

Labels & Labeling

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Feb/Mar 2004
Issue 1 Volume 26

End user



Label printers have a vital role to play in product differentiation for the personal care market

Labelexpo



A major review of the premier label event in Asia, Labelexpo China

Case study



How label printers can work together and take advantage of globalization



**Agfa Acquires Dotrix.
More Power to Digital Label Printing**

e No.102

AGFA

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The value of lasting relationships

FLEXcon employees Dick Dupont (27 years) and Christine DiMarzio (10 years) share valuable background information with Brian Ayers (5 years) center, as they work together to solve a customer challenge.



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Newer additions to the group gain valuable insight from more experienced members. Together, they share their knowledge and contribute new ideas to develop skills to better service your business. This spirit of teamwork is fostered by our most experienced and valued business team employees, currently averaging 13 years on the job. So, whether you have just started purchasing from us or have been a customer for over 30 years, you can be confident in the consistency of service from people that know you, and your business. That's the value of lasting relationships. That's the value of FLEXcon.

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Providing Solutions in Pressure-Sensitive Films

Contents

Features



10-17 **Getting personal**
Label printers have an increasing role to play in product differentiation for the personal care market



18-29 **Labelexpo China review**
Attended by more than 5,000 label and packaging printers, the first Labelexpo China show was hailed a great success



30-34 **Global networking**
'Globalization' can be a frightening idea for the average label printing company. While end users put the finishing touches to global infrastructures and industry suppliers acquire their rivals to straddle the globe, how does the average label printer respond?

36-41 **Film stars**
Shrink sleeves, wraparounds and other film-based products can be produced on the latest narrow-web presses, but how feasible is this market for label printers?

42-44 **Secret services**
Converters and suppliers in the security label business are tight-lipped when it comes to their supply chain. Katy Wight talks to a key supplier about protecting product integrity



47-50 **Omet Technology Center celebrates 40 years**
Founded in 1963, Omet celebrated its 40th anniversary by opening a new technology center in Lecco, Italy, and demonstrated its latest labels, film and carton converting technology to 120 international guests

52-54 **Future vision**
Rako Etiketten has instituted a quality control program on its rewinders utilizing the latest scanning heads and fault detection/analysis software from AVT. L&L reports on a comprehensive QC solution at one of Europe's leading label printers

56-58 **Beam me up**
Imagine a flexo press that can print wet inks on top of wet inks. Sound unlikely?

60 **Digital demo center**
HP Indigo now has its industrial presses, finishing systems and workflow solutions on permanent demonstration at a new technology centre in Maastricht

62 **Meeting the challenge of global branding**
There is a growing trend by the world's major consumer goods manufacturers to market their products globally

64-70 **Opportunities for future growth**
Mike Fairley assesses major opportunities and markets to help the label industry achieve high growth in the future

Regulars

News	6-9
Installations	72
New products	74-76
Appointments	78
Technology news	82



Labeling news

Labels & Labeling

New reader enquiry service from Labels & Labeling magazine

A new system for submitting reader enquiries to L&L has been introduced to help speed up response times to your enquiries.

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DOC determines unfair foreign TTR pricing

The US Department of Commerce (DOC) has issued a preliminary ruling that foreign-produced wax and wax/resin thermal transfer ribbons (TTR) are being sold at unfairly low prices in the United States. The DOC has determined that duties should be imposed on future imports from Japan and France to relieve the impact of dumping on US producers.

The anti-dumping petition was filed with the DOC and the US International Trade Commission (ITC) by IIMAK in May 2003. In July 2003, the DOC began its preliminary investigation when the ITC issued a preliminary determination that these imports have materially injured the U.S. wax and wax/resin TTR industry.

'Today's decision vindicates IIMAK's initial petition and puts the domestic industry on a more level playing field with offshore TTR producers,' says Dick Marshall, CEO of IIMAK. 'Dumping by foreign competition has injured the US wax and wax/resin TTR industry. Both US manufacturers and resellers should be delighted to see an end to these illegal pricing practices which have undermined investments in our industry over the last several years.'

The DOC ruling estimates anti-dumping duty rates for each of the respondent countries. US Customs will begin collecting a bond to cover these duties on all affected TTR imports. The DOC will direct an anti-dumping margin of 147.3 per cent on imports from DNP and Union Chemcar from Japan, and 106.6 per cent on all other Japanese imports. Imports from Armor (France) will be subject to antidumping margins of 60.6 per cent and 44.93 per cent on all other French imports. Duties will be assessed for 90 days retroactive to the Federal Register publication on imports from DNP and Union Chemcar.

The DOC calculated an antidumping margin of 1.27 per cent for ITW Thermal Films' imports from Republic of Korea. Under DOC regulations, this is a de minimus margin level and therefore will not require a bond. However, IIMAK remains confident that this margin will increase in the final determination when a series of additional ITW data filings, including a recently initiated cost analysis, are appropriately included in the DOC calculations.

e No. 400

dotrix inkjet solutions acquired by Agfa

Agfa-Gevaert has reached an agreement with Barco to acquire the assets and all staff of Belgian-based dotrix NV, which manufactures and sells digital color printing solutions for industrial applications. The price of the transaction is around six million Euros.

'This acquisition fits into our growth strategy for Graphic Systems', says Albert Follens, member of Agfa's board of management and general manager of Graphic Systems. 'dotrix will allow us to take position in the markets of digital printing and to gain larger access to industrial printing niches such as decoration, packaging and security printing.'

dotrix employs approximately 75 staff

and its turnover in 2003 is estimated at close to five million Euros. 'We are excited to be part of the world's largest pre-press company', says Rob Haak, CEO of dotrix. 'End-users will benefit from new product offerings and extended services which will lead to increased customer satisfaction. With improved time-to-market and Agfa's recognized brand name we expect to rapidly expand our customer base.'

dotrix's printing solutions consist of a high-speed full-color industrial digital press (the.factory) based on inkjet technology and UV inks, a raster image processor for driving the digital press and workflow software to support the different applications.

e No. 401

Latin America summit announced in Mexico

The inaugural Latin American Label Summit 2004 will take place at the María Isabel Sheraton, Mexico City, on 8-9 June. The exhibition area has over 40 companies exhibiting with tabletop displays, including Distribudora Grafica, Gallus, HP Indigo, Mark Andy, Nilpeter, Omet, Raflatac, and Rotometrics.

The value of the packaging industry in Latin America is currently \$23 billion and rising – with flexible packaging at the forefront. More specifically, pressure sensitive material annual consumption in Latin America is growing at more than 3-4 times the rate of consumption in the US or in Europe. With Mexico being the principal importer of machinery and materials in the region, the Latin American Label Summit has become an extremely important event for the industry in 2004.

Modernization and globalization are key issues for the label converter in Latin America, both of which will be addressed by the conference.

Roger Pellow, Labelexpo md, said: 'Our 2004 Latin American Label Summit is taking excellent shape – this is a fast-moving market. Nearly fifty per cent of highest quality, self-adhesive film labels were exported from the United States into Mexico. Mexican label converters have to compete with converters in the United States more and more, as transportation logistics improve, and taxes and tariffs diminish. While Mexican converting companies have maintained an exceptional ability for self-sustenance, these companies now have to compete with global players who haven't been impacted by the same import hurdles and customer service issues Mexicans have been affected by over the years. As one of the ten largest economies in the world, Mexico will become a formidable global label player, and it's our goal to provide the best information-sharing venue possible to facilitate this process.'

 No.402

Flint Ink claims color strength breakthrough in WD systems

Flint Ink has announced a new colorant technology claimed to increase the color strength of water ink systems by 20 per cent without compromising runnability.

Increasing pigment strength in water ink systems can make them heavier, more viscous and difficult to run. Flint claims that its X-TREME Dispersions enables printers and converters to obtain intense color with thinner ink films at faster press speeds.

'Our X-TREME Dispersions is the single most significant technological advancement in water inks in the past 10 years,' says Steve D'Angelo, director of marketing, Flint Ink North America Packaging Division. 'X-TREME Dispersions use a unique, proprietary chemistry to create stronger inks without increasing viscosity, resulting in

significant improvements in print quality, ink curing and press speed. Printers gain high-strength color, high-end graphics capabilities, and on-press stability in one product.'

D'Angelo credits Flint Ink's vertical integration for development of the new technology, citing the cooperation between pigment scientists, pigment and dispersion manufacturing, and the packaging division's product development lab.

X-TREME Dispersions are available in an array of Pantone colors, and are well suited to inks for flexographic and gravure presses.

Flint claims that because thinner film weights can be used dramatic ink savings are possible.

 No.403

Kodak Polychrome acquires RealTime Image web proofing solutions

Kodak Polychrome Graphics (KPG) has acquired RealTimeImage's Graphic Arts Division. With completion of the acquisition, the suite of RealTimeProof products for web-based, high-resolution collaborative proofing and approval management will become part of KPG's portfolio of proofing solutions, and RealTimeImage will focus on its healthcare imaging operations.

'Bringing together the RealTimeProof suite of solutions and the Kodak Polychrome Graphics Matchprint Virtual Proofing System, makes KPG the leader in monitor proofing,' said Jeff Jacobson, chief executive officer, KPG. 'Customers will have access to the industry's most complete range of monitor proofing options, from soft proofing systems to remote proofing applications to color critical virtual proofing solutions.' Jacobson added that RealTimeProof's core imaging technologies may also further enhance KPG's color imaging expertise for current and future Graphics products.

 No.404

Xeikon buys back operation from UK distributor

Openshaw Ltd and Xeikon GB have entered into an agreement in principle for Xeikon to purchase the UK Xeikon service business from Openshaw. This involves the sale of maintenance contracts, spare parts, consumables and the transfer of engineering staff.

Wim Deblauwe, chief financial officer of Xeikon Bv, said, 'Openshaw have built an excellent installed base that is well serviced and supported. We are pleased to have reached agreement for this purchase and look forward to completing in the near future.'

 No.405

Labeling news

Joint clear label project targets beer industry

Illochroma Labelling Group, a supplier of wet glue labels with production facilities in Germany, France, Belgium, Italy and Poland, and Spear, a supplier of clear film pressure sensitive labeling services with plants in the UK and USA, have founded the joint venture company IlloSpear to better service their

customers in the beer industry.

IlloSpear will service the beer industry worldwide with a complete range of clear label solutions including pressure sensitive film labels and both TactiPhane and Illoclear labels for wet glue applications. Clear labeling products for both one way and returnable bottles will

be offered.

A full range of printing processes including flat bed screen, rotary screen, letterpress, offset, flexographic, rotogravure, hot stamping, and combination printing will all be available.

 No.406



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MBO sees return of Stampiton labels

Renaissance Mark has sold Labels system specialist Stampiton Limited to a management team consisting of the existing Board of Directors for an undisclosed sum.

The company, based in Whaley Bridge, near Manchester, is a GBP14 million turnover label printing business which is focused on producing specialist labels for the A4 stationery and home office market, continuous computer stationery

markets and retail food market. It also manufactures bespoke laminate materials for niche markets.

Commenting on the MBO, managing director David Smith said: 'Under the new ownership, Stampiton Limited's operations will continue as usual and the focus will remain dedicated to improving service and product offering to customers.'

 No.407

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CCL Label in partnership for smart solutions

CCL Label has joined Texas Instruments' Team Tag-it Program, a partnership of companies dedicated to the development and adoption of RFID high-frequency (HF) and ultra-high frequency (UHF) smart label solutions.

CCL already Label converts RFID inlays to pressure sensitive labels, PVC cards, disposable paper tickets and disposable wristbands. The company will leverage its TI Team Tag-it partnership to expand RFID sales for key applications including product authentication, inventory management, anti-counterfeiting, diversion control and security. An important RFID growth area for CCL Label is pharmaceutical, already the firm's largest market.

The company opened a second manufacturing facility for RFID products in January 2004. 

Weber launches RFID compliance program

In the wake of Wal-Mart's mandate that requires its top 100 suppliers to place radio frequency identification (RFID) tags on all cases and pallet loads by January 2005, Weber Marking Systems has announced a program aimed at providing the systems and supplies that will help companies meet RFID compliance standards.

'Wal-Mart was the first to set a deadline for RFID compliance,' says Brad Weber, president of Weber Marking Systems. 'The Department of Defense was next, also for 2005, and we feel that

many other retailers and supply chain operations are bound to follow suit. We pledge that our Initiative 2004 will ensure that our customers will be ready.'

RFID is the latest development in automatic identification and data capture technology. Much of the initial growth of RFID is expected to be linked to 'smart label' technology, which combines the benefits of bar code labeling with the functionality of RFID by embedding an ultra-thin RFID tag in the label material that will transmit a range of product data. 

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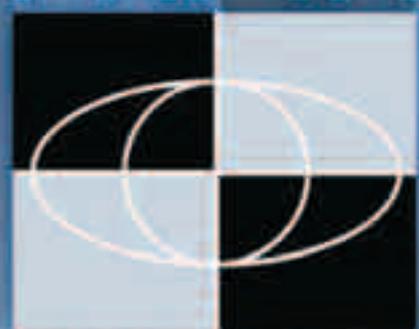
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e No. 164



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ISSN 1478-7520

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USA Mailing:
Periodicals postage paid at Middlesex,
New Jersey 08846

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to
Tarsus Publishing Ltd, c/o PO Box 177,
Middlesex NJ08846

US agent: Pronto Mailers, 200 Wood
 Avenue, Middlesex, NJ 08846

Printers:
Wyndham Grange, West Sussex, UK

SUBSCRIPTIONS:

UK: £50 Europe: €90 (£60)

Outside Europe: €110 (£75)

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Leader



The first Labelexpo China show was a great success – 5,000 label converters visiting the Intex Exhibition Centre in Shanghai (see full report in this issue of L&L, p.18). This show will grow fast and could be as big as the European and North American Labelexpos by the end of the decade.

If you follow L&L regularly you will be aware that the really high growth regions are Asia-Pacific, Eastern Europe and Latin America. The reason is not just the growth in consumer demand, but because the major retail and brand groups like Walmart are sourcing more and more production in areas where they can take advantage of lower labour and production costs. As this work goes offshore, so does the requirement for local label and packaging production of the same quality found in the developed economies – which is where most of these products will end up.

This is surely a major threat to the overwhelming majority of the 10,000 label printing companies on the L&L European and North American database, whose companies are relatively small - around 50 employees and turnover up to €/\$10M – and do not have the resources of a CCL to acquire companies across the world or set up Joint Ventures.

But in this issue of L&L we examine the emergence of a new breed of global relationship well suited to the majority of our readers' companies, which we call 'informal networks'. Our case study is a typical medium-sized printer in Lima, Peru, which has formed a close relationship with two similarly sized converters in Europe (see p30). Already they have exchanged production

“Labelexpo China will grow fast and could be as big as the European and North American Labelexpos by the end of the decade”

personnel and market information and are collaborating in the choice of new equipment. They share common customers and might also know end users who want to move production into Europe, or from Europe to South America. There are many ways the co-operation could move in the future, while retaining the advantages of smaller companies in our industry – dynamism, the ability to react fast and make decisions quickly. Turning the threat of globalisation into an opportunity.

Andy Thomas
 Group Managing Editor

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 **No. 118**

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Installations

Budget Labels Edale Beta

Australian label printer Budget Labels has taken delivery of a 6-color Edale Beta UV flexo press. Jim Martin, Budget MD, comments: 'The Beta combines excellent print quality with ease of operation. It's a modern press design and its attractive price tag met with our criteria exactly. The fact that it was able to work alongside our E250S was great news too.' Based in Melbourne, Budget has been producing self-adhesive labels for over fourteen years.

No.510

Avery Dennison Hong Kong BV Creo Lotem CTP

Avery Dennison Hong Kong BV has ordered a Lotem 400 Quantum computer-to-plate platesetter with multi-cassette unit, and the Brisque workflow management system from Creo. The multi-cassette unit, which stores at least 150 plates, provides full automation for plate loading, slip-sheet removal, and imaging.

No.511

Fort Dearborn Comco ProGlide

Fort Dearborn in Chicago has installed a fourth Comco ProGlide to convert PVC shrink labels. All the company's ProGlides are 10-color, with web widths of 22" and 26". Fort Dearborn claims that the Comco machines' ability to control temperature, web tension, and register all at high speed via a combination of chill drum technology, low tension unwinds, sensitive infeeds and 'S' wraps in every station, is critical. Register is controlled automatically with Comco's 'ARC' system and the ProGlide is fitted with Variprint, which permits different cut-off lengths.

Describing the Comco ProGlide MSP as: 'highly flexible, with the capability of handling various substrates, such as BOPP,' a spokesman for Fort Dearborn added: 'It is difficult to name another press with such versatility.'

No.512

Specialty Tape & Label HP Indigo ws2000

Specialty Tape & Label, Illinois, has installed an HP Indigo ws2000 6-color web press. The ws2000 will be used for full color short to medium run, multiple-lot jobs with or without variable information, on a wide range of substrates. It will enable Specialty Tape & Label to provide its customers with fast turnarounds.

To complement the press, Specialty also purchased a Rotocom servo-driven re-register system which has die-cutting, spot color, laminating and varnishing capabilities.

The Domino Amjet UV-curable inkjet system will be used to produce consecutively numbered or barcoded labels and variable information in a wide range of colors and substrates in-line on the company's multi-web flexo press.

Ken Paveza, Sales Manager said, 'The combination of these new systems along with our existing equipment will allow us to remain competitive, expand our product line and continue to be a leader in the converting market.'

No.513

Kingsway Printers Mark Andy 2200

Kingsway Printers, UK, has installed a 6-color Mark Andy 2200 UV flexo line. The choice of a 13" Mark Andy marks a reversion to the American manufacturer after several years using Arsoma lines.

The Mark Andy 2200 is fitted for the first time with a Teknek double-sided web cleaner and a combined cold foil/laminating unit.

No.514

Labelmakers Uteco Emerald 828

Labelmakers in Australia is now printing sleeves on its new Uteco Emerald 828, 11-color flexographic UV printing press, which was installed at their Somerton plant. This Uteco Emerald press is a combination flexo press with 8-colours around the CI, plus three satellite stations – the last with in-line lamination.

Labelmakers, one of Australia's largest label printers and converters, is producing and applying special shrink sleeves to go on five completely different Kraft products, effectively bonding the five together in a joint promotion. The shrink sleeves, with similar graphics, are being applied to a jar, a tall bottle, a small carton and other containers.

No.515

LMT Mark Andy 2200

Self-adhesive tape and label manufacturer LMT has installed another Mark Andy 2200 press at its production plant in Orpington, Kent, UK, 'to meet the increasing demand for the quality offered by UV flexo,' says joint MD Julian Lee. The new 10" 6-colour machine is the family company's third Mark Andy since 1995.

Labelexpo '95 was the inspiration for LMT's first Mark Andy purchase. A 6-color water-based 2200 press, the Mark Andy paid for itself within two years according to Lee, and began the shift in company emphasis from tape to labels. The growing label division, managed by Philip Wolfson, includes the recent addition of an extra sales representative to cater for the new 2200's capacity for work.

Says Lee, 'We needed to diversify our business and the Mark Andy presses provide us with the opportunity to consolidate our existing customer base and enter new markets.'

Within the company's print division, recent investments in new platemaking technology enables LMT to offer a fully sophisticated in-house computer generated artwork and graphics service sent directly to platemaking and then to the finished product.

LMT supplies to all industries but with a heavy emphasis within the food and removal sectors incorporating roll and sheet form, for thermal and standard use. Although most labels are still printed on paper-based substrates, LMT is moving quickly into filmics.

No.516



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e No.162



Getting

End User Report

How did you choose your last deodorant? Label printers have an increasing role to play in product differentiation for the personal care market. **Katy Wight** reports

Whiter teeth, glossier hair, clearer skin – personal care products make a lot of promises and consumers are keen to cash in on the results. Industry analysts predict that global label sales to the personal care industry will expand six per cent per year, reaching \$540 million by 2006. A constant stream of new products and the re-invention of existing brands are shaping the nature of label printing within the segment. What influence are these factors having?

Appearance is everything – almost

'My wife cannot say how much she pays for her shampoo or deodorant these days,' says Pedro Cattori, executive vice president at converter Quality Assured Label in North Carolina. 'There isn't such a distinction between the cheap and expensive brands anymore, which means that you can have 100 different deodorant options on a single supermarket shelf. What you see on that shelf is very important.'

Research has shown that the majority of purchase decisions are made at the shelf. This means that packaging in the personal care market must stay at the cutting edge of technology and design. As a consequence, labels are in a continual state of development following the launch and re-branding of thousands of products each year.

Ian Baker is senior packaging technologist at Boots Healthcare International (BHI), the company behind skincare brands such as Clearasil and E45. He has keen ideas about what he wants from a label: 'As brand owners the key to our decoration strategy is to ensure the end consumer has no doubt as to the product's identity and purpose. We therefore always design our packaging to maximize the brand stand-out and guarantee clarity of product message.'

In the personal care market, brand owners such as BHI are also increasingly competing with supermarket own (private) brands and beauty products developed by fashion brands. It's the quality of packaging materials and labeling that will make their products stand out.

'Speed-to-market and innovative products, along with pressures on the supply chain mean that packaging development specialists must look to new ways of decorating packs. We hope that we can utilize innovation from our label converter along with our new designs to create the finished packs,' says Baker. ▶

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Artes Gráficas Modernas regularly invests in new equipment to stay at the forefront of its market. This year has been no exception. Investments have centred on a new Nilpeter MO-3300 – a narrow web rotary label printing press that allows any combination of offset, flexo, foil stamping, screen printing and value-added finishing processes – enabling Artes Gráficas Modernas to produce an impressive variety of premium quality self-adhesive labels and other special-purpose, innovative products. Exactly what it takes in today's sophisticated market.

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BHI won a Silver Starpack award for its Iceshampoo product launched in 2002 which used holographics to simulate ice, and Clearasil Total Control, launched in January 2003 won an EFTA (European Flexographic Technical Association) Gold award for its foil block and embossed labels that were printed in one pass. But perhaps appearance isn't actually everything – the momentum for innovation is racing past outward appearance, as Baker explains: 'Consumer habits are such that they like to pick the products off the shelf and look at them. This means that we should focus further on textures within the materials, surface coatings and raised ink effects.'

Cattori of Quality Assured Label, whose client base includes companies such as Colgate-Palmolive and Johnson & Johnson, outlines how they stay one step ahead of the game. He says that 90 per cent of Quality Assured Label's innovation arises from their interpretation of such end user requests.

'The industry has really changed. We never did R&D ten years ago and now we have a dedicated department. We have been in innovation mode for the past 18 months and we have been busy applying for patents. In fact that's how we measure our R&D efforts – by the patents pending and achieved.'

The market is asking printers like Quality Assured Label to come up with new ideas to give them the edge. A year ago it launched the Sensations series, which incorporates



BHI's Clearasil Total Control scooped an EFTA gold award

thermochromatic, scratch and sniff, photochromic, glow-in-the-dark, glitter, color-shift and textured labels, which have raised images that can be used alone to create a special effect or on top of graphics for a textured feel. This can also give a better grip for products like shampoos and shower gels, as used by Hawaiian Tropic and Neutrogena.

'This industry is like pizza making – we are just using the ingredients we have and making the pizza a different way to come up with a new flavor,' he says. 'Everybody wants to differentiate their products – it's the same in Asia, the US and Europe.'

Environmental challenges

'There isn't just a pressure to become more eye-catching,' explains Kari Virtanen, business development manager, films, for Raflatac, USA, 'there's the issue of paper durability. That's why the industry is seeing a double-digit growth in films.'

Despite the fact that they have a short life cycle, they must withstand demanding environmental factors incurred by the shower, bathroom and the product's own ingredients, which makes them one of the most demanding applications for labelstock manufacturers.

Marc Pascoe is purchasing manager for Wella, where they test all labels in-house to ensure they meet certain technical specifications: 'We conduct accelerated aging tests, ensuring that there is no edge-lifting,' he says. 'Water resistance and chemical resistance are two of the main factors we have to consider, since some of our products contain alcohol and present a challenge for the label

manufacturers and printers. If the label isn't able to withstand environmental factors, the print will often smudge or completely rub off the product.'

Filmic products are often an obvious choice over paper substrates. In fact some labelstock suppliers are taking the durability of their personal care labels to another level. Inprint UK has devised a new booklet label called the extended synthetic text, which as Andrew Walker, business development director explains, 'was devised for the toiletries market, but is also being targeted at the chemical and automotive industry where products are handled roughly, prone to spills and stored in damp environments.' Beauty product labels need to withstand the same conditions in the shower, that you would get in a garage or on a farm.

As the use of film has increased, techniques and knowledge about printing on films has improved and that research is ongoing, explains Virtanen: 'In Europe, polyethylene is the main material used for pressures sensitive film labelstock applications, but in the US, polypropylene has traditionally been used. The rigidity of polypropylene is high, so for end-use products in the US that require wall-to-wall squeezability, like hair gel, a new type of squeezable label is needed. Raflatac has been developing alternatives and plans a fully-squeezable ♦

'Consumers like to pick the products off the shelf and look at them. We should focus further on textures, surface coatings and raised inks'

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* Patent pending

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The Self-adhesive Label Market in Western Europe A Techno-Economic Market Review and Evaluation of Business Opportunities

Who should buy this report - packaging converters, label converters, raw materials suppliers, packaging/labels equipment suppliers, consumables suppliers, brand owners, financial institutions.

This report is a comprehensive update of the existing multi-client report published by Labels & Labeling Consultancy in February 2000. Since then, there has been a great deal of change going on in the labels sector. The market for self-adhesive labels in Western Europe has risen to over 3.9 billion sq. metres p.a and is continuing to grow at 5 to 6% annually.

The Self-adhesive Label Market in Central/Eastern Europe A Techno-Economic Market Review and Evaluation of Business Opportunities

This report is a comprehensive update of the existing multi-client report published by Labels & Labeling Consultancy in April 2001.

Report writing is well under way.

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product this year.'

Another key driver in the choice of label substrate is environmental impact and this is likely to increase as the recycling of plastic bottles gains prominence.

Information overload

Regulations enacted by the FDA in the US in 1999 require all active and inactive ingredients to be listed on personal care products along with their quantity and any appropriate directions for safe use and/or warning statements. It must be prominent and appear in a specified location on the label. This ruling has had a significant impact on the design of cosmetic labels.

'It all started with deodorants and now it is spreading to cosmetics and products like anti-dandruff shampoos,' explains Cattori of Quality Assured Label. 'Not only do you have to list all of the active ingredients, but also any possible reactions to them. The legislation even specifies the point size, and colors that the text must be, and the order the information should appear.'

'We introduced the BackPack label to accommodate the added information. It is an extended information booklet label which is printed in-line, with a PS label and unsupported mono layer on



Can label application machinery keep up with the level of innovation from converters and designers?
Ian Baker, senior packaging technologist, BHI, feels that innovation is often held back by high label application costs and slow application speeds.
'When we start designing we are already restricted because of the potential expenditure that would be required to get a machine to apply wrap-around or booklet labels. We are coming up with these innovative designs that often can't be realized on the factory floor.
'It may not be a problem industry-wide, but with our suppliers I am aware that we are often constrained by the application machinery. We have had problems trying to apply booklet labels around non-standard packs at speed and simultaneous multiple label application —on both cap and bottle for example — has provided a specific challenge for our new products.'




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top. It's cheaper as it's all done in one pass and you don't have to collate any parts together. Unilever, P&G and Colgate Palmolive are all using them.'

The increasing demand for content booklets and re-sealable labels is magnified by the increase in global brands and the trend for end users to centralize their manufacturing and having, for example, one facility in Europe and one in the States.

'In North America alone we speak English, Spanish – and French in Canada – so that is at least three languages that you need to include on an average label. These kinds of labels can deal with multi-lingual requirements.'

These requirements have accelerated the transition from direct on-package printed containers to 'no look' and booklet label formats.

Perfume – the smell of success

Cosmetics, grooming and haircare product labels are typically characterized by short shelf lives, needing constant invigoration with regular, short-runs of new look or special edition labels. Interestingly, the perfume market requires a more enduring solution. Vast promotional expenditure is necessary to sustain an established brand and products can remain on the shelf for a long time.

International perfumery companies have started looking at shrink sleeving solutions to protect bottles, jars and cans. Sleeves can offer a glossy, highly protective surface, with 360° of coverage to optimize print coverage. Sleever International has made a significant impression in the market in the last



Sleever International has made its mark with innovative solutions for the perfumery market

eighteen months. It produced the sleeve for the re-launch of the men's scent Yves Saint Laurent Kouros, a special edition of Nina Ricci perfume Premier Jour and won a Formes du Luxe Packaging award in Paris for a unisex perfume by Carolina Herrera

Sleever uses PET and OPS dust repellent films and films with UV protection, as products can be on the shelf for a long time. Reverse printing means that printed text cannot be removed by grease or water and the sleeve is guaranteed to last for the life cycle of the product. Another benefit, which is increasingly being exploited by cosmetics, is the shrink sleeve's ability to meet major packaging demands for tamper proofing with tear tabs and strips.

Budget busting

'All design is a compromise between cost and aesthetics,' reflects BHI's senior packaging technologist Ian Baker realistically. End users want their products to have the edge, but at the lowest cost possible. As a supplier, Maija Kalpamaa-Zimmerman, end use manager for Raflatac, feels the squeeze: 'Market maturity, along with a consolidation trend among large end users has increased the purchasing power of key players in the personal care industry, but the industry leaders continue to develop cost-effective solutions to meet the end user demands.'

In reaction to the market situation, Raflatac, for example, has developed PE Matt Transparent 80 – an 80 micron facestock – which is one of the lightest matt filmic products available on the European market. This cuts down on product waste during the converting process and in turn reduces the overall cost to the end user. Tightening costs are also encouraging a trend towards universal materials.

Future of the market

Analysts predict sales of cosmetic and toiletry labels will be propelled by a healthy pace of new product introductions, and products targeted at growing ethnic markets, non-traditional consumers and specific age groups will be particularly prevalent. For the label printer, this diversity means an increase in on-demand, short print runs: 'We are going to see an increase in digital printing,' says Cattori of Quality Assured Label.'

Constant product introduction and re-invention requires innovation, which will drive the increasing interest in new textures, materials and effects. Globalization, centralization of manufacturing and increasing legislation on format is changing the shape of the label to come. ■

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Will the proliferation of digital printing mean that end-users will take their label printing in-house?

Reflect provides customized beauty products and fragrances. Each product is further customized by applying the consumer's name to the label – *Elise's morning sun body polish*, for example. After problems with supply and demand, Reflect took their label printing in-house and now use a laser printer on special stock developed by FLEXcon in conjunction with converter York Tape and Label. Ralph Comegna, director of supply logistics, cosmetics and packaging materials talks about the strategy:

What do you think the personalized labels say about the Reflect brand?

'The labels bring the entire customized process home to the consumer. It is her brand under her name. She becomes the fashion model and inspirational star of her products, not some Hollywood celebrity or fashion model. It makes the product special to her.'

How are they printed?

'Today we print eight different jewel colors and all text is done in black over shiny metallic stock. The inks are standard wax based toners as used in any other laser printer. The stock uses a special top coat that allows for the toner to adhere effectively. The top coat is applied over a 2mil mylar which uses a polyester backing stock. The back stock is treated with a coating that allows it to travel through the printer with a very accurate travel pattern. This is essential in that it allows us to lay the text down in the exact placement.'

Do you think that personalization of beauty products will increase or remain niche?

'I think this will remain a niche experience. It will grow slowly as companies look for ways to distinguish themselves from their competition but I don't see how this would work in a mass-market application.'

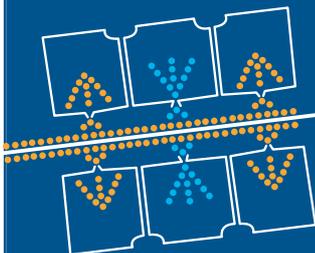
Personal touch: FLEXcon developed the substrate for Reflect's digitally-printed personalised labels



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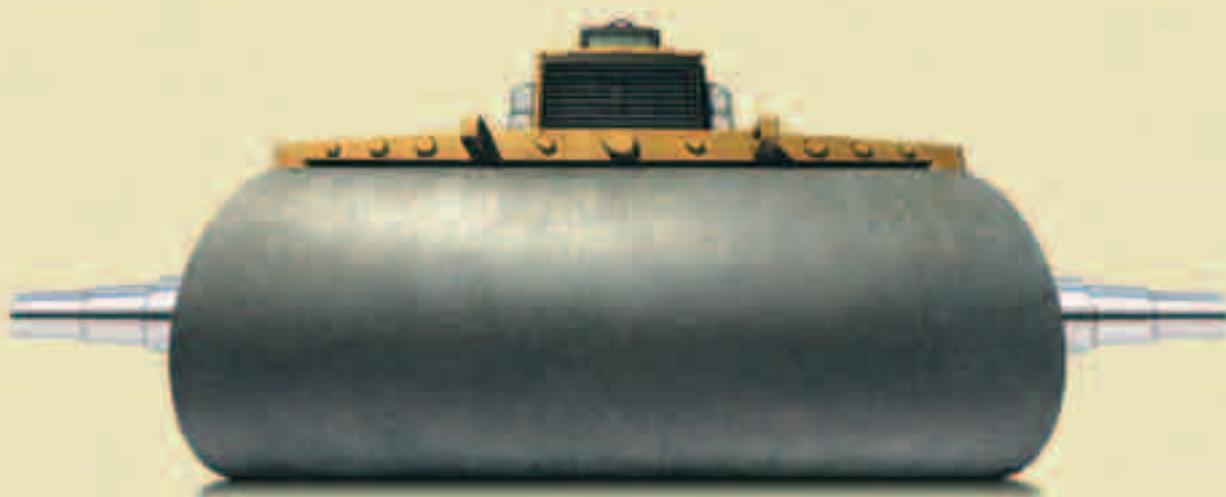


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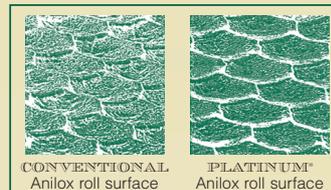
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New products

Avery Dennison Corporation Fasson static cling vinyls

The Fasson Rapid-Roll product line has expanded with the introduction of three vinyls made from highly plasticized PVC including white and clear vinyls.

The static cling vinyls can adhere to most polished smooth surfaces, then removed, stored and reused indefinitely. They are topcoated to improve shelf life and printability and can be printed flexo, offset and screen printed with either a polycoated layflat or printable liner.

From point of sale signage to temporary, non-adhesive promotions, the multi-purpose product has a variety of end use applications.  **No.350**

Sensor Products Inc. (SPI) EZ-Nip

With web-based conveyance machinery, uneven nip rollers can cause web handling waste and yield deficiencies. EZ-Nip paper determines the actual working, static, nip width between two mating rolls. The paper immediately changes color upon the application of pressure, enabling the user to easily measure the nip 'footprint' (nip width) both visually or, for more intense scrutiny, with a ruler or micrometer. This measurement then allows the technician to adjust roll pressures accordingly to achieve the correct alignment.  **No.351**

Epoxies Etc...

20-3001 Epoxy potting and encapsulating resin

20-3001 Epoxy potting and encapsulating resin is a low viscosity, unfilled epoxy potting and encapsulating system which forms a bubble-free glass-like finish when cured. It is a 100 per cent solids resin that does not contain any solvents. Its 1:1 mix ratio and lack of fillers mean that it suits meter mix and dispense equipment and its low viscosity aids in filling voids and air pockets.  **No.352**

MActac

PressGold 710VHP hot-melt adhesive

Patent-pending PressGold 710VHP is designed to increase label converting and dispensing speeds. It claims to provide the necessary quick tack and aggressive adhesion to stick to low surface energy substrates like high-density polyethylene (HDPE) and corrugated board and it can be converted wider than conventional hot-melt adhesives – even up to 20 inches.

PressGold 710VHP can reach die-cutting speeds up to 750 feet per minute. In addition to processing like an acrylic adhesive, it features a wide application temperature range for demanding cold-temperature uses.

PressGold 710VHP is offered on a variety of MActac face stocks, including prime films, foils, fluorescents, prime white paper, dairy labels, EDP stocks and thermal products. Liners for these products include 2.5 mil and 3.2 mil SCK and 2.5 mil unbleached SCK.  **No.353**

Flexo Concepts

New Polyester doctor blade material

Flexo Concepts has introduced a new .020" Polyester doctor blade material. The product is designed to replace steel containment blades on chambered doctor blade systems.

As the steel containment blade on a chambered doctor blade systems wears, the worn material goes into suspension and becomes part of the ink system. These steel particles are thought to be a cause of anilox roll scoring and other forms of roll damage. As a result many printers put magnets in the ink to collect the steel particles and minimize the chance of damaging the anilox roll.

The material is thicker than traditional polyester. 'We can put a 15° bevel on the .020" Polyester and the result is a great metering blade,' so says Kevin McLaughlin, President of Flexo Concepts

The .020" Polyester material is immediately available for shipment in widths between .5 and 4 inches.  **No.354**

Pillar Technologies/ Simco Static Control Narrow web corona treater/web cleaner/static control system

Pillar Technologies and Simco Industrial Static Control, both divisions of ITW, have teamed up to produce a narrow web corona treater/web cleaner combination unit. The design responds to OEMs' request for a treater that was easy to mount on to existing presses and included an attached web cleaner with static control.

The Pillar treater and Simco web cleaner is pre-wired at the factory. Adjustable mounting plate and adjustable treat widths conform to most existing press configurations. The system can run line speeds over 700 fpm in sizes from 7.5-30 inches. The unit is available in top-side, bottom-side, and two-side configurations.

The attached web cleaner and static neutralizer removes particulates down to 20 microns, eliminates any static charge and lifts spray powder or other impurities on the web, improving production speeds. The web cleaner is available in contact and non-contact configurations.  **No.355**

ADM Tronics

Polaqua103 aqueous primer/adhesive

Polaqua103 aqueous primer/adhesive can combine LDPE-Surlyn-Printing inks to substrates that include aclar, polyester, polypropylene, nylon, vinyl, aluminum foil, cellophane, polycarbonate, paper and board. It shows good grease and oil resistant bond strengths whilst only requiring small application levels. Typically, only one undiluted gallon of Polaqua 103 is needed for 60-90,000ft² of substrate.

Bonding is rigorous enough to ensure that the substrate may be primed and rewound for later use for up to 90 days, with no blocking or reduction in bond strength.  **No.356**



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New products

Wasser-Stat

730 high gloss aqueous overcoat

This improved overcoat exhibits a high degree of water resistance when exposed to moisture and purports to be a superior film former, repulpable under conventional alkali processes. Wasser-Stat 730 is quick drying, can be used without mixing or diluting and applied using conventional coating equipment.

No.357

Fusion UV Systems

Light Hammer 10 (LH10)

Fusion has launched the LH10, a high power 10" (250mm) UV curing system. It features two modular components: a microwave powered irradiator and a solid-state power supply.

The microwave technology combines a small-diameter electrodeless bulb with an elliptical reflector to provide peak UV irradiance for high-speed cure. It also reduces infrared emissions, resulting in lower substrate surface temperatures. It claims to reduce operating costs and environmental noise. Power output from 35-100 per cent is easily controlled, allowing a match of lamp output to machine/line speed or ink/coating demands.

The control system allows multiple lamps to be interconnected and remotely controlled. It also enables the collection of operational data to enhance preventative maintenance and line productivity.

No.358

Fusion UV Systems

UVCAD software

Fusion UV has developed a software package for predictive placement of the company's UV lamp systems when curing complex shapes and multi-surface 3D objects. UVCAD claims to provide accurate and optimum lamp positions in as little as two hours.

No.359

Group Logic

MassTransit 4.2 file transfer software

Group Logic Inc. has introduced version 4.2 of its MassTransit Enterprise software for Mac OS X. The upgraded version provides a new platform for mission critical file transfers by combining the power of UNIX-based Mac OS X with the file transfer features of MassTransit.

MassTransit Version 4.2 provides an integrated workflow that promises superior performance, stability and reliability with new options for hosting MassTransit Enterprise's unique, web file transfer workflows with integrated security. It also claims to allow more flexibility in designing file transfer system architectures through Mac OS X's networking enhancements. MassTransit version 4.2 is now shipping, and is available as a paid upgrade for owners of MassTransit for Mac OS 9.

No.360

SICPA North America

Benzophenone-free flexo inks

SICPA North America has upgraded the 39-5 Series UV Flexo Inks with the removal of all benzophenone-based photoinitiators. These inks still offer the added benefit of reducing or even eliminating the problem of doctor blade backside build-up – or spitting – in many press applications. They are available in the full Pantone range, along with process and custom colors.

No.361

SICPA North America

Color shifting inks

SICPA North has introduced SICPAStream Color Shifting Inks. They are available in three different shades, each with its own unique color shift spectrum when printed over a black background. They are available for almost any print process, including flexo, gravure and screen applications.

No.362

BST Pro Mark

POWERscope 3000

BST Pro Mark has introduced a seventh generation video web inspection system, the POWERscope 3000. It combines a high quality PAL video image with a large 3" x 4" field of view – 68 per cent larger than the product's predecessor. It comes standard with a 17" SVGA monitor. An optional metal anti-glare hood is available. The product packs a powerful 38x magnification, essential for effective viewing and inspection of register marks, traps, dot structure, die cuts, tiny type and many other print quality attributes. All this inspection power is neatly packed into a compact 4" x 6" x 12".

No.363

Agfa

Delano Publish and :Delano Production

This web-based project management system provides prepress and printing companies with the means to initiate a company-wide, collaborative solution for project management.

No.364

Weber Marking Systems

Flex-Pack 475 drum label

Weber Marking Systems, Illinois, has introduced its Flex-Pack 475 drum label, a pressure-sensitive material that was engineered for petrochemical labeling and products that are transported in demanding environments.

'Flex-Pack 475 is a unique material that has been tested and accepted for International Maritime Dangerous Goods (IMDG) certification,' says Tom Michalsen, Weber's Media Products manager. 'This label material will withstand just about anything, including seawater immersion and sand abrasion.'

No.365

Labelexpo China 2003
9-11 December, Shanghai
Show Review

Labelexpo China

Attended by more than 5,000 label and packaging printers, the first Labelexpo China show was hailed a great success.

Andy Thomas reports from Shanghai on a booming market



Over 5,000 converters visited Labelexpo China

Labelexpo China 2003, held at the Intex Exhibition Centre in Shanghai, was a great success, attracting over 5,000 visitors and 100 exhibitors. Aside from the very busy exhibition hall, over a thousand visitors also took advantage of the free conference, 'China – Towards a Profitable Future', which featured speakers including Professor Tan Jin-Qiao from the Chinese government.

Roger Pellow, Labelexpo managing director, said Labelexpo China 'exceeded all our expectations. The show was fully sold out and a good quantity and quality of visitor attended from all over China, Hong Kong, Japan, Korea, Philippines, and Taiwan. The feedback from both exhibitors and visitors alike has been excellent – especially with regards to the amount of business having taken place on the show floor. We now look forward to Labelexpo China 2005, which we expect to be double the size of this year's event.'

There is still no such thing as a label 'industry' in China, if by that we mean a defined group of converters dedicated only to labels production, as in Europe and North America

In China, few print plants are dedicated to a single product line, and larger private or government-controlled conglomerates will often buy presses to service their internal print needs. So Labelexpo China visitors also came from related

industries like cigarette and commercial packaging to a larger extent than for the European and Americas shows.

The installed base of modern narrow web machines in China is estimated to be around 400, of which 300 are imported. The biggest volume of narrow web production is taken up with cigarette boxes converted on 16in-20in wide presses. However, the rapid growth of the Chinese economy and the increased penetration of international brands is raising the bar for product decoration – and that means a healthy growth for pressure-sensitive and filmic labels. Perhaps the fastest growing segment, however, will be barcode and product identification labels for marking and logistics operations such as warehousing, baggage tagging, shipping and receiving.

Jakob Landberg, sales director at Nilpeter, sums up the opportunities for suppliers: 'While China is a relatively new market for narrow-web technology, it is proving to be surprisingly sophisticated in respect of adopting the latest UV-flexo or offset printing techniques. It's worth remembering we are talking about the involvement of a relatively young group of well-educated people who are both pragmatic and focused. As far as labels and package converting are concerned, everything currently produced in the west will be eventually produced in China as part of the country's huge manufacturing and service base.'

Awareness of narrow web technology is



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FLEXO

1998 AQUAFLEX ZXB,

26" web, 9 col flexo, UV, hot air, chill rollers, Kemp Smith die. Ref:V8118-L

1996 ARPECO IMPRESSIONIST,

16" web, 6 flexo, UV varnish, 3 rotary die, delam/relam, T bar, rewind. Ref:V7690-L

1998 ARSOMA EM280,

280mm web, 6 flexo, UV varnish, hot air+UV, 3 rotary die, magnetic cyls, rewind. Ref:V8189-L

1997 ARSOMA EM410,

410mm web, 7 col flexo, hot air+1UV, 3 rotary die, rewind+sheet. Ref:V8015-L

1998 ARSOMA EM410,

16" web, 6 col flexo, UV with cooling roll, single rotary die, rewind. Ref:V8573-L

1994 ARSOMA EM410,

410mm web, 5 col flexo, hot air + 1 UV, 2 rotary die, TR 450 Turret rewind. Ref:V8574-L

1997 ARSOMA EM510,

510mm web, 6 col flexo, hot air, 2 rotary die, rewind + sheet. Ref:V8436-L

1998 COMCO FLEXOPACK,

18" web, 6 col flexo, chill rolls, UV, rotary die for cartons. Ref:V6492-L

1998 EDALE G250-60,

250mm web, 6 flexo, hot air, 1UV, delam/relam, 3 rotary die, rew. Ref:V8150-L

1990 EDALE E250S,

10" web, 5 col flexo, hot air, 1UV, 3 rotary die, dual rewind. Ref:V8711-L

1985 MARK ANDY 4120,

16" web, 6 col flexo, hot air, 3 rotary die, rewind. Ref:V6165-L

1989 MARK ANDY 4120,

16" web, 6 col flexo, UV, hot air, 3 rotary die, rewind. Ref:V8288-L

1999 MARK ANDY 4150,

16" web, 8 flexo, UV+hot air, auto register, lamination, 3 rotary die, rew. Ref:V8496-L

1993 MARK ANDY 4150,

16" web, 7 col flexo, hot air + 1UV, 1 rotary die, rewind. Ref:V7609-L

1994 MARK ANDY 2200,

10" web, 6 col flexo, 2UV, T bar, delam/relam, 3 rotary die, rewind. Ref:V8274-L

1991 MARK ANDY 2200,

7" web, 6 col flexo, hot air + UV on last, 3 dies, sheeter, dual rewind. Ref:V8622-L

2000 MARK ANDY 2200,

13" web, 4 flexo, hot air, 3 rotary die, rewind/sheet. Ref:V8825-L

1989 MARK ANDY 830,

7" web, 3 col flexo + 1 add-on flexo, 3 die stations, dual rewind. Ref:V8712-L

2001 MARK ANDY 830,

10" web, 3 col flexo, hot air + IR drying, 3 rotary die, dual rewind. Ref:V8785-L

1999 NILPETER FA3000,

300mm web, 10 col flexo, hot air + 7 UV, 3 rotary die, rewind. Ref:V8492-L

1996 NILPETER FS3000,

300mm web, 6 col flexo, 2 rotary screen, UV, rotary foil, 3 rotary die, rewind. Ref:V6194-L

2000 NILPETER FA2500,

280mm web, 6 col flexo, 6 hot air, 1UV, 3 rotary die, 60+ print cyls, 10 Anilox. Ref:V8713-L

1997 NILPETER F2400,

240mm web, 6 col flexo, UV, 3 rotary die, rewind. Ref:V8714-L

2001 OMET MULTIFILM 620,

620mm web, 7 col flexo, UV, chill rolls, hot air, cold foil, 3 rotary die, rewind. Ref:V7766-L

1995 PROPHETEER 1800,

18" web, 40" unw, 6 col flexo, auto register, lamination, 3 rotary die, rewind. Ref:V8499-L

1999 SIAT L53-200,

200mm web, 5 col flexo on CI drum, 1 UV, double rewind for tape printing. V8486-L

LETTERPRESS

1995 CODIMAG VIVA 300,

300mm web, 5 col L/P, UV, 2 rotary die, 2 rewinds. Ref:V8279-L

1996 GALLUS R300,

300mm web, 5 col L/P, 1 flexo, IR, Corona, T bar, delam/relam, rew. Ref:V7330-L

1991 GALLUS R200 B/S,

200mm web, 6 col L/P, 3 col screen, 1 flexo, rotary foil, 3 rotary die, rew. Ref:V8223-L

1994 GALLUS R200 B/S,

200mm web, 6 col L/P, 3 col screen, 1 flexo, rotary foil, 3 rotary die, rew. Ref:V8224-L

1982 GALLUS R160B,

170mm web, 5 col L/P, 1 flexo, flat & rotary die, rewind. Ref:V8403-L

1988 KOPACK 250 SUPER,

7 col L/P + varnish, 1 flat & rotary die, rewind. Ref:V8146-L

1995 KOPACK 250,

250mm web, 6 col L/P, UV, flat + rotary die, CTC Turret rewind. Ref:V8645-L

2001 LINTEC LPM 300,

300mm web, 5 col L/P, flexo UV, rotary die magnetic cylinders, rewind. Ref:V8730-L

1985 NILPETER ROTOLABEL B200,

205mm web, 6 col L/P, 3 rotary & 1 flat die, UV, hot foil, rewind. Ref:V6925-L

1986 NILPETER B200,

205mm web, 6 col L/P, varnish, UV, gold foil, 3 rotary + flat die, rewind. Ref:V7908-L

1994 NILPETER B3000,

300mm web, 7 col L/P, 2 col screen, foil, 3 rotary + 1 flat die, rewind. Ref:V8430-L

1992 SANJO P270,

270mm web, 6 col L/P, 2 flexo, UV varnish, 3 rotary die, rewind. Ref:V8314-L

1990 SANJO P270,

270mm web, 6 col L/P, flexo varnish, 7 UV, 2 rotary die. Ref:V8729-L

SCREEN

1997 OMET ET450,

16" web, 5 col rotary screen, 1 flexo, 7UV, 3 hot air, 2 rotary die. Ref:V7834-L

1994 SMAG-S/400,

Unwind 600mm, 400mm web, 2 col screen, UV, flat die, strobe, 2 rewind. Ref:V8162-L

MISCELLANEOUS

1996 ROTOFLEX DLI500,

500mm web, sheeter for A4 labels, single die, glue free edge. Ref:V4718-L

1984 ARPECO TRACKER,

13" web, shear slitting, strobe, label counter, web guide. Ref:V8158-L

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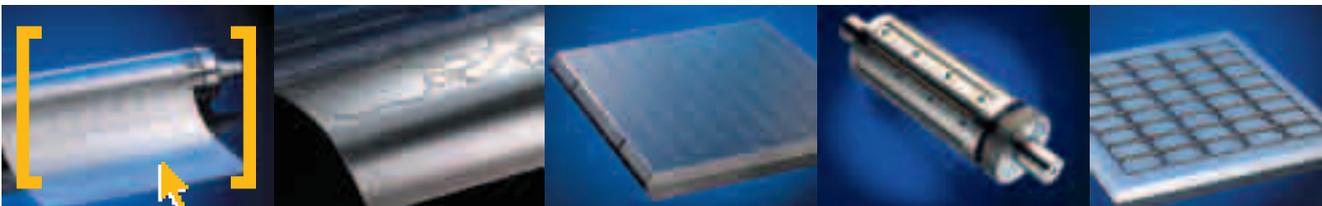
Labelmen claimed 12 press sales

certainly growing in China thanks to the pioneering work of people like Mark Andy's Benny Shaw. Today, supply of pressure-sensitive substrates and inks is no longer seen as a problem in the three key print centres of Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. But as Raymon Lee, newly appointed general manager of Nilpeter China Ltd (see below) points out, 'Up to now rotary tooling is still a problem. Tooling companies should have been producing here, in China, a long time ago.'

So it was big news when Lintec announced at the show that it is to manufacture flexible rotary dies and magnetic cylinders inside China, at a new facility in Tenjin, two hours from Beijing. The facility will supply dies for all makes of press, and has already had orders for Mark Andy, Sanki and Nilpeter machines.

Flexo

'Flexo is still a bit of a negative term in China,' confirms Nilpeter China's Ramon Lee. 'A lot of locally built machines have been installed of limited quality. We are asked to compare



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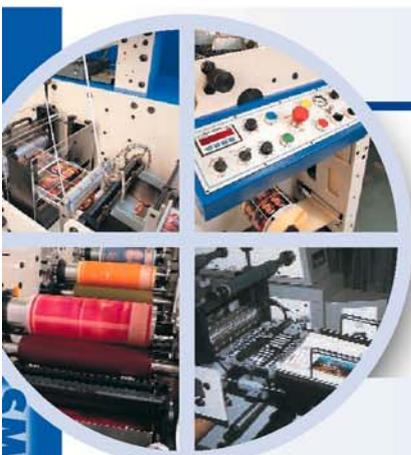
Nilpeter made the biggest commitment to Labelexpo China out of the flexo press manufacturers, demonstrating both labels and carton production. Labels production was shown on a 260mm-wide FA-2500 modular flexo press, configured with seven UV-flexo units and a cold foiling unit, while cigarette pack production was demonstrated on a 420mm-wide FBZ-4200 press running at speeds up to 220 m/minute. 'Apart from solid orders the show generated several hundred strong sales leads that are expected to significantly increase the company's installed base in the region,' enthused Nilpeter's Jakob Landberg.

Kopack – which has shifted its focus from letterpress to flexo press production – was converting double-side printed wraparound PET bottle labels on a 12-colour series 400 UV flexo press.

Mark Andy-Comeo demonstrated an entry level Scout flexo press. The company's Mike Russell, who started selling presses in China back in 1990, is buoyant about the prospects for

'Flexo is still a bit of a negative term in China,' confirms Nilpeter China's Ramon Lee. 'A lot of locally built machines have been installed of limited quality'

China, where Mark Andy now has 50 machines installed. Gallus-Heidelberg showed a fully-specified EM280, with particular emphasis on screen combination converting. Gallus has had a good deal of success with this modular machine in China, helped by the exposure it gains from the press installed at Avery Dennison's converting college in Shanghai allied to the marketing muscle of Heidelberg. ♦



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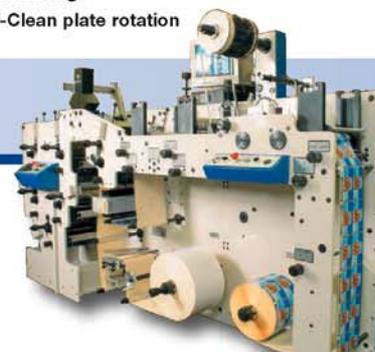


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Labelexpo China 2003 Show Review

Focus Label Machinery showed a 4-color version of its Proflex press launched at Labelexpo Europe. The machine is well suited to first time flexo printers in this market with its relatively low cost and small footprint – the 4-colour version measures just 3.2 x 1.3 metre with three die stations. UV drying is available as an option, along with rotary cold foil, delam-relam, reverse side printing and sheet conveyor. The Proflex shares its print unit design with the Centraflex CI press, which was also on the stand.

KDO's Russell Oddy had the unique experience at a print show of two printers trying to outbid each other to buy the press on his stand, a 6-color 10in flexo press with water-based drying and UV varnish on the sixth station. 'I said the winning bidder would have to have the money by the weekend. The press had actually been sold to a printer in the UK, but I rang him and asked if he would mind waiting a little. He didn't. This is the best show we've done for years, and we do six or seven shows a year. It just never happens that somebody you

never met before buys a machine straight off the stand. Ten years ago Russia was our biggest market, but this will swamp Russia.'

CMR showed its new Roto-Flexo label press, featuring quick changeover between flexo and gravure printing heads via removable trolleys. An in-line die-cutting unit allows production of folding cartons, PS labels and flexible packaging materials. Available print widths are 400-700mm.

Omet was promoting its Varyflex and Flexy presses, but was not showing a press at the show – a disadvantage, as Chinese printers enjoy looking at working machinery (It is reported that Omet will show one at the next Labelexpo China show). Omet was the first Western narrow web press manufacturer to open up a directly owned operation in China, having previously been represented by Mitsubishi.

Letterpress

Letterpress clearly remains a key technology in China, and Labelmen in particular had a 'fantastic' show. Export manager Henry Chen reported the sale of twelve machines. 'China is a very good market for us,' said Chen, who claims total sales of 73 print units in China in just the last three years, as well as the recent installation of a letterpress and screen print machine at Avery Dennison's converter training college. Chinese label printers Chen met at the show were interested in printing a wide range of materials from PS paper to films and IML.

Lintec took the opportunity of Labelexpo to introduce to China a key innovation in letterpress printing. Its servo driven LPM-300ITP press features a computer-controlled inking system with segmented rollers delivering ink to the plate according to a pre-press generated profile. Lintec is one of the biggest press players in China, with 80 of its LPM300 letterpress machines installed in the country and new presses being commissioned at the rate of two a month. 'Right now China is the largest market for us in the world,' says Lintec's Kaz Shiwaku. Lintec has been selling presses to China since the late 1970s and now has over 400 installed.

Kopack was targeting the logistics industry with an interesting application on its series 250 4-colour UV letterpress machine, producing linerless, pressure-sensitive shipping labels.

One Chinese label press manufacturer was present at the show. H. Shine Printing Machine Co, located in China-Dongguan, Guangdong province, manufactures a wide range of printing and ancillary equipment, including flatbed and intermittent/unit-type multi-color rotary presses, slitters, screen presses, die-cutting and foil stamping units, as well as plate making equipment. The basic Eng Jiasheng JS-press series is available from 2-4 colors and print widths up to

Nilpeter sets up China operation

The biggest shock of the show was without doubt the move of Raymon Lee from Heidelberg-Gallus to become general manager of Nilpeter's new wholly-owned China operation, Nilpeter China Ltd. The new company will have sales and technical support centres in Beijing, Shanghai and Shenzhen and expects to employ some 20 engineers and support staff. Nilpeter has had a presence in the Chinese market for several years via MAN Roland, but now wants to take full control of its own destiny.

Raymon Lee graduated from technical college in 1995 and his first post in the graphic arts industry was with EAC, then the agency for Mark Andy in Asia-Pacific. In August 2000 he moved over to head the narrow web business department of the newly formed Gallus-Heidelberg operation, where he drove one of the most successful parts of Gallus-Heidelberg's global business.

Lee sees huge potential in the Chinese market for narrow web presses, and a key weapon in his armory will be the installation of a Nilpeter FA2500 press at Akzo Nobel's ink production plant in Shanghai, where it will be used by both companies for product testing and customer training. 'Training facilities are our biggest problem, which is why the press installed at Akzo Nobel is important for us,' notes Lee. 'The Avery Dennison academy, by comparison was not intended primarily as a training centre for press operators.'

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Chinese PS market is growing 25-30 per cent

250mm. Color registration is claimed accurate to .03mm, and there is a re-registration facility for second pass printing.

The company also offers a more sophisticated servo-driven stack configuration letterpress machine printing reel-to-reel or reel-to-sheet for converting a wide range of materials from pressure sensitive papers to cartons and films. The press can be configured with Screen and UV units. Printing speeds are up to 50 metres/minute.

Shine also acts as the agency for letterpress inks and soya-based inks – certified by the American soya Association – sourced from Japan and from China, as well as a wide range of consumables. Its partners include Toyo inks, Lohmann and Siemens.

Rotary offset

Offset also has a good infrastructure to build on in China. Drent Goebel was promoting the concept of its VSOP (Variable Sleeve Offset Printing) press, although without a press on the stand. The company's Annet Enderink commented, 'Increasing requirements in printing quality mean the sleeve offset press, combined with other printing technologies and inline finishing features, is of high interest to these label printers. It appears that there is a great demand for long run label jobs in China, and here the VSOP printing system perfectly fits in.' L&L spotted Codimag's MD Alain Demol, who confirmed he had been in discussions with three Chinese label printers interested in waterless semi-rotary offset.

Nilpeter was getting a lot of interest from the M3300 offset

unit and gravure cassette – using laser-engraved sleeves – on its stand. Integrated within an MO-3300 rotary offset press line, the gravure unit can be used to print metallic inks for high quality labels, flexible packaging and cartons at less cost than conventional foiling or off-press bronzing.

Komark Corp, now one of the biggest pan-Asia-Pacific label printing groups, installed the first Nilpeter MO3300 offset/gravure combination press in China at its Shanghai plant and last year saw 25-30 per cent growth in the country according to chairman/CEO David Koh. Koh is looking to expand his facility in Guangzhou, which prints beer, care and beauty labels and he plans to assemble label applicators in China. Apart from the Nilpeter offset machine, Komark is a Kopack letterpress house in China – 'Chinese label printers are very used to letterpress,' says David Koh. However, the Shanghai plant will soon pilot its first flexo press, which could see a wider change in direction for the group.

Digital

HP Indigo was testing the digital waters with a fully specified ws4000 digital press on its stand, in-line with an Omega Digicon finishing line, with UV varnishing, digital die-cutting, laminating, slitting/rewinding, with either hot or cold foiling as options.

Also on the stand was a sheetfed Indigo s2000 digital press shown with an off-line I-cut and lamination unit producing on-demand die-cut components. Also on the stand was a VP2020 color label printer with an HP inkjet engine. The VP2020 can also



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Labelexpo China 2003

Show Review

drive the GRE digital converter, which incorporates lamination, ♦ foil stamping, UV-flexo coating, digital die cutting and waste stripping into a compact digital print and converting package.

HP Indigo's Christian Menegon said the show revealed a high degree of interest from Chinese label printers in digital technology. 'They were studying in detail the printed samples. Chinese printers have very high standards, as letterpress and litho is the dominant print culture.'

Journalists at HP Indigo's press conference were less concerned with explanations of digital technology than practical questions over the definition of 'short run', the costs, and are the brands asking for the same in China as elsewhere. 'This shows they want clarification of the digital model,' says Menegon.

Digital printing was also demonstrated by Roland DG, which launched its 'print and cut' VersaCAMM, a 4-color inkjet system incorporating a precision contour cutter. It is aimed at applications from color decals and labels, heat transfers for apparel, posters and Point Of Purchase (POP) materials. Roland has developed a reduced odour, abrasion resistant ink, claimed to require no special ventilation. The company also featured its PC-12 thermal transfer printer/cutter, a highly compact system printing at 2400dpi when using wax ribbons. It uses CMYK plus spot gold and silver foil. Maximum cutting size is 323.4mm wide by 2,000mm long.

Total solutions

In a developing market like China there is a high demand for turnkey, integrated solutions. Two global companies which are well adapted to this environment are Worldmark and Brady Corporation, both of whom had stands. The Chinese division of Worldmark was demonstrating a wide range of systems from thermal transfer printers, ribbons and applicators to in-mold decorated products and die-cut parts. Worldmark has a particular specialism in branding and anti-counterfeit solutions and is also a big label converter/printer, offering digital asset management programs for brand managers. Brady Corporation, similarly, has extensive PS converting operations and is an international manufacturer of coated materials, industrial identification and safety products.

Materials

All the major material suppliers were upbeat about the prospects in China. Raflatac's China marketing and sales manager Fang Deng predicted a 20 per cent growth in pressure sensitive laminates, with film growing fast from a small base. Ms Deng said the Raflatac stand had been visited by key end user companies, including Johnson and Johnson and P&G, which demonstrated Labelexpo China's high profile. Raflatac's ♦

Shanghai production facility began operations in 2001, and reached full capacity late in 2002 with the opening of a second production line.

Avery Dennison's head of Asia-Pacific operations Mike Bero stressed the global nature of the company's business. 'We were able to launch our brand here to have a consistent presentation with what we showed at Labelexpo Europe, the same look and feel.' Also present was Avery Dennison's Printer Systems division, based in Hong Kong, which supplies thermal printers and labelling systems (On the thermal transfer front, ribbon manufacturer Armor Asia announced the opening of a dedicated slitting operation in China for its full range of wax and wax-resin ribbons).

The newly created Surface Specialties business sector of UCB – comprising the former Film and Chemical sectors and the Resins, Additives and Adhesives business of Solutia – was making its first appearance in front of Chinese label printers. Operating through the UCB office in Shanghai, the company was introducing a topcoated facestock film for the HP Indigo press and new waterborne and solvent-borne PS adhesives.

Lintec meanwhile announced the opening of a pressure-sensitive coating plant in Shenzhen and launched a new range of PS materials developed there.

3M was present through its wholly-owned Chinese subsidiary with manufacturing facilities in Shanghai and Xinqiao and sales offices throughout the country. There is a huge market in China for



From left: Kim-Regin Sustman, director Asian operations, Nilpeter; David Koh, CEO, Komark; PH Ching, executive director, Komark; Roger Pellow, MD Labelexpo

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specialist substrates for product identification, particularly in the electronics sector, which is one of 3M's specialities. Another specialist in this area is Polyonics, which was demonstrating its full range of label material/adhesive combinations for industrial environments from circuit boards to ceramics.

Chinese materials manufacturers made a strong showing at this first Labelexpo China. Jinda Plastic Co Ltd. has three huge production plants in Shanghai with more than 30 sales branches throughout the country and produces solventless silicones and emulsion adhesives as well as glassine adhesive label paper and a wide range of food packaging materials.

Guangdong-based King Label Adhesive Products was also present at the show, supplying paper and film face stocks in a variety of grades, as well as adhesives and liners. Film materials include the full range of PP, PE, PVC, PET and PE, while liner choices include kraft, glassine, embossed, double PE laminated, PET and PP.

Another Chinese adhesive specialist is Sun Crown (HK) Adhesive Products, which manufactures a wide range of paper and film face materials – the latter including BOPP and synthetic label materials – as well as specialist adhesives and silicone coatings.

Very interesting was the presence of Jesons Industries at the show. Jesons Adhesives (Suzhou) Ltd is a wholly owned subsidiary of the Indian company Jesons Industries, based in Mumbai. Jesons has been manufacturing synthetic adhesives and acrylic emulsions since 1972 and has ambitious plans to become a truly global player.

Inspection and Finishing

Rotoflex sells high end inspection/rewind systems, and the

company's Val Rimas is confident that Chinese labels printers are ready: 'Label houses in China want the same factory layout and facilities as we find in Europe and North America and the same level of quality. They want to buy right at the top of the market. We have also seen US converters coming over here, Brady Corp, GM Nameplate for example, who want that same equipment globally.'

This was confirmed by Trevor Kavanagh at ABG (formerly AB Graphics/Burton Group): 'We never expected the high level of customers and the realistic general level of business. The bigger labels converters were all interested in buying European equipment, and especially vision control for quality assurance purposes in the pharmaceutical and cosmetics markets.'

Other web inspection/cleaning players included Teknek, demonstrating its double sided web cleaning system and Tectonic showing the entry level KI web inspection system and the fully specified Jaguar 100 per cent inspection for bar and pharmaceutical code verification unit. Unilux showed a new generation of low cost surface inspection lighting for label webs.

Ancillaries and consumables

'We all we learned a lot about this market, especially in the OEM sector,' said David Horton at UV systems specialist GEW. 'The number of visitors from Western countries was surprisingly large and Chinese visitors told us that although there are many regional printing shows in China, none was of the same quality as Labelexpo. We also found the show to be an excellent networking opportunity and met with three possible new distributors one of whom placed and order with us for 70 lamps.'

GEW was launching into China its VCP Film system designed

(Left) Gallus EM 280 combination press (Right) Key end users visited Raflatac stand





to permit UV curing of inks, coatings and adhesives over heat sensitive, thin and filmic substrates on presses not equipped with chill drums. The unit integrates of its own dedicated chill roll within the lamp design. For wider web the NUVaplus system is also now available in a 'Film' version.

Stork saw a lot of interest in rotary screen printing at the show. 'For a lot of Chinese printers it was the first time they have seen a rotary screen unit,' comments the company. Stork now has its own plant in China to manufacture and engrave screens and is continuing its policy of developing drop-in screen print heads for narrow web presses – including now for the Nilpeter FA and FBZ press ranges and the Mark Andy LP3000. Labelmen was reported to have sold four RSI (rotary screen integration) units at the China show to run in-line with its CI letterpress machines. This sort of combination printing is a sure sign of the growing sophistication of the Chinese end user market.

All the key international die suppliers were at the show, where Schober demonstrated a new 'Cut and Place' application

which transfers pre-cut sheets or blanks with high accuracy and at high speed onto a moving web.

Most of the major ink suppliers present at Labelexpo China now have production and distribution networks in China. Sericol, for example - already well-known in China for its Screen inks and now launching its Uvid flexo ink range - has production facilities in Nanjing and customer service centres in Beijing, Shanghai and Guangzhou. US-based Wikoff Color Corporation, by contrast, was making its first venture into China to gain a foothold for its water and UV-based flexo inks.

In terms of pre-press, Esko-Graphics generated a lot of interest from Chinese designers and repro houses with its DeskPack series of plug-ins for Adobe Illustrator, which install high end functionality inside the Illustrator package.

This allows designers to transform concept designs into print-ready files without leaving the native Illustrator format. Esko is also pushing hard the benefits of digital flexo plate making and was demonstrating a CDI unit on-stand. ■

e No.501

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Labels and Labeling

Appointments



Lee Hemphill
Commercial manager, CCL Pachem

Hemphill has been appointed commercial manager to the CCL Pachem group. His key responsibilities will be the management of new business Projects coupled with developing the group's European focus across its blue chip customer base.



Rick Olszewski
Vice president and general manager, Fasson Roll North America (FRNA), Avery Dennison

Olszewski joined Avery Dennison in 1997 and over the last four years has led the company's North American Graphics business.

Don Stoebe
Vice president and general manager, Roll Materials Europe, Avery Dennison

Stoebe joined Fasson Roll North America in 1983 as a process development engineer and has filled increasingly responsible positions in the corporation.

Dave Rosen
Managing director, FLEXcon Europe

Rosen has a background in polymeric coating as well as experience developing brand partnerships with international OEMs and other brand owners. He has worked as a sales representative and more recently as director of corporate business development.

Lynda Purser
Chief executive, The Institute of Packaging (IOP)

Lynda Purser replaces John Webb-Jenkins as chief executive of the IOP in the UK, in preparation for his retirement.

Webb-Jenkins will retain the post of managing director of IOP Services Ltd and take on the role of director of external relations until his retirement.

Tawny Haley
Regional VP of central region packaging, IoPP

An IoPP member since 2000, Tawny's work experience includes 20 years in the printing industry. She began working in display packaging in 1998, and is employed by Midlands Packaging Corporation.

Darin Lyon
National sales manager, Anderson & Vreeland

Lyon will supervise sales and support for A&V's customers in the US, as well as managing the company's internet, e-commerce and telemarketing programs.

Patrick Frimat
Managing director, SATO Europe

Born in France, Frimat has lived and worked in the USA for the past 12 years and relocated to Belgium to join SATO at the beginning of 2004. He has extensive experience in the Auto ID industry.

Tatsumi Inui
General manager, SATO Europe

Inui has worked for SATO since 1979 in both Japan and Europe. In addition to his coordination role in sales and logistics operations, Tatsumi Inui will be supporting

Raflatac, North America

Bob Ambrose has been appointed regional sales manager for the Eastern US; Kevin Griswold is regional sales manager for the Midwestern US; Carl Grosshart is territory sales manager for the New England area; Flora Gonzalez becomes area sales manager for Mexico; Dominico Pavone is territory manager for Canada; Linnea Keen has been appointed product manager, VIP Labeling and Jeff Crum is customer relationship manager.

Donald Kneir
President, decorating solutions division Multi-color Corporation

Kneir will be responsible for the leadership and management of the company's label division and its strategic presence in the industry, with a focus on new product development, customer relationships and profitable revenue growth.

Hanan Yosefi
President & CEO, Matan

Yosefi replaces Rami Einav and joins Matan from Objet Geometries. During 14 years at Scitex Corp, Yosefi served as general manager of the company's largest and most profitable division. He holds a B.Sc. in computer Science and an Executive MBA from Tel Aviv University, and is the holder of several patents in the field of printing. Matan has also established a new global marketing team, consisting of Dror Muallem, VP marketing and Roni Aviv, marketing & sales coordinator. Keren Leshem becomes senior sales director.



The two ILM 280 presses at Kuresa

Global networking

'Globalization' can be a frightening idea for the average label printing company. While end users put the finishing touches to global infrastructures and industry suppliers acquire their rivals to straddle the globe, how does the average label printer respond? **Andy Thomas** reports

The vast majority of the 20,000 label printers who read this magazine around the world work for companies which will never have the resources of a 'CCL, to acquire businesses or set up joint ventures on other continents to service global clients.

But there is another possibility. To build on the strength of smaller companies – dynamism, the ability to respond quickly – and join together with other like-minded label printer/converters in an 'informal network'.

Such networks are based around sharing experiences, technologies, market intelligence and even printing jobs for common customers – but without the crippling management superstructures or the costs, inefficiencies and culture shock often involved in acquisition or joint ventures.

An informal network spanning the continents of Europe and South America is the subject of this article. At the center of the network is successful entrepreneur Daniel Blansjaar. Blansjaar has a long and colorful history in the pressure-sensitive industry, first as owner of Cellux, later as owner of Panoval, and now with a pair of successful coating companies under his belt.

One of these is Kuresa, based in Lima, Peru. Founded 38 years ago, Kuresa's main business is producing pressure sensitive tapes, where it claims 70 per cent of the Peruvian market. It is also the Peruvian agent for Henkel adhesives. Blansjaar is also the biggest shareholder in Mawag, a machine tool manufacturer based in St Gallen, Switzerland. Mawag is the producer of the well-known ILMA letterpress label printing machines. Two European converters using ILMA machines are Kolibri in Holland and Knaup in Germany. Brought together by this common technology, these companies had already established a close working relationship, sharing experiences of the machinery, exchanging production personnel, and handling some work for common customers.

When Daniel Blansjaar made the decision to expand Kuresa's

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From Left: Edmundo Tseng, MD, Kuresa; Daniel Blansjaar; Rodney Noriega, labels division manager



'Kuresa's operation now accounts for one third of the Peruvian labels market and is expanding rapidly into markets across Latin America'

activities into pressure sensitive label production – spotting a 'quality gap' in the Peruvian market – it was a natural move to build upon the existing ILMA/Kolibri/Knaup tie-up.

Three years ago Blansjaar invested \$1m in a purpose-built air-conditioned building to house the first ILMA press on the existing Kuresa site. The Peruvian operatives were trained both in St Gallen and at Kolibri. The Kuresa operation has been a stunning success, now accounting for one third of the Peruvian labels market and expanding rapidly into markets across Latin America. L&L recently visited the plant to see the commissioning of the second ILMA press. Total investment is now \$5m.

Kuresa's current growth rates are spectacular – expected this year to be between 20-30 per cent. Kuresa has some 60 labels customers, with 14 of these accounting for 80 per cent of the company's business. Order sizes are not large, so the capability to change quickly between print jobs was very important in specifying the ILMA presses.

Unlike in the mature markets of Europe, North America and Japan, label converters in Latin America and other developing markets can still win business by investing in state-of-the-art equipment. By installing the ILMA machines, Kuresa immediately leapt ahead of competitors using older flexo machines, and this accounts for the company's spectacular growth.

'Investment in machinery and technology is what differentiates us,' confirms Rodney Noriega, labels division manager at Kuresa. 'Peruvian companies which were buying prime labels from Colombia are now buying from us. The global players in this market want to buy the same quality labels as they buy in North America and Europe at local prices and with short delivery times, and this is the opportunity the ILMA gives us. It helps that our customers see we are at the same level as Europe.'

Kuresa's 'leapfrog' to the very highest level of complex label converting can be directly attributed to its links with Kolibri and the ILM training program.

'This relationship allows us to ask about problems they have already resolved on how to use the ILMAs most effectively,' says Rodney Noriega. 'The transmission of knowledge is particularly good in areas like hot foil combination printing, so we can get to a very high level very quickly. Then we can all start to help each other in terms of new developments. For example we learn that

Knaup is now producing tube labels. This type of synergy is very important once you have reached a common professional level.'

Kuresa claims to be the only label converter in Peru using rotary letterpress, and one of the very few to be printing with a combination of print processes – UV letterpress, UV flexo, hot foiling, lamination. Combination printing allows Kuresa to manufacture in one pass instead of moving sheets or rolls to secondary machines – for example moving printed sheets to a hot stamp machine.

Kuresa has also invested heavily in quality control and is able to bring to bear the company's existing expertise in coating technology to trouble-shoot for customers. And there are other synergies from the tapes business: 'Many of our new labels customers were already buying tapes, so Kuresa already had commercial contacts at the important players,' confirms managing director Edmundo Tseng.

Another useful resource is Kuresa's close relationship with Arca in Italy, allowing label applicators to be supplied to end users.

Expanding through exports

Kuresa's planned 30 per cent growth in 2004 is expected to come from increasing exports throughout South and Central America across prime, industrial and price-promotion labels for the apparel business.

Currently 10 per cent of Kuresa's production is exported. The target is 30 per cent.

Key opportunities are seen in Ecuador – currently Kuresa's best export market – and Colombia, as well as Central America, Venezuela, Chile, Argentina and Brazil. 'Mexico is also very interesting, where lots of local companies are not receiving good service,' states Rodney Noriega. 'Although 60 per cent of Mexico's GDP comes from exports, mainly to the US, there are still opportunities in the domestic market – particularly for promotional labels.'

Kuresa also wants to make an impact in high value-added growth areas like Chilean wine labels, which remains dominated by sheetfed offset. Para Vinos in Chile is already a major customer.

As well as international brands like Beiersdorf, Shell and Castrol, Kuresa counts the major regional players among its



customers, companies like Tampico and Gloria. At the same time Peruvian retailers are matching Kuresa's export drive by moving to other Latin American countries, with certain supermarket groups moving to Columbia, for example.

The second ILMA press is critical for hitting Kuresa's expanded production targets. The company is also looking to buy another new machine which will sit between the lower quality Ecoflex press – used mainly to print textile size and price labels – and the high end ILMAs, allowing the ILMA presses to run the more complex, multi-process jobs.

On the floor

Kuresa's operation is as impressive as anything this writer has seen in Europe and the US in terms of finished label quality, work process and a spotlessly clean pressroom.

A major challenge in Lima is the complete elimination of dust and other contaminants – there is virtually no rainfall in the Peruvian capital and dust from the mountains coats everything. As is well known, UV is particularly sensitive to dust, so the building which houses the presses maintains positive air pressure and incorporates airtight windows specially imported from Switzerland.

The danger of dust contamination led Kuresa to install Teknek double-sided web cleaners after seeing the units in operation at Kolibri.

Kuresa's two UV letterpress ILM 280 machines have the same specification apart from the number of color stations. The most recent is a 4-color rather than a 6-color, since 60 per cent of the company's jobs use just 3-4 colors. The presses are specified for flatbed and rotary dies, with BST web guide, Vetaphone Plus corona treader, turner bar, hot foil and UV flexo varnishing. Closed loop register control is maintained by servo driven length and cross register motors, zeroing on a printed mark applied at pre-press. Once material thickness and cylinder size have been dialed in, register control is automatically maintained regardless of press speed. The touch screen controls are all in Spanish.

A key feature of the ILMA machine is its ability to change quickly between Screen and Letterpress units. The letterpress

station automatically moves up the print tower to make space for the Screen unit, which is rapidly inserted without requiring change cassettes or tools.

Another unique design feature of the ILMA press is the suspension of the die-cutting cylinders on springs which absorb shocks from the press, allowing for variations in material thickness. This eliminates the need for independent tension control zones on the press.

Kuresa uses flexible rotary dies from Kocher + Beck which take 5-6 days to order from Germany. Sicpa supplies all the company's inks. The well-organized pre-press department makes its own film, plates and rotary Screens. A video plate-mounting station sits next to the ILMA machines. The labels finishing section includes two Rotoflex inspection-rewinders.

Political stability

Daniel Blansjaar's opinion concerning the political situation in Latin America is an important indicator of the investment climate on a continent once racked by military coups, social, financial and political instability. And Kuresa is a long-term vision – Blansjaar reckons it will take five years to recoup his investment.

'The political atmosphere has changed rapidly. The military simply can't seize power in Latin America any more and there will be no more forced nationalizations. No country can live without the IMF and the international stock market. Look at the failed coup in Venezuela, and note that even president Chavez has never threatened to privatize the Venezuelan oil industry. In Peru the military is not a power factor anymore.'

Blansjaar is confident that the region has everything it takes to support the best manufacturing practices. 'The cultural background of Latin America stems from the generally European descent of the population, with most quality printers being of either Austrian or German descent. It is a culture that supports quality.'

The Latin America labels industry is now gearing up for handling thin films, Blansjaar reckons. 'Shrink labels in particular have a big future.' ■

 No.502

'Kuresa is as impressive as anything this writer has seen in Europe and the US in terms of finished label quality and work process'





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Technology news

CHECKmate's a winner

Surfscan Technologies has launched a range of true 100 per cent print inspection systems for under £25,000. The CHECKmate series of products is priced from £14,950 to £24,950 and offers a complete end to end solution from proofing stage, to press and through to rewinder.

Andrew Wood, MD of Cardiff based BP Labels says, 'The most interesting development at the Labelexpo in Brussels was the proof reading system from SurfScan Technologies. If we can pick up any errors and irregularities before we run a job on press we believe we can satisfy our clients' stringent QC requirements and save ourselves a lot of money in waste reduction and press time. By using CHECKproof we can be fully confident that a job is ready to run.'

'A lot of our clients operate in the pharmaceutical industry and they've shown a real interest in having this product installed in their own premises as

well. It can support their goods in process so rather than becoming aware of a problem with printed labels at the point of application they'd be able to pre-check all their printed materials right at the point of delivery,' explained Wood.

The CHECKmate system can be implemented pre-press, on the press or on the rewinder.

CHECKproof compares digital artwork (PDF, BMP, EPS etc) with digital scans of print proofs/separations ensuring that any errors in plate makeup/production are detected before running a print job. Proof reading of critical text – of any language – is greatly enhanced, both in time taken and absolute accuracy.

With more than 12 years experience in print inspection CEO and founder Neil Parker explains: 'We have known for some time that there was a gap in the market for a true 100 per cent print inspection system that was both affordable and reliable.'

 No.410

Hot new HighLine Screen

Esko-Graphics has added HighLine Screens to its FlexRip screening family, claimed to offer better details than the smallest FM dot, along with the classic stability of AM screening. Remarks field tester Joe Novak, director of technology at US-based Williamson Printing, 'We have been testing Esko-Graphics' HighLine Screens for over a month. What is remarkable with HighLine screening is that we did not need to change anything to our press setup to produce excellent samples.'

HighLine algorithms can produce high screen rulings at lower output resolutions than traditionally required. For example, a 423lpi screen can be created at 2,400dpi resolution. Esko-Graphics says that by using IntelliCurve, FlexRip's intelligent digital dot gain engine, even the smallest HighLine dot percentages will hold stably on plates and presses, while avoiding side

effects typically associated with stochastic screening – such as higher dot gain or possible retraining of press operators. To avoid any form of object moiré, HighLine Screens are offered with a more flexible, extended set of angle combinations. Alongside the standard set of offset angles, HighLine Screens are offered with 30 and 60 degree angle sets. Because FlexRip allows a printer to combine many screen rulings and dot shapes in the same job separation, HighLine Screens can be combined on the same page with other screening technologies. Esko-Graphics' IntelliCurve Dot gain engine automatically resolves dot gain for all screens on the plate.

HighLine is a device and plate independent screening technology, so can be used on a wide variety of third-party platesetters and imagesetters.

 No.412

Revamped labels website goes live

Log on to labelsandlabeling.com to check out our new look site. With a host of new functions, the site will be a great new tool for the international labeling community.

Surfers can still access and search content from all of the magazine issues, but can now keep up-to-the-minute on all the latest movements in the industry with the new current news and appointments section. Press releases can be uploaded free of charge on to the site and will be updated regularly.

The site also features a new technical forum where you can field questions to our panel of experts from the Di Trolio Flexo Institute – their know-how covers all aspects of the industry from pre-press, inks and die-cutting to finishing. If you have a burning question, check out the link to the section called 'industry knowledge'. There is also a new section called 'labels live' which will feature future web seminars, and other areas include a calendar of events and industry contacts.

 No.411

New Peel & Seal unit from Omet

Omet has developed a Peel & Seal unit which can be applied to any narrow-web printing line. The unit sits between the printing and converting section of press. The new unit can manufacture peel and seal constructions starting from a single material roll, either paper or adhesive BOPP.

The key application is on products such as foodstuffs and cosmetics where the upper label promotes the product, and on its inside you can read more in-depth information.

The label is produced in a width that is equal to half the starting base material, so applying the unit to a machine with a width of 420 mm will deliver a label with a maximum width of 210 mm.  No.413



Firefly: combines a shrink sleeve by Decorative Sleeves UK and a pressure-sensitive label

Film stars

Shrink sleeves, wraparounds and other film-based products can be produced on the latest narrow-web presses, but how feasible is this market for label printers? Report by **Barry Hunt**

Package decoration is all about perceptions of reality. The outside of the container should tell us something appealing about the quality of the product it contains. This is certainly true of film-based packaging. Items like shrink sleeves, wrap-around labels, in-mould labels, re-fill and stand-alone pouches are noted for high-quality product decoration. They also offer pack designers more variation in terms of container shapes, sizes and materials, while playing a major role in the increased global demand for flexible or rigid plastic containers.

These benefits are described separately, but suffice to say that all types of film products are enjoying consistent annual growth in most world markets. The distinction between flexible packaging and labeling is not always clear-cut, but as a rough

guide, the label-oriented types account for about 14 per cent of the total western European labels market. In the USA the Flexible Packaging Association says film-based products represent a \$20 billion industry that accounts for 17 per cent of the total US packaging market.

Clearly, an increasing number of label converters would like to grab some of this action, but occupying center stage are those press manufacturers with new ranges of advanced combination presses. The ability of these machines to process unsupported films, as well as conventional labelstocks, has changed the dynamics of the market.

However, the key issue is whether run length patterns will show any further significant falls. If this happens as part of brand management trends, say some industry pundits, the role of



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multi-substrate presses in web widths up to 510mm, or perhaps marginally wider, will increase. Of course, a similar argument pertains to processing carton board on UV flexo or offset presses, with similar levels of ambiguity.

First, however, there is the matter of how to compete with the present incumbents. Flexible packaging printers own the market. They tend to be part of large packaging organizations that may have their own problems, but they are acutely conscious of global market trends. Day-to-day production centers on using gravure or flexo presses of a meter or more in width that can achieve speeds of 300 m/minute or more. Sometimes so-called mid-web presses are also evident, with both press types split between either central impression (CI) or in-line configurations with hot air drying systems.

Lately the trend has been to install models fitted with electronic servo drives in order to replace mechanical shafts, clutches and gear assemblies. Most are augmented with quick-change gravure or flexo sleeves to achieve infinitely variable repeats and, crucially, faster job changeovers.

Narrow-web advantages

These developments have helped the major flexible printers keep on track with corporate buyers. Arguably, however, there is a largely unsung factor in the equation: they cannot compete with narrow-web presses on grounds of flexibility. As we know, narrow web can operate with more in-line printing and finishing options. If exploited correctly, it can offer packaging buyers even more decorative options, such as rotary UV screen, cold or hot foiling and embossing, as well as a mix of punching, cutting and/or slitting options. Furthermore, UV curing augmented with water-cooled chill plates or chill drums to handle heat-sensitive films is not as technically feasible on wide-web presses as it is on narrower types. Where applications require water-based or solvent-based flexo inks, such as sleeves or wraps for food products, hot-air dryers can increase the drying options.

The latest twist – plainly apparent at last year's Labelexpo Europe – is the adoption of shaftless technology on narrow-web presses. Faster job changeovers include changes between self-adhesive laminates and unsupported films, so enhancing any commercial advantages. ♣

Clockwise from left: Special edition Kronenbourg shrink sleeves; IML labels from Argentina using YUPO synthetic paper; New film packaging for Palmolive soaps; Alcoholic fruit drinks using shrink sleeves



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Profiles of film packaging

• Shrink sleeves

Brand marketers have boosted sleeve sales because they offer 360-degree product decoration, scuff-free reverse printing and many variations of metallic, gloss, matt or pearled surface finishes. They can also fit complex container shapes and incorporate tamper-evident tear strips, perforations or tabs to cover part or all of the closure. Sleeves for high-value products can incorporate anti-counterfeit holographic and/or thermochromic inks features. For soft drinks, carbonated beverages, mineral waters and fruit drinks, sleeves can reduce the effects of stress pressure during filling and distribution, while adding a containment, or anti-shatter factor for glass bottles.

On automatic applicators, the sleeves are formed into tubes by unwinding the printed film webs into a slitting machine, followed by heat-sealing or gluing and cutting to length. The tube is slipped over the container and passed through a heat tunnel to shrink the tube to conform to the container's shape. Manual applicators are available for smaller runs, with both methods carried out either at the container manufacturing stage or before or after filling to suit inventory controls.

Pre-stretched PVC remains a popular and easily-printed sleeve material in some markets, but it is being superseded by oriented polyester (OPET) or oriented polystyrene (OPS) to meet environmental mono-packaging demands, such as using a PET sleeve on a PET bottle.

• Film wraps

Mono-web or overlamine wrap-around film labels also give 360-degree exposure and are applied to glass jars and bottles, metal or cardboard cans and many types and shapes of plastic containers. While paper remains

popular, especially for mineral waters, films offer high gloss effects and come in transparent, white or metallized grades with good conformity to bottle shapes. Like sleeves, wrap-arounds are frequently used to band together variable-size products, such as shampoos or toiletries, for multi-pack promotions.

A hot-melt adhesive strip applied to the label's leading and trailing edges ensures the label wraps tightly around the container. Film wraps are supplied flat from the reel or produced as cut-and-stack variants printed by sheet-fed offset printing. They relate closely to the latest spot-patch film developments as an alternative to wet-glue paper labels.

• In-mould labels

Pre-printed in-mould paper or film labels (IML) form part of the plastic container, so there is no visible label edge. Providing run lengths are economical, they offer several logistical advantages to packagers, especially for dairy products, domestic and industrial cleaners, laundry products and motor oils.

IML methods can add rigidity to containers and, in the case of rectangular tubs, text and graphics for all five sides of the container, plus the lid.

In-mould labels are mainly printed by sheet-fed offset or web-fed gravure, with some mid and narrow-web presses linked with off-line cutters starting to emerge.

In Europe about 95 per cent of the IML market is based on injection molded containers and grows at some 20 per cent annually, according to RBS Technologies Inc. Cut labels made from paper, or white or clear polypropylene, polyethylene or polystyrene are fed from a hopper into the female part of the mould.

While closing, the male part pushes the label into position inside the mould. Polymer is injected and within seconds is cooled sufficiently to produce an integrated container without distortion to the label design. As the mould opens, the container falls away and a new label is simultaneously placed into position for the next cycle.

In North America IML is identified with blow molding. Growth has declined to 4-5 per cent in recent years, due mainly to saturation in the laundry products market and a reversion to pressure-sensitive labeling, says RBS Technologies. It involves feeding pre-printed and adhesive-backed labels into a mould and then blowing a molten plastic polymer into it to form a shaped bottle. Commonly filmic or synthetic materials have replaced paper. Air pressure forms the container and the label adheres through heat activation.

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Individual servo drives also contribute to stable web tension control and accurate print length settings. A corona discharge treater to balance dyne levels for treated or non-treated films and a web cleaner complete the specification.

So far, each of the label markets in the developed world supports no more than a dozen or so converters whose output includes meaningful volumes of film products (that's not counting the small number of Russian, Chinese and other Asian converters that have gone straight to film). In the first case, evidence suggests such firms have worked hard to develop new leads and perhaps master new production techniques. Identifying and encouraging these resourceful converters is also a hard task for those press manufacturers involved. Not surprisingly, their mood is reasonably upbeat.

Jakob Landberg, Nilpeter's sales director, likens the issue to owning a powerful car: 'You don't use all of its capabilities, but it's nice to have them available. It's the same with mixed-substrate presses. People want all the facilities as a safeguard for the future. At least 50 per cent of the flexo presses we sell worldwide have some kind of film-printing capability, and at commissioning trials at least half the owners insist we run film through the press. Many of them see niche markets as a way of spreading out volume, which offers some interesting prospects providing they bring the same values to film as they do with labels.'

Alan Chandler, Edale's international sales manager, has a similar bullish view. He claims brand managers have become not only more receptive towards shrink sleeves, but they have no qualms about accepting UV flexo. 'The manner in which

many international brands are being promoted should see an expansion of short-run jobs printed on narrower presses over the next twelve months.'

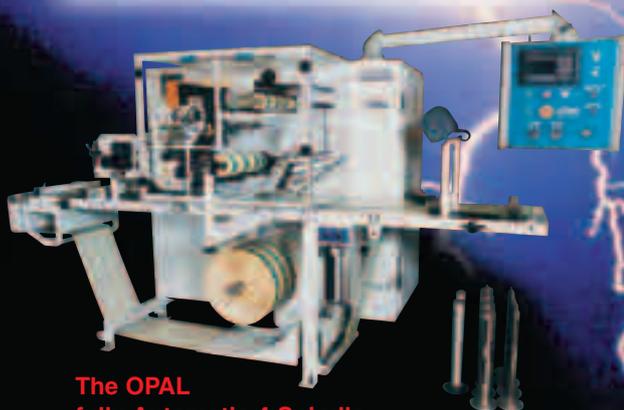
He cites the example of film sleeves for alcopops and similar drinks bottles aimed at specific markets. The uniform size of 375ml means that two-across labels can be easily handled on 510mm wide press for example. He concedes, however, that new label printers must clear some formidable hurdles: 'In this market, sales contacts are everything. Many label sales people would soon be out of their depth selling to major buyers of flexible packaging, therefore it's advisable that suppliers import the specialized sales skills they need.'

'Many label sales people would soon be out of their depth selling to major buyers of flexible packaging, therefore it's advisable to import specialized sales skills'

John Morton, former production director of Jarvis Porter's Leeds facility, has another angle. He once set-up a printing and decoration training scheme for Unilever and is now connected with 4impression based in Harrogate, Yorkshire, which offers similar services for brand managers and print buyers. He expects short runs of film-based products, especially shrink sleeves, will grow strongly for narrow/mid-web presses. 'We are seeing two

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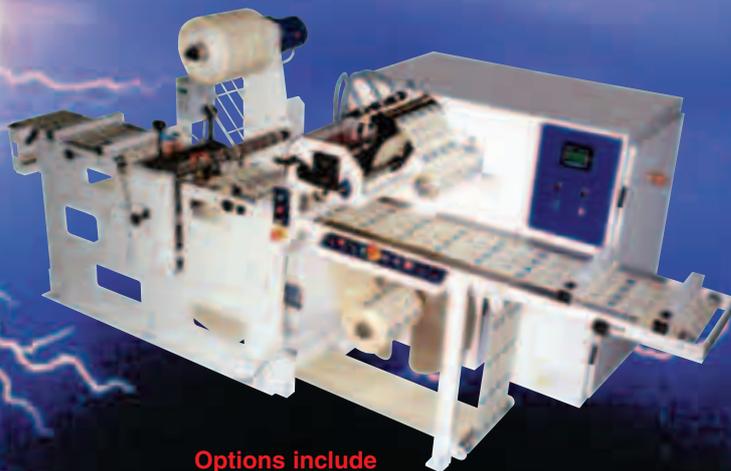


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separate market seekers that are poles apart. The wide-web market is looking to downsize to mid-web to add extra value, while the narrow-web world is becoming wider to meet it in the middle with the same objectives.' This development requires new ways of thinking, by all concerned, including end-users: 'Even the largest of buyers frequently have gaps in their expertise. Many organizations have reduced staffing levels and therefore stripped out a lot of experience. It's important to have trained people who can avoid the pitfalls between the design concept for a pack and the finished result.'

Seemingly, the more enlightened end users who represent companies with strong international brands and clear brand management strategies realize the benefits in building close, long-term relationships with their preferred suppliers. For converters this may mean overhauling their production and communications technology to meet some often-exacting requirements. Of course, we have heard all this before, but it will hardly be surprising if we do not see yet more mergers and takeovers of label groups intended to form integrated label and packaging operations. There are now scores of them in Europe and North America offering UV flexo or offset-based production to high standards with extensive pre-press support.

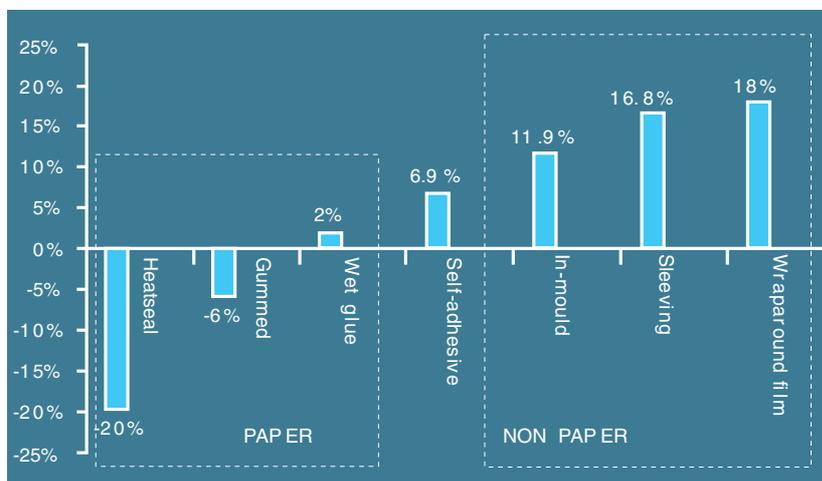
Technical factors

Obviously printing unsupported, heat-sensitive films at practical speeds is more exacting than handling ordinary PS laminates. Some issues like coping with static build-up and maintaining correct tension values would already be familiar to converters of filmic labels. As would a basic understanding of the properties and printing characteristics of the basic materials, namely oriented (pre-stretched) polypropylene, polyester, polystyrene, polyethylene and vinyl.

The pre-press operations relating to package design, origination, remote and/or on-site proofing, as well as rotary tooling and aspects of platemaking may also need reappraisal. Dedicated pre-press systems involving the secure sharing of workflow data using standard file formats have made tremendous technical strides. They include specialized software programs that calculate warping factors to pre-distort designs for sleeves with varying rates of shrinkage, although this service tends to be widely offered by trade repro and platemaking houses supplying packaging printers.

Fortunately for converters entering the film market, the main suppliers of substrates, presses, inks and plates can usually offer sound technical help. Many are keen supporters or sponsors of industry seminars, company workshops and open days devoted to the subject. Here, converters are exhorted to form partnerships with these suppliers, while seeking means to 'future proof' themselves.

In the future, nobody knows where this particular trail will lead, or how fast changing supply chains among brand owners will develop. In ten year's time, a fewer number of converters – and not necessarily in Europe or North America – may have distinct label and film operations using both conventional and digital press technology. Perhaps by then more flexible packaging printers will be operating even faster mid-web presses, while those with wide-web, sleeve-based presses will farm out their uneconomic small-run orders to selected narrow-web converters. As usual, the market will ultimately decide. ■



Growth label technologies by type and by face material used.
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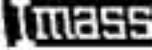
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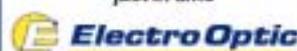
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- 4) 3-4 Colour Economic FlexoPress, like MA830 10"/Focus etc for making VIP Labels and for off-line UV Varnishing(this one we may be interested only if its real cheap)

We are looking at purchasing the above in the next 3 months , which means that in Feb 04 we have to fix the prices and machine make and configuration and in Mar04 we would like to come for machine inspection and in Apr04 we would like to initiate paperwork for the machines. Pls let us know if you want to seriously work out a deal and look at a long-term relationship rather than making a fast-buck.

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Converters and suppliers in the security label business are tight-lipped when it comes to their supply chain. **Katy Wight** talks to Appleton about protecting product integrity

Global demand for branded products is symptomatic of the 21st century. Hot on the heels of this demand are the brand bandits, keen to make a fast buck from counterfeiting, piracy and diversion (CPD). Security-labeling solutions present opportunities for converters, but potentially pose a threat for those who are not looking to invest the necessary capital in establishing a secure supply chain. After all, what use is a security solution that isn't secure?

Brand protection

'No brand is immune from CPD crime,' explains Joe Pleshek, segment manager, security products at Appleton. Appleton has over 95 years of paper and coating technology and in 1994 introduced its first security papers. Since then, it has introduced DocuMark, TechMark and AssurMark [see box p44] security solutions for the secure document and brand protection markets.

The consequences of CPD crime are far-reaching: loss of brand revenue, profit and positioning; erosion of brand value by being associated with inferior product; and destabilization of brand market share, or the entire market itself. Brand owners are also increasingly liable for the impact of fraud if they have not shown due diligence in protecting their brand. Liability is of critical concern where product inferiority has potential safety risks, such as with pharmaceuticals.

'The stakes are incredibly high, which is why brand owners are starting to really drive the initiative,' he adds. 'It comes down to protection. Brand owners want to protect their

business interests, so they are doing something about it, and this in turn is driving their suppliers to look for security solutions they can implement in a cost-effective manner.'

The number of global brands that attended the annual PISEC conference 2003 – brands such as Manchester Utd FC and Burberry – is testament to the growing concern for brand protection. 'Exactly how large it will get is difficult to say,' he adds. 'Still, for brand owners, the future holds tremendous promise for technology that has literally turned paper into an electronic device, with embedded machine-readable codes and magnetic strips.'

For converters that see themselves as solution providers, this niche market offers good opportunities.

Implementation

Security label paper from Appleton is a platform designed to be seamlessly integrated into the label and packaging line and, 'instead of taking the standard label paper that they run every day, they just take that off the end of the press and put a roll of Appleton's stock on.'

Theoretically, converter diversification into security is easy, but Appleton isn't about to supply its security labelstock indiscriminately. The suppliers and licensees of the security technology used in their papers demand that Appleton ensure that from manufacturing, to converting and in transit, not one label falls into the wrong hands. At any point in time, every single label ever produced by Appleton should be accounted for – whether it is in Appleton's hands, at the converter, with the



client or being transported. The supply chain must be watertight.

'The mill where we produce our security products is secure and we are continuously upgrading the security facilities. A lot of this has been driven by the security documents industry, which includes government-related applications that require us to continually monitor the viability of our mill security.' From the mill, both Appleton and the converter know when a particular product is being shipped, whom the carrier is and when it is scheduled to arrive.

From this point, the converter takes responsibility for the labelstock. A converter must be prepared to invest the necessary capital to establish their part in securing this supply chain, or risks compromising the integrity of the labelstock and the brand.

'We look for partners who are willing to invest in the infrastructure. Appleton has a formal chain of custody requirements procedural document that each converter must agree to and sign.'

Chain of custody

'There is a sort of cat and mouse game that we all play with and against the bad guys. What we are trying to do is create products that will make it very difficult for criminals to create pass-offs,' says Pleshek.

One of the chain of custody requirements calls for storing all TechMark and AssurMark products – including raw stock, work in process, finished products and readers – to be stored in a locked, secured location with access limited to the converter's designated security representative. When a roll of security paper arrives, the converter must authenticate it and then fax Appleton immediately acknowledging receipt of the shipment. If the product isn't going immediately on press, it must go into a caged or secure area.

'We also require the converter to package all finished goods with tamper-evident packaging such as shrink-wrapped packages or tamper-evident tape,' says Pleshek. 'The converter must also ensure the proper distribution of finished TechMark and AssurMark products to their customers.'

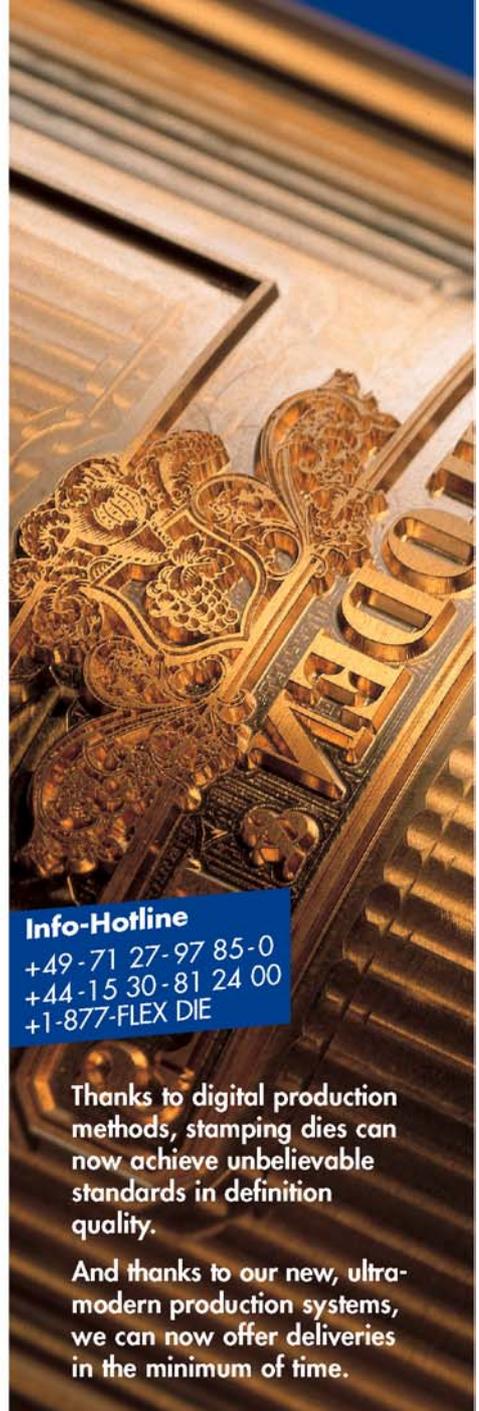
Converter Brady Corporation, based in Milwaukee, works directly with brand owners and has formed strategic partnerships with other security technology companies to offer

North American Security Products Organization (NASPO)

'Until recently, there has not been much in the way of formal standards for ensuring chain of custody procedures and the resulting requirements,' says Jeff Turmel of Brady. 'Any printing company with modern electronic-imaging capabilities can call itself a security printer'.

To combat this lack of regulation, NASPO was founded in 2002 to classify and certify security printers and suppliers. Members are required to fulfil and maintain a set of consensus standards and operational protocols and are certified annually by certified auditors.

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Jeff Turmel (above) leads brand protection at Brady; Encrypted TechMark threads (left) embedded in a label; Hand-held readers (below) can authenticate and track individual products



TechMark Threads

TechMark threads are embedded in paper and carry encrypted information that can be read by a hand-held reader. Coded data is added to the thread by a proprietary process using structured magnetics. Information encoded with this process cannot be erased, altered or duplicated. The thread cannot be removed without destroying the paper. After embedding, the thread can also be written to, allowing variable data to be added.

TechMark Taggants

TechMark Taggants are added to the paper fibers during the papermaking process. When viewed under ultraviolet light they become visible in various colors. The TechMark VeriCam reader can distinguish the color combination in each document or product to validate a code.

AssurMark Security Label Substrate

AssurMark Security Label Substrate is a pressure-sensitive labelstock that can't be removed without visible damage. It combines embedded security fibers, which are only visible under ultraviolet light, with tamper-evident characteristics, so that brand owners can tell if someone has placed a fraudulent label over the top of an authentic AssurMark label.

a range of standard and custom-engineered security label solutions. Naturally they can't go into too much detail about their capabilities and brand owner customers – this would breach their confidentiality agreements – but they have been working closely with Appleton.

'The company has invested heavily to establish its own chain of custody requirements and within the last six months has put in place an entirely separate manufacturing operation for its secure products,' explains says Jeff Turmel, business leader of Brady's brand protection group. 'The facility has restricted areas, cameras monitor all activities and employees are required to submit to background checks. These efforts minimize the risks that any security label material could get out into the marketplace.

'In accordance with Appleton's custody requirements, Brady has put in place a very sophisticated series of measures. We literally monitor and document every ounce or square inch of material used.'

Appleton has an agreement that at any stage, it can audit a converter's use of security products. In the event of a court case, Brady and Appleton can provide documented evidence of every inch of security label material sold to them, as well as a full account that all excess was destroyed. This helps to prove that suspect label products are counterfeit, but so far, 'this has not happened and it is our hope that it does not,' says Pleshek.

Layered solutions

Converters partnering with other security providers and investing together in R&D for a holistic solution are likely to stay one step ahead of the game. A forward-thinking converter can provide a variety of security tactics and brand owners are increasingly exploiting more than one.

'Brady offers a variety of additional security features to give brand owners a layered approach to brand protection,' says Turmel. 'On top of Appleton's paper, Brady could add a layer of security inks, a variety of printed features, (laminates, holograms, taggants etc) logos or identifying marks.'

Security label technology will continue to evolve because of the migration path of the technology – followed by competitors and criminals alike. He adds: 'Realistically we see a 12-24 month lifespan on exclusivity. The criminals are more devious than the competition. So, given the sensitive nature of this business, I unfortunately cannot share any of our future developments for fear of tipping our hand!' ■

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 enquiry directly to the relevant company.

		e No.
AB KELVA	17	100
AEMG	IBC	101
AGFA	FC	102
ALPHASONIC	13, 16, 22, 27	103
ASHE CONVERTING	40	104
AVERY DENNISON	IFC	105
LABEL INDUSTRY GLOBAL AWARDS 2004	73	149
BOISE	45	160
BRUSHFOIL	31	106
BUNTING MAGNETICS	79	107
CC1	32	108
CHEMINSTRUMENTS	81	140
CPS	14	153
CREO	48	109
DAVID HULME	19	157
DIGITAL LABEL & TAG PRINTING WORKSHOP	71	110
DUPONT	35	159
EDALE	55	111
ELECTRO OPTIC	53	112
ETISOFT	31	150
FLEXCON	2	113
FOCUS	21	158
GALLUS	26	148
GRAFICON	8	114
GRE ENGINEERING	83	163
GREEN BAY PACKAGING	OBC	115
GSB WAHL	32	154
HARPER	51	139
HOLFIELD TOOL & DIE	63	147
IGT TESTING SYSTEMS	32	116
ILM	63	117
KDO	81	164
KOCHER + BECK	5, 39, 41, 43	118

		e No.
LABELXPO AMREICAS	69	119
LABELXPO LATIN AMERICA	66	120
MARABUWERKE	75	161
MARK ANDY	23	121
MATAN	67	151
MPS	83	162
NILPETER	12	122
PCMC	57	123
POLYMAG TECH	61	145
POWERFWD	14	156
PRATI	9	124
PRIMARC	80	165
PRIX	29	125
RAFLATAC	37	142
RAYVEN	77	126
RIPIT	49	127
ROTARY SYSTEMS	63	146
ROTOMETRICS	1	128
SCHOBER	61	129
SERICOL	46	138
SOHN	29	131
SOHN	77	130
SOPAL	59	143
TAKRA CORP	25	133
LABEL EXPO GLOBAL SERIES	65	132
TEKNEK	77	144
TRANSAM	79	166
UVITEC	31	134
VANDERGRAF	14	152
W&D MACHINERY	77	135
WINK	20	136
XYNATECH	15	137





Omet's new technical demonstration center

Omet has celebrated its 40th anniversary by opening a new Technology Center at its home base of Lecco, Italy. The company was founded in 1963 by today's president Angelo Bartesaghi, who oversaw the opening of the new 2,000 sq meter, three-floor building next to Omet's production facility, and hosted a gala dinner for the visiting international group of 120 label printers, carton converters and journalists.

The ground floor of the new Technology Center forms a 600 sq meter showroom where the Omet presses can be demonstrated and customer jobs trialled.

'More space is now necessary to be able to manage the business activity of our company efficiently, owing to strong expansion across the world,' comments Omet business manager Marco Calcagni. 'Above all, we have realized how important it is to have a fully equipped show room available for our customers to get a direct view of what's new. Our machines need to be seen in production so the technology and quality can be properly assessed.'

Both a Flexy label press and a Varyflex shaftless press were on demonstration. The Varyflex was shown changing between unsupported film and folding carton without changing the machine configuration, demonstrating the speed of a makeready which combines plate sleeve changeover and removable inking cassettes with automatic pre-register and register control for

Founded in 1963, Omet celebrated its 40th anniversary by opening a new technology center in Lecco, Italy, and demonstrated its latest labels, film and carton converting technology to 120 international guests.

Andy Thomas reports

Omet Technology Center celebrates 40 years

both print and die-cut sections. The Varyflex print unit is driven by two independent drives for the plate and anilox cylinders, with plates mounted outside the press on lightweight sleeves, which are demounted and locked using air pressure. The plates at the demo were BASF Digiflex digital plates made by NuMaber. When converting cartons, the Varyflex was utilizing Xynatech male and female magnetic dies.

The press can print BOPP films down to 12 microns in its FP variant, utilizing chill drums and the 'Multitension' tension control system to allow handling of extensible films.

Omet took the opportunity of its Open House to announce the commercialization of its rotogravure unit for the Varyflex. The fireproof unit comes with an extractable inking cassette, optional viscometer for solvent inks and rubber inking roller for metallized inks. It has a double membrane pump for ink feed and can take either a full printing cylinder or flexo plate cylinder. ▶



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'Since Labelexpo Europe, Omet has scored some big successes with the carton configuration of the Varyflex. Devrim, a major Turkish printer, has ordered its second machine'

Print repeat is from 12-26ins. There are different drying options for inks, adhesives and varnish for medium runs and for higher volumes. The unit is available for press widths 430mm, 520mm and 670mm with print widths 10mm less. Longitudinal pre-register is fully automatic and longitudinal adjustment 360° driven. Register control is optional.

Also now available for the Varyflex is a Screen unit which can be inserted, without tools, into any printing unit using the same cassette used for the flexo units. The silkscreen head is driven directly by the print unit and utilizes the UV lamps already on the press web path. The operator can adjust for paper thickness, doctor blade inclination, printing pressure and traverse/circumferential pressure. Automatic pre-register and automatic inker with level control are also available.

Since Labelexpo Europe, Omet has scored some big successes with the carton configuration of the Varyflex. Devrim, a major Turkish printer, has ordered its second machine, specified with 8-colors flexo with combined UV + hot air drying, 670 mm width for in-line printing, embossing, die-cutting and creasing of folding carton boxes.

Significantly, the most highly specified press line has gone to China, with the active cooperation of the new Omet office in Shanghai (see Labelexpo China review). The 520 mm wide press has 10 flexo printing stations along which a reverse unit, silkscreen unit and rotogravure unit – both of which can be inserted between the flexo stations. It combines UV and hot air drying, hot-foil and cold-foil units, a converting station for in-line production of carton boxes with a sheeter collection table and waste suction. The press is supported by a videoconference connection for online service, if needed.

Flexible Flexy

Omet also wanted to demonstrate that its 'entry level' Flexy press is capable of producing more than just pressure sensitive laminates. The press on display had been specially configured to print thin films down to 20 microns – it can also be modified to convert folding cartons – with inter-station UV drying, chill drums, motorized phasing on print and die-cut sections and automatic register control. Other options for the Flexy now include magnetic hot foil stamping plates and the new Peel & Seal unit, as well as cold foil. These are retrofittable.

Omet's Peel & Seal unit, which sits between the printing and converting section of the press, can manufacture Peel and Seal constructions starting from a single material roll, either paper or adhesive BOPP. The key application is for products such as foodstuffs and cosmetics where the upper label promotes the product, and the inside carries more in-depth information.

The Peel & Seal label is produced in a width that is equal to half the starting base material, so applying the Peel & Seal unit to a machine with a web width of 420 mm will deliver a finished label with a maximum width of 210 mm. The construction can be printed with UV and/or water-based inks, although when using UV on PP, it is necessary to have a cooling drum. The Peel & Seal unit can be fitted to any press. ▶



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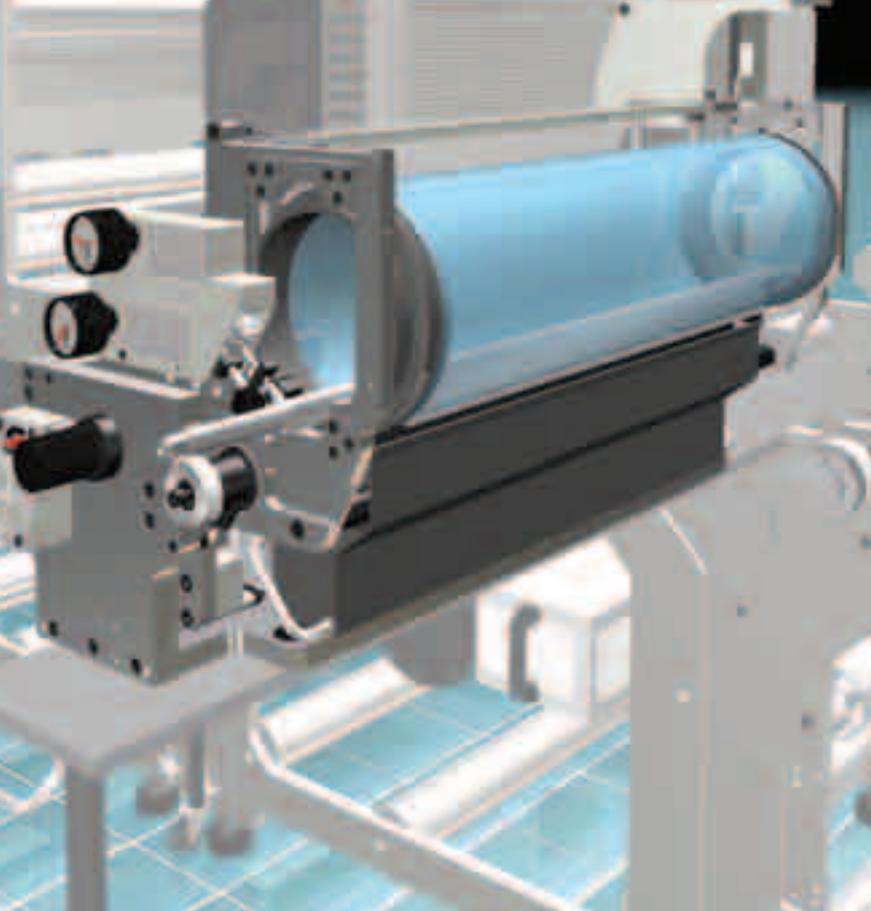
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Modular screen unit for the Varyflex press

'The entrepreneurial dream of Angelo Bartesaghi started long before he founded Omet in 1963 – during ten years spent as a design engineer in an major company in Lecco'

Angelo Bartesaghi – industry pioneer

The entrepreneurial dream of Angelo Bartesaghi started long before he founded Omet in 1963 – during ten years spent as a design engineer in a major company in Lecco. In the early 1960s Italy went through an economic boom and Bartesaghi saw his opportunity. 'We started working in my parents' house: the offices at home, the first workshop in the garage,' recalls Bartesaghi. Working 12 hours a day with two other engineers from his previous enterprise, the team modified an existing label press design, and shortly afterwards built its first machine – a press to fold napkins.

In 1965 Bartesaghi moved to Via Lamarmora in Lecco, making a point of employing administrative staff with foreign language skills. 'That attention for foreign markets that always marked Omet started already at that time,' says Silvia Agostoni, Bartesaghi's administration 'right hand' since 1965. The company exhibited at Drupa, Dusseldorf, for the first time in 1970 and by the beginning of the '80s the company had over 50 employees and two divisions - machines and bearings. Bartesaghi then decided to invest in a purpose built factory, expanding in the '90s into the new complex in Via Polvara. Today the company stands at 150 employees and Snr Bartesaghi shows no sign of wanting to retire. ■

 No.504

News in brief

MDC installs full automation line at WRE/ColorTech

The Max Daetwyler Corporation has been selected to install a complete MDC automated plating, finishing, and engraving line at WRE/ColorTech located in Greensboro, North Carolina. WRE/ColorTech has six locations across the US and Canada. Installation will begin early 2004 and be completed by the end of the third quarter.

Ripware to distribute KPG First Check

Kodak Polychrome Graphics has appointed Ripware Limited as a distributor of the KPG First Check desktop color proofer in the UK.

Expansion strategy for synthetics manufacturer

Yupo Corporation America has completed a major expansion of its manufacturing facility in Chesapeake, Virginia. The project resulted in an additional 10,500 square feet of warehouse space.

Dynamic online store goes live

Dynamic Dies has launched a new website and online store at www.dynamicdies.com. Stocking over 100 products, the site aims to provide a one-stop shopping solution. Buyers can choose items from categories that include cutting die supplies, printing plate supplies, Dienamo and Shoulderflex.

Swiss labeling system to enter Irish market

Lenox Systems has been appointed distributor of Swiss company Collamat Stralfors AG's labeling systems and labels in Ireland and Northern Ireland. Lenox Systems is based in Bray, County Wicklow, and supplies product identification, coding and marking to the food, beverage, pharmaceutical, electronics and industrial sectors.

Tekra gains another ISO certificate

Tekra Corporation's New Berlin facility for coating and converting engineered plastic films has gained ISO 9001:2000 certification.

'Implementing the new standard has been a positive force for us,' said Mike Dreobl, VP of Corporate Quality at Tekra. He continued, 'These changes have already begun to pay off in terms of error avoidance as well as improving and enhancing our business processes.'

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Future vision

Rako Etiketten has instituted a quality control program on its rewinders utilizing the latest scanning heads and fault detection/analysis software from AVT. L&L reports on a comprehensive QC solution at one of Europe's leading label printers

In the global label industry, the name Rako Etiketten is synonymous with quality and innovation. Since Ralph Koopmann founded the company in 1969, the growth achieved through the success of its products on the one hand, and a series of acquisitions on the other, has established Rako as a leading performer in the industry. Today, the company has approximately 400 employees, 40 of whom are apprentices training in a variety of trades.

Over the years, Rako has acquired a reputation for its enthusiastic and ready acceptance of new technology. In 1997 for example, it was the first printing house in Germany to install an Indigo Omnius digital press for printing labels, foil and cardboard in top quality offset. The resulting growth in demand for digital offset printing led to the installation of another two presses for printing 6-color Indichrome. Most recently Rako became a pilot installation for HP Indigo's latest ws4000 digital press.

Now Rako has invested in a PrintVision Helios 100% quality assurance solution from Advanced Vision Technology (AVT), representing another example of the early adoption of new technology.

Visitors to Rako's production facilities in Witzhave, near Hamburg in

northern Germany, are impressed by the clinically clean, well-lit printing facility, and the array of more than 30 presses extending into the distance. Signage above each press provides details of its configuration, its printing process and ancillary equipment, and the names of its crew.

Sascha Willhöft, the executive responsible for Rako's data processing and organization, explains the reasoning behind the company's decision to acquire the Helios quality assurance system. 'We wanted to have absolute quality control with the ability to remove faulty labels and replace them. We must deliver perfect reels to our customers to ensure trouble-free operation during the subsequent automatic labeling process.'

After deciding that they wanted the Helios, Willhöft notes that question was: where to mount



*Below: 100 per cent inspection on LeoMat rewinder
Left: Nilpeter press at Rako*



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Above: The Helios scanning head examines full web width

it. Installing the system on press was out, because stopping and re-starting presses to cull unacceptable labels would result in costly downtime. And Rako would have to equip all 30 presses with Helios systems, a costly way to go. So they decided on a different approach.

'Working in conjunction with the people from our LeoMat Maschinenbau (Machinery Construction) division, AVT's technicians installed the Helios system on an off-line LeoMat rewinder, enabling us to gain experience with the control equipment in the most economical manner,' Willhöft explains. 'We began using the Helios to control the quality of pharmaceutical jobs, because that is the most critical type of work. The text and symbols on the labels must be absolutely correct, complete and legible. Nothing must be missed or distorted. A comma, for example must be printed as a comma and not a period. Now we're using it to control all the top quality jobs we produce for branded products from other customers.'

In operation, the Helios scanning head examines the full width of the running web. Colored lights indicate the condition of the labels being scanned: green for perfect, yellow for slightly faulty and red for imperfections. On detecting a faulty label, signals from the scanning head automatically stop the rewinder. The questionable label can then be inspected on the monitor of the control's terminal to determine the nature of the flaw and whether the label should be removed and replaced with a good one. When asked if that procedure can be accomplished with the precision required, Willhöft points out that the system operators have proven that they are perfectly capable of locating a label on the web in perfect register.

Apart from ensuring that the printed images are complete and correct, the Helios detects a multitude of random defects such as misregistration, color variations, streaking, spotting, hazing and misprints. It also ascertains that the matrix removal and die-cutting processes are being performed accurately. The thresholds, at which the Helios activates the fault signal for any of those defects, are preset on the screen of the unit's terminal.

Satisfied that the Helios fulfilled their requirements for total quality control, Rako executives have ordered more systems to equip other rewinders. One of the new installations will incorporate an add-on module, which will enable them to control the full-color surface of any kind of printed label. With the aid of a reflector support, the range of labels inspected will

be extended to include those printed on all types of highly reflective substrates, such as aluminum foil and metallized, as well as transparent materials.

The rewinders

The additional new Helios inspection systems will also be installed on the LeoMat rewinders. Several years ago, when trying to source rewinders, Rako management was unable to find one that met all their specifications, and decided to build their own on the premises in Witzhave. Since then, LeoMat Maschinenbau has manufactured all the rewinders installed by Rako Etiketten, including 12 in the finishing department alone, and has sold approximately 150 more to third parties.

In the digital printing department, LeoMats are used in die-cutting and slitting reels of the labels printed on the HP Indigos, and also for overprinting using flexo and silk-screen printing stations which, like the other finishing units, can easily be interchanged as required. During overprinting and die-cutting, accurate register is maintained by Insetter electronic controls, with scanning heads mounted over the web on the stations concerned. The heads generate signals that electronically determine register status. Any misregister is automatically corrected by adjusting the speed of the station's individual servo-drive motors in order to alter the web tension and the repeat length. Although the rewinders can run at speeds of up to 250 meters (820 feet) per minute that is reduced to 120 meters (394 feet) per minute when insetting is involved.

Peer Gronkowsky of LeoMat provided more detailed information about the rewinders. He relates that they are capable of handling webs up to 510 millimeters (20 inches) in width and in addition to the finishing functions, can also be equipped with laminating, ink-jet printing, hot-foil stamping and corona treating stations among others. While the LeoMat rewinders at Rako work in conjunction with Nilpeter presses, they can be employed off-line with those from other manufacturers such as Arsoma and Gallus. ■

No. 505

'The range of labels inspected will be extended to include those printed on all types of highly reflective substrates'

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Beam me up

Imagine a flexo press that can print wet inks on top of wet inks. Sound unlikely? **Katy Wight** investigates

It's not often these days that flexo innovations can truly claim to be revolutionary. However, a new printing ink technology from Sun Chemical called WetFlex is threatening to overturn the film and flexible packaging industry.

Ko-Pack, a CI-flexo press manufacturer, and ESI, an electron beam manufacturer, have been collaborating with Sun Chemical to promote this printing technology. The three companies have set up a demonstration center at Sun Chemical in Carlstadt, New Jersey, to showcase their press configuration: a Ko-Pack 400-F CID press, Energy Science's EZCure electron beam (EB) curing unit and Sun Chemical's WetFlex printing process with UniQure inks. The system enables printers to wet-trap electron beam-curable inks on a central impression drum (CID) flexographic press, without the use of inter-station drying. And it claims to be commercially viable. So does this technology really live up to its 'revolutionary and not evolutionary' claim?

Unique innovation

'Why is it revolutionary?' echoes David Klein, product development specialist, Sun Chemical. 'Because no one has been able to print wet-on-wet before, on non-absorbent substrates, with liquid inks that contain no VOCs. You have always needed to have inter-station driers. We have been working on the ink system for about four years and now it is a feasible solution. We can offer our customers something that nobody else can.'

UV-curable inks did not transfer across to flexible packaging as easily as expected. Jim Anzai, President Ko-Pack explains: 'When flexible packaging printers were trying to sell UV inks to the pharmaceutical, food and cosmetic industries, the issue was always the odor caused by the chemical reaction with a catalyst during curing. This doesn't matter with labels that don't come into contact with the actual product, but for flexible packaging – which is

predominantly used for food packaging – solvent and -based inks typically have been used.

Cost effective curing

Crude forms of EB technology have existed for the film and flexible packaging markets for a while, but initially they damaged the film and were very expensive. ESI has produced a smaller, cost-effective curing unit, which has harnessed the strength of the electron beam, softening its collision with the film. The press and inks are currently configured to work on PE, but research on OPP, PET, PVC, PETG and coated board is ongoing.

The EZCure unit filament emits electrons. When a high voltage is applied, the electrons accelerate and are concentrated in one direction. On contact with the web, the electrons cause molecular changes in the inks to cure them. The EB-cured inks are claimed to have a significant quality advantage over solvent and -based equivalents. Purported to be the same standard as UV-curable inks, they are also FDA-compliant for indirect contact with food and avoid the odor problem. ▶



Images courtesy of Sun Chemical

EZCure electron beam (EB) curing unit

'no one has been able to print wet-on-wet before, on non-absorbent substrates, with liquid inks that contain no VOCs. You have always needed to have inter-station driers'



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With the UniQure inks, you can trap over-printed inks – while wet – on non-absorbant substrates, independent of color lay-down sequence'

Images courtesy of Sun Chemical



Inks cure instantly after exposure to electron beam

Ko-Pack 400-F CID press

Until this technology was introduced, both inter-station driers and overhead ovens had been required to dry flexo inks adequately. With the UniQure inks, you can trap over-printed inks – while wet – on non-absorbant substrates, independent of color lay-down sequence. The inks cure instantaneously after the printed image is exposed to the electron beam installed in-line after the central impression cylinder. Printing wet on wet means that a CID press is essential since it has no turn bars or other rollers that would touch the layers of ink before it has been cured.

'Having a single EB-curing unit addresses the cost and space restrictions associated with having one between each station. Printing wet on wet also saves a lot of time,' points out Anzai. 'In UV flexo, the density of ink drops at high speeds, which can result in a reduction in color density. We have developed a special closed chamber to ensure that we maintain 100 per cent transfer at high speeds – up to 1,000 feet/min.

'UV flexo doesn't fully utilize all of the energy expended for curing. During EB curing, the web goes through a nitrogen chamber, which makes the surroundings inert. Purging the system of oxygen means that the electrons can cure more efficiently,' he says.

UniQure inks

The ability to wet trap inks is noteworthy, but not the only advantage of EB-cured inks. David Klein of Sun Chemical believes that UniQure has a significant quality advantage over solvent and water-based inks.

'UniQure gives a crisper image. It achieves excellent color

and high definition images through good and consistent ink density. It has an ink density with an 800 line anilox similar to a 600 line with water and solvent. It also eliminates do-nuts and other problems that can occur with water-based inks where it's difficult to maintain viscosity,' he says.

'It achieves a very high gloss with a fine anilox – it puts down less ink, has finer dots, but manages to be glossier,' adds Klein. Sun Chemical predicts that ink consumption will decrease by between 23-33 per cent with the UniQure ink system compared to solvent or water-based inks used on the same print job. 'Although it puts down less ink, it leaves more on the substrate after curing – and that contributes to the high gloss, ink density and durability.'

Another coup for WetFlex is the fact that it can achieve a 'lamination look' when an EB coating is applied in-line over the printed image. If a printer doesn't need to laminate solely to protect inks, UniQure can give their product a lamination look – in-line and in one pass. The cost benefits are glaringly obvious – no laminate costs and no adhesive costs in addition to all the advantages of running a zero-VOC inks system..

UniQure also cures instantly – and completely – at high speed, which is important when printing roll to roll.

'UV lamps should be replaced at specified intervals as they degrade over time and they may not always be operating at the optimum output. When you are printing roll-to-roll this can have a dire effect if the ink is not fully cured, because the inks might offset on the reverse side of a printed roll when it's wound,' explains John Warwick, sales director at Ko-Pack.

UniQure is VOC-free, Kyoto-compliant and does not contain any of the photo-initiators or extractables that are associated with odor and off-taste. The inks are also robust and have high resistance properties. 'And on top of that, the CID press is smaller, easy to install and to maintain – you can even retrofit older press equipment with EB capabilities,' Klein adds.

Commercial runs on PE are expected to start running in the first quarter of 2004. There is a full color range of the ink with 17 dispersions and white and a fade-resistant outdoor line. A variety of EB coatings and laminating adhesives also are available from Sun Chemical for optimum performance.

'We think that it will make a tremendous impact on the packaging industry. It's not often that something completely new comes along,' says Klein. 'It offers a real alternative and the benefits are easy to see. The product offers new avenues for making money.' ■

No. 506

The concept:

- Wet trap inks on a CI press
- High definition graphics
- No interstation drying/curing or tunnel ovens
- No VOCs or solvents
- Instant cure at high speed
- Low extractables
- Low/no odor
- In-line mono-web 'lamination look'

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Andy Thomas, Tarsus

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Digital demo center

HP Indigo now has its industrial presses, finishing systems and workflow solutions on permanent demonstration at a new technology centre in Maastricht. **Andy Thomas** reports

HP Indigo has opened a dedicated demo and training centre in Maastricht, allowing the company to demonstrate a full digital workflow from origination and data handling to print and conversion. The recent open day brought together some of Europe's biggest label converters and saw a satellite link-up with ws4000 digital press users in Germany and the UK.

At the Open Day a ws4000 press was being demonstrated with a Digicon in-line finishing unit from ABG, combining digital die cutting with a laser die-cutting unit from Cartes.

There is clearly a lot of misunderstanding about these two terms. Digital die cutting refers to the technique of mounting the cutting plate on a servo-controlled cylinder which registers the cut to an eye mark on the web then adjusts the cylinder speed relative to the semi-rotative web to achieve the desired repeat. This means there is no need to change cylinders when the repeat changes.

An interesting aspect of the demo area was the materials coating section. To key the inks on the HP Indigo press, most film and many paper substrates need to be specially coated. There is today a wide selection of film and paper grades available from the main materials suppliers, with more constantly being added and validated by HP Indigo. But there is a premium to be paid for these specialist grades, while many converters will want the flexibility to coat the full range of materials they use as they need them.

Up to now, many label converters have shied away from in-house coating because of the need to use HP Indigo's solvent-based Topaz coating, requiring systems for exhausting fumes, explosion proofing and special storage.

But at the Open House HP Indigo's partners showed new, more user friendly water-based solutions. ICI for example has developed Emicote 2, which can be applied to papers and synthetic substrates and has a shelf life up to six months. Other water-based options include Michelman Inc's

Digiprime, and Starna/SY Technologies' Curecoat.

With a water-based coating it is possible to coat from any station on a press or finishing line. But there will be converters who want to dedicate a machine to the coating process. At the Open House Cooper Machinery demonstrated just such a dedicated unit in both sheetfed and roll-to-roll configurations. The roll-to-roll system has a web width of 330mm to be compatible with the ws4000.

The machine coats at 40 metres/minute and is simple to operate and maintain. The cost is around €45K for the roll-to-roll version and €75K for the sheetfed. Coating adds around 10 per cent to the cost of the web, and from current experience in the field Chris Cooper reckons Return on Investment (ROI) is around six months. For some synthetics such as PVC, however, an in-line corona treater may be necessary.

There were other discussions at the Open House around security and variable information printing. 'The tools are now coming to make this more user friendly,' states HP Indigo's Christian Menegon, using as an example HP's SNAP software, which merges variable data post-RIP.

As well as the rollfed ws4000, the demo center also showcases a sheetfed s2000 press working in conjunction with MGE's i-cut cutting table, which allows precise contour cutting of virtually any image printed in sheets. Optional is a new automated material-loading system which further automates the cutting process. The system handles cutting, scoring and creasing and automatically cuts stepped and repeated graphics.

UK-based printer Graphic Art confirmed the purchase of an s2000. The company has been a screen printer of membrane switches, fascia panels and clear polycarbonates since 1995. 'This takes us into new niche areas, where there are definitely cross-over areas between what we do now and labels,' says the company's Graham Scrivener.

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No. 149



Meeting the challenge of global branding



There is a growing trend by the world's major consumer goods manufacturers to market their products globally – a one-name-for-all-markets approach. Report by **David Harrison**, pan-European sales director, Skanem

Take for example the re-branding of chocolate bars where the familiar Marathon bar became Snickers, Jif became Cif and Pantene and Organics become strong global hair shampoo brands.

This move to global branding had already been started by motor manufacturers which harmonised production and models – Ford, a Ka was a Ka and a Focus was a Focus in whichever nation it was sold and motorists the world over could ask and rely on Castrol motor oils.

So how does all of this affect label printers?

Well, apart from the need to produce a brand-harmonised label, suitably amended to include several languages for the intended market, many of the large, multinational manufacturers have been talking about global purchasing.

Now they are starting to work towards this. There are good reasons for them to take this global approach for the betterment of their business. These include:

- Saving cost
- Promoting the same image on their products throughout the world
- Working with a limited number of reliable suppliers who can focus on helping them in continuous improvement as well as offering a stream of innovations

Obviously, by restricting their contracts to just a couple or three label printers, strategically situated around the world, the economies of scale can be reaped by both – the trusted printer can offer a better price because of longer runs while the globally-minded customer knows that the reliability that had prompted that trust will mean that labels are always where they are wanted when they are wanted.

It does mean, however, that the printer and the client have to establish the closest of contact to ensure such a smooth 'just-in-time' supply chain.

It also means that the multinational group can be sure that its common label design and logo will look the same and promote the same image wherever they are sold in the world – a shade won't be lavender in one market and purple in another, as could be the case when a geographically wide variety of print houses are used.

And, by using such a limited number of print houses, the scope for mutual advancement is enhanced. The printer has the security of contracts to prompt further investment in state-of-the-art techniques and equipment, while the expertise that this can generate can be shared with the client to create a constant stream of innovation.

Geography has an important role to play. While the closely-knit nature of nations in Europe makes it relatively easy for one printer to supply to plants in a dozen or more countries, providing labels to the five continents could prove to be more of a logistical nightmare.

It is unlikely that label printers will rush out and acquire companies in every continent.

Far more likely will be the establishment of strategic alliances between printers in the various regions... often with the input from our customers. Printers in these alliances will need to have identical working methods and similar, if not the same, printing presses to ensure a globally uniform image.

The opportunity for savings cannot be over-emphasised and these can be generated in several ways:

- By placing larger volumes through a smaller number of regional printers
- Working towards global pricing for substrate, ink and other raw materials (there are big differences in prices of materials in different continents)
- Harmonising label designs, bar code and logo positions, and
- Common sources of raw materials

In the multinationals' quest for the global brand **No.508** image the printer alliance has its part to play and could be the

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e No. 126

Creating a future for growth



There are major opportunities and markets for the label industry to achieve high growth in the future.

Mike Fairley assesses how the Tarsus Group – with its Labelexpo and Labels & Labeling brands – is developing these opportunities with new levels of support for industry suppliers and converters

Over the past five years or so the label industry has been undergoing a quite dramatic change – not just in new technology or new products, but in terms of consolidation, globalization, emerging markets, and how the industry is serviced.

Probably no more evident than in the label industry supplier chain, few can be unaware of some of the major mergers and acquisitions that have been taking place: Mark Andy and Comco, Nilpeter and Rotopress, Avery Dennison and Jackstädt, Hewlett Packard and Indigo – the list goes on. It's taking place in label substrates, presses, pre-press, inks and ancillary technology, and constantly changing the dynamics of the industry.

In terms of the potential customer market for label industry suppliers this, too, is undergoing significant change. No longer is key new label growth coming from North America or Western Europe; the highest growth is now in markets such as China, Latin America, Eastern Europe and India. That's where increasing numbers of products are now being manufactured, packed and labeled.

How many in the world of labels realize for example, that some 50 per cent of all the world's container ships at sea are carrying Chinese goods for supermarket giant Wal-Mart? Little wonder that the Chinese label industry is growing at around 20 per cent per annum and there has been a slowdown in the USA.

Staying with Wal-Mart, it has recently announced that it is planning some 60 more shops in China by 2005, bringing their total in the country to 80, with sales worth around \$3 billion. B&Q, Tesco and other major retail groups are also growing fast in China, while outside of retailing, sales of cars on China's roads rose by almost 40 per cent last year – including Volkswagens and Buicks made in Shanghai factories – and they all have multiple labels in them.

Similar kinds of stories can be found about brand owner,

consumer and label industry growth in other emerging markets – Poland, Hungary, Russia, Mexico, Chile and India. Indeed, on a worldwide basis, self-adhesive label growth alone is probably close to 10 per cent per annum, while opportunities for label industry suppliers are growing just as fast. The growth opportunities are still there, but they are in different countries and markets than they were, say, 10 years ago.

Even the new label technologies of sleeving and wrap-around film are experiencing good new growth in the world's developing markets, almost bypassing the historical labeling technology of wet-glue applied labels in many sectors like soft drinks and bottled waters.

The challenge for the label supplier industry though, is how do they find and build new customers in different continents? Where do they find the databases? How do they establish new agents and distributors to service these emerging markets? Which markets are the most important?

This is where a key global industry resource such as the Tarsus Group, with its 'Labelexpo', 'Labels & Labeling' and 'PISEC' brand names and activities, can have a major role to play in creating the future opportunities and growth potential for a rapidly changing global industry. It is also why the Labels Group at Tarsus has recently carried out a strategic review of its role in the industry – and developed a comprehensive business plan to

'The challenge for the label supplier industry though, is how do they find and build new customers in different continents?'

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aid the industry's 400-500 key international suppliers in maximising their growth potential worldwide.

Key elements of this strategic business plan are incorporated into widening the scope and growth potential of the Group's existing and new Labelexpo events, into expanding conference activities to support fast evolving industry growth sectors, enhancing the content and coverage of *Labels & Labeling* magazine, and through new and expanding web-based Internet services.

For the Group's two major Labelexpo events – in Brussels and Chicago – the target aim is to widen the scope of the shows to additionally cover the new and emerging product markets which key exhibitors are moving into, namely, wrap-around film, cut-and-stack film, in-mould and sleeve labeling technology. Conference sessions at the shows will help to support and stimulate these new industry growth opportunities. There will additionally be a label-user conference programme.

The role of secondary converting and handling will also be enhanced, with special demonstration areas covering aspects of label and reel handling, lifting and reel packaging, label finishing, overprinting, label application machinery, smart label and packaging solutions and supply chain management. Again, relevant conference sessions will aid the development of these new areas.

In tandem with the expansion of the show exhibitor base comes an extensive review and development of visitor databases and knowledge opportunities for

'Key elements of this strategic business plan are incorporated into widening the scope and growth potential of the Group's existing and new Labelexpo events'

potential visitors in the new and expanding areas, working with relevant industry associations in the label, packaging and end-user sectors, and establishing advisory groups where appropriate. Information and database resources are also important for the industry in finding agents, distributors and support staff in developing markets, as well as stimulating new technology areas in existing shows.

'Smart Packaging' will be a stand-alone conference running held in October. Separately sponsored by the Institute of Packaging Professionals (IOPP), this event will help to stimulate the whole area of brand protection, authentication, theft prevention, tamper-resistance and 'smart' logistics.

As global shows, both Labelexpo Americas and Labelexpo Europe are already targeting visitors from the emerging label markets in Mexico and Latin America, and Eastern Europe respectively. Indeed, the recent Brussels show in September 2003 – with its long-term sponsorship by the FINAT organisation – attracted some 2,500 visitors from Eastern European countries. Latin American and Eastern European conferences in 2004 will aid the development of these new markets and build the database and visitor resources that exhibitors need to grow their global operations.

In the Asia Pacific region, the challenge for the Labels Group and Labelexpo ▶

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'Labelexpo China attracted so much attention from potential exhibitors that it ended up being launched as a full-blown exhibition'

shows is how to meet the varying requirements of a market fragmented into the key trading areas of China, South East Asia, Australasia and India. A Labelexpo Asia Show has been successfully run in Singapore since the early 1990s, but it is in China (and India for the more medium and longer term) where the real growth potential for many of the major industry suppliers will be created. Yet there is still a demand for the Singapore show to support the existing exhibitors, and the ancillary suppliers who are more recent entrants into the South East Asian market place.

These current and future growth challenges have been met through the launch of a new show in China at the end of 2003 (returning to Shanghai in 2005), and by continuing with the development of the Singapore show. Longer term, it may be that a China (or Hong Kong) show becomes as important as Singapore in building major Labelexpo events in the region. Initially scheduled as a conference with mini exhibition, Labelexpo China attracted so much attention from potential exhibitors that it ended up being launched as a full-blown exhibition, supported with conference sessions. This event will undoubtedly become a major Asian event for the future, complementing Singapore in developing the whole Asia Pacific region.

What is vital to understand is that the Labelexpo shows in Singapore undoubtedly still have a valuable and key role to play in the ongoing development of the Asian Pacific label market. This is to aid the continuing evolution of the South East Asian label industry with a major supplier exhibition, conference sessions and education and training activities and also to offer market and technology update support to the many Australian and New Zealand visitors to the show.

At Labelexpo South East Asia 2004, this will be done not only through the products and technology on the exhibition floor but also by running separate conference streams for the two key market regions. Indeed, it is proposed to provide high-level conference sessions on global label trends, smart packaging and on advances in bottle decoration and branding (including wine labelling) for the Australasian visitors, with separate purpose-designed conference sessions specifically for label converters and users from Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore and Indonesia.

With India also a key region for the medium to long term

future development of the global label industry, *Labels & Labeling* has also reached agreement with the organisers of the existing India Label Show to initially establish an International Hall and keynote conference sessions at future events. With a vast population and potential, India is undoubtedly a major label growth opportunity for the world's global suppliers.

For the Latin American market, the Group has recently announced the launch of a Latin America Label Summit in Mexico City on the 8-9 June 2004. Like China, this event – again planned as a conference with tabletop exhibition – has already had its allocation of exhibition space rapidly taken up by the key label industry suppliers and a Latin American conference and show seems assured of a permanent place in the Labelexpo show programme. Indeed, the next conference in this region has already been scheduled in Brazil for 2005.

While China, India and Latin America are important for the future of the label industry, it is important to remember that there are 10 new countries proposed for entry to the European Community in 2004, mainly from Eastern Europe. To aid this transition and the development of new label markets, the Group is holding a Label Summit on Eastern Europe in the latter part of 2004. This will look at the needs and requirements of countries from Poland to Hungary, Czech republic, Slovakia and others, assessing supplier and converter demands, education and training needs, and marketing challenges.

In Russia, the existing Labels Show is being complemented with a Labelexpo Russia pavilion to continue to support international exhibitors in their quest to enter new markets and sectors.

Supporting the existing and new Labelexpo shows, *Labels & Labeling* magazine – and the web-based language versions – are being expanded to have a key role in the development of shows around the world, helping to target new product sectors, research country information and demographics for the new regions with features on, say, 'Focus on China' or 'Focus on Mexico'.

The magazine – which will have a totally global circulation covering not only North America and Europe but also South America, Asia and India by 2005 – aims to highlight new industry suppliers, new products and technologies, key industry achievers, and review programmes of label conferences worldwide. The best conference papers will appear as editorial features in the magazine.

Conferences and seminars are also set to receive a boost in the Labels Group forward strategy, with dedicated conference programmes running alongside all Labelexpo shows worldwide in the future, and additional keynote conferences built-in each year to inform and educate the industry on new markets, technologies and sectors. Indeed, when visitors to the recent Labelexpo Europe show were asked to list the areas that were most under-represented at the show, some 32 per cent (double the score for any other area) highlighted 'training options for ♦



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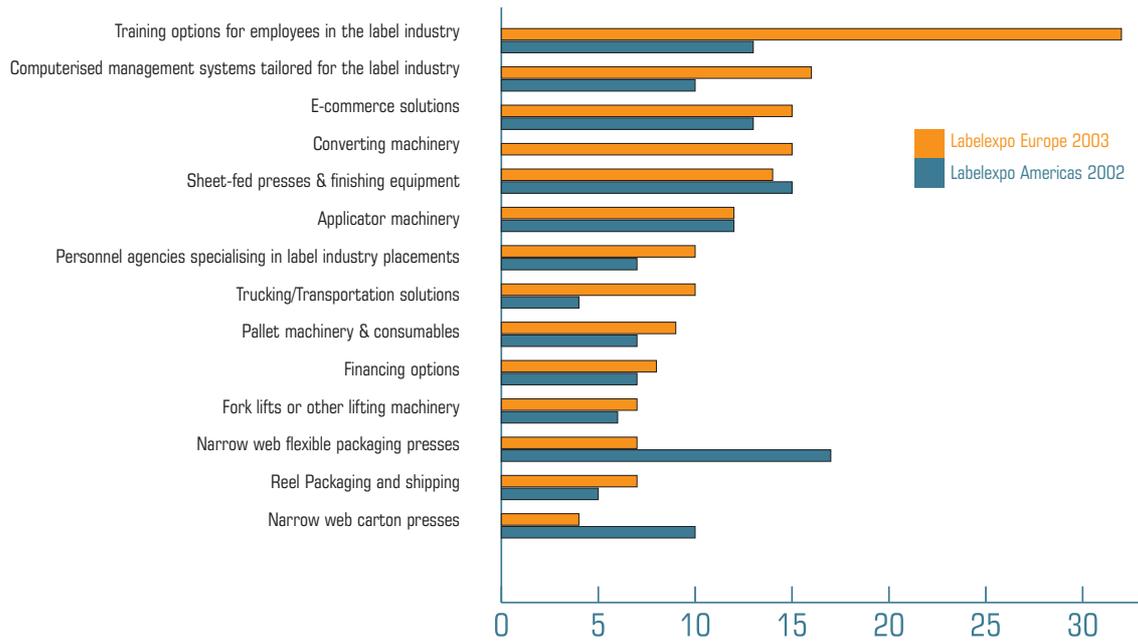
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Graph showing what converters would like to see at Labelexpo



employees in the label industry', while a further 31 per cent added 'computerised management systems' and 'e-commerce solutions'. These areas, and particularly the education and training aspects, will be developed and expanded for the future.

Readers that attended the Labelexpo Europe conference

'It's a bold strategy, but one that the industry increasingly needs and one which the major industry suppliers will increasingly rely on to continue their global growth'

sessions in September 2003 will perhaps be aware that the best-attended day was for the speaker programme on 'Bottle decoration and branding'. These key brand owner topics will now be run alongside other shows. Similarly, security solutions was the best-attended individual session in Brussels. This topic too, will be expanded in the future with dedicated smart label or smart packaging conferences.

The 'Smart Packaging' conference programme, scheduled in Chicago in 2004, will be continued with a 'Smart Packaging' event alongside Labelexpo Europe in 2005. In addition, it is also planned to run a 'Smart Logistics' or 'Smart Track' conference alongside Prolog – the Group's logistics show in Paris – in November 2004, while a 'Smart ID' conference is under consideration.

These 'smart' conferences, intended to highlight the use of smart and intelligent label solutions in packaging, supply chain management and identification, will be used to complement the Group's highly successful PISEC product and image

security conferences – the next one of which will be in Vienna in March or April 2005.

Finally, the Labels Group is also re-launching and re-branding its global label industry awards scheme – first launched in 1994 – with sponsorship from Avery Dennison and other key industry suppliers. The first of these new Label industry Global Awards will take place during 2004, culminating with a Gala Dinner and Awards Evening to be held on the first night of the Labelexpo Americas show from 13-16 September. Details of this will be announced in early 2004 and a special website established for the industry to nominate individuals and companies for the various categories of Awards.

Put together, the Labelexpo and Labels & Labeling Group at Tarsus have developed a forward looking strategic plan and programme of shows, conferences and magazine activities to support the label industry in, probably, its most significant period of future growth and opportunity. Totally global in effect, the strategy aims to further support the label industry and the continued expansion of three major global Labelexpo shows in the Americas, Europe and Asia.

More localised conferences and events are being developed in Latin America, Eastern Europe and the Indian sub-continent, with dedicated conference programmes and education and training activities to further support these fast emerging regions. Certainly, the opportunity now exists for key industry suppliers to have total global marketing support opportunities wherever they wish to trade in the world.

It's a bold strategy, but one that the industry increasingly needs and one which the major industry suppliers will increasingly rely on to continue their global growth. Complementary to new strategies being developed by the leading industry trade associations, the Labelexpo/Labels & Labeling Group has set out a strategic platform for the future of not only the label industry but also for itself in the days and years ahead. ■

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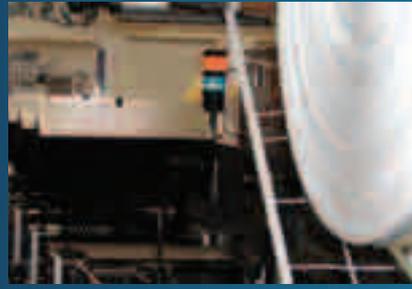
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Labelexpo Russia

Labelexpo has partnered with the long-established Russian show Etiketka, to bring international suppliers to this fast-growing labels market

Etiketka Labelexpo Russia takes place at the Sokolniki Culture & Exhibition Centre, Moscow on 23 - 26 March. Labelexpo's partnership with Etiketka was launched at last year's Etiketka and since then international exhibitors have booked into the Labelexpo pavillion, including Arjobex, Creo, ITW Thermal Films, KDO, Madico, Teknek, Vacmet and Transam, a Singapore-based distributor of thermal transfer ribbons and printing systems.

In addition, Labelexpo will be running a seminar programme on Thursday 25 March with speakers from high profile companies such as Avery Dennison, Exxon Mobile, HP and Nilpeter. A number of issues relevant to the Russian market will be addressed, including press trends in Russia, developments in Eastern Europe and growth in the self-adhesive materials sector, as well as taking a look at how digital printing could enhance the package printing supply chain

The Russian economy is currently one of the major global success stories. Following the rapid growth of the early nineties and subsequent currency collapse in 1998, the economy is now showing stable and steady growth and in 2002 foreign trade turnover reached a record \$151.8 billion, with the GDP growing 4.2 per cent between January and November. With Russia joining the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and enjoying strong diplomatic relations with the West, the growth appears set to continue.

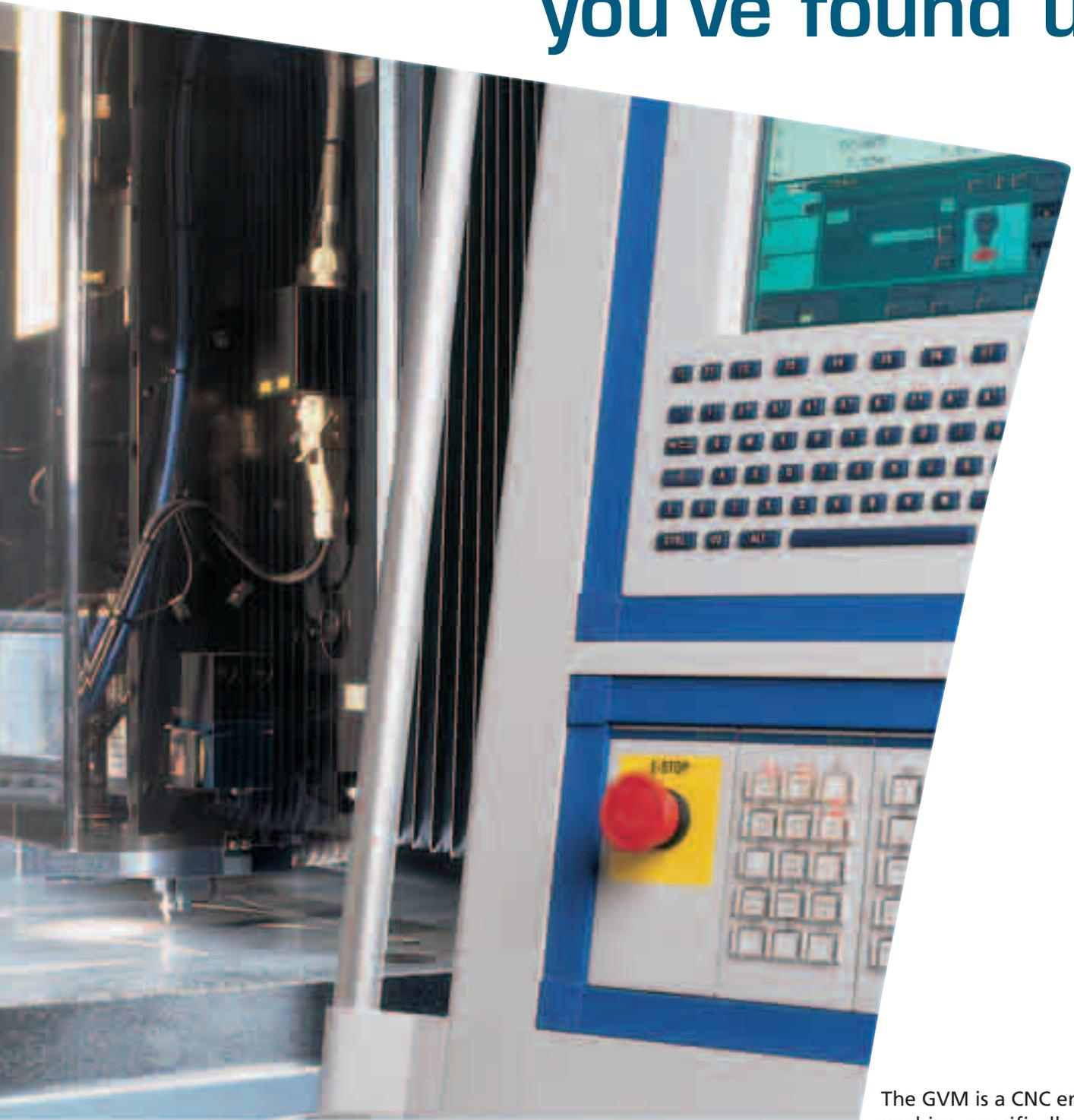
The Russian market consists of 145 million people and covers an enormous geographical area. Suppliers in the labeling industry estimate growth rates of 30-40 per cent for all label technologies. Both consumer demand and domestic production are rising and fierce competition and more sophisticated branding are driving an increase in demand for labels.

Valentina Vishnevskaya, director of Etiketka, said, 'Etiketka Labelexpo Russia will be the ideal meeting place for new international business contacts and partnerships to be formed - as well as an opportunity for everyone involved in the global labels industry to learn about the latest developments and changes in the Russian market.'

Roger Pellow, Labelexpo managing director, said, 'This combined international event will give the leading players in the labels market an opportunity to learn about and do real business in Russia and provide new stimulus to the market. Over 20 companies who have never before exhibited in Russia will be at Labelexpo Russia, bringing fresh impetus into the industry.'

Etiketka has been running in Sokolniki, Moscow for nine years. It has been established as the biggest show of labels machinery, equipment and materials in Russia and the Baltic States, with over 350 companies exhibiting, including manufacturers, distributors and converters from across Europe.

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