLEXPACK AND FOLDING CARTONS AND ARE WELL REPRESENTED AT LABELEXPO EUROPE 2025"



ArrowJet Hybrid Pro



Comexi midweb F4

SHRINK SLEEVES = FLEXIBLES?

It is interesting to note that for the wide-web converter, shrink sleeve labels fall under the category of flexible packaging, along with stretch sleeves and all other forms of unsupported filmic materials. For these converters, there is a wealth of shrink sleeve suppliers to visit at Labelexpo Europe 2025, demonstrating everything from inks, coatings and materials to seaming and inspection machines.

Exhibitors in this segment include DCM Group with its Sleeve3 entry-level forming, perforating, hotmelt application and inspection system; Karlville shows its latest K3 Plus Seamer, which can be configured as a stand-alone unit or with turrets; the Polly Automatic PA-series shrink sleeve seaming machine; Eckart metallic inks for both LED/UV and solvent gravure systems; and sustainable shrink sleeve materials from Taghleef, Klockner Pentaplast, Innovia and Sleevemaker by Maytech.

packaging films include the Spande AC, Nilpeter FA-26, Mark Andy Performance Series S9, Omet X7 and Lombardi Invicta i1. Bobst and MPS both promote their mid-web presses configured for flexible packaging, although with no presses at the show. Rotatek shows a print unit from its Universal 850 rotary offset press, while Bengraphic demonstrates its F8-650 press specified for flexible packaging, with heavy-duty dual servo-driven print and converting units.

Multitec and Weigang both say their presses are capable of handling flexpack materials, with the Weigang ZJR series specified to handle 12 micron films.

Although there are no CI or gravure flexible packaging presses at the show, several suppliers will promote this technology to label converters looking to ramp up production volumes. Comexi promotes its F4 CI press, designed for shorter runs and available in the 'mid-web' 670 and 800mm-wide formats. This is an example of how CI and in-line presses are converging on this width.

A particularly interesting CI development is Giave's Gialux UV LED CI press. Because it does not require a drying tunnel, the press is compact and eliminates the use of solvents.

EMBELLISHMENT

One of the key advantages of in-line printing of flexible packaging is the ability to add decoration processes on a modular basis, in exactly the same way as on a label press.

Cold foil is one value-added decoration process for flexible packaging. Pantec demonstrates a range of pouch and embellishment possibilities, including textured foiling/embossing and micro-embossing using its Rhino S410 embellishment equipment.

A range of exhibitors, including Kurz and Lemmaco, demonstrate cold foil and adhesive systems suitable for application to flexible packaging materials.

Digital embellishment is a key trend in both labels and flexible packaging. At the show, JetFX launches the Solo FlexPack, which extends digital embellishment to flexible packaging. With FDA-compliant embellishments and optional UV or eBeam curing, it allows food-safe gloss, matte and embossed finishes directly in-line on pouches, films, and wraps. The unit can be installed in-line on a press, on a laminator or on an off-line finishing machine.

CUTTING AND PERFORATING TOOLING

Berhalter Swiss demonstrates die-cutting systems tooled for a wide range of flexible packaging applications, including lidding materials, as does Schobertechnologies, which brings to the show cutting, perforation and punching tools for flexible packaging.

SUBSTRATES

Flexible packaging materials suppliers are recognizing the new mid-web in-line technology as a distinct market sector and opportunity, which tends to require more of a 'label-supply' mentality of smaller and more frequent deliveries, even slit to width.

Synthogra has led the way in tailoring its inventory to the requirements of the emerging mid-web in-line market. The company shows a high-barrier, mono-material film for flexible packaging in PE and PP, suitable for pouches and other applications.

GMerix showcases its custom-coated PET and specialty films for flexible packaging applications. The company also promotes contract slitting and rewinding services for flexible packaging films, toll coating and R&D support.

Nobelus is releasing a line of eight films in a variety of finishes and material types compatible with different flexible packaging structures. For gloss and matte, the company offers its Platinum OPP films and sustainable EcoElement CLS films, which can be used for compostable packaging. Toray International demonstrates its mono-material and retortable films.

SLITTING AND REWINDING

While materials suppliers transition to a new supply model for short-run production, converters are investing in warehousing space to hold stock and slitters to process master rolls. There is also a requirement for slitting mid-web rolls off-line, and Ashe demonstrates its 800mm-wide Solitaire duplex slitter tailored to mid-web in-line flexible packaging presses.

POUCH MAKING

Many label converters who have moved into flexible package printing have taken the next step up the value chain by taking pouch making in-house. At Labelexpo, Galaxy Packtech showcases its GS 24 Plus 200 pouch-making machine, designed for the production of stand-up pouches, three-side seal pouches and zipper pouches at speeds of up to 200 cycles per minute with a working web width of 200-1,200mm. It is fully compatible with recyclable mono-materials.

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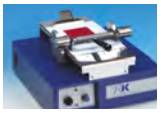

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L&L GLOBAL AWARDS HONOR INDUSTRY'S BEST

Winners of the first-ever Labels & Labeling Global Awards will be announced during the Festa Barcelona welcome party at Labelexpo Europe. Chelsea McDougall reports

Labels & Labeling will host its first-ever global label awards during Labelexpo Europe 2025.

The Labels & Labeling Global Awards will honor outstanding achievements across three categories: innovation, sustainability and Converter of the Year.

The judging panel included Andy Thomas-Emans, strategic director of the labels group at Informa Markets, serving as chairman; Mark Glendenning, owner and CEO of Inland and president of TLMI; Philippe Voet, CEO of Etivoet and chair of Finat; and Chelsea McDougall, editor of Labels & Labeling.

The judges chose winners from a curated list of nominees first selected by Labels & Labeling's global editorial team, based on news coverage and industry impact reported by the magazine throughout the year.

'Labels & Labeling's international editorial team has drawn on our experience and industry insight to carefully select this year's shortlist, recognizing true excellence, innovation and leadership across every corner of the world,' McDougall says. 'These awards are truly a celebration of the very best our industry has to offer.'

The winners will be announced at a welcome party on Sept 16, during the first night of Labelexpo Europe 2025.

SHORTLIST

The **Innovation Award**, sponsored by Gallus/Heidelberg, recognizes companies that have developed a specific, groundbreaking innovation that is new, novel, functional and impactful on the wider label and package printing industries.

The shortlisted nominees are: Esko for its Print Clone AI color matching tool; LemuGroup for its end-of-line automation; and Mark Andy for its Digital Series HD High-Speed 1200 press.

Esko launched its new AI color-matching technology that enables digital press operators to replicate colors from previously printed packaging, regardless of the original printing process. Print Clone reduces job completion times and boosts digital printing productivity.

It eliminates lengthy trial-and-error cycles, helping to minimize waste and subsequent environmental impact.

> "THESE AWARDS ARE TRULY A CELEBRATION OF THE VERY BEST OUR INDUSTRY HAS TO OFFER"

LemuGroup advances automation with its UltraCompact system, which uses robotics to pack rolls into boxes and palletize them. LemuGroup also offers inspection technology that can send a signal to the rewinder to mark a defective roll, enabling the UltraCompact to discard it before packing. The company is leading the industry in reducing manual labor and helping with the worker shortages that converters across the globe are facing.

Launched at Labelexpo Americas 2024, Mark Andy's Digital Series HD High-Speed 1200 press achieves an unprecedented speed of 480ft/min (146m/min) — the fastest multi-color UV inkjet press on the market today. The press was developed in collaboration with Hybrid Software companies, Global Graphics and Meteor Inkjet. The Global Graphics SmartDFE powers Mark Andy's new ProWorx digital front end, and the higher press is enabled by streaming real-time raster data directly to the printhead electronics provided by Meteor Inkjet.

In the sustainability category, nominees were selected for sustainable products or processes, developed by a supplier or converter, that promote a reduced environmental impact or a circular economy. The **Sustainability Award** is sponsored by Durst Group.

The shortlisted nominees are: Bio4life for its home-compostable pressure-sensitive adhesive; Elkem for its recycled release liner silicones; and Polish converter Masterpress, for its development of magnetizable inks for shrink sleeves with Magnomer.

Bio4life launched a home-compostable pressure-sensitive adhesive suitable for direct food contact applications and certified to break down in home-composting environments.

Bio4life has provided an alternative to traditional PS adhesives, while stepping up the game in reducing waste, promoting environmental responsibility, and meeting PPWR requirements in the European Union.

Elkem's Silcolease range for release liners is 100 percent recycled, silicone-based, solvent-free products. These are developed using Elkem's new, patented depolymerization technology, and have a 70 percent lower carbon footprint compared to their non-recycled counterparts. These recycled silicones mark a significant step toward a circular economy in liner recycling.

As reported earlier in this issue (See page 57), Polish converter Masterpress, in collaboration with Magnomer, has developed magnetizable inks for shrink sleeve applications. Magnetizable inks provide improved separation of the printed substrate in PET-on-PET shrink sleeves, where both the bottle and label are made from the same material and have the same density. The magnetic coating layer remains adhered to the shrink sleeve label throughout the recycling process. The magnet pulls out the label flakes, leaving behind clean PET bottle flakes ready for reuse.

The **Converter of the Year award** is sponsored by Flint Group. This award recognizes a label printing and converter company that has stood out over the last year and met a number of criteria, including a commitment to a diverse and inclusive workforce; development of training programs; contributions to charitable initiatives and the introduction of innovative products or programs.

The shortlisted nominees are Masterpress (Poland), OPM Group (UK) and Schreiner MedPharm (Germany).

'The quality and creativity showcased in this year's Global Label Awards shortlist is a powerful reminder of just how innovative and dynamic our industry continues to be,' says Thomas-Emans, the awards chairman. 'From sustainability breakthroughs to game-changing technologies, the entries truly reflect the spirit of progress driving label and package printing forward.'

The Labels & Labeling team selecting the shortlist was: Adyasha Sinha, Akanksha Meena, McDougall, Yolanda Wang, Piotr Wnuk and Selah Zighelboim.

Scan the QR code to learn more about the Labels & Labeling Global Awards

LABELEXPO EUROPE 2025 A-Z TECHNOLOGY PREVIEW

A B GRAPHIC INTERNATIONAL ✕ BOOTH 3E41

ABG showcases its latest DigiLase laser finishing system, featuring two laser beams, doubling cutting speed. ABG brings 10 machines to the show, including two Digicon Series 3 lines, a 430mm version set up for premium embellishment and a 350mm model producing multi-layer labels. Other highlights include a 540mm wide converting line featuring ABG's ASU (automatic servo unwind), Converter, and Vectra AutoSet turret rewinder and the Ti200 RFID inserter. Also on display are a shrink sleeve seaming rewinder and a booklet machine with a braille inkjet module.

Additionally, the ABG technology is featured on the HP stands (Hall 5, 5E25 and 5D21), including the DigiLite and Digicon Series 3, as well as Fast Track and Vectra AutoSet.

ACME ROLLTECH ✧ BOOTH L54

Acme Rolltech showcases its Advanced Channel Engravings (ACE) technology, which offers the advantages of tonal printing, including hexagonal engraving and the density of channel engraving. The company also shows its specialty aniloxes for embellishments: ATAC and ATAC2.0, Acme Tactile for screen-type raised effects; AHDW and AHDW 2.0, Acme High-Density White for opaque white printing for solids and text; AGLT, Acme Glitter for transferring glitter particles; and ATXR G and M, Acme Texture gloss and matte for texture effect.

ACTEGA ✦ BOOTH 3D41

Actega shows its latest products, partner and customer collaborations and advanced labeling technologies. On display is Ecoleaf, Actega's on-demand metallization technology, configured with the Gallus One Digital Press.

Actega also demonstrates Signite, a labeling technology that combines ultra-thin, durable decoration with an applicator.

Actega also showcases its coatings product portfolio for PSL, shrink sleeves, and in-mold labels. Actega's coatings include gloss, matte, motion effects and UV and LED coatings.

ADA ✕ BOOTH 4A29

ADA unveils its laser die-cutter, the ULC350, offering no thermal damage, zero mold costs and instant setup, powered by AI-driven automation. The company claims that the new system decreases production downtime by 60 percent while enabling ultra-short runs that were previously deemed unprofitable.

AFFORD INKS ✧ BOOTH L08

Afford shows a new generation of UV flexo inks, offering optimized press performance, fast and complete curing, and adhesion across a broad spectrum of labelstocks and flexible packaging materials. Afford also introduces its expanded portfolio of UV-curable screen printing varnishes and effects inks, developed for advanced label embellishment. This range includes tactile and haptic coatings, high-build effects, and scratch-and-sniff technologies, as well as thermochromic and photochromic systems, enabling converters to add high-value sensory and visual features that enhance brand differentiation and shelf appeal.

The company also shows digital inks, available in water-based and UV-curable formulations, offering high optical density, substrate compatibility and high performance characteristics.

AGERGAARD ✦ BOOTH L62

Agergaard Group presents AkeBoose Nova TK, an all-in-one chamber doctor blade system, for label, folding carton and flexible packaging flexo printing. Combined with the compact, low-pulsation, energy-efficient EPP100 peristaltic pump, suitable for both UV and water-based printing inks and coatings, the system enables a resource-efficient, closed ink circuit for elevated print quality and efficiency in flexographic workflows.

Also featured is the Lina flexo marking system for continuous web processes such as laminating or coating lines. It enables spot printing of material codes, recycling symbols, or traceability data using UV or water-based inks.

AHLSTROM ✕ BOOTH 3B89

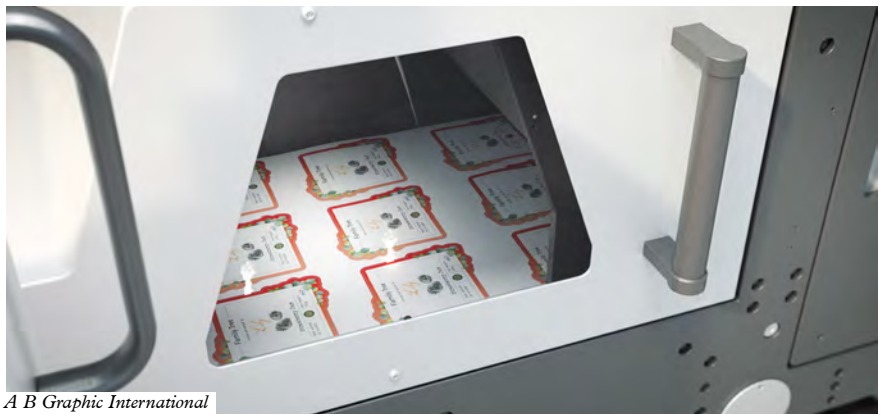
Ahlstrom introduces its range of low-impact Acti-V glassine release liners, using recycled cellulose fiber (RF versions), combinations of recycled and unbleached fiber (RF Natural versions), and stretch to lower weights (40 and 45gsm), to support circularity and reduce overall product carbon footprint. The range offers various colors and basis weights, including the custom version Acti-V Industrial RF Natural, entirely based on recycled and unbleached fibers.

ALUMINIUM FERON ✧ BOOTH 3A94

Aluminium Feron showcases a range of durable substrates for labels and tags. The company also promotes a portfolio of synthetic papers, such as Monotex, for digital printing, as well as substrates like Tritex, developed for durability, metal detectability or RFID protection.

AMTECH SOFTWARE (LABEL TRAXX) ✦ BOOTH 5F25

Amtech presents Label Traxx ERP, a job management system designed for narrow web flexo and digital printing. Batched is an automated scheduling technology that eliminates manual planning by generating optimized production



A B Graphic International

schedules in real-time.

Also featured is Siteline, a customer and sales portal that enables round-the-clock order access, status checks, approvals and artwork collaboration. It integrates with Label Traxx, accelerating order-to-press times and improving overall efficiency.

ANYTRON (BITEK TECHNOLOGY) ✕ BOOTH 5G22

Anytron shows an upgraded Any-Cut for laser cutting, lamination and matrix removal. The company also promotes Any-Jet II, now integrated with AIMS, as well as Anytron's new automation software, featuring hot folder-based job import, auto-nesting and auto-contouring, enabling synchronized control between printing and laser cutting.

APEX EUROPE ✧ BOOTH 5G40

Apex promotes GTT 2.0 engraving technology, developed as an alternative to traditional cell-based engraving. Unlike conventional rolls, the GTT design features a wave/channel that allows for better ink movement, resulting in lower pressure and, therefore, no build-up on the back of the doctor blade.

API TRANSFER TECHNOLOGIES ✦ BOOTH 3D60

The API Transfer Technologies group demonstrates products from its member companies. API launches the CTW-Series cold foil for narrow web flexo printing, used in conjunction with Paragon Inks' cold foil adhesives L725 and L741, recommended for adhesive labels and shrink sleeves. Paragon Inks introduces the Chameleon range of inks for extended gamut printing, formulated to integrate with the Chameleon reprographic system from JFM.

Newfoil presents the Newfoil 3500 Servo, a high-speed hot foil label stamping, embossing and converting machine.

Starfoil introduces the Starfoil Value Line Core Cutter 1600, a new machine with manual loading and off-loading of cut cores, and the Starfoil Value Line 1300SXL, a spooling/slitting machine operating at up to 250m/min, with larger roll diameters up to 350mm and a maximum unwind roll diameter of 700mm. Also at the stand, visitors can see the new CLC-600RXL, engineered for spooling or slitting 3in hot-stamping rolls into 1 or 3in finished rolls.

APPLIED LASER ENGINEERING (ALE) ✕ BOOTH 3D09

ALE launches EasyCell engraving technology, which can be retrofitted or purchased with a new laser engraving system. It reduces the need for machine operator intervention and manual adjustments. The company showcases this capability by exhibiting a ceramic anilox engraved automatically by EasyCell.

APPVION ✧ BOOTH 4E73

Appvion launches EarthChem, a sustainable product line that includes paper and films for variable imaging applications. Products on display include PolyTherm E 300 and Resiste B550 E and Appvion unveils a new direct thermal labeling technology with a coating that extends label life and enhances environmental resistance.

ARCHROMA PACKAGING TECHNOLOGIES ✦ BOOTH 7B36

Archroma Packaging Technologies debuts at Labelexpo Europe 2025, showcasing its range of coatings, adhesives, primers and colorants for the paper and board, flexible packaging and labels segments.



Actega

ARMOR – IIMAK ✕ BOOTH L44

Armor-IIMAK launches AWR XL, a wax ribbon developed with sustainability and performance in mind, designed for traditional applications such as logistics, retail and shipping. It combines a solvent-free formulation, including the backcoat, with a 3.35 micron PET film, claimed to be the thinnest in the industry. AWR XL delivers fewer roll changes, reduced packaging waste, and increased productivity, with up to reportedly 40 percent additional printer uptime.

ARROW SYSTEMS ✧ BOOTH 4A10

Arrow Systems shows the ArrowJet Aqua 330R water-based pigment printer, which prints at speeds of up to 45m/min and resolutions of 1,600 x 1,600 DPI, utilizing Nestle- and Swiss-compliant inks.

The company also promotes the ArrowJet Bolt Hybrid Pro M, featuring in-line priming and varnishing at speeds of up to 150m/min. The ArrowJet Bolt utilizes Memjet's Durabolt print technology with dual-head redundancy for increased speeds and visually dense colors on a wide range of substrates.

Arrow Systems also features a range of digital finishing products, including a complete, end-to-end digital workflow for label and packaging production.

ASAHI PHOTOPRODUCTS ✦ BOOTH 3E23

Asahi Photoproducts shares the stand with Gallus to highlight the AWP Ecosystem, designed to eliminate solvents and minimize resource consumption. The system integrates the AWP water-washable photopolymer plate, the AWP-2530AA plate processor, engineered for small-format plate sizes, and the AWP-Loop Petite, a closed-loop water recycling unit that utilizes Asahi Kasei's Microza membrane filtration technology to recover and reuse up to 90 percent of the process water.

ASHE CONVERTING ✕ BOOTH 3G67

Ashe promotes an Opal Series ALCL (automated label converting line) with a maximum production web width of 540mm, featuring heavy-duty, full rotary die stations with adjustable anvils, bespoke matrix strip assemblies, automated slitting capabilities and auto-set glueless four spindle turret rewind with production speeds of up to 250m/min. The company also promotes an 800mm-wide Duplex center-wind Solitaire Slitter operating at 600m/min and developed for printed thin films, typically BOPP wraparound labels. Also on display is the 440mm wide Opal Series ISR, which demonstrates 100 percent camera inspection, shear slitting, and a 600mm diameter duplex rewind.

ASTRONOVA ✧ BOOTH 5C12

AstroNova presents the QL-435 high-speed, compact full-color label printer for mid- to high-volume production with 1,200 DPI resolution.

The QL-435 is showcased alongside AstroNova's complete portfolio of products, including desktop label printers, digital overprinting systems and full-color flexible packaging press.

ATLANTIC ZEISER ✦ BOOTH L95

Atlantic Zeiser launches CodeVault, an integrated application developed for brand owners to securely generate, store and distribute serialized codes enriched with standardized, security-focused data formats. Users can gain complete control over anti-diversion activities, manage code

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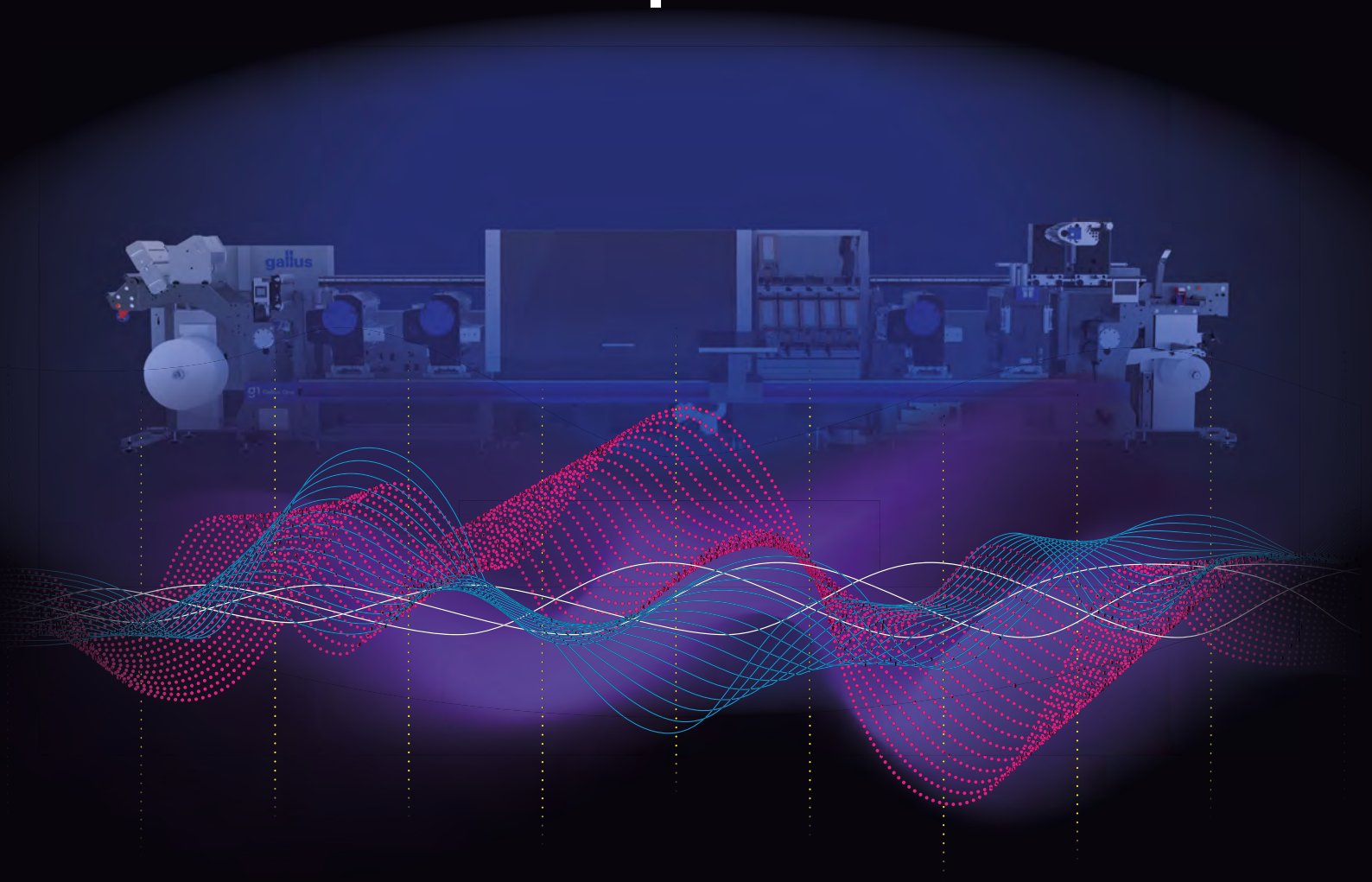

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AVERY DENNISON ✕ BOOTH 3E61

Avery Dennison unveils a suite of labeling products. Visitors can experience product activations that focus on enabling packaging recycling and reuse with technologies for every packaging substrate. The company also presents an suite of products designed to enhance traceability and connectivity, including RFID for automotive and pharmaceutical safety applications. Innovations on display include AD CleanFlake for PET, AD CleanGlass for glass, AD CleanFiber for paper and cardboard and film label options for HDPE. A dedicated retail zone shows packaging innovations designed to enhance shelf appeal and drive consumer engagement, including the latest luxury materials from Avery Dennison's Infinity and Sensorial Collections, as well as demonstrations featuring RFID and NFC technologies.

AVT ✧ BOOTH 5D37

The company shows its new Helios Core, Turbo and Ultra platforms. Also on display is AVT's Varnish Inspection for labels, which detects mis-registers and starvation in real-time, even across multilayer coatings. AVT discusses its fully integrated technology with MIS and pre-press software, Helios, which uses inspection data to drive real-time manufacturing decisions, incorporating AI-based technology.

AXODE ✦ BOOTH L40

Axode launches digitally printed holographic labels combining authentication and tracking with simultaneous printing of serialization data. This technology is fully customizable and offers Axode's camera inspection technology. The modular system can be configured to add spot colors, variable data, scratch-off and special inks, holograms, selective varnish, codes, numbering, embossing and RFID.

BANGGU ✕ BOOTH 4D72

Banggu launches water-based and solvent-based coatings for hot stamping foil, cold foil, heat transfer film, protective film, special adhesive tapes, car wrapping film and window film. Its product range includes polyurethane, acrylic, polyester resin, special monomers and curing agents, as well as pressure-sensitive adhesives.

BAR GRAPHIC MACHINERY ✧ BOOTH 4E34

BGM launches a 22in-wide high-speed converter with semi-automatic turret, and an inspection slitter rewinder. Standard features include a large-capacity unwind with integral roll lifting, BGM's GPS gear positioning system, and the CAP system, which provides constant air pressure to the unwind mandrel. The machine features a two-spindle semi-automatic turret, which splices material and advances tails onto cores whilst a tail lay-on system applies tails to the cores. The automatic inspection slitter rewinder inspects both sides of the web, slits and rewinds unsupported and supported substrates down to 15 microns at speeds up to 300m/min.

BGM also shows the 370eDSRT, an easy-load die-cut slitter semi-automatic turret rewinder with rotary die-cutting speeds up to 250m/min. Dies are supported by a bottom guide rail, allowing for easy loading, improving setup time and reducing damage caused by incorrect loading.

Also on display is the 450 Label-I, capable of speeds of up to 300m/min. Capable of running 12.7mm cores, automatically inspect for print defects, die registration to print, missing matrix and labels. Slit and rewind substrates as thin as 15 microns.



Ahlstrom

BAUMER ✦ BOOTH 7C27

Baumer promotes its Xdot digital UV varnishing system. The system is capable of jetting raised Braille text to the Marburg Medium standard, offering high abrasion resistance and excellent readability. The company also promotes the modular Xtend³ controller, offering a user-friendly interface, automated job management, and quick text and data import.

BIC INK ✕ BOOTH 4F39

BIC Group showcases a wide range of high-performance, environmentally friendly printing inks and coatings that are widely adopted in sectors including label printing, cigarette and food packaging, scratch-off lottery and specialized security printing.

BENGRAPHIC ✧ BOOTH L35

Bengraphic promotes the IP330/430 flexo press model for label printing and the F8-330/430/650 model for folding carton and film printing.

BEONTAG ✦ BOOTH 3B101

Beontag presents its latest self-adhesive materials, including commodity hot melt products, PET liners and acrylic films, while also unveiling two new launches: Wash-Off label, a semi-permanent acrylic adhesive that ensures strong initial tack while offering excellent wash-off performance for HDPE and glass surfaces; and ScandArtisan, a premium paper facestock designed for high-end glass applications. The company also highlights its expansive product portfolio, which includes UHF RFID, HF/NFC and dual-frequency inlays. It offers over 80 standard inlays and labels, as well as over 2,000 customized products that serve a wide range of segments and applications. Key technologies include the Carrier eWave, a microwave-compliant and washable RFID tag for returnable packaging, and paper-based Eco RFID tags with a reduced carbon footprint.

BERHALTER ✕ BOOTH L20

Berhalter brings its Swiss Die-Cutter B6, which integrates robotics, automation and IIoT for smart, efficient die-cutting. It supports a wide range of materials and applications and offers rapid changeovers to minimize waste.

BEYOND ADHESIVES ✧ BOOTH 4A46

The company showcases hotmelt pressure-sensitive adhesives and introduces Brightmelt PS 1408, designed for quick service restaurant linerless labels. It offers high performance in challenging environments, including those with grease, heat and moisture. This product complements the Brightmelt PS 1230, a permanent adhesive for linerless labels in the retail sector.

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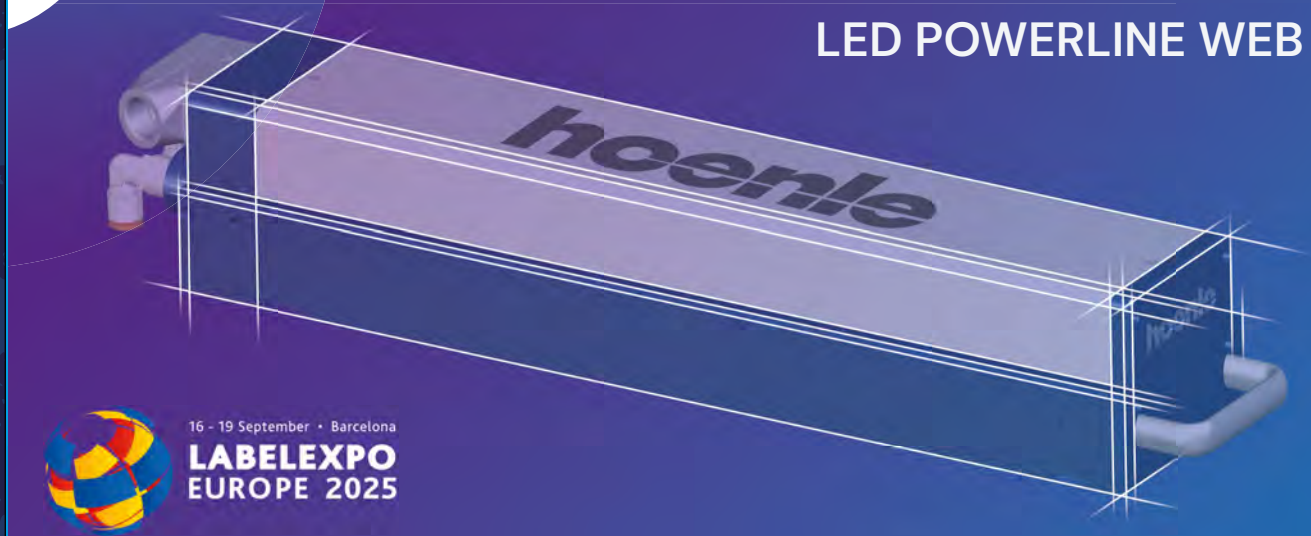

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BIO4LIFE ✦ BOOTH 4B65
Bio4life launches BioTak HC700, a home compostable pressure-sensitive adhesive certified safe for direct food contact. The adhesive is non-toxic, made from renewable materials and designed to break down in home composting environments.

BIXOLON ✕ BOOTH L41
Bixolon showcases its linerless printing products, including the XL5-40 (114mm) linerless desktop printer, along with the SRP-S3000 (80mm) desktop POS linerless printer. At the stand, there is also the XM7 mobile series along with RFID printers, including the XT5-40NR 114mm thermal transfer RFID label printer; the XD5-40tR 118mm RFID-enabled thermal transfer desktop label printer and the XM7-40R 112mm mobile label printer. Bixolon also unveils the SRP-S300II, tailored for high-demand retail and hospitality environments.

BLUMER MASCHINENBAU ✧ BOOTH 3G109
Blumer Maschinenbau presents the newly enhanced Atlas-1110 Dual, a fully automatic punching and banding system. With its dual-mode operation, it can run with or without counter-pressure. The counter-pressure mode can be activated to ensure precise processing. New features include an intuitive user interface, faster job setup and automatic machine calibration. Advanced sensors ensure reliable color detection throughout the label separation and banding process.

BOBST ✦ BOOTH 5E43
Bobst promotes its integrated Digital Master series platform and automated mid-web UV flexo presses for flexible packaging and filmic label applications.

BROTECH DIGITAL GRAPHICS ✕ BOOTH 5D67
Brotech showcases the iDM800 digital embellishment system, capable of jetting white, digital foil and varnish. It is capable of imaging braille, and can add textures, metallic and gloss effects. The company also promotes SDF Plus, a modular, platform-based digital label finishing system available in widths of 330, 370, 420 and 520mm. It can work either left to right or right to left, thanks to a bidirectional workflow. The system supports add-on options including lamination, standard cold foil and 90-degree hot foil stamping.

BSC ✧ BOOTH 4A68
The company showcases its BSC Series of products, including label rewinders, label dispensers and handheld label applicators.

BST ✦ BOOTH 5D49
BST and Nyquist Systems unveil the TubeScan V8 label inspection system built on a new software platform. It introduces Smart False-Defect Prevention, enhanced pharma inspection mode, streak detection for inkjet nozzles and a fully redesigned user interface. A standout feature is its ability to capture full-resolution, full-context defect images, offering traceability and visual verification. This makes TubeScan V8 suitable for pharmaceutical, variable data and high-value label applications.

CAB PRODUKTTECHNIK ✕ BOOTH 3B93
The company showcases the Roxi label dispenser, designed for the precise supply of printed labels. Cab units range from 'out of the box' desktop devices to modular systems for installation into automatic plants. The new Roxi applies pre-printed adhesive labels at belt speeds up to 30m/min onto flat and curved surfaces.

CAISHENG ✧ BOOTH 3A78
Caisheng showcases its updated CS-JQ350G label press. It



AVT

supports both full rotary and intermittent printing modes, featuring integrated functions such as rotary die-cutting, cold foil stamping, flexo varnishing, lamination, corona treatment and glue-side printing.

CANON ✦ BOOTH 4E07
Canon demonstrates the UVgel Factory Solution for Labels featuring the Colorado M-series, Fotoba Jumbo Roll JRL 17 and Colex flatbed cutting table, showcasing the automated roll printing and digital finishing of applications, producing kiss-cut self-adhesives and labels. Also on display is Edale CartonLine, a single-pass flexo carton production line that offers multiple in-line embellishments and traditional flatbed finishing. Canon's forthcoming LabelStream LS2000 will be promoted at the show. The water-based, 5-color (CMYK plus white) inkjet digital label press is designed for industrial-scale label printing at up to 40m/min and with a maximum printing width of 340mm.

CARTES ✕ BOOTH 3D101
Cartes showcases seven embellishment lines and a digital embellishment system with new features. Cartes demonstrates a line that integrates its Jet D-Screen and laser die-cutting system for fully digital converting. The Jet D-Screen module can print multi-layer effects, spot coating, complex tactile raised areas and braille, as well as detailed foiling and metallic doming.

Cartes Laser reaches new levels of process automation, including automatic job changeover via barcode reading, automatic slitter knife positioning, and turret rewinding. Simultaneously, Cartes showcases several additional machines running label jobs, including an entry-level unit and the GT360 Series, which is designed for the conventional embellishment of high-end labels.

CELLOPACK ✧ BOOTH 3A85
The company showcases its entire portfolio of pressure-sensitive label materials, including a broad range of paper and filmic materials as well as paper cores.

CERM ✦ BOOTH 3G43
Cerm promotes a range of new and updated MILS modules and a new user interface. The company launches the next generation of its Scheduling Optimizer. This smart engine transforms how print planners handle complexity and bottlenecks, enabling shorter lead times and improved machine utilization. Cerm Smart BI provides real-time insights into business performance. Cerm Lumi is an AI-supported assistant and learning tool. Also on display is an enhanced Production Monitor, allowing operators to gain complete visibility of jobs in progress.

CHEM INSTRUMENTS ✕ BOOTH 4C35
ChemInstruments offers a comprehensive range of precision instruments designed for quality control, research and development. These instruments are engineered to test the performance of pressure-sensitive adhesives, labels, tapes, films

and substrates according to key industry standards, including PSTC, ASTM, Finat and TLMI.

CHESHIRE ANILOX TECHNOLOGY ✧ BOOTH L04

The company launches a new anilox sleeve design, specially developed to extend the sleeve's lifespan by protecting its edges, and a new engraving specially designed to overcome the most common narrow web print issues and improve print quality. Also on display is Maxflo+, an innovative engraving design that has been refined over 12 years to enhance the transfer of ink to the plate, drastically reducing foaming, ink spitting, mottling, pin holing, plugging and dot gain. Cheshire also demonstrates its full range of engraving technologies, including TactiLoX for high-build tactile finishes and easyFlo HD for high opacity whites in a single pass.

CHIASA ✦ BOOTH 5G75

Chiasa unveils its white matte PP inkjet film, certified to BS5609, making it suitable for chemical labeling and other demanding environments. Chiasa also presents a loop tag specifically designed for inkjet printing, perfect for outdoor and horticultural applications. For companies working with digital traceability, the company showcases thermal transfer materials compatible with the Digital Product Passport (DPP).

Chiasa also introduces its washable paper technology, certified by FSC and Oeko-Tex, as a sustainable alternative for labeling and packaging, as well as stone paper, a tree-free, waterproof material suitable for durable labeling.

CISC SEMICONDUCTOR ✕ BOOTH 7C82

CISC Semiconductor showcases products designed to boost the productivity and quality of RAIN and NFC inlay and label production. Key innovations include CISC's RFID Xplorer in-line production tester, which provides accuracy, speed and real-time analytics for quality assurance, encoding and process control. These tools empower manufacturers to identify and eliminate defects early, ensure compliance with RAIN standards and achieve higher yield rates.

CLS ✧ BOOTH 7A43

CLS promotes the CL-822 RFID automatic label lamination machine. It utilizes RFID inlay laminating, laminating the surface of RFID tag composites, including pre-die-cut labels and continuous label compounds, at speeds of up to 60m/min.

CMC CEVENINI ✦ BOOTH 7C80

The company promotes automatic log slitters and log winders for adhesive tapes, foam tapes, plastic films, cloth, non-woven materials, paper, fiber-reinforced tapes and roofing materials.

CNI ✕ BOOTH 3G111

CNI launches premium self-adhesive materials and products, including PWG6060 white PP, PTG5060 clear PP, PAG5060 metallic silver PP and PHPS5060 holo rainbow PP materials. Thermal options feature PWM75F60THY white top PP and PWM95F60THY white top PP. The Indigo and inkjet range comprises PWG6060IN white PP, PTG5060IN clear PP and PAG5060IN metallic silver PP.

COLORCONSULTING ✧ BOOTH 3A12

ColorConsulting unveils the latest Color Software Suite, which accurately creates and weighs color recipes, reduces inventory and tracks production batches. It helps reduce makeready time and waste, allows for direct color adjustments on the press side, and controls quality.

COLOR-DEC ✦ BOOTH 5A78

The company promotes the STR2000, a sheet-to-roll laminating machine that applies TexFlex labels to rolls for automated labeling systems. It converts labels on their release liner to variable-size rolls compatible with any labeling system.

COMEXI ✕ BOOTH 5G73

Comexi promotes the F4 flexographic press, designed for short-run production. With a minimum repeat of 240mm, the F4 reduces plate costs, making it a highly cost-effective technology for small and narrow format products. It features a compact, ergonomic design that allows for fast job changeovers, enhanced by carbon fiber shafts, hydraulic intermediate sleeves and reinforced supports, with speeds of up to 350m/min and widths of 670 or 870mm. Comexi also launches the Offset CI Evolution.



Brotech

CONTITECH ✧ BOOTH L91

The company presents precision rubber printing blankets by Conti-Air, Phoenix Xtra Blankets, Printec, Rollin, Sava and Vulcan, for offset printing and sheet-fed applications, as well as flexographic printing forms for direct engraving by Conti Laserline and the Axcyl Flexo Plate Mounting sleeves.

CRON ✦ BOOTH 5E15

The company showcases the Cron HDI-400, a high-definition digital flexo platesetter designed for high-definition label printing. Equipped with an advanced SMFO laser optical system, it offers accurate and stable imaging. It can be fitted with an optional automatic unloading platform for offset thermal plates. Cron also promotes the HDI-600 automatic platemaking machine, which is compatible with various types of plates.

CROWNFLEX ✕ BOOTH 4A19

The company launches a drum-type LED flexographic plate exposure system offering high-quality flat-top dot plates.

DAHENG ✧ BOOTH L52

Daheng launches a label rewinding inspection machine that performs full-web high-speed inspection on printed rolls. The hardware configuration includes a 4K color line scan camera with a combined lamp for detecting various printing defects, such as dirty spots, missing prints, color variance, misregistration, varnish defects and lamination wrinkles.

The software is equipped with a new intelligent inspection feature that supports automatic modeling by importing a PDF file, inspection of complex variable codes, real-time image monitoring, automatic slitting blade settings, and export of PDF inspection reports.

DACO SOLUTIONS ✦ BOOTH 4A43

Daco Solutions launches the PLR430V, featuring a wider 430mm web width, to meet the increasing demand for larger-capacity inspection and finishing machines. The company showcases this inspection slitter rewinder with a patented three-spindle semi-automatic turret rewind. The machine features a fully automatic slitting unit and a BST TubeScan inspection system. Other display options also include a large-capacity 1,000mm (40in) servo-driven unwind with roll lift. An optional accumulator enables replaced labels to be reinspected for 100 percent inspection. Also on display is the Daco

PLD350 semi-automatic turret rewinder for plain label production

DANTEX ✕ BOOTH 5E73
Dantex conducts live demonstrations of the PicoJet digital UV inkjet press. Also featured is the newly developed compact, entry-level PicoColor press. Dantex reveals its most advanced in-line plate processing technology to date, the Aqua X. Engineered for use with Dantex's Aquaflex plate range, the Aqua X is a fully automatic, ultra-high-speed, water-wash system that sets new standards in sustainable, solvent-free flexographic processing.

DARUI ✧ BOOTH 5A66
Darui Machine launches its Smarter Die-Cutter Plotter S8/S9, featuring a CCD camera that automatically scans and changes jobs. For increased stability, it features an integrated casting blade head bridge, and the blade depth is automatically inspected and adjusted. The new version features a 40 percent speed increase.

DCHANGE ✦ BOOTH L66
The company showcases tamper-evident security materials, including packing tapes, labels and security bags.

DCM GROUP ✕ BOOTH 3G91
DCM promotes Sleeve3, an entry-point machine that offers easy sleeve forming, perforating, hotmelt application and inspection. Also on display is Sleeve 6, which features a plug-and-play design, allowing users to easily add non-stop rewinder and unwinder modules. This highly automated model features an intelligent learning mode, simplifying adjustments by recording all positions and tasks, and enabling instant recall for maximum efficiency. The company also showcases the Sleevecut5, which delivers precise horizontal, vertical and custom micro-perforations, as well as batch cutting. It features the BB4 bi-directional rewinder, equipped with a 100 percent inspection camera.

DECOSYSTEM ✧ BOOTH 3G25
Decosystem showcases Sentinel, a 100 percent inspection system for printing machines and rewinders. It monitors color, 2D and 3D codes for reading and grading, and verifies variable data. The optional Sentinel workflow enables linking the printing machine and rewinder flow to save waste and maintain production control. The company also promotes Scandiff2 proofing software, the Multilabel machine for pharma labels, and Deco_GPR software, developed to keep production data under control and easily accessible.

DELTA MODTECH ✦ BOOTH 4G52
Delta ModTech showcases its RFID label converting products. The company will run a live demonstration on its Delta Crusader platform running at 120m/min, including high positional accuracy inlay-insertion and tag read/write capability.

DENCHERN ✕ BOOTH 4E38
Denchern Machinery promotes the DCFM370-PRO finishing machine, featuring an unwinder, web guide, semi-rotary flexo printing unit, semi-rotary die-cutting unit, slitting unit and up-and-down rewinder. The maximum speed in semi-rotary mode is 300m/min running on materials between 20 and 300 microns. The flexo printing unit features a dual servo motor, allowing it to operate in either full rotary or semi-rotary modes.

DILLI ✧ BOOTH 5G70
Dilli presents its flagship UV inkjet label press, the 330mm-wide Neo Picasso Plus. Maximum resolution is 600 x 1200 DPI. The Neo Picasso Plus runs in-line at the show with a jumbo winder, highlighting its stability for flexible packaging and long-run jobs.

DNP ✦ BOOTH L79
DNP launches its R380 resin thermal transfer ribbon, designed for medical and laboratory environments. It offers alcohol resistance and delivers sharp prints, especially on substrates such as PVC, PET, vinyl and polyimide.

DOMINO ✕ BOOTH 3E91
Domino launches the latest version of its Sunrise DFE, introducing significant productivity improvements for label converters through AI-enhanced ripping technology. Live demonstrations feature Domino's N730i and N610i digital label presses, as well as Domino's N730i Integration Module, showcased as part of an integrated high-resolution hybrid printing and finishing technology in the Domino-Grafotronic Hybrid Arena (booth 3G85). Visitors can also experience high-resolution, high-speed 2D code overprinting with Domino's K600i and K300 monochrome inkjet printers on a Mark Andy Pro Series press, featuring inspection and verification by Lake Image Systems' technology.

DOREY CONVERTING SYSTEMS (DCS) ✧ BOOTH 3D28
DCS launches an upgraded version of its Essential (Level 2) RDC roll-to-roll system, featuring a new control platform. The complete RDC-N10 machine from the same range is also demonstrated live on the stand.


BST

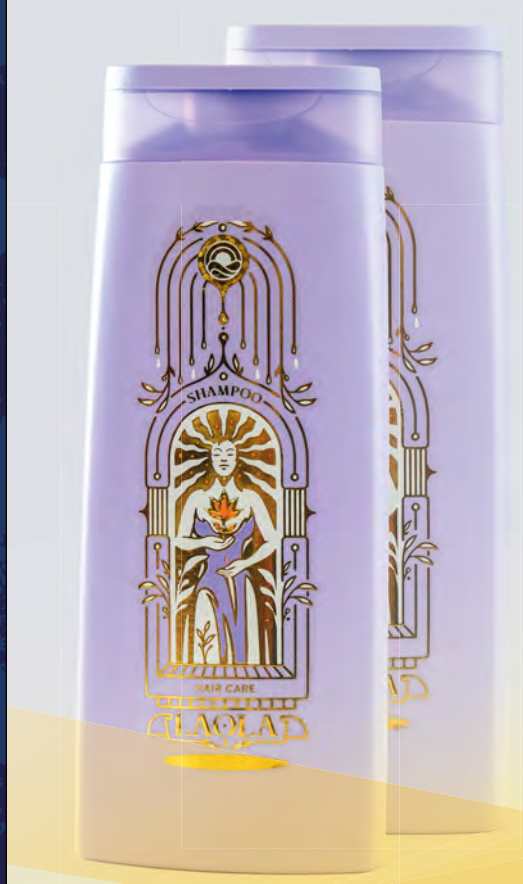
DPR GROUP ✦ BOOTH 5A58A
DPR Group showcases the Taurus X2 laser die-cutter, which features dual cutting heads generating 700W of laser power. It can handle rolls up to 800mm in diameter. It features an optional premium finishing module, enabling corona treatment, spot varnish and foil application.
For lower volume production, DPR introduces the Leo X4, a compact digital blade cutting system equipped with four cutting heads.

DURICO ✕ BOOTH 5G80
Durico showcases its advanced range of direct thermal films, including phenol-free options. They are designed to be highly resistant to harsh environments, such as exposure to heat, humidity, hot water, solvents, alcohol, oil and tallow.
The company also shows translucent DT-film, which boasts enhanced transparency with a frosted look for see-through food labels.

DURST GROUP ✧ BOOTH 3E79
Durst will unveil a new press codenamed 'G3'. The company also demonstrates a 9-color 420mm-wide Durst KJet hybrid press, incorporating the company's LED-UV inkjet print engine, four flexo units, two multi-purpose lamination units, turn-bar and semi-rotary die-cut.

DYM MACHINERY ✦ BOOTH 3D45
DYM launches the HAU450 non-stop butt splicer, the NAC450 waste removal and the SAC450 automatic turret rewinder. The company also showcases the WBC and WBU automatic non-stop cold stamping unwinder and rewinders designed for different flexo presses.

DYNIC ✕ BOOTH 4E60
Dynic Group introduces NICX Synergetic Thermal Printer. The company also showcases the CP2610HMES heat-seal



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laundry label material, the HL36 White (dual-technology) thermal transfer resin, the Dynic thin-film thermal transfer overprinting ribbons, and the Dynic EcoSeries (up to 100 percent recycled content) care label fabric range.

E21 TECHNOLOGIES ✧ BOOTH 4C25

The company presents the XSDISTINT, E21's compact dispensing system for flexographic inks, designed for customers who require small, frequent batches with maximum repeatability. Also on display is the XSDOSAT ink management system for offset printers. It supports full traceability, ink returns and reuse functionalities. Both systems are powered by Dosis, E21's proprietary software suite, which delivers real-time production insights, formula management and automation.

EASTWAY ✦ BOOTH 4G90

Eastway unveils Edgegap digital labelstock designed for laser toner digital printing and HP Indigo presses. Low-static labelstock ensures high ink adhesion, zero adhesive bleeding and minimal curling, even under high-temperature printing conditions. Edgegap incorporates non-adhesive edges within the labelstock, eliminating adhesive bleeding on the printing unit.

ECKART ✕ BOOTH L28

Eckart introduces a range of inks, including the TMPTA-free Rotostar dual-cure UV/LED 733 series for food packaging applications. Also shown is Ultrastar UV FPG 78120 for providing polychromatic effects based on the latest generation of Metalure effect pigments. It delivers a dark chrome effect with high gloss levels.

Eckart also shows products for shrink sleeve printing, including the dual-cure Platinstar UV/LED168 004 Shrink Silver and Platinstar GX 2903 for solvent-based gravure printing processes. Both are based on new pigment milling technology and are mineral oil-free.

ECO3 ✧ BOOTH 5D13

Eco3 demonstrates Magis integrated platemaking workflow system from advanced PDF management and imaging software to aqueous and solvent flexo plates, along with Amfortis cloud-based management and automation system. Also on display is the Eco3's Spir@l screening, claimed to ensure precise dot control for sharper detail, vibrant colors and more consistent results.

ECOSYSTEM CONSTRUZIONI ✦ BOOTH 5G76

Finishing system specialist demonstrates roll-to-roll converting equipment configured with dual inkjet print bars for registered printing of high-build varnishes and UV adhesives for digital cold foil application.

ELKEM ASA SILICONES ✕ BOOTH 4C42

Elkem Silicones introduces two additions to its release liners range: Silcolease RE Poly 11362 and RE Poly 368. These 100 percent recycled, solvent-free silicones deliver identical performance to virgin alternatives. They are developed using patented depolymerization technology, boasting a 70 percent lower carbon footprint.

EMMENDINGER MASCHINENBAU ✧ BOOTH L94

Emmendinger Maschinenbau presents the EMB range of die-cutting and embossing machines for producing high volumes of lids and labels. A modular system for decorating champagne and screw capsules is also shown.

EPSON ✦ BOOTH 3E35

Espon showcases three SurePress models, including the newly released SurePress L-5034 water-based digital press. The stand also includes an extensive range of ColorWorks on-demand color label printers. The new C8000e series addresses the high-volume label production needs across various sectors, including food and beverage, healthcare and logistics. It uses 1200 x 600 DPI resolution PrecisionCore printhead technology with a print speed of 300mm/sec. The CW-D6000 series, equipped with UltraChrome DYL dye inks, is designed for durability and color reproduction on glossy media.

As a special feature, Epson demonstrates a collaborative robot (AX6) in operation with the ColorWorks C6000Pe to automate a test tube labeling process.

Epson also introduces the 1,200 DPI D3000 UV-UIR PrecisionCore printhead tailored for UV inkjet label production. In addition to label printers, Epson features the SC-S8100, a 64-inch large-format eco-solvent signage printer.

ERHARDT+LEIMER ✕ BOOTH 3A52

Erhardt+Leimer launches Elscan OMS5 web monitoring system, which uses two high-resolution 18 megapixel cameras, each with distinct fields of view. In addition to the higher image quality, the dualView technology enables delay-free digital zooming up to the highest magnification level, eliminating the need for motorized lens adjustment.

ESKO ✧ BOOTH 5D31 AND 5E31

Esko showcases the newly launched Esko WebCenter Pack, a complete packaging management technology for converters. The company also promotes Esko Print Clone, a cloud-based color-matching system harnessing the power of AI to minimize trial and error in color matching. Esko also discusses the Esko CDI Quartz. This platemaking product delivers high-quality plates that reduce ink usage.

ETI CONVERTING ✦ BOOTH 4D35

ETI runs live demos of its Cohesio coating and converting line, which features integrated flexographic printing, silicone coating, adhesive coating/laminating and die-cutting capabilities. It produces high-quality pressure-sensitive laminates and linerless labels from raw materials to finished products in a single-pass operation. The demonstration features a live production job for a Spanish customer in a joint automation project with Martin Automatic and LemuGroup.

EXCELITAS TECHNOLOGIES ✕ BOOTH 3B13

Excelitas promotes the Phoseon Nexus One UV LED, air- and water-cooled systems designed for flexographic printing applications. They deliver high total UV power output to achieve increased print speeds. Nexus One comes with real-time remote monitoring capabilities for Industry 4.0. At the stand, there is also a Phoseon FireJet UV LED air-cooled system, capable of curing at high speeds for small, medium and grand format digital printing systems. Booth visitors can also experience the Phoseon FireLine UV LED water-cooled system, designed for a wide range of web and conveyor-based UV curing applications. The architecture allows the systems to be scalable and built up to two meters in length. On show are also Noblelight



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EXTEN ✧ BOOTH 3A07

Exten showcases SynPap, a PP-based synthetic media. Due to its toughness and tear resistance, SynPap is designed for horticulture, luggage and heavy-duty industrial labels. The standard version is cold-resistant, heat-resistant and moderately resistant to UV light, with long-term UV stabilization available. The certified direct food contact allows the application for food labeling. It is also available with 30 percent recycled content.

EYEC ✦ BOOTH 5B11

EyeC presents new AI-supported functions for the entire EyeC ProofRunner line, enabling the detection, categorization and filtering of defects with greater precision, while simultaneously increasing speed and reducing false positives. The new AI technology can be experienced live on the EyeC ProofRunner Web HighLight, installed on the EcoLine RSH 340 from Rotocon. EyeC also premieres the new Proofiler Graphic, the latest version of its pre-press inspection technology. The system proofreads artwork by comparing print-ready files or step-and-repeat files with the approved artwork. EyeC also highlights its Proofiler 400 DT, a compact demo system aimed specifically at small and medium-sized companies looking to get started with automated sample inspection.

FAES ✕ BOOTH L49

FAES introduces a new slitter rewinder with a separate unwinding stand for backloading and rewinding turrets. It is equipped with a magnetic cylinder and heavy-duty dies for die-cutting all common materials, complemented by non-stick coatings when adhesive build-up is a problem. Self-adhesive products include paper, PP, PE, PVT, PET and thin films, as well as those with PET liners.

FANGDA ✧ BOOTH 3D11

Fangda showcases a wide range of paper and film-based label materials. Self-adhesive materials also include thermal transfer paper, semi-gloss or coated paper, eco-thermal paper and top-coated thermal paper.

FEDRIGONI SELF-ADHESIVES ✦ BOOTH 3D79

Fedrigoni Self-Adhesives showcases wash-off labels for wine, beverage, home and personal care, food, and logistics, as well as monomaterial products for HPC packaging and semi-rigid wet wipes, recognized by RecyClass. Compostable papers and films, along with fluorine-free greaseproof materials for food applications, also support circularity. Fedrigoni integrates recycled materials, including 30 percent post-consumer content for wine, such as Cotone Bianco Sabbia and Brillante White Feld, as well as food-grade stock materials. The Re-Play Tintoretto range furthers circularity with premium wine labels made from recycled content in two refined versions. Fedrigoni offers products with up to 80 percent chemically recycled content for high-demand sectors, such as tire and pharmaceutical labeling. In addition, Fedrigoni features luxury wine neck labels, Tintoretto Waterproof technology, and durable materials for UL Recognized and high-end pharmaceutical labeling applications. These products leverage solvent-based adhesives to meet rigorous industry requirements.

FERPA GRAPHIC ✕ BOOTH 5D16

Ferpa Graphics presents an end-to-end flexo platemaking system that combines high-definition plate imaging with Waterdrop M-PW, a water-washable processing system with the range of FP Flexo Aqua plates.
Also on the stand is the KNF SC range of digital cutting tables, developed to automate the cutting of flexographic plates and streamline the digital production of customized packaging. These tables are integrated with the company's KNF Pack software, which allows the design and production of custom packaging.

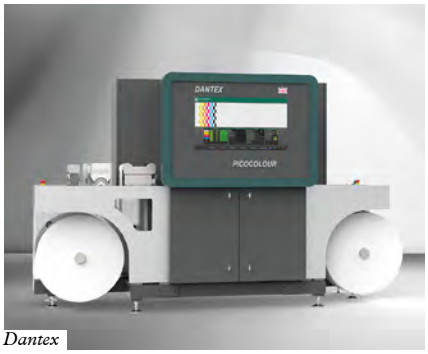
The company also showcases its FP CTP Hybrid technology, developed for imaging offset plates or thermal film without ablation. The technology is designed for the production of high-quality digital plates and can be adapted to different sectors of the graphic industry, including offset, flexography, screen printing and engravings for printing.

FINAT ✧ BOOTH 4E49

Finat launches the 11th edition of its Technical Handbook, the globally recognized standard on testing procedures for self-adhesive labels. Finat will also provide information on a basic e-learning label education program now under development, as well as the development of a PCF (Product Carbon Footprint) calculation tool for the self-adhesive label industry. Finat also hosts Celab-Europe, an initiative of the whole self-adhesive label value chain aimed at creating greater circularity for label products by enhancing matrix and release liner recycling in Europe.

FIRST CROWN ENTERPRISES ✦ BOOTH 4A18

First Crown Enterprises showcases a wide-format, full-servo satellite flexo



Dantex

printing press incorporating pre-pressure adjustment and one-button machine start. A locking device is installed on each print unit to minimize the probability of plate roller and screen roller vibration, producing more stable printing pressure and increasing the service life of the plate, anilox and doctor blade.

The company also showcases a narrow web satellite flexo printing press, suitable for 175 DPI printing on special substrates such as self-adhesive paper/film, PE/PVC heat shrink film and other materials.

FIRSTA ✕ BOOTH 3C13

Firsta promotes siliconized PET liners and facestocks, including BOPP/PET top-coated films, R-PET, aluminized Films (VMPET/VMOPP), functional masterbatch and biodegradable materials for self-adhesive labels, specialty tapes and packaging.

FLEXO CONCEPTS ✧ BOOTH L10

Flexo Concepts launches TruPoint Edge and Polylam doctor blades.

FLEXO WASH ✦ BOOTH 3A56

Flexo Wash showcases the full range of cleaning products and runs live demos on the Anilox Cleaning Liquid and the Laser Anilox Cleaner. Visitors can also see the parts washer, plate washer and screen washer. The company also showcases a new anilox cleaner, which can clean four aniloxes with a 630mm face length simultaneously.

FLEXOR ✕ BOOTH 3A110

Flexor presents modular machines for label finishing, including slitting, die-cutting, inspection and digital processing. Each system is built to order and tailored to customer needs, combining flexibility, ease of use and high productivity.

FLINT GROUP ✧ BOOTH 3E55 AND 3G55

Flint Group highlights its next-generation UV Hg curing ink series, engineered to meet the critical demands of food-safe packaging, complemented by the EkoCure Ancora dual-cure series. Flint also promotes its new range of FCM-grade high-opacity opaque whites. The Evolution series



Delta ModTech

enhances label recycling and supports the transition to circular packaging. Also at the booth is the latest expansion of the Vivo Color Solutions platform: a new module, Vivo ColorMatch, designed to achieve brand shades and manage press returns.

FRIMPEKS ✦ BOOTH 3A76

Frimpeks showcases a range of products, including UV-curable, LED, low-migration and water-based inks suitable for high-speed, high-volume production environments. Frimpeks also promotes an expanded range of coatings, including low-migration and specialty finishes, that ensure regulatory compliance and enhance shelf appeal, particularly in food, beverage and pharmaceutical applications. Visitors can also see self-adhesive label materials. For converters working in flexible packaging, Frimpeks promotes adhesive systems, including solvent-free, water-based and solvent-based options.

FUJIFILM ✕ BOOTH 5D73

Fujifilm showcases flexo plate production using Flenex FW water-wash plates. The company also demonstrates LuXtreme LED UV system and CuremaX inks and varnishes. A dedicated presentation stage hosts regular sessions on the benefits of Fujifilm's analog and digital products, including the Jet Press FP790 and 750S. Also on display is Fujifilm's new Revoria Press SC285S, which features an additional specialty toner station, allowing for 5-color printing in a single pass.

GALAXY PACKTECH ✧ BOOTH 5E48

Galaxy Packtech showcases the GS 24 PLUS 200 pouch-making machine, designed for high-performance production of stand-up pouches, three-side seal pouches, zipper pouches and more, at speeds of up to 200 cycles a minute with a working web width of 200mm to 1,200mm, and featuring servo-driven technology at its core. The machine features tool-less changeovers and intelligent tension control, which reduce downtime and enhance operator ease. It is fully compatible with recyclable mono-materials.

GALLUS ✦ BOOTH 3E23 AND 3E29

Gallus launches a new press system based around its System to Compose, which allows integration of the Gallus One digital press with modules from the Labelmaster press platform.

GENERAL INKJET PRINTING (GIP) ✕ BOOTH 3D95

GIP showcases the compact Label Smart digital press in a CMYK + double white configuration. Also on display is the Label Ultra series digital label press featuring an upgraded 1,200 DPI printhead. The company also promotes the Label Modular hybrid press series, which supports up to eight colors. Its modularity enables the addition of flexo printing, varnishing and foil stamping.

GEW ✧ BOOTH 3G61

GEW highlights its latest LED products, the air-cooled AeroLED2 and water-cooled LeoLED2.

Compared to the first-generation system, AeroLED2 provides a 30 percent increase in electrical power (70W/cm), a 30 percent increase in UV dose (170mJ/cm2) and a 40 percent increase in UV irradiance (26W/cm2). AeroLED2 is also ArcLED compatible. Using the same fan and ducting arrangement as the industry standard E2C, customers have total flexibility to switch between UV arc and AeroLED2 on any print station.

GIAVE ✦ BOOTH L63

Giave promotes its Gialux UV LED CI flexographic printing press. The press is capable of solvent-free printing, eliminating the need for fans and drying tunnels and allowing a compact footprint. Giave also provides information about its flexographic presses, gravure presses, cutting machines and hybrid presses.

GIC ✕ BOOTH 5B29

GIC presents the modular Dyxee Vario Cut label converter, incorporating semi-rotary cutting and a new semi-rotary flexo unit. The company also promotes the Taginnov Single Line, which converts RFID inlays into adhesive labels. It offers many options for integrating, converting and controlling the label (positioning and antenna) in a single pass, ensuring 100 percent controlled production.

GMAC ✧ BOOTH 4A27

The company showcases high-speed, precision coating systems, including silicone/adhesive dual-coating technologies and multiple coating methods, such as five-roll, hot melt and curtain coating.

GMERIX ✦ BOOTH 4D28

GMerix promotes specialty coating technologies, toll coating, slitting and material development services for the label, packaging and print media industries. Beyond coating, GMerix provides slitting, sheeting and finishing services, as well as complete material construction, combining facestocks, adhesives and release liners into ready-to-die-cut label and tape stock.

GPPE AUTOMATION ✕ BOOTH L51

GPPE promotes a turret slitter/rewinder equipped with an automatic core loading system, non-stop rewinding, flexo printing, die-cutting and waste stripping. It incorporates air-expanding shafts for fast changeovers with automatic adjustment to different format sizes.

GRAFISK MASKINFABRIK (GM) ✧ BOOTH 3E67

GM unveils the LR250+ RFID inspection system for 100 percent in-line RFID tag testing, high-speed RAIN/NFC encoding, and automatic marking of faulty tags. Smart automation halts the production line in the event of repeated failures. Fully integrated into GM's modular rewinder, the LR250+ enables converters to achieve inspection, encoding and rewinding in one continuous workflow. GM also showcases the upgraded DC350Flex fast finishing system. The Flex model range is a modular finisher engineered for high-speed digital label production, offering die-cutting up to 120m/min with semi-rotary processing. Designed for quick changeovers, it seamlessly integrates with digital presses to enable a single, continuous workflow.

GRAFOTRONIC ✦ BOOTH 3E85, 3G85

Grafotronic brings 10 machines, including the next-generation Sci-Fi Laser; the new Haptic Series featuring The Revolver, which offers hot-foil embossing and embellishment capabilities; and the Grafotronic Infinity, a fully automatic turret rewinder powered by Serame. The company also presents its Multi-Layer Label Module and unveils a world premiere: the X-1, claimed the fastest

single-anvil semi-rotary die-cutting unit on the market.

GRAPHIMECC ✕ BOOTH 3D67

Graphimecc presents technology for RFID encoding, variable data printing and print quality inspection. On display is the new Zero RFID W, built to encode RFID and print variable data in one pass, producing high-value RFID labels with exceptional end-user quality. This performance is powered by Graphimecc's proprietary Zero Process, a precision-controlled workflow that guarantees high-quality results even at the highest of speeds. Graphimecc also unveils its new generation of automated active print inspection, an in-line system that detects defects and removes them automatically, with no operator intervention.

GSE ✧ BOOTH 3A47

GSE showcases ink dispensing systems and software that streamline ink workflows. On show is its Ink Manager (GIm), which automates a host of ink-handling processes. The software minimizes administration and errors, while its immediate access to critical ink data also enables users to monitor inventory, track usage and plan resources. The newly enhanced GSE Advanced Reporting module, featured, offers automatic report generation for deeper insights into ink consumption, compliance and forecasting. The company also promotes the Colorsat dispensing systems, which achieve accurate, repeatable spot color quality and reduce ink consumption by up to 30 percent. Dispensers are available for all flexo, gravure and screen printing applications, including short-run labels, cartons, flexible packaging and high-volume corrugated board.

GSE presents an augmented reality (AR)- powered virtual ink room, where users can design optimal ink workflows using touchpads on the stand and visualize how these may be integrated into their operations.

HANA RFID ✦ BOOTH 7A51

Hana launches TX5015 M830 ARC-Certified RAIN RFID inlays powered by the Impinj M830 chip and Gen2X-enabled. The inlay is tailored for retail, electronics and logistics and is nearly half the size of standard inlays.

HAVESINO ✕ BOOTH 7C38

Havesino showcases a fully automatic, high-performance TTR slitting machine for hands-free operation. It features an automatic leader table, turret rewinding, cross-cutting and knife adjustment with slitting speeds of up to 450m/min. It is suitable for slitting a wide range of films from 4 to 20 microns.

HB FULLER ✧ BOOTH 4C68

HB Fuller shows its Gel-Tac microsphere adhesives, which offer repositionability, clean removability and low to medium peel strength, making them suitable for applications requiring temporary adhesion without compromising surface integrity. The range includes the Gel-Tac Graphics for flexible vinyl substrates, Gel-Tac Linerless for self-wound products, Gel-Tac Masking for delicate masking jobs and Gel-Tac Stationery for sticky notes.

HEFENG ✦ BOOTH L02

HeFeng promotes its new corona treater, which features a modular, integrated diagnostic system; adjustable resonant frequency; electrode defect detection; a web server for on-site and remote service; maximized output; a touch-screen system; multiple language options and a ceramic electrode.

HEIGHT-LED ✕ BOOTH L21

Height-LED showcases a UV LED curing system with a service life exceeding 20,000 hours. The automatic width sensor adjusts the



Domino

UV irradiation width based on print format, further reducing energy consumption and accurately detecting transparent films. Tailored UV LED lamp cassettes and mounting brackets are available for new and existing presses.

HENKEL ✧ BOOTH 4C56

Henkel presents its new range of PSA hot melts for linerless label applications and UV-curable hot melt PSAs, an energy-efficient portfolio of pure-acrylic and modified products that can be cured with mercury and UV LED systems. Henkel emphasizes solving end-of-life challenges, drawing on its expertise in supporting customers with the upcoming PPWR. A key technology is Aquence PS 3017 RE, a Finat award-winning water-based adhesive for PET bottle labels.

HERMANS GRABADOS BARCELONA ✦ BOOTH 5A28

Hermans launches an anti-counterfeit product that enables a lenticular effect to be printed on a label using hot foil stamping. This effect can be combined with an embossed foil design. It can be applied using standard foil, as the pattern is created through laser engraving directly in the stamping unit.

HIGHTOP ✕ BOOTH 3G97

Hightop promotes the servo-driven GBK-1800 slitter rewinder machine operating at speeds of 800m/min. This machine can handle a wide range of materials and has an automatic roll loading system. Maximum unwind roll width is 3m with a 1,500mm rewinding diameter.

HOLOGRAFIA POLSKA ✧ BOOTH 7C68

Holografia Polska showcases holographic products that protect brands, products and data, ranging from security labels and tamper-proof seals to fully customizable holograms.

HONTEC INDUSTRIES ✦ BOOTH 4E21

Hontec showcases its FlexiCon flexo presses for self-adhesive labels, shrink sleeves, IML and wet glue labels. The print stations feature dual independent servo motors per unit with speeds up to 150m/min. The company also showcases the Digifini series, which offers high-precision die-cutting.

HP ✕ BOOTH 5E25 AND 5D21

HP showcases the new HP Indigo 6K+ Digital Press and the high-speed HP Indigo V12. Visitors can see how the HP Indigo 6K+ delivers productivity and versatility with its new integrated SmartControlSystem, while the HP Indigo V12 meets the needs for high-volume, multi-SKU digital label production. Powered by AI-driven tools like HP PrintOS and Nio, both presses are designed to help converters automate, scale and grow.

The new HP Indigo 6K+ supports a broad substrate range and complex applications, including smart labels with brand protection features.

It features seven ink stations and spot colors, covering up to 97

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percent of the color gamut with specialty inks including silver ElectroInk, invisible and fade-resistant inks and a white ink portfolio. Sustainability features include reduced media-related CO2 emissions per job by up to 20 percent and decreased media waste through shorter job setup and execution. The press also supports substrates containing recycled and renewable materials.

HSF ✕ BOOTH 4B45

HSF showcases specialty BOPP, CCPP and PET films. The company promotes its recent product launches: extensions to the BOPP film range with 30 percent PCR content; improved phenol-free direct thermal coated BOPP and PE range; chemical-free direct thermal paper; PVC-free, conformable Graphics range; PE-based direct thermal range; BOPP synthetic paper range; extensions to the high abrasion resistance direct thermal coated BOPP range and the third generation of hot melt barrier coating across the BOPP range.

HUAYANG ✧ BOOTH 4G24

Huayang promotes the high-speed, 2,400mm wide model HT-2400 self-adhesive coating machine. It offers five roller coating, gravure reverse coating, gravure coating, flexo printing and lamination. Users can choose from natural gas, thermal oil or electrical heating sources.

HUAYUAN ✦ BOOTH 7C64

The company highlights its next-generation RFID technology, which distinguishes between near-field transponders and far-field antennas. Antennas are mass-produced using low-cost die-cutting, and universal transponder modules are assembled on a single production line. Assembly involves simply attaching the module to the antenna, reducing costs and saving 90 percent of the plastic substrates.

HUBEI HYF PACKAGING ✕ BOOTH 7C50

The company offers a range of shrink sleeve label films, including PLA, CPET, PETG and RPETG shrink films.

HUBERGROUP ✧ BOOTH 4D19

Hubergroup showcases its iray UV flexo series of primers, laminating adhesives, inks and varnishes designed to work together. Customers benefit from high scratch resistance, strong adhesion, low odor and high yield. Also on display is the Hydro-X portfolio for water-based flexo and gravure printing. A highlight in this segment are the water-based barrier coatings, which improve the oxygen or water and grease resistance of mono-material packaging. Completing the lineup is Gecko, Hubergroup's solvent-based series. To help customers design recyclable packaging with these solvent-based inks, Hubergroup offers various options: the PU-based Gecko Platinum series, NC-based printing within the thresholds using NC-free white, and NC-based printing combined with a deinking primer, allowing the inks to be easily removed.



Eckart

HYBRID SOFTWARE GROUP ✦ BOOTH 5E55

Hybrid Software Group debuts Packz Max, integrating the Harlequin RIP directly into a PDF-based pre-press editor. Packz Max enables real-time RIP previews, precise screening control, and 1-bit TIFF output, making it optimized for both flexo and digital printing. Packzimizer Laneplanner's tool, showcased within CloudFlow, is also featured at the stand. It uses intelligent sorting and ganging to streamline digital label production. For production-ready multi-layer labels, smart automation in Packz and Cloudflow delivers precision in managing adhesive-free zones, 3D approvals and CLP/CHS compliance. The company also promotes the easy application of label embellishments directly during artwork placement with iC3D version 11. Rounding out the showcase is the next-generation SmartDFE, an AI-powered suite of OEM components designed to optimize press performance and streamline integration.

IBIS INTEGRATED BINDERY ✕ BOOTH 3A60

Ibis launches the new Smart Label Binder with integrated in-line laser tabber for ECL booklet production. It features ISG cold glue binding, variable booklet pagination and the ability to handle lightweight paper stocks. The modular design is suitable for use with digitally printed sheets, providing fast-turnaround ECL output with minimal manual intervention.

IDENTIV ✧ BOOTH 7C24

Identiv showcases ID-Brain, a dual-frequency inlay and label designed for item-level tagging, brand protection, supply chain efficiency and logistics optimization. It ensures product authenticity, mitigates fraud and fosters consumer engagement while enhancing supply chain transparency, streamlining logistics and optimizing distribution tracking.

IGF EUROPE ✦ BOOTH 5F29

IGF Europe showcases a portfolio of linerless self-wound overlaminating films, including MLF 35SL SoftLam, a matte polypropylene film offering a soft, velvet-like surface for luxury label applications; GLF 25SG SilverGlitter, a silver glitter PP laminate; and GLF 33DP and MLF35DP DirectPrintable, glossy and matte over-printable PP films enabling customized labels and variable data printing. All films are engineered for linerless, self-wound application, eliminating liner waste while enhancing operational efficiency and product impact.

IMATEK ✕ BOOTH 5C07

Imatek shows inkjet labelstocks in paper, PET, PP and synthetic materials. They are compatible with water-based dye and pigment ink, eco-solvent, UV, and latex inks.

INGLESE ✧ BOOTH 5G36

Inglese introduces LX-series plate-cleaning machines, which can be configured to be Industry 4.0-ready and with an automatic infeed conveyor belt. Inglese also shows its new automatic anilox cleaners, which utilize high-pressure water, and a plate-mounting system engineered for labeling.

INNADHEX ✦ BOOTH 3A104

Innadhex launches Fake Cotton, a rough-textured paper made from cellulose fibers, reminiscent of cotton-based texturing. Compared to classic felt-marked papers, it offers an improved rustic appearance. Fake Cotton is a wet-strength and anti-mold paper, also available as a stop-lam barrier option.

INNOVIA FILMS ✕ BOOTH 3A34

Innovia Films shows CPE and WPE films as sustainable and economical alternatives to PE films, and they are approximately 40 percent thinner. CPE also has high clarity and low haze compared to polyethylene. The new coated films are suitable for pressure-sensitive labeling in various markets. Innovia also runs live demonstrations of its thin, floatable shrink sleeve material, RayoFloat, including the new RayoFloat white, which enables a switch from opaque white HDPE or PET bottles to transparent ones by

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Galaxy Packtech

incorporating light-blocking technology into the sleeve. The company promotes clear label film, Encore RFC35m35, which contains 35 percent mechanically recycled plastic waste.

ITALSTICK ✧ BOOTH 3G69

Italstick presents its full range of adhesive materials, including coated and uncoated label papers and films, emphasizing its water-based acrylic adhesives.

JAOUR ADHESIVE PRODUCTS ✦ BOOTH 3E18

The company showcases JM-5268, an elastic adhesive designed for ultrathin materials. Also on display are the JM-5306 high-wet-bonding construction adhesive and JM-5606, a premium adhesive used in disposable hygiene products.

JETFX ✕ BOOTH 5G28

JetFx showcases digital embellishment technology, including the JetFX Solo, Solo FlexPack and Fusion, each designed for integration onto existing web presses, creating a single-pass workflow. Solo delivers digital spot varnish, tactile effects and variable digital foil/ holograms for narrow-web label production. Solo FlexPack extends these capabilities to flexible packaging. With FDA-compliant embellishments and optional UV or eBeam curing, it allows food-safe gloss, matte and embossed finishes directly in-line on pouches, films and wraps. Fusion is JetFx's self-contained retrofit module, featuring unwind/rewind, pre-cure and LED curing, differential shafts and foil recovery. Additionally, JetFx will debut 'AuthNow', an integrated security track-and-trace hologram.

JETRON MACHINERY ✧ BOOTH 5A29

Jetron showcases the D2Roll LB3550 digital label press. This high-resolution, roll-to-roll inkjet press features advanced digital embossing and opaque white capabilities for short- and mid-run jobs. It supports fast changeovers, a broad media range, and easy integration with Jetron's Saga Lite workflow software. Also on display is Jetron's PB400 Inkjet Printbar, a modular unit suitable for hybrid setups. With print speeds up to 75m/min for variable data, it enables the application of serialized information, barcodes, embellishments or opaque white on both preprinted and unprinted substrates. It adds digital embossing and spot effects to conventional lines with precision registration. Jetron also highlights its browser-based software, designed to streamline color management, work order processing and operator control in production.

JIANGHE PAPER ✦ BOOTH L88

Jianghe Paper unveils its Color Glassine Collection in red, yellow and blue, meeting global compliance requirements and EU certification standards.

JINDA ✕ BOOTH 3A66

Jinda offers new label materials that prioritize environmental protection. The company has already obtained ISO, FSC, FDA and GRS certifications, and this year, it is closely following the requirements of the EUDR policy.

JIAYUAN MACHINERY ✧ BOOTH 4A62

Jiayuan promotes its JYT-HSA high-speed linerless label coating machine, primarily used in the production of paper self-adhesive label materials and self-adhesive films. It features an automatic PLC touchscreen control system, automatic tension control and incorporates a high-precision alloy steel coating head and a slot die knife coating system. The company also promotes the JYT-UV for medical tapes, wire harness tapes, labels and other adhesive products.

JINDAL FILMS ✦ BOOTH 3G41

The company launches the Label-Lyte Facestock 58RLC346M30, which incorporates 30 percent certified mechanically recycled post-consumer content. This two-sided coated film offers high ink adhesion, as well as a adhesive anchorage for both hot melts and water-based emulsions. It also provides a barrier effect to migrating adhesive components and a high humidity resistance.

JIUWEI ✕ BOOTH 7A10

The company showcases its latest UV LED lamp series.

JUYOU ✧ BOOTH 7C62

Juyou showcases its CLS slitter rewinder, featuring laser core positioning, an automatic knife positioning system, an optimized interface and an easy-unload system. It features an upgraded, AI-driven automatic knife positioning system, which reduces the alignment time of 10 knives to less than one minute.

KARLVILLE ✦ BOOTH 5B33

Karlville showcases its latest K3 Plus Seamer, which can be configured as a stand-alone unit or with turrets. The third-generation machine offers a friction-free, fingerless forming system, automated lay-flat correction and non-stop layout capabilities. It features multiple tension zones, precise solvent application using brush tips and optional laser integration for accurate, tool-free perforation.

KETE MACHINERY ✕ 3A62

Kete Machinery features its automatic wine capsule machine, compatible with shrinkable PVC film, PET-G film and polylaminate material. It is widely used for wine, beer, condiment, olive oil bottles and for security sealing.

KLÖCKNER PENTAPLAST ✧ BOOTH 4B38

Klöckner Pentaplast showcases SmartCycle PO, a new polyolefin-based recyclable shrink sleeve label film, enabling the label and container's full recyclability.



GSE



GEW

KOCHER + BECK ✦ BOOTH 3E47

Kocher + Beck shows the GapMaster EM (Electronic Move) interactively alongside the new Variable Gap System. Additionally, Kocher + Beck introduces a new generation of anti-stick coatings for flexible dies certified for all applications, including pharmaceutical and medical uses, and compliant with environmental standards. The company also promotes the new, Industry 4.0-ready digital KMS Pressure Gauge System, along with its latest motorized version, which is equipped with sensors and offers higher stability under varying loads. Another highlight is the quick-change die-cutting station, which allows magnetic cylinders to be pre-mounted during the current job and exchanged in seconds.

TecScreen has improved its Screen processing unit. The unit now features the capability to store and recycle water.

KONICA MINOLTA ✕ BOOTH 5G60 AND 5E61

Konica Minolta presents a preview of the new AccurioLabel press, featuring an added IQ unit for in-line quality control, which offers increased automation and productivity. Sharing its booth with MGI Digital Technology, both companies feature a variety of production lines and software. Besides the AccurioLabel prototype, products on display include the AccurioLabel 400, MGI JETvarnish 3D Web 400, MGI Octopus Web and the GM DC350Nano, as well as the IC-320L (Creo Controller), AccurioPro Flux and AccurioPro Dashboard software.

KURZ ✧ BOOTH 3D73

The company runs live jobs on the DM-Uniliner 3D, demonstrating the range of Kurz 3D digital embellishment technology. Kurz also showcases DreamComposer, an intuitive software for visualizing embellished label designs in real time. Also on display is Silver Line, developed to enhance labels with a high-quality, luxurious look, and Lumafin, featuring a semi-transparent finish that makes underprinted motifs appear to shimmer through a layer of glass. Many Kurz products are available on reduced-thickness carrier material, ranging from 10 micron to 6 micron.

LABEL SOURCE ✦ BOOTH 3D91

Label Source runs live demonstrations of its in-line flexo press F6-370-10C, featuring non-stop unwind and rewind, non-stop waste removal and waste compression capabilities for 24-hour non-stop production with high-level printing registration performance. Also on display is the new 1,200 DPI hybrid press with an inkjet engine, 8-color digital printing and four flexo stations with a non-stop system.

LABELTECH ✕ BOOTH 3D90

Italian manufacturer show its Ortles slitter rewinder, featuring automatic slitter knife setting (rotary and razor blades) and 100 percent inspection. The lineup also includes the Sciliar horizontal bidirectional rewinder with variable data print and verification, and the Stelvio modular converter, offering complete flexibility from blank label die-cutting to embellishment with cold foil and a semi-rotary flexo unit.

A key highlight is the compact Reit, suitable for short-run digital label or doctoring jobs, equipped with 100 percent inspection and the 4.Jet multilayer label applicator for RFID tag insertion. Labeltech also unveils its new Stelvio IML roll-to-sheet die-cut machine for in-mold and glue-applied labels, with a collecting belt and a pick-up robot.

LANG ✧ BOOTH 3G09

Lang shows a range of engraving machines, including CNC engraving machines of the Impala series, designed for milling of embossing dies, male and female dies and smaller cylinders. For bigger cutting and embossing cylinders, Lang offers the RM series. The complete system also includes the Pulsaris 300FS laser engraving machine, which features an ultra-short pulse laser for creating special effects, as well as a 3D software package for designing creative and complex projects.

LEMORAU ✦ BOOTH 3B91

Lemorau presents the improved Smart-L Premium converter, now equipped with next-generation software, which will be integrated across all of Lemorau's flexo printing, die-cutting, embellishment and finishing machines. It enables automatic initial positioning of tools, fast register setup, and barcode scanning for tool recognition, drastically reducing set-up times and material waste. Also on display is the upgraded ICR4 inspection slitter rewinder, featuring automatic slitting knife positioning. Lemorau also shows a range of auxiliary equipment, including core cutters and roll lifters designed to streamline every step of the production process.

LEMUGROUP ✕ BOOTH 4D29

Lemu shows several innovations, including the new 660mm GTU glue turret, which can produce rolls up to 400mm in diameter. It applies hot melt using a Nordson applicator, handles cores ranging from 19 to 76mm, and achieves a speed of 250m/min. The UltraCompact automates end-of-line operations, boxing and palletizing the finished product. LemuGroup also presents digital finishing equipment with an inkjet module for high-volume varnish application. Additionally, the LI 220 RFID is on display with an integrated Voyantic inspection system.

LENZE ✧ BOOTH 4E53

Lenze presents the compact multi-axis servo drive i750 for precise motion control. The company also showcases the intelligent i950 cabinet servo drive for demanding servo applications, which easily integrates into modular machines, and the C520 controller, featuring high computing power for demanding motion control in compact machines.

LESKO ENGINEERING ✦ BOOTH 4F64

Lesko Engineering premieres TT200LT, a compact tabletop rewinder for challenging materials with low web tension, as well as the SGL, an ultra-compact semi-rotary die-cutting and laminating machine, suitable for both newcomers to digital finishing and experienced converters. Additionally, visitors can view upgraded versions of popular machines, such as CL, a modular converting line featuring semi-rotary printing and die-cutting, and HI, a high-speed inspection rewinder equipped with automatic shear knives and the latest design of an advanced semi-turret rewinder.

LICHTZEN ✕ BOOTH L80

Lichtzen showcases an advanced UV/IR/LED printing portfolio, including UV LED retrofit systems, IR (NIR/MIR) LED drying

systems and UV inks specifically optimized for label and packaging applications. Lichtzen highlights its UV LED retrofit technology, which upgrades conventional printing equipment with energy-efficient LED curing systems. Additionally, the company presents its UV offset and screen printing inks.

LIMITX GROUP ✧ BOOTH L22

LimitX announces its Limex Sheet, crafted from limestone-based calcium carbonate, providing a sustainable and high-performance alternative to traditional paper and plastic. It's waterproof, tear-resistant, and can be entirely upcycled, making it suitable for labeling, packaging and point-of-sale media applications. Visitors to the LimitX Group booth can explore a range of Limex sheet gauges, including soft, hard and adhesive-backed options.

LINTEC ✦ BOOTH 4E58

Lintec showcases RC, a removable adhesive that offers high-quality adhesion in chilled environments. It can be applied at low temperature and on a condensation surface, removed without residue and used repeatedly. It enables challenging applications for packaging frozen, chilled or oily foods, such as reclosing labels.

LOMBARDI CONVERTING TECHNOLOGY ✕ BOOTH 3E95

Lombardi premieres its upgraded Synchroline press platform and runs live demonstrations of a hybrid line combining digital inkjet technology with Lombardi's converting units (flexo and finishing). Completing the trio is the Invicta i1 530, Lombardi's flagship platform for in-line label and packaging printing, featuring gearless sleeve change technology.

LUNDBERG TECH ✧ BOOTH 4D27

Lundberg unveils the new generation MatrixCompactor 160, an efficient waste-capturing system designed to handle label matrix waste from one label press. Show visitors can learn how it enhances production by capturing and compacting label matrix waste, reducing the use of virgin materials, cutting transport-related CO2 emissions, eliminating unnecessary disposal of paper cores and easing physical strain on operators.

LUSTER ✦ BOOTH 5A50

Luster introduces three next-generation inspection products. LabelHero is an off-line inspection system enhanced with AI features that allows for a 30-second template setup. A live defect roll map provides real-time visualization of defect distribution, enabling immediate corrective actions. The company also promotes the PrintingProof pre-press inspection system, which ensures flawless digital files and proofs with comprehensive defect inspection. Also on display is the new AI Quality Control Center, which utilizes data-driven production intelligence to transform inspection data into actionable insights throughout the workflow.

MARK ANDY ✕ BOOTH 4G08, 4E05 AND 4G17

Mark Andy showcases a full pressroom of software, materials and equipment. The company spotlights four high-performance presses alongside cutting-edge pre-press, materials and finishing products. Attendees can experience the Performance Series S9, optimized for mid-web flexible packaging and high-speed changeovers; the DSHD HighSpeed 1200, the fastest 1,200 DPI hybrid press on the market; the Pro Series, engineered for short-run label production; and the Digital Pro MAX, a toner-based hybrid platform, with modular flexibility and low operating cost. Also featured in the booth is the Rotoflex VLI, a high-speed inspection and rewinding system designed to handle film, tension-sensitive substrates and complex label applications. Mark Andy Print Products (MAPP) showcases its private-label range of equipment and consumables.

MARTIGNONI ✧ BOOTH 3D39

Martignoni launches Labelfles C109, a new high-performance corona treater.

MARTIN AUTOMATIC ✦ BOOTH 4D37

Martin Automatic showcases two MBS automatic unwind splicers, marking the start of a fully automated production line that spans four collaborating booths. Following a successful debut at Labelexpo Americas 2024, the high-performance technology will be showcased in Europe for the first time. Martin Automatic highlights two configurations of its MBS butt splicer, both of which feed webs non-stop into an ETI Cohesio laminator. The first unwinder features the standard MBS layout, while the second features a 90-degree turnbar that shortens the in-line footprint. Both MBSs can handle rolls up to 26in (660mm) in diameter. They can run at speeds up to 250m/min (820ft/min) for the standard configuration and 152m/min (500ft/min) with the turnbar configuration, ensuring optimum performance on high-production lines.

MATHO ✕ BOOTH L42

Matho spotlights Cuttobag (CB), a compact unit that integrates cutting, extraction and collection into a single, space-saving design. Suitable for film, label and edge-trim waste, the CB offers quiet operation, low operational costs and high cutting performance. Also featured is Matho's line of cutters, engineered for energy-efficient granulation of production waste.

MAXCESS ✧ BOOTH 3G73

Under the RotoMetrics brand, the company showcases the EcoPrint Print Cylinder, an economical print cylinder alternative; Longest Running Flexible Dies, which claim twice the durability compared to competitors; the RotoScan Adjustable Anvil, featuring proactive die strike monitoring with AI enhancements; and the RD Scorer HP, a high-performance scorer for film and paper applications. Under the Tidland brand, Maxcess promotes SmartSlit, a more operator-safe automated narrow web slitting system, and RD AutoScore, an automated back-scoring system that increases uptime. In the Fife section of the stand, new digital sensors and guiding systems are featured. In the Componex corner, new plasma coatings and FDA-compliant coatings are showcased, offering improved release and enhanced wear and abrasion resistance.

MELZER ✦ BOOTH 7A60

Melzer showcases the latest version of the SC-X processor, featuring a 330mm (13in) web width combined with up to six individual transponder tracks, including a transponder selection guarantee and 100 percent tested final products.

MIYAKOSHI PRINTING MACHINERY ✕ BOOTH 5A68

Miyakoshi showcases the LPS13A semi-rotary UV offset press upgraded with a more advanced artificial intelligence system, Yaless Professional, and a new operator interface, Yaless Eye. While Yaless Professional offers a highly automated operational environment, Yaless Eye provides an interactive communication



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environment between the operator and the machine, facilitated by AI.

MPS SYSTEMS ✧ BOOTH 4E41
MPS Systems promotes its EF packaging press.

MUEHLBAUER ✦ BOOTH L61
Muehlbauer showcases the IL30000 inlay insertion line suitable for efficient smart label production. It is designed to automatically insert wet RFID inlays into conventional self-adhesive labels in a standalone reel-to-reel process. The company promotes the complete RFID production line from chip attachment to converting to personalization.

MULTITEC ✕ BOOTH 3D108
Multitec launches its gearless S3S in-line flexo press featuring a sleeve system with servo-driven print mandrels, chilled impression and anilox cylinders. Gearless print units ensure zero backlash and no gear marks. Intelligent systems enable automatic on-the-fly pre-registration and register stability during acceleration and deceleration. There are live demonstrations throughout the show printing jobs with UV and LED combinations on various substrates.

NANOVIS ✧ BOOTH 5B07
Nanovis presents cleaning products for the printing industry, focusing on current developments to further optimize cleaning processes. This includes increasing efficiency in the recycling of cleaning agents and using Bella for the automated cleaning of HP Indigo parts.

NDC HOT MELT ADHESIVE APPLICATION SYSTEM ✦ BOOTH 4C52
The company showcases NTH1700, a fully automated turret hot melt adhesive coating machine equipped with a high-precision servo control system. It ensures a uniform coating and stable tension control. Its modular design allows for rapid customization to accommodate varying material widths. The design of the turret unwinder and rewinder reduces operational costs and labor costs while enhancing productivity (up to 300m/min).

NEXQO TECHNOLOGY ✕ BOOTH 3E09
Nexqo promotes an extensive range of RFID hardware, including RFID labels, NFC stickers, RFID inlays, pre-laminated tags, and tags designed for logistics, retail, healthcare, asset management, warehouse management, cashless payment and anti-counterfeiting.

NICELY MACHINEY ✧ BOOTH 7A48
Nicely Machinery introduces the


HP

EG-8002 series slitter rewinder, offering expanded capabilities for high-volume production, with support for rewind diameters of up to 1,200mm and speeds of up to 800m/min. Its operator-friendly design features motorized unloading carts, automatic knife positioning and a PLC control system with HMI touchscreen. The company also showcases the EG-9000 spooling slitter rewinder designed for ultra-narrow width slitting and high-speed spooling. This model is suitable for processing adhesive tapes, aluminum/polyethylene terephthalate (Alu/PET) composite materials, and functional films or foams. Also on display is the EG-8003 primary slitter rewinder, which supports widths of up to 7,800mm, speeds of up to 800m/min, and rewind diameters of up to 1,200mm. Engineered for large-scale film converting, the machine features servo-driven individual winders with precise tension control and superior roll quality. The EG-8003 commonly integrates automatic knife positioning, motorized web threading, energy-efficient servo motors and real-time tension monitoring.

NILPETER ✦ BOOTH 3D55
Nilpeter presents the next level of its 'The Future is Flexo' vision with two advanced press configurations: a 7-color FA-26 and a 9-color FA-17. Driven by real-time OEE data insights and cloud-based job databases, Nilpeter continues to push toward its 'Dark Room' vision for fully optimized and automated production environments. A 5x5m LED wall highlights the Digital Shadow Concept, a complete digital visualization of the press in action.

NINESTAR ✕ BOOTH 4B25
Ninestar showcases a range of barcode printers, thermal label printers, receipt printers, portable label makers, portable document printers, portable keyboard printers and compatible labels. Additionally, the company promotes a full range of label tapes and ribbons.

NOBELUS ✧ BOOTH 7A12
Nobelus showcases a line of adhesive-free films with gloss, matte and specialty finishes. Nobelus also expands its portfolio to include options designed for the flexible packaging market. The collection consists of various finishes and material types to ensure converters can select the product most compatible with their packaging structure.

OKI EUROPE ✦ BOOTH 5B23
OKI Europe exhibits its digital toner-based label printers, including the new Plavi ES9542R label press bundle (OKI printer + DPR winder), the Pro1050 with finishing equipment including a robotic arm for in-line production, and the Pro9542dn for direct printing onto pouches.

The Plavi ES9542R is a 5-color roll-to-roll label press that prints in CMYK+white and supports media up to 330mm in width. The OKI Pro1050 narrow-format label printer and the OKI Pro9542dn are designed for packaging applications and are suitable for on-demand jobs. Both models offer CMYK+white printing and media flexibility, handling film, paper and synthetic materials.

OMET ✕ BOOTH 3E73
Omet unveils the Omet K6, a new printing platform featuring interchangeable flexo units with sleeve technology. The machine is equipped with a cold foil saver unit, which delivers up to 50 percent material savings on cold foil applications. Among the highlights are the latest versions of Omet Vision and Multivision systems, which have been designed for automated register adjustment and control. Also on display is the Omet X7, which showcases printing of shrink sleeve and flexible packaging, featuring fully servo-driven flexo units and a maximum speed of 250m/min. Visitors can also explore the full range of Omet digital products, including Omet Sfera, a tool for improving the efficiency of every production line through production data collection and real-time analytics.

OSP GROUP ✧ BOOTH 7B47
OSP features reusable and recyclable direct thermal tapes that leave no residue on the surface to which they are adhered. It is an eco-friendly product with a linerless design and reduced adhesive usage.

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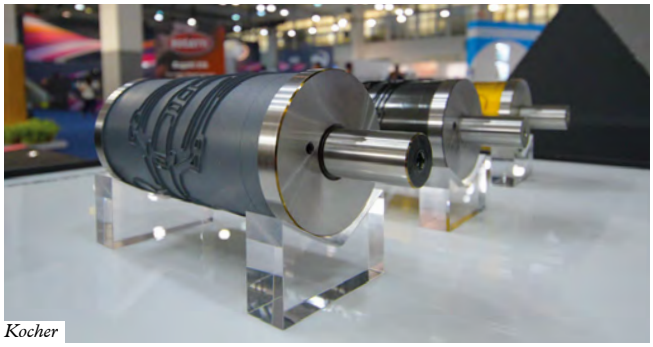
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PACKERS ✦ BOOTH 3A05
Packers showcases an automated punching (die-cutting) machine, which can punch various packaging products such as pre-cut lidding, in-mold labels, blow-mold labels, wet strength paper labels, ice cream cone sleeves and induction/liner seals from roll-form materials. It can be configured with an in-line embossing unit.

PAMARCO ✕ BOOTH L74
Pamarco showcases TeroLux carbide coating technology, claimed to offer improvements over ceramic coating of anilox rollers in terms of durability, ink release and high-definition print performance. Alongside Terolux, Pamarco presents its full range of anilox rollers, manufactured using proprietary laser engraving techniques that ensure consistent cell geometry and volume. Visitors can also learn about Pamarco's tailored cleaning technologies and roller maintenance programs.

PANLARN ✧ BOOTH L83
The company promotes high-performance label materials for the electronics sector, featuring critical functionalities such as high-temperature resistance, antistatic properties, flame retardancy and electromagnetic shielding.

PANTEC ✦ BOOTH 3A30
Pantec presents new applications for its Rhino flatbed technology. Rhino produces metallic effects, as well as tactile 3D structures and relief embossing. It can make micro and nano structures, enabling sustainable security features with copy protection. Multiple foil applications in a single pass increase efficiency and significantly expand creative possibilities. The flatbed offers up to 80 tons of embossing force, production speeds of 150m/min and intelligent foil handling.

PLOCKMATIC GROUP ✕ BOOTH 5G26
The company showcases its full spectrum of label-cutting and finishing technologies, from desktop units to premium roll-to-roll systems, encompassing Intec and Morgana brands. In the sheet-fed lineup, on display is ColorCut LC330, a compact, QR-code-driven desktop cutter developed for short runs; the high-speed ColorCut LC700 with 250-sheet automation; and the SC6500, featuring vacuum belt feeding and dual cutting tools for simultaneous kiss-cut and die-cut jobs. The roll-to-roll offering on display includes the budget-friendly LCF500 with in-line laminating and precision slitting; the ColorCut LCF520; and a preview of the upcoming LCF840Di, a four-head, digitally tracked powerhouse engineered for maximum speed and automated quality control.

PLURISERVICE GROUP ✧ BOOTH 3G30
The company showcases its modular Apix Cobot print apply systems. The company also promotes a wide range of software, including VisionTech for monitoring the vision station, Sentinel Software for centralized monitoring, real-time production monitoring software, E2K Collect Enterprise Software for data collection on Android devices, E2K RF Software for warehouse management and E2K Spooler for print automation.

POLLY AUTOMATIC ✦ BOOTH 5G50
Polly Automatic promotes its PA250/300/350 shrink sleeve seaming machine featuring an intelligent gluing system, upgraded servo motor, automatic seaming width adjustment system, automatic seaming line offset device and oscillating rewinder. The company also promotes the M370/420/520, a multi-function label finishing machine equipped with semi- or full-rotary flexo stations for printing cold foil, lamination and varnishing, as well as a semi- or full-rotary die-cutting unit.

POLYART GROUP ✕ BOOTH 3G50
Polyart promotes its recycled product range, including r-Polyart, r-Fluolux, r-Satinex and r-JetPrint Aquaskin, which feature PCR and PIR content to support circular economy goals. For digital printing technologies, Polyart showcases a range of substrates suited for dry toner, water-based and UV inkjet, as well as HP Indigo, including advanced papers and films that meet the demand for durability, print quality and eco-responsibility. The company also promotes tamper-evident substrates, such as Polyart TE, ensuring security across critical applications. For packaging converters, the company promotes LDPE and HDPE films for mono products, as well as sustainable flexible packaging products. Lastly, the company also discusses Polyservices, including custom toll services such as coating, extrusion, gravure printing and lamination, which help customers co-develop bespoke materials.

POLYONICS ✧ BOOTH 5G85
Polyonics introduces a line of high-performance label materials designed for the electronics, automotive and aerospace industries. These labels feature advanced performance coatings that resist abrasion, flux and aggressive cleaners, maintaining barcode readability after exposure to extreme heat and chemicals. Pressure-sensitive adhesives engineered for high adhesion remain secure through solder reflow and harsh wash cycles. Polyonics' coated polyimide materials are UL-certified, REACH/RoHS compliant and flame-retardant, offering unmatched durability and performance in demanding environments.

POSTEK ✦ BOOTH L60
Postek exhibits its MX Pro label applicator, VisualGuard inspection system and desktop printer range powered by OX Script, which offers intelligent control and customization for diverse application needs.

PPF SOLUTIONS (PPF) ✕ BOOTH 5G49
PPF unveils its range of Velocity stamping and embossing tools, featuring a non-stick heated die surface.

PRATI ✧ BOOTH 3D23 AND 3E17
Prati displays the DigiFast20000 finishing machine configured for materials from 12 to 450 microns in 760mm web width. The


Konica Minolta

machine processes flexible packaging, pouches, sleeves, labels and cartons with registered white, UV or water-based varnish and digital embellishment capabilities. The DigiFastOne converting line operates at 330mm width for wine and spirits labels, featuring UV varnishing and semi-rotary hot foil stamping. It handles self-adhesive labels, clear-on-clear, wraparound labels, shrink sleeves, plastic films and unsupported papers and plastic materials. Also on show is the Jupiter modular control table, which runs at speeds up to 400m/min with semi-rotary die-cutting for label and flexible packaging inspection and finishing. The machine appears in a 670mm web width configuration. The DigiCompact processes materials in roll-to-roll, roll-to-sheet and roll-to-stack formats, targeting digitally printed adhesive and linerless labels in a 450mm web width roll-to-stack setup. Prati also shows the Saturn modular finishing machine in a 450mm web width with 100 percent inspection capabilities. The Saturn Next intelligent control table features automated quality control and defect rejection for cosmetics and personal care applications. The Saturn Bidi bidirectional inspection table targets pharmaceutical and security sectors with 100 percent quality control and variable data printing. The company also exhibits Vega+ and Star+ off-line label production lines for logistics and retail applications.

PREMIER COATING & CONVERTERS ✧ BOOTH 5G25

The company showcases a range of self-adhesive label materials, including high-performance labelstock for chemicals, wine and beverage packaging, retail point-of-sale and durable applications. Materials are available in paper and filmic formats, with options suitable for all printing methods. The company promotes biodegradable and compostable label materials that offer environmental responsibility and on-product performance.

PRINT SYSTEMS ✕ BOOTH 4A02

Print Systems presents a new UV LED 75 Combo flexo platemaking system. The multi-functional exposure unit features a UVA exposure lamp, a UVC drawer, two drying drawers and a vacuum table. The company also launches an eco-friendly wastewater filtration system. Also on display is the Flow Flexo 110, an in-line processor that handles flexographic plates up to 1,100mm wide, featuring punching, black mask wash, plate wash, rinse, drying, UVC and UVA exposure and unloading.

PRINTMARK GROUP ✧ BOOTH 3E14

Printmark presents label printing products from Japanese manufacturer Chuwa. The equipment lineup features care label printers for woven tapes and single-tag printers for individual sheet tags. The company also introduces the Spica Series textile printers, for printing on nylon and satin labels. They are compatible with the optional ultrasonic cutter CUC-45.

PROPYPLAST ✦ BOOTH L93

The company promotes a new sustainable in-mold label technology, LMG CleanLoop. The innovation lies in the separation of the thin printed layer (with inks and varnish) from the container and the remaining part of the label during the mechanical recycling process. Recyclass has recognized this technology as 'fully compatible with the existing European industrial recycling process for PP containers'.

PULSE ROLL LABEL MATERIALS ✕ BOOTH 3G93

Pulse showcases PureTone inks, offering high-strength, single-pigment formulations. Pulse also discusses bespoke ink mixing, which helps achieve the Delta E target and color match. Also on display is Monolox, a fixed anilox printing system for spot colors that standardizes anilox selection, reduces the burden of changeovers, increases press utilization and reduces waste.

QIANRUN ✧ BOOTH 4C10

The company promotes the servo-driven Label King S5-370-8C in-line flexo press configured with eight color stations. The press is said to adopt a new 'petal-shaped' print unit and doctor blade structure. The new press incorporates automated printing pressure and inking pressure setting. An optional non-stop system is also available.

RAVENWOOD PACKAGING ✦ BOOTH 5A52

Ravenwood expands its Nobac 40 range with the new airless Nobac 40B Bottle Labeller, an entry-level linerless label applicator. It applies labels up to 200mm long and 40mm wide around various bottle sizes, achieving application speeds of 75 bottles per minute. The company also introduces a new scanner for its Com 500 coating machine, delivering new accuracy levels. Ravenwood also launches Stripe Roller Support Shaft for the Com 500 Coater, replacing the traditional ETP locking bush system.

RE ✕ BOOTH 4C12

Re unveils the latest evolution of ReVision NET system, debuting with a new web tension controller that offers improved response speed, precision in web tension control and an intuitive touchscreen.

REBORN ✧ BOOTH 5G66

Reborn showcases its modular RBJ-Remix 3DW 370 digital UV embellishment series featuring semi-rotary flexo, digital embellishment and rotary die-cutting. The machine features a 2,000m unwinding and rewinding unit, equipped with forward and reverse rewinding functions. It also features auxiliary functions such as dust removal and corona treatment. The machine operates at a maximum printing speed of 50m/min.

RECYL ✦ BOOTH L33

Recyl presents Quick'Wash Resolv, its new cleaning technology for printing plates. This simple and effective cleaning technology is specifically designed to remove ink residues and impurities from plates contaminated with solvent-based ink.

RHYGUAN ✕ BOOTH 5D43

Rhyguan showcases its complete finishing line with six machines, including a Smart Inspection system and automatic slitter rewinder. Also on display are Top-Plus systems, featuring one flexo and one die-cutting unit, as well as the Top die-cutting machine, which boasts a new compact design and upgraded operating speed. For wine labels, the company displays a modular Plus330 with a new fast silkscreen unit and a heavy-duty hot foil module with dual heating zones and constant dwell time.

RICOH ✧ BOOTH 4G60

Ricoh premieres a tree-free, top-coated thermal paper based



Lombardi



PPF

on agricultural residue, certified for home compostability. In addition to an eco-friendly and phenol-free chemical formula, Ricoh minimizes the overall impact of its processes and products by utilizing base paper entirely produced from sugarcane agricultural waste.

RK PRINTCOAT INSTRUMENTS ✦ BOOTH L25

RK PrintCoat Instruments showcases the FlexiProof 100 machine, which incorporates a custom-designed LED UV unit, an alternative to the dichroic mercury arc vapor lamps currently used. It utilizes a doctored ceramic anilox roller and a photopolymer plate, allowing for realistic printability testing at a maximum speed of 100m/min on all types of flexo substrates. RK also showcases its VCML Pilot coater, the GP100, K303S Multicoater, Esi Proof, KLOX Complete and K Hand Coater.

ROSAS MASCHINENBAU ✕ BOOTH 3A54

Rosas Maschinenbau showcases the Rosas Leopard 300 tabletop rewinder, which incorporates an optical RFID inspection system, high-speed RFID encoding and a printing station. It offers adjustable web tension, a maximum web width of 254mm, unwind and rewind diameters up to 520mm, an integrated splicing table and speeds up to 300m/min. The company also promotes the Rosas Gazelle digital printer, integrated with the GTUS eZ-Inkjet 54mm, 600 x 600 DPI high-resolution printer, which is a compact system delivering all-in-one printing with adjustable web tension, a 254mm max web width, unwind/rewind diameters of 520mm and speeds up to 500m/min. Lastly, making its debut is the Viper 750 tabletop rewinder featuring a 4K AI-based optical inspection system, adjustable web tension, a maximum web width of 254mm, unwind and rewind diameters of 520mm, an integrated splicing table and a top speed of up to 750m/min.

ROTOCON ✧ BOOTH 4D21

Rotocon and HS Machinery are showcasing three machines, including the Chrome 450 flexo press, which features advanced embellishment capabilities and a modular design. The company also shows an RDF 340, a digital label converting and finishing system. Also on display is the Ecoline RSI 540, a fully servo-driven machine for label slitting, inspection and rewinding.

ROTOMETAL ✦ BOOTH 3B99

Rotometal unveils an expanded portfolio, highlighting advanced composite sleeves for narrow and mid-web converters. A key highlight is the ability to customize composite formulas, thanks to Rotometal's in-house R&D department, tailoring technologies to specific client needs. Rotometal also promotes its new consumables unit, with a primary focus on high-quality UV inks and coatings.

RUDHOLM ✕ BOOTH 7C53

Rudholm showcases a range of responsibly designed garment branding products, including labels, trims and packaging. The labeling portfolio includes woven and printed labels, hang tags, heat transfers and badges, tailored for apparel, footwear and home textiles. In packaging, the company showcases durable and efficient e-commerce and retail products, including boxes, polybags, mailers and footwear packaging. The company promotes its latest digital innovations, including Digital Product Passport (DPP) technology, ShareLabel, an automated care label and barcode platform, Variable Data Cloud and integrated technologies such as RFID and NFC.

SCHOBERTECHNOLOGIES ✧ BOOTH 4D41

Schobertechnologies promotes a twin-spider setup for its RSM410 IML/MX, designed for high-speed die-cutting and stacking of in-mold labels. It provides a high-speed, programmable robot-automated stacking and counting system. For short runs, especially in the case of digital printing, Schobertechnologies offers a hybrid rotary vector die-cutting system. Also on display are punching modules for parking tickets, tea tags and line hole perforations, available in different material combinations, as well as all types of slitting knives, blades and die-cutting cylinders for challenging materials in labels and packaging.

SCREEN ✦ BOOTH 5D55

Screen demonstrates the Truepress Label 350UV SAI-S with extended orange and blue inks, and High-Opacity White inks. The press also incorporates a new digital primer option for embellishment and durability, alongside advanced workflow management and finishing technology integrations. Visitors can observe the press handling a variety of challenging label applications, including cosmetics, food, beverages and industrial labeling, as well as cutting-edge workflow and finishing integrations with providers such as Cerm and Lombardi.

SEAL KING ✕ BOOTH 4A26

Seal King presents a range of security products, including premium tamper-evident labels and security tapes. The labels are available in non-transfer, total transfer and partial transfer options. All transfer types are available in different colors. Tamper-evident tape also acts as an anti-theft and counterfeit measure.

SENSEE ✧ BOOTH 3A43

Sensee unveils its digital braille press system, designed for high-speed, on-demand braille printing directly onto labels and flexible packaging. Built to integrate into existing production lines, the system enables variable-data braille embossing for critical information, including expiration dates, product names and tactile symbols, with real-time quality control and intelligent software integration.

This technology delivers precise and durable Braille on various substrates, including PET, paper and laminated labels. It is suited for the pharmaceutical, cosmetics and FMCG industries. Sensee also presents its Braille Seal Label, recognized at the Finat International Label Competition.

SIEGWERK ✦ BOOTH 3G77

Siegwerk highlights Siucra Nutriflex LEDTec and Siucra Nutriflex 10, which enable GIO (German Ink Ordinance) compliant printing for primary food packaging. Whereas the Siucra Nutriflex LEDTec is a dual-cure ink series that can be cured with either LED-UV or UV-curing, the Siucra Nutriflex 10 is a pure UV-curing ink

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Rotocon

series. With the Siucra Flex dual-cure, the company presents a non-low-migration, dual-cure flexo ink series suitable for both non-food packaging and food packaging applications, where processing conditions rule out the possibility of set-off and the final printed packaging ensures reliable functional barrier properties against migration. The company also showcases the new overprint varnishes specifically developed for finishing and embellishment of digitally printed labels.

SISTRADE ✕ BOOTH 4F37

Sistrade presents the latest advancements in Sistrade Atlas, showcasing key new features to promote productivity and traceability. At the heart of these innovations is the technical data sheet, now integrated with graphical process management and digital job order. This combination ensures every job contains complete technical data, enabling smart production and full traceability throughout the manufacturing process. Visitors can discover a customizable interface featuring dynamic widgets and modern dashboards, each tailored to the individual user. Sistrade Atlas also introduces features like Sistrade AI, an intelligent virtual assistant and query generator.

SITEXCO ✧ BOOTH 4B36

Sitexco presents a laser cleaning system for anilox rolls, designed for the narrow web industry. The company launches Sitexco Label L30.

SLEEVEMAKER BY MAYTECH ✦ BOOTH 5D35

Sleevemaker by Maytech showcases shrink films for sleeve applications. The company launches C-PET shrink film and low-density floatable shrink film. The entire product portfolio on display also includes PETG shrink film, R-PET shrink film and PVC shrink film.

SPANDE ✕ BOOTH 3E107 AND 3E101

Spande promotes the fifth generation of S7 press with eight servo motors on each printing unit, an automatic pressure setting and an intelligent visual registration system. The press is available in four web widths: 370mm, 450mm, 520mm and 670mm. On display is a 450mm wide S7 model configured with 8-color flexo printing units, dual die-cutting units, with full LED UV and hot air drying systems. The live demonstrations highlight the 'One-Touch' changeover between various substrates and repeat lengths.

Also on display is the S5 flexo press, developed to meet the needs of the mid-range market. It features an independent drive system, with a printing cylinder that does not require additional gears for mounting. The showcased model features 12 colors and is equipped with lamination and cold foil units.

The company also demonstrates an 8-color, 800mm-wide AC series printing line in roll-to-roll format, showcasing high-speed flexible packaging production on wide-web materials. The AC series is available in 700 and 800mm web widths and features nine servo motors in each flexo printing station. It offers printing speeds of up to 250m/min. It covers a wide substrate range, from 12 to 800 microns, including paper, PE, OPP, PPC, PVC, plastic film, carton, self-adhesive materials and aluminum-coated materials. The AC series integrates finishing technology that combines embossing, creasing, die-cutting, stripping, inspection, sorting and stacking.

SPGPRINTS ✧ BOOTH 3G14

SPGPrints promotes its Marble Rotary Screen Integration unit (RSI), available as a retrofit or on its partner press manufacturers' machines. Typical applications include first-down white for non-label look PS, metallic colors, strong opaques, tactiles, special varnishes and scratch cards. The company also promotes associated products, including screens and pre-press systems.

SQ LABEL (PRIBER) ✦ BOOTH L07

Priber presents ITS SQ Label 2026 labeling software with automation and custom app builder tools, fast performance and expanded printer compatibility for barcode and label printing. Designed for high-volume, unattended workflows, it offers print job optimization, centralized control and easy integration into any production environment. SQ Label Studio allows users and integrators to develop their printing interfaces powered by the SQ Label engine.

START INTERNATIONAL ✕ BOOTH 4C66

Start International launches its European operations, marking a major milestone in the company's global expansion. The new structure includes local inventory, shorter delivery times and a dedicated show and test room. Show visitors can see a range of electronic dispensers for adhesive tape and labels, widely used for in-line applications across the packaging, automotive, electronics, textile and food industries.

SUN CHEMICAL ✧ BOOTH 3D92

Sun Chemical presents high-performance inks, coatings and adhesives, including UV, UV flexo, UV LED and water-based technologies, as well as electron beam (EB) systems for labels, sleeves and packaging. Also showcased are retention-grade recyclable products, washable and de-inking products, EB-curable inks and coatings tailored for mono-material and monolayer packaging structures. The company also highlights its latest developments in digital ink technologies, as well as a range of coatings, primers and lamination adhesives optimized to integrate seamlessly with digital inks. Also at the booth, Sun Chemical specialists discuss SunColorBox: a set of tools and services that enable consistent and accurate digital color communication throughout the entire packaging supply chain.

SUPER COLOR ✦ BOOTH 3G95

The company showcases a wide range of LED UV flexo and digital inks, as well as inks developed for shrink sleeves, rotary screens, UV offset and letterpress. Also on display are varnishes, adhesives and primers.

SYNTHOGRA ✕ BOOTH 3C64

Synthogra presents a high-barrier, mono-material film for flexible packaging in PE and PP, suitable for pouches and other applications. This lightweight product minimizes transport emissions and lowers



SPG Prints



Screen

CO2 output. Additionally, Synthogra promotes high-quality synthetic papers made from natural minerals.

SYSCO MACHINERY ✦ BOOTH 7A52
The company showcases its compact RDC-PS rotary die-cutting machine for high-volume production lines. This machine is suited for industries that require fast and accurate cutting of labels, packaging materials, gaskets and more.

TAGHLEEF INDUSTRIES ✕ BOOTH 3A42
Taghleef Industries launches Shape360 TDSW, a high-performance, floatable white polyolefin TD shrink sleeve film designed for optimal recyclability. Suitable for dairy beverages and other light-sensitive products, it offers vibrant print quality with a premium glossy finish. Its low-density structure enables clean separation from PET flakes during recycling, supporting the production of high-quality recyclate and reducing plastic waste.

TAMARACK PRODUCTS ✧ BOOTH 7B52
Tamarack introduces EZ RFID Encode, a high-speed, fully integrated system that verifies, encodes, prints and inspects RFID-enabled labels, tickets and tags in one process. Visitors can see live demonstrations of the EZ RFID Encode with a CISC encoding system for inlay testing, encoding and locking, the Hawk M7 from Digital Print for variable data printing, and a Lake Image System camera system for inspection. The machine operates at speeds up to 200ft/min and has multi-lane capability.

TENETH TECHNOLOGY ✦ BOOTH 4B63
Teneth Technology showcases a label cutting machine developed for cutting A3 and A4 label sheets. It features a built-in camera, a large-capacity tray and a repeat cutting function. It supports kiss-cutting and die-cutting. It can also crease.

THEURER ✕ BOOTH 4A36
Theurer previews a browser-based CRM prototype alongside the new Logistics App and the next-generation browser-based C3 Web Portal. The Logistics App offers mobile stock-taking, roll and pallet transfers, external roll number linking, image capture for QA, and final delivery checks on smartphones, handheld devices or forklift terminals. Powered by new web technology, the C3 Web Portal provides 24/7 article overviews, including stock information, and shows and manages contract orders, enabling call-off ordering. The CRM prototype introduces browser-based customer and prospect management with workflow support. Theurer also showcases e-invoice and EUDR compliance services, highlighting its swift regulatory support.

TKM ✧ BOOTH 4A37
TKM showcases NEOFlex, its latest patented doctor blade technology. Thanks to its innovative blade tip, the pressure can be reduced by up to 40 percent. This leads to lower wear on doctor blades, end seals and anilox rollers (including scoring lines and general wear). The tip ensures consistent ink transfer to the anilox roller.

TONGFEI ✦ BOOTH 3G07
Tongfei showcases products designed for quality control and process efficiency. The company promotes its flagship InSenXe Infrared Measurement Systems, which provide real-time, in-line monitoring of adhesive coating weight, UV/EB/water-based coating thickness and moisture content. This technology empowers converters with data-driven insights, enabling them to make immediate process adjustments, achieve material savings, reduce energy consumption and improve product quality.

TOOTECH ✕ BOOTH L39
The company promotes its laser barcode label printer, the TTE-72FK, which prints on the middle layer of labels, with a maximum size of 108 mm x 108 mm and a resolution of up to 2,000 DPI.

TOYO INK ✧ BOOTH 3A32
Toyo Ink introduces Steraflex GIO, a new low-migration flexographic ink designed to meet the stringent requirements of the German Ink Ordinance (GIO). Free from intentionally added photo initiator 379, it ensures compliance with evolving food and pharmaceutical packaging regulations. Beyond safety, Steraflex GIO features a next-generation binder system that enhances adhesion on a wide range of substrates. Optimized for flexographic printing, it offers runnability and print quality.

TROIKA SYSTEMS ✦ BOOTH 3G98
Troika Systems introduces AniCAM HD Plus, the latest advancement in high-definition 3D scanning technology for labels and packaging converters. It delivers high-performance measurements of anilox rolls, gravure cylinders and flexo plates. With its optics and enhanced scanning capabilities, it provides accurate and repeatable measurements of volume and cell structure. This system is powered by advanced TMS 3D software, which offers analysis tools, intuitive reporting and easy integration into quality control workflows.

UNILUX ✕ BOOTH L27
The company promotes the UniPRINT vision system for web inspection. It offers a clear image, touchscreen operation and robust industrial-grade build quality, as well as the ability to inspect both standard and UV-visible inks with a single system. Depending on needs, converters can choose the standard package or upgrade to advanced inspection features with the Pro version. The company also showcases its LED stroboscopes, including both handheld units and those for fixed installation.

UNIVACCO ✧ BOOTH 4D54
Univacco showcases sustainable hot and cold transfer foils, which are PPWR-compliant and engineered to perform on rough surfaces. The 761 hot foil offers vibrant color expression and broad coverage.

UPM ADHESIVE MATERIALS ✦ BOOTH 3D29
UPM Adhesive Materials, formerly known as UPM Raflatac, introduces label materials that combine performance and sustainability. Highlights include more sustainable plastic and paper label material portfolios, high-performance linerless labels and label material expertise in selected end-use applications. Visitors can learn how the company's products and services support circularity and decarbonization, as well as provide ease of business through digital ordering.

UTRAXX ✕ BOOTH 3A110
UTraxx showcases its modular ERP technology, explicitly tailored for label printers. The platform encompasses CRM, quoting and order management, automatic calculation with AI, production planning, warehouse logistics and shipping in a single, integrated system. uTraxx automates key processes and brings clarity to daily operations. Webshop integration, CF2 import for complete imposition calculation, JDF/JMF, open system architecture or CO2 calculation are optional.

UV RAY ✧ BOOTH 3A71
UV Ray presents its MaxLED lamps with a new air-cooled technology, complementing its water-cooled systems. The new air-cooled version maintains consistent temperature and emission performance throughout its lifetime, offering long-term energy and cost savings. It features a compact, modular design and precision-managed power for various UV curing applications. It can also be configured in hybrid setups with UV Ray's mercury lamps. The company also highlights MaxLED as a retrofit option for straight-path presses and debuts its Goliath UV reflector, delivering uniform output with lower web temperatures.

UVITERNO ✦ BOOTH 3F15
Uviterno showcases an upgraded electronic power supply, RCS 330/430, developed in cooperation with Gallus Classics. Uviterno's upgrade to add LED to any used Gallus RCS is simple, efficient and cost-effective. It can reduce energy consumption by up to 50 percent, helping to achieve sustainability objectives. The upgrade enables simultaneous UV and LED integration, with easy and fast switching between UV and UV-LED, and minimal production downtime due to the short installation time. The switch to the dual RKV9 power supply makes the press immediately LED-ready.

VALCO MELTON ✕ BOOTH 4C60
Valco Melton presents LP Series Coating Lines designed to coat and laminate a variety of substrates using hot melts or UV hot melts, offering complete control of the coating process through programmed recipes and closed-loop capabilities. The company also promotes Akura Applicators, which feature independent hydraulic zones, each fed by a gear pump, to ensure uniform adhesive distribution. Coupled with Weight-Inspekt, the equipment enables real-time grammage measurement and closed-loop control. Weight Inspekt automatically corrects the flow rate in the out-of-tolerance hydraulic zone when a grammage deviation occurs.

VALENCE BONDING TECHNOLOGY ✧ BOOTH 4A63
The company showcases the ValenTak product series of hotmelt adhesives for five key categories, including pressure-sensitive applications, labels, industrial tapes, medical tapes and bandages, hygienic disposables, and special PSA industries. The label applications cover various industrial uses, including paper labels, film labels, logistics parcel labels, RFID labels, tire labels, anti-freeze labels, security labels and removable labels.

VALLOY ✦ BOOTH 5A36
Valloy introduces its new Duoblade FX, NS and NX series. The Duoblade FX is a sheet-fed finishing system that utilizes multiple tools simultaneously to produce stickers, tags, toppers, boxes and decorative cards without requiring user intervention. The Duoblade NS6 and NX8 are 30 percent more productive than previous models.

VFP INK TECHNOLOGIES ✕ BOOTH 3G49
VFP Ink Technologies presents a new flexo ink for smart labels, FSE (Flexography Silver Electron). It is a non-CMR high-performance functional ink designed for printed electronics and intelligent labeling applications. It offers excellent flexibility and strong adhesion on multiple substrates, making it suitable for high-speed industrial production. FSE enables the integration of sensors, RFID or NFC components directly into labels, combining reliability and sustainability.

VIVID LAMINATING TECHNOLOGIES ✧ BOOTH 3E15
Vivid Laminating Technologies unveils its cutting technology, Veloton. The Veloton is Vivid's patented interchangeable system that can be retrofitted to any Veloblade Volta+ and Nexus cutting systems. The technology allows users to increase cutting speed with multiple aligned cutting heads, reducing production time without compromising on quality. The system operates on both roll-fed and sheet-fed materials.

VOYANTIC ✦ BOOTH L55
Voyantic introduces the upgraded Tagsurance 3 system, a system for measuring the performance of UHF and HF RFID inlays, tags and labels in different stages of the production process, from chip attachment to label converting and incoming inspection. Additionally, Tagsurance 3 enables the encoding of RAIN RFID labels on high-speed machines, eliminating the need for external encoding systems and streamlining production processes.

VPF ✕ BOOTH 3B107
VPF presents three new wash-off adhesives. Wash-Off 604 is cold-washable from 20deg C and is designed for use with paper face materials. Wash-Off 605 is hot- and caustic-washable (70deg C + 1 percent caustic) and is intended for use with PET shrink films in glass and PET bottle recycling. Wash-Off HM725UV is designed for use with PET shrink films in glass and PET bottle recycling. VPF also showcases four new, high-quality inkjet papers: Inkjet Vergé, Inkjet Martelé, Inkjet Laid White and Inkjet Bagasse, intended for exclusive products such as wine, spirits and high-quality cosmetics and food. Visitors can also see a range of opaque films developed for multi-layer labels and reverse printing.

WAMPOLET ✧ BOOTH L46
Wampolet showcases a range of functional materials, primarily used for PSA lamination, including thermal paper, thermal film, label film and thermal transfer paper. The company also promotes converted products such as thermal labels, thermal receipt paper rolls, BOPP PSA films and in-mold labels.

WANJIE ✦ BOOTH 4D05
Wanjie showcases its WJPS-350 intermittent offset press, featuring five offset units, one flexo unit and one die-cutting unit.



Synthogra

WEIGANG ✧ BOOTH 3D85
Weigang showcases its ZJR350G flexo and ZX320 offset presses. The ZJR series flexo is designed for label, in-mold labels and flexible packaging applications down to 12 microns. Complementing this, the ZX series offset press is suitable for premium wine labels and short-run projects. Weigang also highlights the use of UV inkjet technology for fast, sustainable and low-volume printing.

WENZHOU DABA ✦ BOOTH 3G52
The company promotes the Goprinto jumbo roll slitting machine, suitable for slitting and rewinding adhesive paper, PET/PVC/film, kraft paper, non-woven fabric, cardboard, paper-plastic composite materials and other web materials slitting and rewinding. The machine features three servo motor controls, automatic tension and center reeling way.

WESTLAND GUMMIWERKE ✕ BOOTH L87
Westland Group highlights the next-generation LotoTec MRS roller, featuring a patented sealed surface that preserves the roller's elasticity while offering high chemical resistance, low surface tension and a mirror-smooth finish. Another highlight is the Eco Sleeve, developed by Westland's subsidiary Ligum. Designed for multiple reuse and regumming, these thin sleeves drastically reduce material consumption, lower energy use, and help avoid early disposal.

WINK ✧ BOOTH 5E67
Wink showcases high-performance, flexible dies with refinements, such as the enhanced MCR UltraChrome coating and an upgraded non-stick coating, for maximum hardness and easier handling. Also on display are solid dies with various waste removal systems, including Pintec and the next-generation adjustable anvil SmartGap.

XEIKON ✦ BOOTH 3G55, 3E55
Xeikon showcases three digital label presses. The TX500 features live demonstrations with in-line metallization from Kurz, a hybrid technology that combines dry toner with metallized effects in a single pass. Suitable for premium wine and spirits labels and other high-end applications, this setup delivers eye-catching embellishments with digital flexibility and zero compromise on food safety. Also on show is the LX3000, powered by Xeikon's Cheetah 3.0 dry toner technology. The company also promotes the PX3300HD high-definition Panther inkjet press.

Xeikon also participates in a cross-stand initiative led by Esko, guiding visitors along a complete end-to-end digital label workflow. Each company involved showcases a vital link in the digital production chain, from design to print to embellishment and inspection.

XINZHU ✕ BOOTH 4A22
Xinzhu showcases a wide range of innovative label materials, including 48g–400g thermal paper and card, thermal/RFID baggage tags, linerless labels, fruit tags and labels, multipack carry handles, inkjet/UV inkjet printable materials, medical wristbands and wine labels. Al products are suitable for a diverse range of applications, from logistics and retail to healthcare and personal care.

XPX MACHINERY ✧ BOOTH 4D59
The company promotes MDC-360-Plus, combining semi-rotary flexo and rotary die-cutting with a high-speed sheeter. The fully servo-driven digital label finishing machine offers spot varnish, flexo and flatbed die-cutting capabilities.

YUANMINGJIE ✦ BOOTH 5A04
YMJ launches YMJ-RDSR2, high-speed inspection and processing equipment designed to process roll-to-roll RFID labels, featuring rapid detection, editing and replacement capabilities.It is capable of automatically removing faulty labels with marks present on finished products at high speeds. It can also remove the incorrect label and replace it with a new label in the blank spaces. The machine can process 40,000 pieces per hour. The software can be integrated with the MES system.

ZEBRA TECHNOLOGIES ✕ BOOTH 5F43
The company shows the ZT411 Linerless Industrial Printer featuring efficient, jam-free printing. This printer is suitable for high-demand environments, producing sharp, high-quality prints. The company also promotes ZeroLiner, a linerless media.

ZELLER + GMELIN ✧ BOOTH 5G47
Zeller+Gmelin focuses on transition to LED UV technology and the impact of new legal regulations, such as the German Printing Ink Regulation, which takes effect in 2026. The company showcases a wide range of products, including the Uvaflex LED FCM Y581 for food packaging, the Uvaflex LED Y580 for non-food use, and the Toracur W580 for waterless offset printing.

ZHOULI IMAGING TECHNOLOGY ✦ BOOTH L36
Zhuoli Imaging Technology launches new products, including the Premium Wax Flat-Head (4.0 micron PET base-film), Near-edge/TTO Wax/Resin and Textile Resin.



UPM

ZHOUTAI MACHINERY ✕ BOOTH 5E12
ZhouTai Machinery introduces the servo-driven AMD450FSL-S flat-bottom pouch making machine, which achieves 100 pieces a minute with ±1.5mm eye mark accuracy and handles films up to 160 microns thick. A small footprint reduces setup time and material waste. Quick change tools for cross-sealing and longitudinal sealing further reduce setup times. There is also a special design for a larger gap in cross-sealing to accommodate PE/PE materials and minimize waste.

ZODNGOC ✧ BOOTH 7A49
The company launches a new high-speed label die-cutting machine, developed to serve the medical, electronics, and automotive sectors, producing labels, bandages, frame adhesives, and electronic components.

ZOLO PACKAGING ✦ BOOTH 3F07
Zolo Packaging launches biodegradable, tamper-evident VOID labels.

ZONTEN ✕ BOOTH 3D50
Zonten highlights the ZTJ Series intermittent offset press, which delivers high-resolution output, precise color control and minimal waste , making it ideal for short to mid-run label production. The ZTR Series modular flexo press showcsases its versatility with features such as UV/LED curing, die-cutting, slitting and cold foil capabilities.
Zonten also debuts the ZTD hybrid digital-flexo press, which combines CMYK digital printing with flexo enhancements for variable data and fast job changeovers. Additionally, the ZMQ Series Multi Convert System integrates flexo, varnishing, die-cutting and slitting.

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Label trends: AI in packaging

Over the next decade, AI in packaging is expected to grow exponentially, bringing increased efficiency, better accuracy and optimized resource usage.

2024 estimated value of AI in packaging market:

1.8bn USD

2034 projected value of AI in packaging market:

23.4bn USD

CAGR:

29.3 percent

Applications



Quality control and inspection



Pre-press technology



Customized packaging

Benefits



Improves accuracy



Increases efficiency



Reduces waste



Lessens need for labor

Countries with highest CAGR (2024-2034) for AI in packaging market



1. India

39.6%



2. Japan

33.8%



3. Canada

32.3%



4. South Africa

31.8%



5. China

31.6%

Source: https://www.futuremarketinsights.com/reports/artificial-intelligence-in-packaging-market

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PRATI srl
Via Deruta, 2
48018 Faenza (Ra) - Italy
+39 0546 633 811
info@praticompany.com
PRATI USA LLC
4101 McEwen - Suite 368
Dallas, TX 75244 - USA
+1 913 908 8607
fhasselberg@praticompany.com
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