Volume 29 Issue 2

Labels & Labeling

The wider world of narrow web

Apr/May 2007

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100 Years

L&L celebrates centenary of Stan Avery, founder of the self-adhesive industry

China opening

UPM Raflatac expands in China with new factory

Analysis

Round-up of developments in slitter rewinder technology

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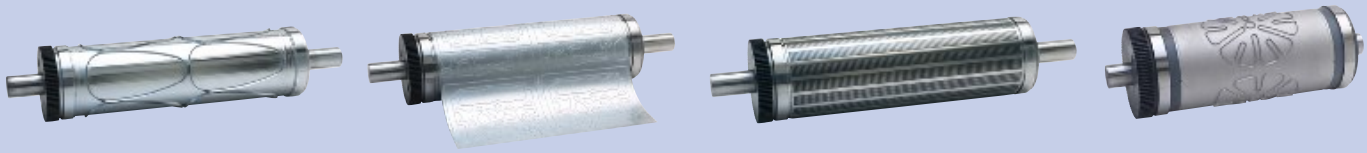

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Leader

It is too often forgotten that we are in a fortunate position in the labels industry. It is the only segment of the graphics arts sector which continues to show significant growth worldwide, and this helps explain the continued movement of sheetfed offset commercial printers into roll-fed labels (see for example the article on Italian company Cattaneo Paolo in the current issue of *L&L*).

But at the same time as many as one third of all label converters surveyed by *L&L* and Labelexpo are showing no, or unacceptably low profitability.

How are we to explain this contradiction?

The reason is quite simple. There is no longer the easy money to be made from producing long runs of commodity 4-color labels which characterized the early days of the pressure-sensitive industry in the late 1970s and 1980s. There are simply too many highly productive narrow web presses in the market today to make such a strategy feasible, and if you are only selling on price in a saturated market you will fail as a business.

> "One third of all label converters surveyed by *L&L* and Labelexpo are showing no, or unacceptably low, profitability"

At the same time, too many label converters are carrying unnecessary overheads: inefficient make-readies; dead inventory and finished stock; an inability to sort jobs which pay from jobs which don't.

Label printers are being turned around today by tackling these inefficiencies through Lean programs, often taking millions of dollars/euros of costs out of the business. But also look outwards to the added value opportunities which propel the industry's continued growth: applying smart technologies to end users' supply chain management needs; inventory management; consulting for end users on new materials (thinner, conformable etc – see Barry Hunt's article in this issue); leveraging the modular flexibility of today's presses to produce new label constructions; diversifying into filmics and so on.

There is still good money to be made from labels. But you will need a sustained focus on adding value internally and externally in dealings with end users equally focused on adding value to their businesses.

By the time you read this issue, an exciting new feature will have been added to our website www.labelsandlabeling.com. We will stream video footage and product presentations from leading industry suppliers, which will allow you the converter to see for yourself how the latest technology in the industry works.

Andy Thomas
Group Managing Editor

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Labeling news

Avery Dennison to acquire Paxar

Avery Dennison is to acquire Paxar for $1.34 billion, in what is seen as a bid to compete more effectively in the fragmented, expanding $15 billion-plus global retail information and brand identification market.

'This combination will give us the capabilities, products and geographic reach to pursue new segments of the global retail information and brand identification market. These segments include retailers and manufacturers serving local customers in India and China,' said Dean Scarborough, president and chief executive officer of Avery Dennison.

Avery Dennison's Retail Information Services (RIS) business represents one of its fastest-growing units. RIS provides brand identification and supply chain management solutions primarily for manufacturers and retailers, including tag and label design and printing; inventory and shipment tracking; and data management systems.

In this evolving marketplace, it is increasingly important to be close to the local manufacturing clusters. With their complementary geographic footprints, in particular with Paxar's greater focus on Europe, the acquisition improves the combined company's ability to serve customers in Europe, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia.

'Lower-cost production – and higher levels of quality and speed of delivery – will be crucial for winning against the local and regional competition we face at the buying office and factory levels,' said Scarborough.

Mark Andy allies with PTS

Mark Andy has entered into an agreement with Florida-based Printing Technology Services, Inc. (PTS), a specialist in integrating variable data inkjet printing systems into web presses and finishing systems. As part of the agreement, PTS' JetFlex inkjet printing systems can be fully integrated into any Mark Andy flexographic press. The JetFlex system is based around Hewlett-Packard TIJ 2.5 thermal ink jet technology.

'We're very excited about the possibilities this relationship opens up for our customers around the world,' commented Curtis Miller, president of PTS. 'As a result of this partnership, flexographic printers will be able to print both static and variable data in one pass – saving time and money, and opening up new business opportunities for our customers. Customers also benefit from the increased confidence of choosing a product that is endorsed by the market leader, which is Mark Andy.'

CCL wraps sleeve acquisition

CCL Industries has completed the acquisition of the sleeve label business of Illinois Tool Works (ITW). ITW produces shrink-film sleeve labels for the European and North American markets in two factories at its decorative sleeves division in the United Kingdom. Additionally, the ITW Auto-Sleeve division has facilities in Austria and Brazil that produce primarily stretch-film sleeve labels for markets in Europe and the Americas, respectively. A sales, service and distribution arm operates from Twinsburg, Ohio, to supply the North American market.

The combination of CCL Label's sleeve product lines with those of ITW will make CCL one of the global leaders in this fast growing segment of the label industry.

● Further extending its Asia-Pacific reach, CCL has opened a sales office in Japan. In a press briefing, the company predicted that Asia's share of its total business will rise from five per cent today to 20 per cent over the next 5-6 years.

BST establishes Chinese subsidiary

BST MD Wolfgang Küster and Jenny Zhang, MD

BST International GmbH, manufacturer of quality assuring components for the web processing industry, has opened a new production and sales base in Songjiang, Shanghai.

BST International Shanghai Co., Ltd, 100 per cent subsidiary of the German company, will, with at first 15 local employees, both supply the Chinese market with BST products and organize sales and service in the East Asian region.

'The Chinese expectations of products of German manufacturers are very high,' said BST managing director Wolfgang Küster. 'With our subsidiary enterprise we want to be in a position to react quickly to the market and at the same time guarantee German quality.'

The current share of the Chinese business in the total turnover of the company is about one eighth. In Songjiang BST has invested about €250,000 both to manufacture the country-specific components – for example the mechanical guiding devices for the BST web guiding systems – and to conduct sales activities.

Jenny Zhang, the previous head of the representation office, has been appointed managing director.

In the future, India, Brazil and Eastern Europe will be the focus of the company's activities, concentrating on increasing business operations already run successfully by local BST enterprises.

RSI partners with Comercial Arqué

RSI ID Technologies (RSI), an RFID manufacturer and systems integrator in the United States, has announced a partnership with Comercial Arqué S.A., a leading manufacturer in the Specialty Printing Industry including hot stamping machinery and thermal printing. Comercial Arqué, with headquarters in Barcelona, Spain, will expand its printing solutions from plastic, textile, and vinyl to include RFID by offering RSI RFID labels, Pressiza RFID readers, and Flexolution software to the European market.

'As one of the only vertically integrated manufacturers of RFID labels in the U.S, we look forward to expanding our global distribution channels through our partnership with Comercial Arqué,' says Wolf Bielas, Co-Founder and CEO of RSI ID Technologies. 'This new relationship provides an important gateway for RSI's continued expansion into European and other global markets.'

RSI's core skills in tag design and manufacturing, coupled with its extensive systems design and integration expertise, enable it to develop custom tags to address complex RFID problems in multiple industries across global markets. RSI already offers a full line of HF and UHF RFID labels, readers and software to customers in a broad range of industries.

New structure for Pago Group

The Pago Group has changed its corporate structure. Its international activities will now be led by Pago International AG, newly formed on 1.1.2007. The Management Board of Pago International comprises Fritz Beglinger, CEO, Emanuel Schäpper, marketing director, Urs Schwenk, technical director machines, and Markus Rüttimann, CFO. The two main sites at Grabs, Switzerland and Aichtal, Germany are also represented by their managing directors Mathias Engler, Manfred Macht and Dirk Lautenschlager. The intention is to add a technical director printing during the course of this year.

Pago has also recently signed a cooperation agreement with UK company Turpins, which will provide co-branded sleeve systems to Pago for exclusive distribution in the markets of Switzerland, Germany, Austria and the Principality of Liechtenstein.

More news @ www.labelsandlabeling.com

Avery Dennison expands in India

Avery Dennison (India) Pvt. Ltd. has announced the setting up of a new production facility located in the Ranjangaon Industrial Area of Pune, India.

John Quinn, vice president and general manager, Roll Materials Asia Pacific, said: 'The new plant will help Avery Dennison meet the increasing demand for more pressure-sensitive materials in India. We are very excited about the market potential India represents in both the short and the long term.'

Commercialization of the Pune plant is planned for later 2007 and Raj Srinivasan, managing director, Materials India added, 'Expanding our manufacturing capacity demonstrates our strong commitment to the Indian market. We are delighted that demand for our pressure-sensitive materials in this region has grown with the fantastic support from our customers over the years. We look forward to continuing to drive growth with this new expansion by partnering with our customers to develop existing and new markets together.'

● Avery Dennison has promoted Lisa Hubbard to the post of technical director, roll materials Europe. In this new role, she leads the European product technology and innovation team, which develops adhesives, release systems, face materials, and top coatings to provide high-performance Fasson-brand product solutions for customers.

Ms Hubbard joined Avery Dennison in 2002 as product development project leader at the Corporation's Fort Wayne, Indiana, facility. She moved to Europe in 2005 to take up the post of R&D manager, facestock development and analytical services for roll materials Europe in Leiden, The Netherlands, where in her new role she continues to be located.

Omet appoints European agencies

Offlex OY, which already represents Omet in Finland, has been officially appointed as the new distributor for Sweden and Estonia. The company's duties will be to represent the sales and service interests of the Italian press manufacturer's range of machinery for the converting and tissue sectors.

The decision to extend Offlex OY's territory was based on the positive results that the Finnish distributor has achieved in its own domestic market. One recent success was the sale of an Omet Varyflex line to the largest company in the Finnish printing sector, Tarratuote OY. The new Varyflex will be installed in Tarratuote's production plant in Tampere.

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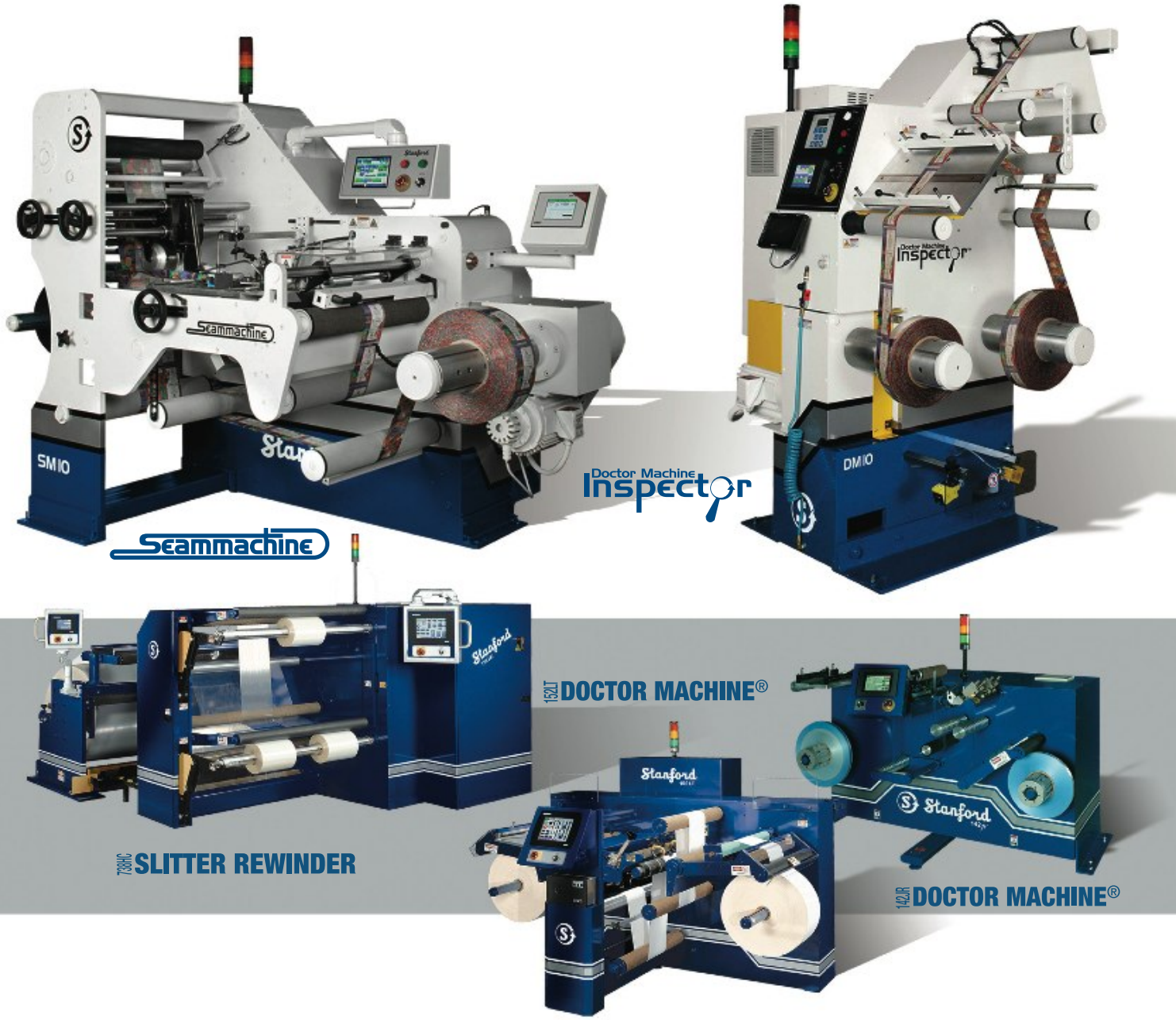

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Herma commences work on 30M euro coating plant

Herma has announced the commencement of construction of its new coating plant in Filderstadt Bonlanden, as dignitaries layed the traditional foundation stone.

Herma, specialist in self-adhesive technology, is investing some 30 million Euros in building what is claimed the most modern plant of its kind in the world. It is anticipated to be operational by the end of 2007.

Herma supplies 70 per cent of its adhesive material to customers throughout the world while 30 percent is used for internal company processes.

Managing director at Herma, Dr Baumgärtner, commented: 'This coating plant represents the start of a new era at the company with the potential annual production capacity for adhesive material set to triple, from 250 to 750 million square metres.'

Herma is also set to achieve a breakthrough in terms of coating speed, with production rates increasing from 800m/min to 1,100 -1,200 m/min from the new curtain coater.

The coating plant includes an integrated material flow system which increases speed and efficiency by reducing manual transportation routes between the coating machine and the interim storage facility for raw materials and finished products.

The multi-storey Herma facility requires only 50 per cent of the floor area as compared to more conventional plants which are constructed at ground level. Addressing 'green issues', a state-of-the-art heat recovery system considerably reduces energy consumption, whilst facades with extensive areas of glazing facilitate optimum use of natural daylight. Gas-fired heating is used to dry the paper webs directly instead of using thermal oil, a more complex and less direct solution.

It is anticipated that the new plant will eventually create employment for up to 60 people.

News in brief

Muehlbauer opens competence center in South Africa

Muehlbauer has announced the opening of its first showroom on the African continent.

The company said in a statement: 'In our office in Midrand, South Africa customers have now the opportunity to see a live demo of the Muehlbauer Tecurity Identity Document Issuance Solution. Based on the smallest desktop systems for ID document personalization, the complete workflow including any necessary software will be demonstrated.'

UPM Raflatac doubles its RFID tag production capacity in Finland

UPM Raflatac, manufacturer of RFID tags and inlays, has announced that it is doubling the RFID tag and inlay production capacity at its Jyväskylä production plant in Finland. With this capacity increase the company addresses rapidly growing demand for both HF and UHF products.

The additional RFID tag production capacity will be installed and ready for use in March 2007, when UPM Raflatac's RFID production plant in Jyväskylä, Central Finland moves to new, modern premises in the same area. In addition to production in Finland, UPM Raflatac has an RFID production plant in North Carolina, USA. Both production plants serve RFID markets globally.

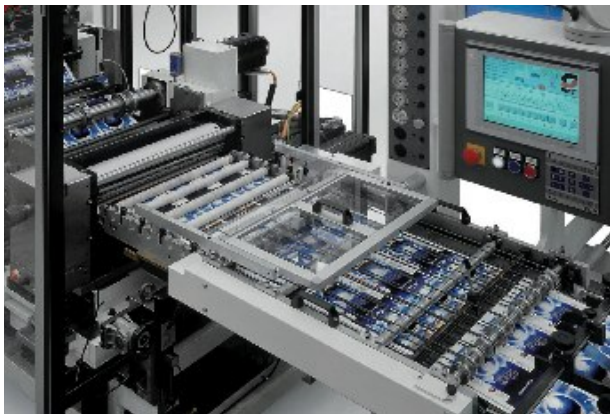
Timestrip announces joint development arrangement with Plastek

Timestrip Plc has announced a joint development arrangement with packaging designer Plastek. The arrangement will open up significant opportunities for Timestrip to develop its smart label technology into practical, usable solutions for a wide range of consumer brands.

A working relationship with specialist injection molder Plastek will enable Timestrip to move forward in developing fully-integrated solutions for industry. The two companies are at present working on integrating Timestrip labels into caps and closures, a development which will meet the requirements of many industry sectors, including FMCG grocery, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

Timestrip will benefit from Plastek's significant packaging expertise and manufacturing capability to enable Timestrip's product ideas and concepts to be converted into workable and readily available products to take to market. Plastek, in turn, gains access to the innovative technology and design thinking for which Timestrip has become widely known. A prototype cosmetics solution has already been produced: by modifying an existing product in the Plastek Phoenix range, a cosmetics lid with integrated Timestrip has been developed.

Technology news



Omet's fly cutting unit installed on a Varyflex press

Omet variable sheeter tested on Varyflex

Omet has developed an in-line 'fly cutting' unit which cuts printed rolls into different size sheets – from 6in to 33in – without the need to change set up. Omet has successfully tested the system on its Varyflex press.

Operated by its own independent motor, the unit is made up of two rotating bladed cylinders which cut the sheet using a synchronized scissor cutting action. Synchronization of the cutting cylinders is achieved by a set of spiral-tooth gears positioned on both control and operator sides. Software controls the acceleration or deceleration of the cylinders, synchronising them with the external speed of the material at the moment of the cut.

According to Omet, the fly cutting unit produces a dust-free, clean-cut sheet with no skewed edges, very important for paper products.

'In shorter-sized formats, the machine leaves no rips or tears and does not block up with longer-sizes; in all sheet lengths, the cut is perfectly squared without having to correct the cutting angle,' says the company.

The unit can work with a wide range of materials, from 60g/m2 paper through to 600 micron board, and can be combined with a range of downstream automation devices.

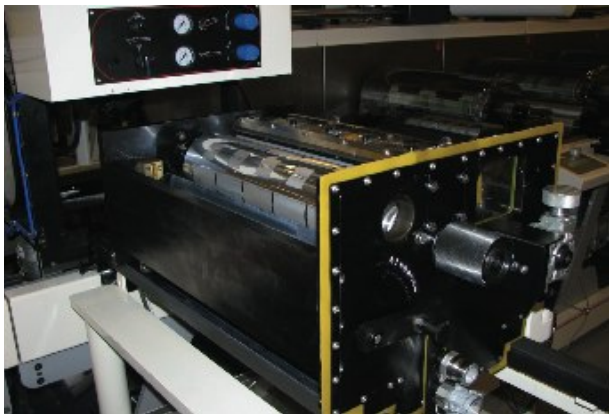
Interchangeable inking for flexo units

De Rossi Vittoriano S.r.l has developed flexo printing units with interchangeable inking systems – closed doctor blades for longer production runs and inking rollers for shorter runs.

The units incorporate automatic register, which allows easy inserting into multi-color presses.

The units are available in web widths from 150-520 mm, with a printing repeat length of 6"- 20". Printing speed is 150 m/min, depending on drying/curing system power, and there are systems to reduce backlash at high speeds.

It is possible to use the system for reverse printing without using turn bars and therefore without introducing tension to the web. A motor can be applied to the anilox roller for processing water-based inks.



Gravure unit installed on a 16 inch wide Nilpeter FA-4

Nilpeter develops 420mm gravure unit

Nilpeter has developed the first 16 inch wide gravure unit for its in-line presses.

The gravure printing method allows label converters to achieve a number of unique coating effects, such as printing high brilliance metallics with solvent inks. The cassette is designed to accept both conventional gravure cylinders and the latest gravure sleeve systems. The unit is servo-driven, without the need for format gears, which allows register to be rapidly achieved and maintained.

Gravure modules were originally developed for Nilpeter's MO offset presses, and the company says it has more than 25 gravure installations worldwide on narrow web presses.

Gidue launches oxygen-free curing system

Gidue has developed a nitrogen-inerted UV curing system designed specifically to meet the stringent regulations which apply to food contact flexible packaging applications.

Gidue's UV Time system uses a flux of nitrogen to suppress the oxygen which usually inhibits the UV polymerization process. This means that UV curing takes place with a greatly reduced quantity of expensive photo-initiators, and that less lamp power is required to effect a complete cure. Other advantages claimed by Gidue include increased curing speeds – because higher levels of photo-initiators adversely affect UV curing efficiency whatever the lamp power used – and increased adhesion, since curing is claimed more accurate under inert atmosphere.

Gidue worked with Air Liquide France to develop the nitrogen inerting system, which is claimed to reduce the level of oxygen carried with the substrate from 210,000 to 50 ppb. Gidue is also working closely with ink suppliers to bring photo-initiator reduced UV inks to market.

The system is undergoing final tests at one of Gidue's major converter customers, where it is fitted to an Athena press. A variant is also being developed for an offset roll press.

A full technical appraisal will appear in the next edition of *Labels & Labeling*.

Technology news

Retro fit servo unit

Cooper Printing Machinery has announced details of a new servo driven flexographic printing unit designed as a retro-fit for existing printing and converting equipment. The unit has been designed for applying water-based inks, coatings and varnishes at speeds of up to 150 meters per minute. The print unit is mounted on linear slides to enable it to be positioned anywhere across a one-meter wide web. Standard printing width is 500mm, although the unit will be available in sizes from 350 – 1,000mm wide. A ceramic anilox roller and a carbon fibre chambered doctor blade are available as options. The first unit was installed at The Lettershop Group, Leeds, UK, fitted onto web offset presses for spot or flood coat UV varnish application.

Print ready film in minutes

A desktop system which allows the production of high density film from a laser printer, is available from Flexo Technology Inc.

LaserBlack is claimed the first desktop film system to produce print-ready film in minutes without hazardous chemicals, no messy sprays and no costly equipment. LaserBlack enhances laser printed transparencies by increasing image density, making the output suitable for exposing silkscreens or photopolymer plates used in screen and pad printing.

Simply print your image from your desktop laser printer, then run it though the LaserBlack unit and set it with the heat gun – you've just produced your first print-ready film. With LaserBlack you can produce film positive or negatives quickly, easily and cheaply with an image density suitable for exposing silkscreens and polymer plates.

LaserBlack is a non-toxic, 'environment friendly' chemical. The film's opaque density can reach or exceed 3.50, and results are as good with fine line/characters and dots.

The company suggests that HP/Canon Laser Printers are used for best results. One liter of LB-Solution can process 2,000 sheets of A4 size tracing paper/transparent film

Gallus upgrades EM280

The Gallus EM 280 flexo combination press is now shipping with upgrades which include an optional servo drive to give greater substrate capability, a chambered doctor blade system, and a hot-foil saving and hologram insetting device.

Micro-embed security system

A new micro-embedding software system is set to 'transform anti-counterfeiting measures for the packaging industry,' according to developer Nautilus Security Technologies.

'Hidden Image' (HIT) generates algorithms which convert any PDF into a covert image which is micro-embedded into a print cylinder or die. Images can be viewed using an inexpensive lens.

The system uses bespoke embossing equipment designed by converting equipment engineer Henderson Engineering in Manchester, UK.

Omet and Asahi announce standards alliance

Omet has forged a mutual co-operation agreement with leading photopolymer plate supplier Asahi Photoproducts aimed at standardizing the flexo printing process.

The two companies have combined their expertise to design a standard procedure which will define all parameters that influence printing, including machine, plate, inks, and anilox. Asahi Photoproducts' Graphic Arts Center in Brussels, Belgium, has designed a printing test which combines color images specifically retouched and separated for flexo printing, along with technical elements which measure the impression results not by traditional densitometry, but by spectrophotometer and color management.

Using this method, the latest generation of Asahi's digital printing plates (AFP DSH 1.14) were produced in a controlled environment at the Brussels Graphic Arts Centre. The plates were then shipped to Omet's Lecco factory for use on a Varyflex line, using Sun Chemical inks and a Burgo paper substrate. For both standard and monitored printing conditions, additional trials have been set up to assess the possible deviations when modifying the settings.

A complete analysis of the printed samples has since been made at Asahi's Graphic Arts Centre in Brussels, where standard measures for establishing print characteristics like dot gain curves, ink density, and tonal contrasts were evaluated, in addition to which, a color profile of the press has been generated.

According to the two companies, the readings confirmed exceptional quality, with very low dot gain, extremely fine highlights with first print dots at four per cent, open screen reverse up to 96 per cent, wide tonal range, high contrast and a very broad color gamut. It is claimed the print results are comparable with offset.

Gallus adds servos to EM 280 press

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Industry to vote for Label Industry Global Awards winners

An international Label Industry Man of Achievement Award was first launched in 1992 by the Labelexpo/Cowise Group (now Tarsus Group plc) to recognize the achievements of the early pioneers and creators of the pressure-sensitive label industry.

The Labels Group at Tarsus – supported by the major international industry associations FINAT and TLMI – has widened the scope of the awards program into a global label industry awards competition to honor key industry individuals and those companies who have made a significant contribution to innovation/growth and excellence in the label industry. The awards will be presented during Labelexpo Europe in Brussels in September.

Here are the nominees and their citations

R Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement Award Sponsored by Avery Dennison

Angelo Bartesaghi, Omet Srl.
Angelo Bartesaghi was born in Lecco, Italy, where he obtained a diploma in 1953 at the Technical Institute 'I.T. Badoni'. In 1963 he established the Company Omet Srl, and more recently he set up O-pac Srl, which specializes in the production of wet wipes. He remains the owner of both companies, which collectively employ a staff of more then 200 people. He holds many positions within industry associations and has received awards recognizing his work throughout his career.

Joseph Weber, Jnr, chairman, Weber Marking Systems
Joseph originally traded law books for the label industry in the 1960s to carry on growing the business founded by his father in 1932. Today, the company is an international labeling and coding leader employing 1,000 people, with group sales exceeding $90 billion and some 50,000 customers worldwide. He is a former TLMI Converter of the Year award winner

Tom Rink, Ritrama S.p.A
Tom was born in Caracas, Venezuela in 1944 where he lived until 1964. He went on to study in Europe, Canada and later studied chemical engineering at Cornell University. After university he returned to Italy and spent the next four years working for Purina the feed company. He then joined his father who founded Ritrama which manufactured self adhesive materials with a €2.5m turnover. Over the following 30 years they developed Ritrama into a small multinational doing more than €300m.

Jaume Puigbó, Caposa Group
Jaume Puigbó has been involved with Caposa, his family-owned company, since his teenage years and is presently the CEO Caposa group, of APLI Paper SA and Sinel Systems SA. Jaume is one of the founders and presently the vice-president of the Spanish label association Anfec. He has been an active member of the FINAT board, was founder of AIM Europe Spain, he is also a founder of Concordia Labels, a strategic alliance of five of the top European label converters.

Andrew Jack, Dow Corning
Andrew Jack has a career spanning over thirty five years in the silicone industry, firstly with Midland Silicones and then with the Dow Corning Corporation. He is working within Dow Corning's global business unit responsible for the development and application of silicone release systems for the pressure sensitive adhesive industry. A Chartered Scientist, Chartered Chemist and Fellow of the Royal Society of Chemistry, he has recently stood down after nine years as chairman of the FINAT Technical Committee. He is a member of the FINAT board and was in 2006 awarded honorable life membership of the association.

Helmut Schreiner, Schreiner Group
Helmut F. Schreiner, born in 1939, has been working for 55 years in the label industry, setting up the Schreiner group in 1974. His slogan is 'lifelong learning and its realization.'

Jørgen Gerhardt, Gerhardt
Jørgen Gerhardt started in his fathers' company in 1956, and soon he was able to engrave the first rotary die in Europe. When he took over the company he transformed it from a small engraver's shop to a global player in tool making for the label industry. He has had a major influence on the growth of the label industry.

Nominations for European Converter of the Year 2007 Sponsored by XSYS

Pago AG

Pago AG was founded in 1896. In the following years, the business grew from a one-man firm into an international operating holding company with over 1,200 employees. Pago offers all-round solutions for labels, labeling systems, and services

Drorys Etichette

Drorys Imp/Exp, was founded in 1945 and is now formed of three consolidated companies, Drorys Imp/Exp, Packlist and Drorys Sud, specialized in printing labels, sleeves, package film and in the production of sealing tape. Beside these activities, the company builds labeling machines.

The first printing press was installed in 1945, and today the company can print using various printing process such as rotogravure, typographic, offset, flexo and digital.

Fix-a-Form/Denny Bros

Over 25 years ago Denny Bros devised the first multi-page label system, Fix-a-Form, which transformed the way information could be communicated on-pack. Still independent and family owned, pharmaceutically accredited and with 24 licensed manufacturers of Fix-a-Form worldwide, Dennys was voted the BPIF company of the year in 2006.

Arca Etichette

Arca has a turnover of more than 25 million euros, 130 employees and over 50 labeling equipment dealers in Europe and America. The Labels Division product range covers all printing systems, from flexo and offset to silkscreen and digital, including combined mixed technique to get sophisticated results. The company has a strong focus on research and has obtained many patents.

IlloSpear (formerly Illochroma)

IlloSpear, created through the merger of the Illochroma Label Group and the European operations of Spear Group Holdings, is one of Europe's leading label suppliers. The group supplies wet glue, wrap around and pressure sensitive labels to customers in Europe, Africa and Asia. With six sites across five European countries IlloSpear also offer a wide range of technical and application support services to the FMCG Industry.

Schreiner Group

The Schreiner Group works on an area of 37,000 square meters with 550 employees. The turnover in 2006 amounted to 87 million euros.

The Schreiner Group has been awarded for its quality, innovation, performance and its sense of social responsibility.

Caposa Group

In the past 20 years the company's turnover has increased tenfold from less than six million euros to over 61 million in 2006. Caposa has today two subsidiaries, APLI Paper SA and Sinel Systems SA, both leaders in the Spanish market in their respective fields which are: labels and other office products (APLI) and prime and VIP labels and systems (SINEL). Caposa converted over 49 million square meters of self-adhesive material in 2006 in its three plants, two in Spain and one in France. APLI has subsidiaries in France, Portugal, Poland and Russia. The group's international sales represent 37 per cent of its turnover. Caposa was the company that introduced self-adhesive labels in the Spanish market in 1958 and developed its own manufacturing technology. ■

In the supplier award categories, the nominees for the Continuous Innovation Award 2007 are Rotometrics, Rotoflex, Xsys Print Solutions, Dow Corning, Gerhardt Engraving, AB Graphics International, ExxonMobil Chemical, UPM Raflatac, Kocher + Beck and BASF Adhesives.

Nominees for the New Innovation Award 2007 include Advanced Vision Technology (AVT), Bielomatik, Stork Prints, GEW and Xeikon

25 years superior quality products

25 years ago, the company Intercoat, situated in Kaltenkirchen, the north of Germany, was established as manufacturer of screen printing materials. By Mr. Dähnick (bottom left), a co-founder of the company, whilst now a member of the supervisory board he still shows an active interest in the business.

Mr. Dähnick

In 1982, Intercoat began the production on its first laminating unit together with global sales activities. In 1987 Intercoat started the production of plotter materials (typecut) and PVC rolls and in 1992 Intercoat entered the market of label materials.

Today Intercoat is very well known in the industry of self-adhesive films, with international activities in the self-adhesive film market, is established for its image of consistent high quality and flexibility. INTERCOAT materials are used predominately in the segments cosmetic, food and beverages also industrial, for a wide variety of different applications.

Thank you !

We are very proud of the success within the last 25 years and would like to say a very big **THANK YOU** to our customers, strategic partners and suppliers who have remained loyal and assisted in the development of Intercoat throughout the years, culminating in an extremely successful 25 years.

A special thanks goes to our employees whom without this success would not have been achievable. Thank you for working so hard, motivated and with such a passion for quality.

Intercoat are now seriously focussed on the coming 25 years !

Tony Harman
Division Manager
Sales & Marketing

Michael Goossen
Division Manager
Supply Chain Management

Wolfgang Schaps
Division Manager
Production

INTERCOAT

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Tel.: +49 (0)4191 8005 0 — info@intercoat.de — www.intercoat.de

Label Summit Latin America returns to Brazil

The seminar which was such a success two years ago returns to Sao Paolo, Brazil. **James Quirk** previews the Brazil Label Summit

15-16 May, Sao Paulo

LABELSUMMIT
Latin America 2007
www.labelsummit.com

Label Summit Latin America, taking place on 15-16 May 2007 at the WTC Hotel, Sao Paulo, will celebrate its second anniversary as a high-level conference being held in Brazil. This year's packed conference program features over 20 seminar sessions designed to help local and regional label printers learn about the commercial opportunities available to them in this fast-moving and increasingly globalized industry.

A range of leading local and international industry experts will gather in Sao Paulo to address the senior-level delegation this May. Specialists from leading global organizations such as Avery Dennison, Nilpeter, Mark Andy, UPM Raflactac, Stanford Products and Gidue will all be taking center stage and demonstrating the main factors and trends shaping the future direction of the label industry.

Hot topics over the two day conference program include: regional label industry trends; anti-counterfeiting processes; brand security and authenticity; opportunities in the beverage and wine industry; leaner manufacturing; digital printing and supplier relationships, to name a few.

On the first day, Christian Simcic, group vice president of Roll Materials at Avery Dennison, will give the keynote address with an overview of the key developments in the Latin American economy and an analysis of the main challenges and opportunities in this growing industry. The first day will also feature the results of an in-depth survey of Latin American converters revealing the latest growth areas and the changing material trends in the market. At the end of the first day, an case study will be presented by Jeffrey Arippol, managing director of Novelprint, who will show delegates how to meet the requirements of a global brand entering new markets and how 100 million labels were produced in under a month for a launch program.

Various international panel sessions will focus on a number of themes, including: the best strategies for adapting smart labels and RFID technologies; how to form regional and global alliances; and how to select the printing process that will maximize efficiency and performance. Case studies will also be a key component of the conference, with examples from the food and drinks industries discussed.

A tabletop exhibition will be running alongside the conference with local and international suppliers showcasing their latest product news, including: Avery Dennison, Mark Andy, Nilpeter, Gallus, UPM Raflatac, Gidue, GEW, Green Bay Packaging, Hewlett Packard, AVT, Omet, Xsys Print Solutions, Industrial de Informatica SA de CV, Distribuidora Grafica Novaro, Rotoflex, Degussa and Comprint, to name a few.

Label Summit Latin American 2007 is supported by two local industry associations, ABIEA and ASIMPRES. Davidson Guilherme Tomé, president of ABIEA, commented: 'In 2005, Label Summit Latin America provided an unprecedented opportunity for label converters to learn the latest technical and market information, along with the chance to network with key suppliers. We are delighted to support the summit again this year, and look forward to seeing many converters at the event in May.' ■

News Special

Ashland acquires Northwest Coatings

Ashland Inc. has acquired Northwest Coatings to expand its specialty polymers and adhesives sector, *writes Danielle Jerschefske.*

Global chemical company Ashland has been interested in Northwest Coatings, which has facilities in Oak Creek, Wisconsin and Greensboro, North Carolina, for a number of years. When an acquisition opportunity recently presented itself, the company acted on it immediately.

'The acquisition offers a nice synergy and brings a bigger product line to our shared customer base,' says Randy Waddell, global market manager, packaging and converting group, Ashland.

Since the merger, the new team has been working to further commercialize three new products. One is a new EB laminating adhesive, already approved by the FDA. Another is a water-based coating for hot/cold beverage cups, and lastly, a protective packaging for food spoilage prevention and warehousing. The company plans to launch these products later this year.

Ahlstrom to open plant in Brazil

Ahlstrom has signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Brazilian Votorantim Celulose e Papel (VCP) to form a joint venture for specialty paper production in Brazil.

The assets in the joint venture, currently owned by VCP, comprise a paper machine, an offline coater and extensive finishing equipment at the Jacarei mill, close to São Paulo. According to the Memorandum of Understanding, Ahlstrom will hold a majority of the joint venture.

Ahlstrom expects to close the deal on or before June 30, 2007, subject to antitrust clearances and satisfactory conclusion of the ongoing due diligence process.

The paper production capacity of the assets is approximately 110,000 tons per year. The joint venture will be part of Ahlstrom's Specialty Papers segment and serve mainly the labeling and flexible packaging markets. In addition, it will continue to produce coated and uncoated paper grades for other end-uses.

You can read a full report in the next issue of *Labels & Labeling*.

Proofing alliance

EFI and X-Rite have combined their expertise in color measurement to deliver a new high end digital proofing solution based around Colorproof XF client/server-based software and X-Rite's new Eye-One iSis automated spectral chart reader.

Colorproof XF transforms inkjet and laser printers into powerful proofing systems, and significant new features launched with Version 3 include a new output option for gravure printers, a production option for wide format production environments and the Fiery Option, which seamlessly integrates Fiery-driven digital output devices into the Colorproof XF workflow.

The X-Rite automatic chart reader is based on Eye-One technology, measuring a 1500 patches target in eight minutes. Using the iSis measuring device with Colorproof XF speeds the system set-up process of linearization, profiling, as well as calibration of the proofing system.

The XL version (A3+, Tabloid format) measures charts with as many as 2,500 patches printed on a single A3 (Tabloid) page – eliminating the time consuming task of cutting charts and feeding multiple pages. A built-in vision system that offers high tolerance for how charts are aligned as they are fed into the system and automatically corrects for misalignment.

Inkjet partners

Franchini has entered into a partnership with US company Array Graphics to integrate ink jet printers into its label printing and converting lines. Array´s Jet engine inkjet module consists of two basic units: a head – similar to desktop printer cartridges – and the imager, a fixed block of three heads covering a print width of 3.81 cm. Print resolution ranges from 600x150 dpi to 600x600 dpi.

Windows-based software controls all programming and operating functions and the user-friendly GUI allows for many functions: for example, images can be rotated by one degree at a time, check digits can be inserted, prefixes and suffixes can be added and ink consumption can be calculated according to each job. The system uses solvent and UV curable inks in either cartridges or bulk ink systems, with Pantone colors available.

The Array system is highly modular and allows stitching of more than four units across a press line. Franchini recently installed in Italy the widest in-line inkjet module created in Europe, with 11 imagers set in a continuous line – 33 heads – on a flexo press used for security applications at Pasqui Srl.

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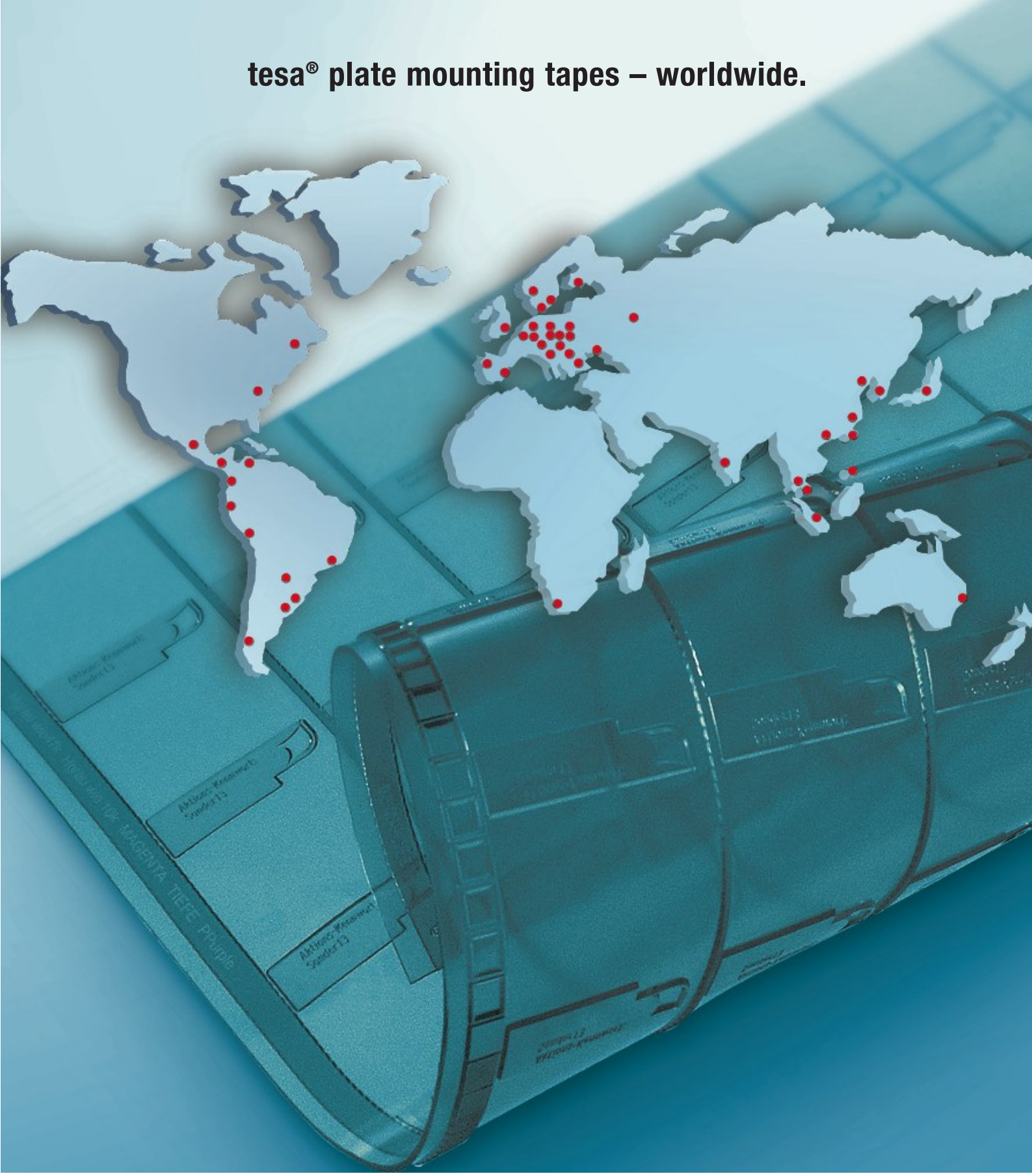

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The XP5000 servo press was on display at Mark Andy's new Advanced Technology Center in Basle

Mark Andy on the offensive

James Quirk reports from the inauguration of Mark Andy's new Advanced Technology Center in Basle, Switzerland

With an increasing number of European press manufacturers entering the US market, Mark Andy, traditionally dominant in America, is taking on the Europeans in their own backyard, and with increasing success.

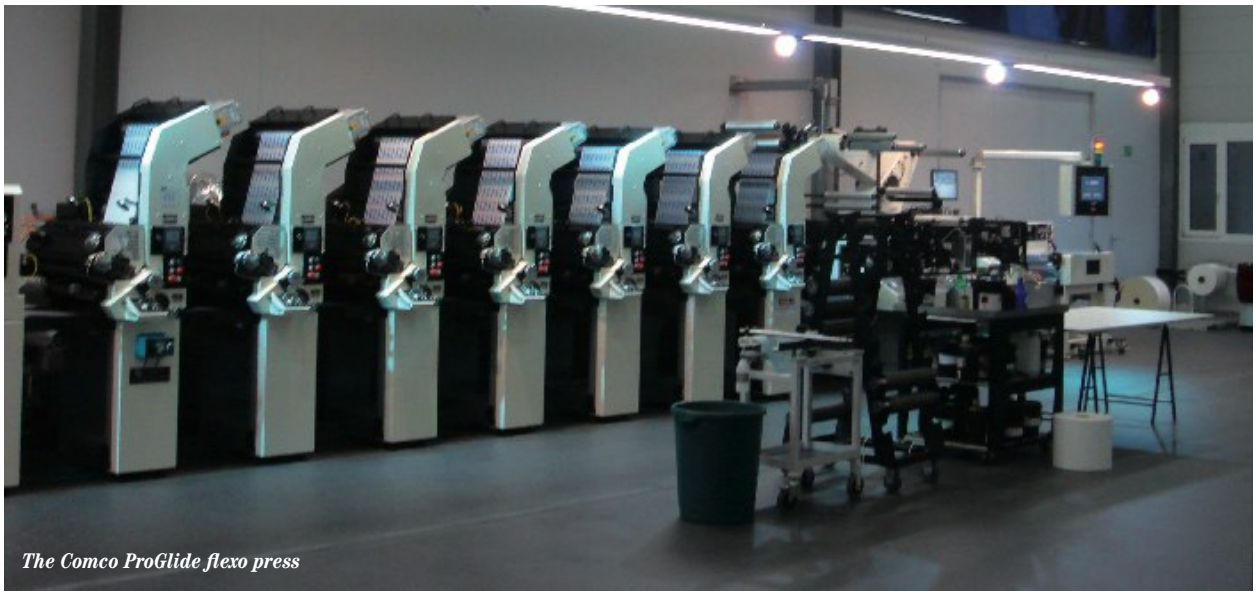
Testament to this success is the company's new Advanced Technology Center, opened recently at Mark Andy's European headquarters in Basle, Switzerland. Around 100 customers and partners attended the opening, where Mark Andy presses were on display and the company's vision for the European market was unveiled.

'The European market is at the epicenter of what we want to achieve,' said Paul Brauss. Mark Andy's president. 'Many people think that we are a US-focused company, but in the last year 60 per cent of our revenue came from outside the US market.'

Mark Andy's European vision began 20 years ago with the foundation of Mark Andy AG Switzerland in 1987. In its first full year, eight presses were sold. Service organizations have also been set up in the UK and France.

European demand for the presses has increased greatly. In 2006, Mark Andy sold more than 60 presses into Europe, a third of which went to Eastern Europe. The new 1,000 square meter facility will cater to this rapidly growing area for the company, offering a full range of technical support to label and package print converters throughout Europe, as well as other parts of the world.

The new facility includes a demonstration showroom for print tests on a cross section of the company's Mark Andy and Comco press range and VSR converting lines. In addition, the company will be offering certified Mark Andy technical service, advanced print and technical training programs, educational events,



The Comco ProGlide flexo press

(Left-right) Paul Briggs, MD, Mark Andy UK; Paul Brauss, president, Mark Andy and Dieter Huck, MD, Mark Andy Europe

applications R&D, and a complete parts and technical support department.

On display were the XP5000 multi-process servo press, the new version of the 2200 flexo press, the VSR 300D inspection rewinder and the Proglide FLX press from Comco.

Mark Andy's 2200 series of flexo presses, the company's most successful machine, has been reengineered and is available in three forms: the economical L-model, the high-speed XL-model, and the XLS-model which features servo drive technology. Each model is upgradeable, allowing future growth to be achieved on the same machine.

Representatives from Mark Andy Europe, UK, and USA were all present, as well as from Morgenthaler Partners, Mark Andy's parent company. 'The challenge is to take Mark Andy's leadership position in the US and transfer it to Europe,' said John Lutsi, Morgenthaler Partners.

The inauguration was opened by a traditional drummer from the Carnival of Basle. 'We like it loud!' explained Dieter Huck, MD, Mark Andy Europe.

Greg Palm, VP sales and marketing, gave thanks to the company's key partners, many of whom were present at the event. Alphasonics, Rotometrics, GEW, Kocher + Beck, AVT, Stork, Raflatac, Xsys, Honle and Harper were all acknowledged. ■

Eastern European success

Mark Andy's increasing success in Eastern Europe can be shown through the example of Romanian converter Gebacolor, based in Iasi.

CEO Cristian Delcea describes the company as a 'proud Mark Andy house', and it is easy to see why. In the ten years since Gebacolor printed its first label, the company has installed no less than eight Mark Andy flexo presses – ranging from two Cadets and four 7-inch 2200 lines (up to 12 colors), to a 4300 and, just last year, a 13-inch XP5000 servo driven press with water base and UV capabilities.

Exclusively converting self-adhesive products, Gebacolor serves the food, pharmaceutical, cosmetic, logistic, and drinks industries. Its market is mainly local, but with an increasing amount of export to, among other places, the US.

'I learned about flexo from my co-founding partner Mircea Abaitanci and most recently in America,' said Delcea, who lives part of the time in the US, 'where Mark Andy was the accepted standard, so it made good sense to work with a manufacturer that offered a full range of equipment from introductory level to highly sophisticated lines. Continuity of contact is so important, especially in Romania, where there is little or no support for flexo technology outside of the manufacturer's network.'

Delcea has witnessed consumption of labels per capita grow three-fold, and according to figures from FINAT, Romania has in recent years been enjoying growth rates of approaching 50 per cent – the fastest in the world.

In the past six years sales turnover at Gebacolor has quadrupled, which has required triple shift working, and highlighted the need for increased capacity. Delcea saw the need to raise the level of technology to allow a more diversified product range to be produced.

The result of six months of negotiation was the installation of a 13" Mark Andy XP5000 servo driven flexo line early in 2006, a press that has four times the capacity of Gebacolor's 7" 2200 lines.

Production schedules are now filling up well in the company's 2,000 square meter facility. Currently employing 90 staff, Gebacolor converts two million labels each day, and topped $4m in turnover in 2006.

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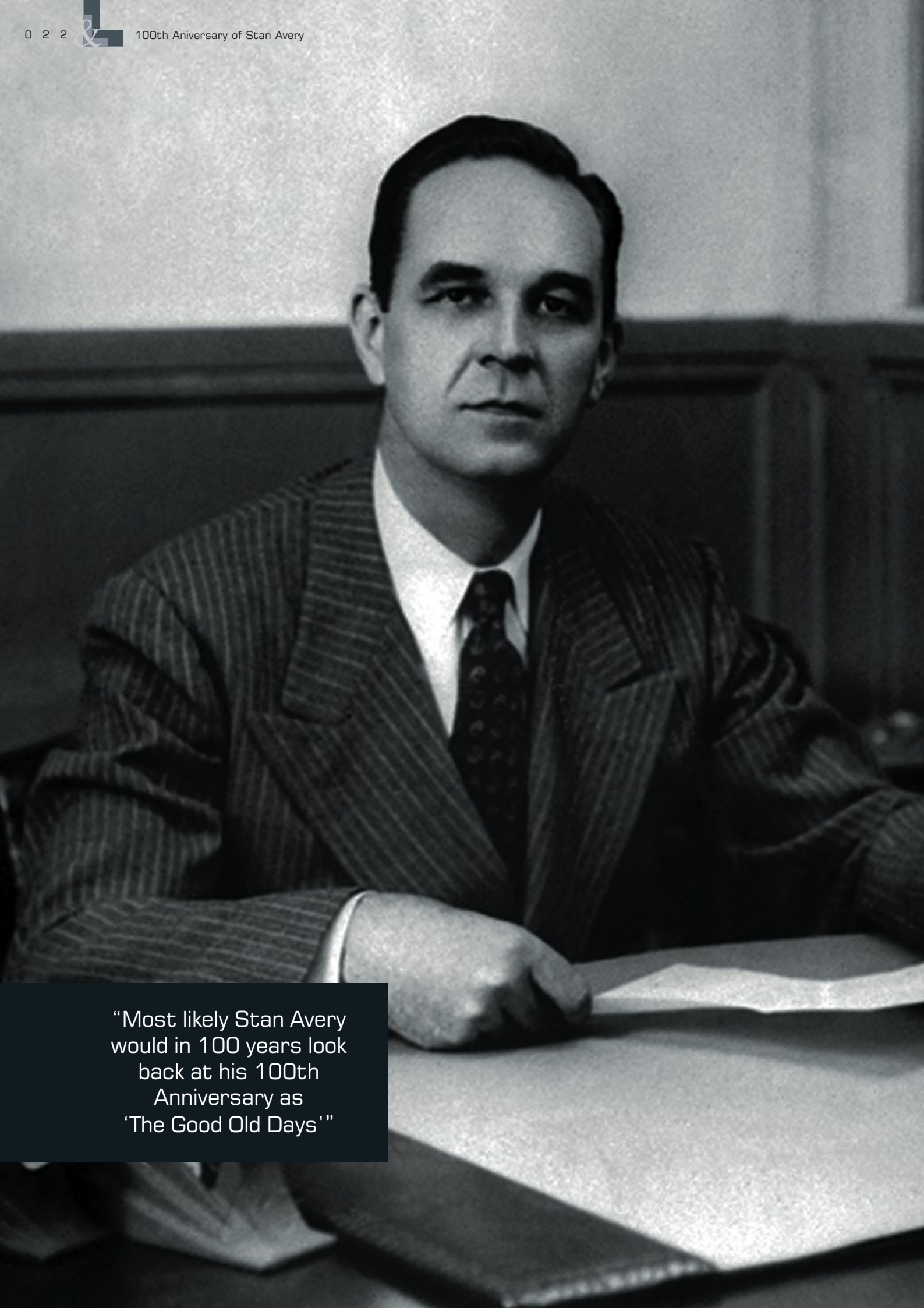


"Most likely Stan Avery would in 100 years look back at his 100th Anniversary as 'The Good Old Days'"

The legacy of Stan Avery

Just 100 years on from the birth of Stan Avery in 1907, the world of labels has changed dramatically – yet his key innovations are still at the core of all self-adhesive label production even today. **Mike Fairley** looks at how the industry continues to evolve

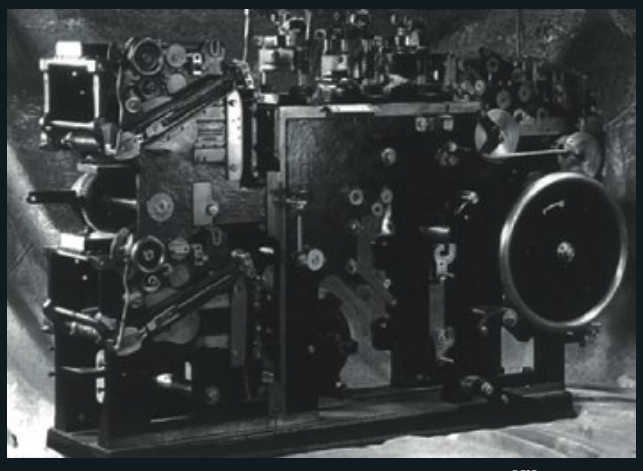
With the label industry now well into the 21st century it is already clear that the pace of change in label materials, technology and solutions is proving just as rapid as the later part of the 20th century. Radio frequency technology and applications for RFID labels are still in their early stages of evolution, smart active and intelligent label solutions seem to be growing by the month, while major advances in nanotechnology and nano-coatings seem certain to have a significant impact on the food, drug, medical, and distribution sectors and the future of label usage.

Yet it is still only 100 years this year since one of the most significant figures in the world of labels was born; R Stanton Avery, better known as Stan Avery. When he was born in January 1907 almost all labels used at that time were applied onto bottles or cans using a wet glue. Indeed, it had only been towards the end of the 19th century that the introduction of the continuous papermaking machine and the invention of lithography had even made it economically feasible to produce long runs of the same quality (label) papers and to print them, in sheeted form, in color.

Undoubtedly it was this world of cost-effective colorful labels that was at this time enabling food, beverage and medicines manufacturers to individually pack and label their products themselves, rather than being individually weighed and packed by the provision merchant or retailer. Applicator machines as we might recognize them today were also being rapidly introduced. These applied a wet-glue to the back of each label and then, in turn, applied the label to the glass bottle or can. Mass product labeling as we would understand it today, was still only really developing when Stan Avery was coming into the world.

> "During the 1970s, the growth of self-adhesive labeling prompted many narrow-web, die-cutting and UV-curing developments, including the R160 and wide version R200, as well as the Rota-Screen system"

Even the use of gummed paper labels was still only in its early infancy at this time. A patent for the production of non-curling gummed paper for labels was purchased by Samuel Jones & Company in 1905 and this saw the beginnings of hand-applied box and luggage labeling – and also the growth of



Nilpeter press

Kum-Kleen printed labels

lick-and-stick postage stamps. However, the development of the first packaging films in the 1930s, to which moistenable gummed paper labels did not stick that successfully, in turn saw the introduction of the first heatseal label materials which could be automatically applied and, even at this stage, heralded the slow decline of the pre-gummed paper labels.

The self-adhesive label was still unknown at this time, although self-adhesive bandages and wound dressings had been developed for battlefield use as far back as the Crimean War in the 1850s, along with the first primitive ambulances and the beginnings of modern nursing and infection reduction techniques emanating from the work and influence of Florence Nightingale.

Self-adhesives make their impact

However, it was undoubtedly the original development of self-adhesive labels by Stan Avery in 1935 and their subsequent evolution into a highly efficient and cost-effective method of label printing and die-cutting in rolls, with automatic application in many different industries and markets, that undoubtedly had the most significant impact on the world of labels in the 20th century – and still is even today.

Yet this remarkable development was not just one innovation but a number of different creative ideas which, put together, enabled individual self-adhesive labels to be printed in-line on a continuous web of material, die-cut to shape or size on the same production line, be re-reeled and then be automatically applied (with waste removal) from a roll to a wide variety of pack and product shapes. Almost unbelievably, all those came from initial trials using an adhesive 'coater' fashioned from a cigar box and a simple die-punch. From this, Stan Avery pioneered a technique from which virtually all of the self-adhesive graphic and industrial fastening products used worldwide have evolved – and all this working from a 100 square foot rented loft space in Los Angeles. His first products were Kum-Kleen pricing labels.

These first self-adhesive labels were not technically die-cut but rather were die-punched using a male die which came up through a guiding plate and die-cut two 3/4 inch round discs of adhesive coated paper. Carrying them through a female die and sticking them side by side on a strip of backing paper, Stan Avery made 3/4 inch price labels for antique and gift shops. When the limitation of the die-punched method began to restrict both the production and volume sales of self-adhesive labels, he had the idea that it might be possible to make a sandwich of the backing, the face paper and the adhesive and, then, as a separate process, die-cut the required label shape through the face paper only.

To create the first cutters, Stan Avery used the edge of a very thin strip of watch spring. Supported on edge in a thin metal plate with only a fraction of an inch or so exposed for cutting, Stan Avery was able to make dies of any desired shape with uniformly thin cutting edges. It was then only necessary to work the die between absolutely flat ground steel surfaces to make perfect cuts every time.

> "From this, Stan Avery pioneered a technique from which virtually all of the self-adhesive graphic and industrial fastening products used worldwide have evolved"

Close co-operation in the supplier chain

Jakob Landberg, Nilpeter A/S, discusses how 100 years of innovative advantage and co-operation in the supplier chain have benefited the label industry.

'At a 100th Anniversary it is a tradition to look back – I'm sure Stan would also do so. And there must be plenty of things to observe during the past 100 years of the highly innovative industry that Stan could chose from!

'I will not even start to go through his contribution to the development of new and innovative substrates, adhesive chemistry and non-sticky backing materials – but surely our niche-industry would not have been where it is now without his visions and achievements.

'Huge steps have also been taken in the world of process equipment for the labeling industry – from heat-set letterpress over UV-letterpress, hot air flexo over UV-flexo, wet and dry offset, gravure and digital printing.

'I think there is a distinctive innovative advantage in our industry – namely the close co-operation between the players in the supply chain – something Stan also utilized. Therefore, not only presses, inks and substrates have been improved ten-fold of times since the birth of the self-adhesive industry – also numerous OEM-parts have seen the first daylight and been optimized constantly. Just think of UV-systems, control equipment, anilox technology, gears and servo systems – to mention a few.

'Over the latest decade or so the major focus from press manufactures has been on optimizing existing processes – rather than implementing new ones. Thereby the efficiency in the printing process has been elevated – by gaining productivity and achieving tremendous savings in set-up time and material.

'A highly innovative capacity as Stan Avery, however, would not dwell on looking back during his own 100th anniversary – I'm sure he would also look forward and try to predict where the future would take his industry for the next 100 years!

'Some topics are easy to see in the crystal ball: environmental issues will push us forward in efficiency. Lean Manufacturing will improve our productivity and cost structures – somehow to withstand the ever increasing level of end-user price pressure. Copy-cats will take security printing, laminating, and other technologies forward towards the extreme.

'Most likely Stan Avery would in 100 years look back at his 100th Anniversary as "The Good Old Days!"'

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The three owners of flexiket as, Denmark. From left - Ulrik Andersson, Bjarne Svensson and Henrik Hansen

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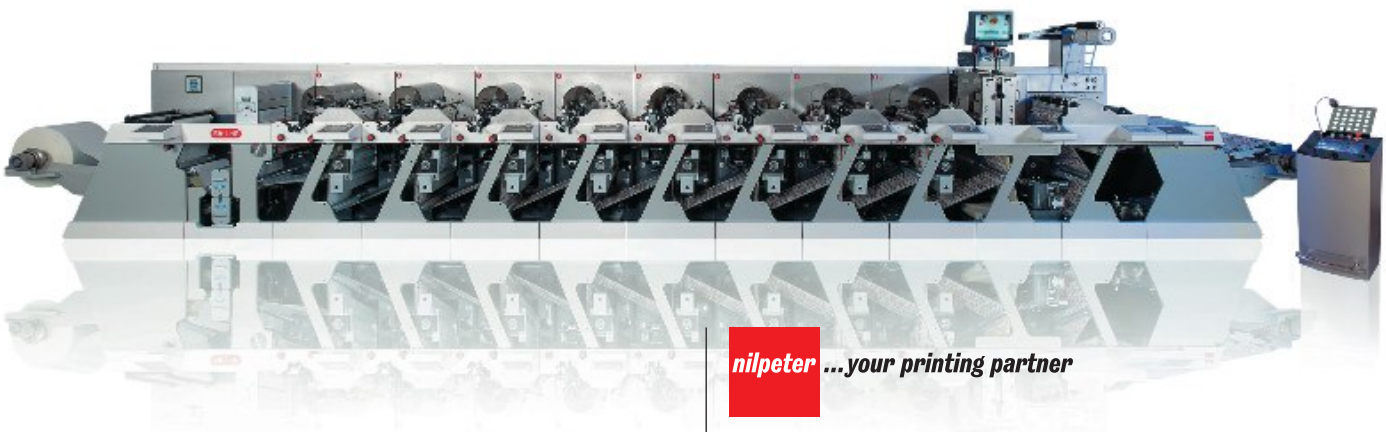

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By 1937 Avery had developed the first synthetic-based pressure-sensitive adhesive and, using a second-hand dough mixer purchased for $10, started his own adhesive production. It was many years later before he purchased his first high-speed mixer.

The following year, in 1938, Sessions of York produced the very first Avery Kum-Kleen labels in England. These were manufactured on the company's roll-label seal presses which were used to stamp out printed labels from slit-back Kum-Kleen tape purchased in 4.5 inch rolls – the full width of Stan Avery's original tape-based plant.

During World War II Avery received wartime government contracts for self-adhesive labels that replaced metal identification tags and also for instructional labels for assembly-line workers. It was from these approaches that Stan Avery changed his business focus and markets from retail labels to one that encompassed much broader markets.

Killing time on a train journey, Stan used a wooden matchbox to satisfy himself that if the backing paper of a roll of labels is pulled away at a sharp angle, the labels on the roll will always detach themselves. Hence the first automatic on-roll label dispensing system was born in 1949. Today's sophisticated label dispensing equipment still uses that basic simple principle developed by Stan in the 1940s.

"Killing time on a train journey, Stan used a wooden matchbox to satisfy himself that if the backing paper of a roll of labels is pulled away at a sharp angle, the labels on the roll will always detach themselves"

Fasson, the base materials division of Avery, was established in 1953 and pressure-sensitive self-adhesive label materials from a newly-built plant in Painsville, Ohio, now became available in the wider market place. By 1955 the first Fasson base materials plant in Europe had been opened in Leiden in the Netherlands. Today, under the name of Avery Dennison, the Fasson brand name of self-adhesive materials is sold and marketed worldwide.

Narrow-web converting technology

With this new material, which only required a backing sheet to be peeled-off to reveal a ready-to-use 'sticker', came the need for a new kind of production technology for die-cutting the labels to shape in-line on a printing press. It was to solve this problem that another industry pioneer based in St. Louis, Mark Andrews Snr. began developing rotary die-cutting, in turn working with a number of companies to develop solutions that could be used on the Mark Andy flexographic tape printing machines which he was at that time building.

Several companies successfully produced engraved dies from blanks supplied by Mark Andy. Shortly after, Mark Andy began manufacturing dies. This development of rotary die-cutting and its marriage with flexographic printing paved the way for narrow-web printing and converting as it is known today. Mark Andy Inc., although no longer manufacturing dies, has continued this innovative role to become one of the world's leaders in narrow-web press design and sales.

Kum-Kleen pricing labels: Stan Avery's first product

Of the original key North American pioneers in the design and manufacturing of simple rotary dies for the earliest flexographic label press manufacturers, Richard Rosemann became the founder of RotoMetrics in 1957. From that early beginning, that company has grown from a small business start-up serving printers in the St. Louis region to become a worldwide leader in precision rotary tooling. Today, Rotometrics serves converting industry clients worldwide, with offices in many countries.

At around the same time, a chance meeting between Ferd Rüesch Snr. and Stan Avery, led the then young Ferd Rüesch into laying the foundations for the success of the Swiss label press manufacturing company Gallus. A prototype self-adhesive label press was

Avery's laws

Some of Stan Avery's homespun humor – with underlying truths:

- 'When you stop making mistakes, you're in deep trouble.'
- 'When the going gets rough, you get the best traction.'
- 'External pressures unite; internal pressures divide.'
- 'If you have the power, you don't have to use it.'
- 'You're always down on what you're not up on.'

introduced by the company in 1957 and this led to the incremental-feed Q33 and T180 models, more than 800 of which were eventually installed worldwide. During the 1970s, the growth of self-adhesive labeling prompted many narrow-web, die-cutting and UV-curing developments, including the R160 and wide version R200, as well as the Rota-Screen system.

Ferd Rüesch in turn contributed many other innovative designs for pressure-sensitive labeling, and played a significant role in the development of FINAT, the worldwide labeling association.

Even before Gallus and Mark Andy had launched their self-adhesive label presses, two Danish pioneers,

Far reaching

'It's amazing how far-reaching the effects of Stan Avery's invention have been. His concept has affected so many lives in so many ways – not just in the packaging industry, but in the whole of consumer society.'

Suzanne Zaccone, vice chairman, GSI Technologies

Christian Andersen Nielson and Axel Nikolaj Petersen, were designing and building rotary letterpress and flexo presses for pressure-sensitive and gummed tape production, gummed paper labels and the production of tickets.

Reel-to-reel production for them was already a reality, with the first Nilpeter printing press, known as the Simplex, being launched in the 1920s, and continuing as part of the company's range until the 1970s. Gummed paper, which was introduced to the company by Kay Fritz Crone in the 1930s, became a decisive factor in the

"What I remember most about Stan Avery was his character. His values-based approach to business still provides a guidepost for our business leaders today."

company evolving from a pure service workshop into the fields of development and manufacture of specialized presses.

In the 1940s the Simplex press was re-launched as a semi-rotary printing press, working reel-to-reel or reel-to-sheet, for the printing of tickets. The Viking Dominator press was also developed. Die-cutting was incorporated into the Dominator design in the mid 1940s to produce pressure-sensitive seals and labels. By the 1950s, the Simplex and Viking Dominator presses were becoming an important component within the newly developing self-adhesive label industry. Indeed, more than 2,000 Dominators were sold before production ceased in 1984. Today, Nilpeter offers all label printing processes, in all widths, for all substrates, and for all label and related markets.

Other label industry pioneers

While Mark Andy, Gallus and Nilpeter were developing in-line printing and converting of self-adhesive materials, other companies – such as Jackstadt – were also becoming involved in the manufacture of self-adhesive materials in sheet and roll form

In Germany, a young Werner Jackstädt, an early pioneer of the European and international pressure-sensitive label industry, joined his father's wholesale paper business in 1947 and by 1949 that small family business had begun producing pressure-sensitive sheet products. By 1954, the Jackstädt business had started to dispatch the first sample rolls of self-adhesive paper to printers in Europe.

Eventually, under the guidance of Werner Jackstädt, the Jac

Stan Avery (top row, second from left), sets sail in 1929, heading for China with a group of friends

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organization grew to become the world's largest private manufacturer of self-adhesive papers, films and labels, with over 50,000 customers in more than 100 countries. Jackstädt GmbH was acquired by Avery Dennison in 2002.

Meanwhile, across the other side of the world in Japan, Nozumu Shiwaku had just joined a small family gummed tape business with just 40 employees as executive vice president. Very quickly, his efforts rapidly made Fuji Shiko, a leading gummed tape manufacturer in Japan, and also took the company into the self-adhesive materials, label applicator and label printing machinery markets.

Within five years, Fuji Shiko had became a leading manufacturer of self-adhesive materials. Mr Shiwaku became president and CEO of the company in 1967 after the founder of the company, Keisuke Shiwaku, passed away. In the mid-1980s he started planning to take the company into a listing on the Tokyo stock exchange, becoming chairman and CEO of FSK in 1986 and obtaining a company stock listing in 1989.

That major Asian pioneer of self-adhesives made an outstanding contribution to the development of the self-adhesive industry in Japan and was a major influence on the narrow-web printing industry around the world. He was on the board of directors of FIPAGO, the board of directors of FINAT, was a judge for the World Label Association Awards and made a significant contribution to local societies in Japan, especially in the areas of safety and education.

Also building a business on the back of rapid growth in self-adhesive laminates during the 1950s and beyond was Dow Corning. Originally established in 1943 to explore the potential of silicones and their applications in many different sectors, the company has been a global source of innovative, proven performance and cost-effective silicone-based solutions for the paper and label industries now for over 50 years.

Certainly by the 1960s, self-adhesive labeling was a major global growth industry, with all the leading pioneers now expanding their manufacturing, sales or service operations throughout all the key industrial markets of the world – North America, Western Europe, Japan, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa.

"Originally only used for decorating blown plastic containers for hair care and under-the-sink products, in-mold labeling later extended to the labeling of injection molded biscuit containers and to tubs for soft spreads and margarines"

The famous Chicago Boys scare the Swiss

In the Summer of 1945 – World War II had just ended – Ferdinand Rüesch III visited a trade show in Chicago. Chicago was already then known for its 'gangster reputation'. Nevertheless, Ferdinand Rüesch III – the father of today's Gallus' owner – travelled to the windy city to establish business contacts. At the show, he was asked by Stan Avery whether he could take over the representation of Avery's business in Europe.

Ferdinand was very excited about this idea and travelled back to St. Gallen. His father, Ferdinand Rüesch II, was unfortunately not that enthusiastic: 'We don't enter any business with these Chicago Boys,' he concluded, and his son had to obey. Luckily for the label printing industry, there were more occasions for Stanton Avery and Ferdinand Rüesch III to meet and work on successful business deals.

Global expansion for Avery

For the original pioneer of self-adhesives, Stan Avery, the years through the 1960s, 70s and 80s, was a key time. Aided and then superseded as chairman and CEO by Charles (Chuck) D Miller, the company steadily expanded labelstock production into Europe, Australia and Latin America.

Certainly, as president and chief operating officer for seven years and then CEO for twenty-one years, there were few who new Stan Avery better. 'I had many opportunities to work directly with Stan during this period and to get to know him well,' says Chuck Miller. 'In all truthfulness, he was a gentle man who never could quite believe the company was getting so big. His pride in the growth of Avery Dennison was absolutely amazing. Although everyone thought of Stan as a quiet, modest man, he had tremendous internal strength and he was a very determined individual, but he never wanted to run anything and he certainly never wanted to have to deal with people issues. He delegated to me the management direction and strategy of Avery Dennison, participating whenever he felt he wanted to insert himself – which was on a frequent basis. Stan always cared deeply about the employees and I think I could write a book on some of the episodes!

'My first recollection of Stan is when we went out to dinner during the week I was being interviewed. We had a good dinner and a good talk about strategy and what a CEO needed to do. My first assignment when I came into the company was to write a position description to give Stan some guidance on the role of the CEO. I insisted that I be given thirty days to work in the field and call on customers and I would then be ready to come to work. When I came back, I reported directly to Stan and we worked together on planning and strategy. Regardless of my position in the company, I always felt I worked for Stan, even when I was the CEO.

'I felt it was my responsibility to reply quickly to any letter he wrote and that I did. One day, Stan called me into his office and said: 'Chuck, you really do not understand my letters. My letters are all philosophical. I am not asking you to reply to them. I am not asking you to do anything. What I simply want you to do is think about them.' That was wonderful guidance from a very philosophical and thoughtful gentleman.

'One of the nicest gestures Stan ever made to me, and one of the things that truly depicts his caring personality, are the little notes he used to write me on the back of his calling card and stick in the window of my car when he left for the evening. It seems that I was always there late, and it amazed me the number of times that I would receive a note stuck on the window that said 'Great meeting – great company' or 'Let's have lunch next week' or 'Hope you and your family are well'. He was a warm, caring individual who continued to express his pride in the success of the company. Stan loved seeing our business expand to Europe and then on to Japan, Korea, China and now India. All of us at the company miss him a great deal.'

Emergence of new labeling technologies

While self-adhesive labels achieved dramatic growth throughout the 1960s, 70s and 80s under the guidance of Stan Avery and Chuck Miller, new pressures were emerging to find different ways of labeling very long runs of blow-molded containers. From these pressures came the development of in-mold labeling in the 1980s in which the label is placed in the mold prior to the forming of the container and so becoming an integral part of the bottle.

Originally only used for decorating blown plastic containers for hair care and under-the-sink products, in-mold labeling later extended to the labeling of injection molded biscuit containers and to tubs for soft spreads and margarines. Most recently, in-mold labeling has been used for the labeling of thermoformed tubs, again for soft spreads.

Also in the 1980s came the development of shrink-sleeve labeling where a continuous web of film is printed, formed into a tube and then, for application, cut to the appropriate length, placed over the container and then shrunk to fit. Having the advantage of 360 degree decoration, sleeve labeling has created new markets and applications for labels and also added the potential to extend the shrink capability to provide a tamper-evident cap seal. An alternative and more recent technology for 360 degree bottle decoration came with the introduction of stretch-sleeve labeling in the 1990s.

Other new labeling technologies developed in the 1990s, primarily for the labeling of plastic bottles, including wrap-around film labeling, cut-and-stack film labeling, roll-on-shrink-on labeling (ROSO) and spot patch film labeling. Used for the decoration of soft drinks, carbonated beverages and some beers, these newer label technologies are achieving some of the highest growth in the label and end-user market.

The explosion of supermarkets and hypermarkets in the

The start of great things

Paul Jarvis comments on how Jarvis Porter started producing self-adhesive labels in the 1960s.

'In the mid-1960's the self-adhesive labeling industry, although growing fast, was still in its infancy. Jarvis Porter, who were already a respected name within the wet glue label market, started producing self-adhesive labels from their Southern base in New Kings Road, Fulham, London. I had the privilege to be in charge of this division and indeed purchased the first press on behalf of the company, which was a Viking Dominator from Nilpeter.

'Supported by Fasson, who were of course then the self-adhesive material arm of Avery Dennison, production snowballed. Orders were being received from famous companies such as Castrol, who used them for engine stickers; the Co-op, who introduced self-adhesive for their bonus stamps in competition to Green Shield; and also Winsor & Newton, who decided to go self-adhesive for their range of Alkyd oil tube labels. As these labels featured illustrations of paintings by the Great Masters, they were indeed a challenge. Special copper plates had to be ordered and a new press invested in.

'This press was one of the first Gallus T160 flatbed letterpress machines to be installed in the UK. The independent printing heads, together with the copper printing plates and the high-quality cast-coated Fasson material enabled superb results to be achieved. Jarvis Porter won a Fasson Award for the Winsor & Newton labels, and I had the privilege of receiving this from the hands of Stan Avery himself.

'This was the start of great things for Jarvis Porter – which continue to this day – although now under the name of CCL Label.

'It was a great privilege for me to meet Stan Avery personally. He struck me as a man of integrity and honesty who had the ability to communicate to an industry that he had virtually single-handedly invented.'

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Potential and growth

Ferdinand E Rüesch JR looks at aspects of the co-operation between R Stanton Avery and Ferdinand Rüesch III

A long-lasting relationship between Stanton Avery and Ferdinand Rüesch III saw major, if not to say, incisive evolutions in the label printing industry. Ferdinand Rüesch III, a true label industry pioneer who over a period of 40 years successfully turned a small precision machinery and specialized printing equipment (including lottery presses) manufacturer into the Gallus organization, was born in St. Gallen/Switzerland in 1924. Ferd Rüesch III worked in the family business (founded in 1923) after graduating as an engineer, taking charge of the business in 1953.

It was a meeting in the 1950s with Stanton Avery, the father of the self-adhesive label, whose ideas on pressure-sensitive labeling soon led Ferd Rüesch III into laying the foundations for the success of the Gallus label press manufacturing company. A prototype self-adhesive label press was introduced by the company in 1957 and this led to the incremental-feed Q33 and T180 models, more than 800 of which were installed worldwide.

It was thanks to the visionary mind of Ferd Rüesch III, who instantly recognized the potential of the self-adhesive material invented by Stanton Avery, that these developments took place. At that time, he was very lonely with his visions about self-adhesive labeling: the concept of cutting the label was completely unknown.

Ferd Rüesch III had realized that the post-war area, a period characterized by scarceness of food and other commodity products, would soon develop into a more positive era: more access to products means diversity, and diversity calls for improved product decoration. A graduate engineer, Ferd Rüesch III managed to harmonize the interaction between the press, the paper and the die-cutting. His development of the – we may say truly revolutionary – flatbed-diecutter marked one of the most important milestones in the history of our industry.

The impulse was set, and the era of self-adhesive labeling headed off like a rocket. Parallel to the global expansion of Avery's business, Gallus entered the global scene by exporting presses to all continents. Gallus has been a truly international company for more than half a century, a development that could only be realized with a clear vision for potential in mind and determination – the key aspects for successful business growth.

The 1960's and 1970's were characterized by an ever-growing demand for machines. The speed and thus the output per machine was, compared to today's presses, very conservative, to say the least. The speed was determined by the technology in the press: the substrate had to dry up in between printing units. This stop-and-go process, comparable to pilgrim steps, slowed down the speed of the press. Owing, or maybe thanks, to the limited output, an enormous amount of presses was sold in these years.

When UV-curing came along, the technology changed to continuous roll production without breaks between the colors: now the business really hit off. Although bigger, faster, better, the business could still be secured thanks to growing market needs, more refined customer segmentation and booming markets in emerging markets. A development that has encouraged both Avery and Gallus to continuously innovate and move the label printing business forward.

Gallus' owner, Ferdinand Rüesch IV, has inherited his father's vision and determination. ‘I am very proud of the history that our two companies share, and I feel an extraordinary admiration for the pioneering work that my father and Stanton Avery achieved. Stanton Avery's life work turned into a successful company that has been and will continue to be considered a benchmark in our industry. I am of course very delighted that Avery and Gallus are still the closest business partners’.

past 20 or more years – not only in the developed markets but now also in China, South East Asia, Eastern Europe and now India – has brought the development of ‘Own Brand’ labels, successfully competing with and gaining market share from the major brand owners. This, coupled with faster and faster store throughput and a significant increase in pre-packed fresh produce, has brought about the need for increasingly shorter run lengths, a major requirement for price-weigh labels, ever reducing lead times, Just-In-Time (JIT) manufacturing practises, improved supply chain management and demands for improved quality standards.

All these trends and pressures have had an influence on label evolution and on the types of labels used today, as well as the printing process required, on pre-press technology, on label application and on label usage – particularly in the world of digital solutions. Just witness the tremendous changes over the past ten years in digital pre-press, digital printing, digital-to-plate and digital finishing. Even the introduction of digital direct drive (servo technology) on conventional presses.

Complementing the growth of digital solutions in the world of labels are coming major new advances in smart, smart active and intelligent labels – between them expected to add as much as 10 per cent additional growth to the label industry over the next five years or so. RFID labels alone are likely to account for more than half of this additional growth, with new smart active label solutions perhaps adding another two-to-three percent

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Avery Dennison in the 21st century

Today, the Avery Dennison Corporation continues to pioneer. 'The company he founded,' says Sjaak Elmendorp, vice president, product technology and innovation, roll materials, Avery Dennison, 'has continued to innovate through its history – solventless silicones, emulsion adhesives and die-coating technology are all areas where Avery Dennison has been a pioneer.'

Christian A. Simcic – today group vice president Roll Materials Worldwide – met Stan Avery 25 years ago when he first joined Avery Dennison as a process engineer at a plant in Champ-sur-Drac, France. 'I was amazed to see Stan walking the factory floor, and it was obvious that he felt at home in this situation. It was his world, connecting with people – he was one of us. I've never forgotten that. One of the biggest lessons I learned from Stan is that this business is about people. People buy from people – not from companies. And that's as true today as it was in Stan's time, and it will continue to drive our business in the future.' Simcic sees the same entrepreneurial spirit which drove Stan Avery driving innovation in the industry today. 'Our customers are the element that will have the most impactful influence on the continued growth of our market. The best example of this is beer. Through risk, commitment, passion for making a difference, our customers drove the transition from cut and stack to PS.'

A look back by William K Sessions, president, Sessions of York

It was just three years after Stan Avery made his epoque-making self-adhesive-label invention in 1935, that Sessions of York began producing Avery Kum-Kleen labels using a roll-label seal-presses to stamp out printed labels from split-back Kum-Kleen tape – which we bought in as 4¼ inch rolls from Stan Avery's original tape-plant.

The photo below was taken in October 1960 in California at Avery's 25th Anniversary celebration, was when I had the honor of presenting a Georgian silver wax-jack to Stan Avery – with his wife Dorothy in smiling support.

Perhaps the last word in this review of the 100th Anniversary of the birth of Stan Avery should come from the Corporation's current president and CEO, Dean Scarborough.

'What I remember most about Stan Avery was his character. His values-based approach to business still provides a guidepost for our business leaders today. Stan believed the best way to help people to be successful was to provide them with the opportunity to work in an ethical and successful business.

'Stan would have been amazed at the growth of self-adhesive materials in the emerging markets of China, Latin America, India and South East Asia,' adds Dean Scarborough. 'The combination of innovation and entrepreneurial printers is driving growth in all these markets, just as it did in the US and western European markets, but at a far more blistering pace.

'Digitization of labels will be one of the major themes of the future. RFID will drive entire new platforms for growth for self-adhesives, with low-cost disposable RFID tags becoming the most ubiquitous electronic products on the planet. Imagine the applications that will emerge for individual item tracking, security and smart tags as costs continue to go down.'

In conclusion, it can be said that Stan Avery not only founded a new company in the 1930s. He pioneered a whole new industry which, in volume terms, still grows annually at a faster rate than any other method of labeling. Today, there are literally thousands of label converting companies, industry employees, suppliers and users who can trace their businesses and jobs back to the innovative and pioneering developments of Stan Avery. For that, the label industry has much to celebrate in his 100th Anniversary. ■

The V6 coater installed at Avery's plant in Vinhedo, Brazil, has increased production by 50 per cent

Commitment to a continent

Avery Dennison's regional vice president for Latin America, Angelo Depietri, speaks exclusively to L&L about the growing opportunities in the region. **James Quirk** reports

Issue 1 of *Labels & Labeling* featured an extended report on the growth of the Latin American label market. Avery Dennison, present in the region for nearly 40 years, is one of the driving forces of this growth. With manufacturing sites in Medellin, Colombia; San Luis, Argentina; and Vinhedo, Brazil – which is home to the continent's largest coater – and distribution centers in Argentina, Chile and Southern Brazil, Avery is strategically located to cover the region. L&L visited its distribution center in Buenos Aires and its plant in Brazil.

Avery Dennison came to Buenos Aires, Argentina in 1996 through its acquisition of Dover. Celebrating its 10th anniversary last year allowed regional vice president Angelo Depietri to take stock of the company's progress.

'In the last two years, Avery has invested 20 million dollars in South America,' he says. 'We see it as one of our biggest potential markets – and have shown commitment to the region by being present here for nearly 40 years.'

Depietri has witnessed a great deal of change in the Argentine label market in recent years. The country has largely recovered from the economic crisis of 2001, and has seen a GDP growth of nine per cent last year. 'I have seen the improvements in the economy in the time I've been here,' he says.

This atmosphere of increased economic and political stability is echoed in the surrounding region, says Depietri. Many Latin American countries are presided over by increasingly stable governments: Bachelet came into office in Chile last year; Brazil's Lula and Colombia's Uribe have both been reelected, while Kirchner is 'quite popular' in Argentina.

Economically, the region is strengthening. 'Brazil has good plans to boost its economy,' says Depietri, 'and Argentina is growing at a fast pace. Chile and Colombia, too, are economically stable.'

Against this background of increased economic and political sustainability, Depietri sees a wide range of opportunities for

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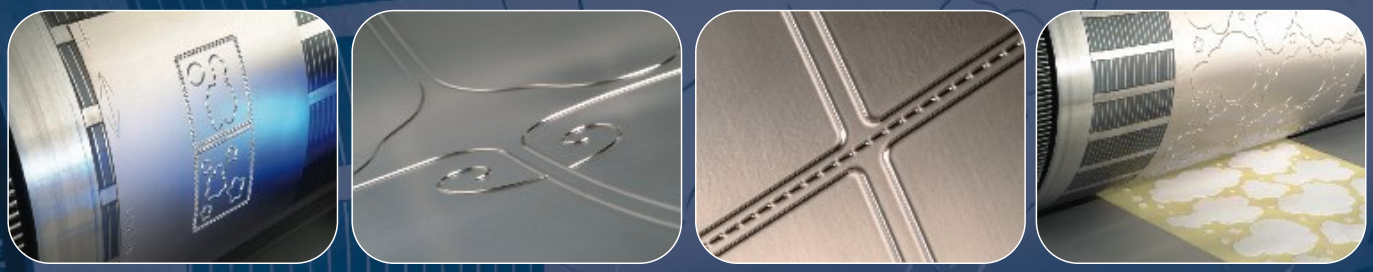

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the label industry: 'In our industry, there are big opportunities in the beverage, food, homecare, and personal care sectors,' he says. 'The whole region is expected to move to self-adhesive labels instead of wet glue in the beer market, for example, and we have developed a Fasson product portfolio specific for this market.'

The wealth of opportunities is reiterated by Gustavo Perez, marketing communications specialist for specialty materials, Avery Dennison South America: 'Just a few years ago, there were only a couple of different SKUs in a single shampoo line, for example, now there are dozens. PS is only technology that can service the variety of products that we are now seeing.'

In the personal care segment, Depietri reports that end users are expanding their product offerings and that clear-on-clear is a current trend. To support this sector, the company launched worldwide the Fasson Global Co-Ex film. Incorporating polymer-blending, co-extrusion, machine-direction orientation and cross-direction conformability into its design, the film is white and clear and can reduce inventory as the single material can decorate a range of applications.

The wine market, too, is an area about which Depietri is excited: 'In Argentina and Chile, the wine segment growth has been amazing both in volume as in label sophistication,' he says. 'Avery has worked hard with converters to develop this market.'

To support the wine sector, Avery created a range of PS materials specifically designed for wine labeling, including textured papers, metalized films and foils, and clear films, all with specific adhesives for wine bottle application. According to Depietri, opportunities in the wine sector lead to potential in related areas, such as gourmet foods and spirits.

South America currently represents around five per cent of the global pressure sensitive market. 'The challenge,' says Depietri, 'is to bring the market to a solid double figure growth. We all have responsibility to help this market to fulfill its potential – information and communication are key.'

Avery Dennison offers its original portfolio in Latin America, and as a global player it is in the position to transfer expertise and success from mature markets to developing ones. The company works hard to support the industry by participating in and sponsoring shows such as Label Summit Latin America and Argentina Gráfica. 'We are listening very carefully to our customer's needs and expectations,' says Depietri, 'and are investing a great deal in training – we want to get deeper into the market segment by segment. There is a very positive outlook for the whole region. ■

Angelo Depietri, vice president and general manager of Avery Dennison materials South America

Region's largest coater installed in Brazil

Fasson arrived in Brazil in 1969, and the Vinhedo operation started in 1976. With four coaters in total, the plant serves the South America Region. A distribution center in Porto Alegre, in southern Brazil, aids the company in covering the largest country in Latin America. In August 2006, Avery Dennison completed the installation of the continent's largest coater, the V6, in its plant in Vinhedo, Brazil. The installation took an impressive three months. 'Usually an installation on this scale would take six,' says general manager Jorge Luis Orejuela.

In August 2006, Avery Dennison completed the installation of the continent's largest coater, the V6, in its plant in Vinhedo, Brazil. The installation took an impressive three months. 'Usually an installation on this scale would take six,' says general manager Jorge Luis Orejuela.

The launch was attended by over 150 customers, and the local market's excitement over the installation has been justified by a dramatic increase in the plant's production.

'Since the coater has been running, our output has increased by 50 per cent – both in terms of speed and width,' says Orejuela.

The V6 coater contains siliconization and adhesive technologies that were customized and patented during its creation. It can siliconize and laminate in the same pass on both paper and film. Its 1.5 meter width is a first in South America, and it can run at up to 500 meters per minute.

'We support our customers to encourage the use of pressure sensitive materials. We slit to any width that the converter needs, for example, so he can save money on waste.' says Isabel Monteiro, marketing manager, materials division, South America.

Adhesives are produced at the Vinhedo plant, and its research and technology center is equipped to carry out development tests on new products, physical tests on papers and films, and chemical analysis on adhesive components, among others.

Top Left-right: Enrico Giudici, Paolo Cattaneo, Mauro Trigerio, Mauro Cameroni. Bottom Left-right: Ambrogio Sangiorio, Marco Cattaneo, Teodoro Butti

From offset to flexo

The continued growth of the labels sector has encouraged one commercial offset printer to set up a successful narrow web flexo division. **Andy Thomas** reports from Italy

The labels industry in Western Europe continues to grow at a steady rate of 3-6 per cent, while the commercial print sector stagnates or even declines under a barrage of ferocious competition.

This situation has led a growing number of commercial sheetfed offset printers to look at the roll label market to grow their businesses. An excellent example is Cattaneo Paolo, based just outside Milan, Italy.

The company was founded in 1920 by the father of current owner Paolo Cattaneo. Paolo started working at his father's plant when he was just 14 and is as enthusiastic about the business now as he was then: 'This business is part of my enjoyment and not just business,' he tells *L&L*.

The company is housed in a modern 3,300 square meter plant with 35 employees. It produces a wide range of commercial work including books, posters, cartons and some wet glue paper labels. In the 1970s, the company set up a continuous forms division converting on Drent web offset presses.

With the declining profitability of the forms business and reduced margins in the commercial sheetfed business, Paolo Cattaneo made the decision to move into roll labels, driven by demand from his existing customers – particularly those buying cartons and sheetfed labels.

Visting a trade show, Cattaneo decided on an Omet Flexy 'S' flexo press, and bought it – for cash – off the Omet stand. This was the first Flexy 'S' machine Omet installed.

Most offset printers moving into flexo need to climb a steep cultural learning curve when moving from sheet to in-line converting, but Paolo Cattaneo had an advantage here, as his press operators were used to processing continuous forms on their Drent Gazelle roll offset presses. 'It was not a big jump from continuous forms to in-line flexo,' says Cattaneo. 'Admittedly we did have some problems in the beginning, but thanks to great support from Omet, we overcame them. For example, in flexo there can be variations in how the plate is

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The Omet Flexy 'S' press at Cattaneo Paolo

mounted and in the thickness of the plate which you do not find in offset, where the plate is standard and is locked into place.'

The flexo labels operation has been set up as a separate division, called EtiCont, which is run by the third generation of the family, Marco Cattaneo. Commenting on the quality of UV flexo compared to offset, Marco says 'the quality is really very close to offset and some customers have complimented us on our flexo work. Flexo colors are much brighter and we can offer more colors, which gives designers more ideas.'

A key factor in the high quality of the company's flexo work is the use of digital flexo plates, produced on Esko fCTP equipment at an outside platemaking house. Generally printing is at 54-60 l/cm.

The 330mm (13in) Omet Flexy 'S' press is configured with corona treater, eight UV flexo servo-driven print stations and a cold foil unit, with die cutting on magnetic cylinders. The press also incorporates automatic longitudinal and lateral registration control.

Cattaneo's Flexy 'S' incorporates chill drums for printing on heat sensitive films and thermal papers. Maintaining registration on extensible substrates is greatly assisted by the servo motors on the plate and impression cylinders, which allow fine control of the web between print units. A registration mark is printed on the first print station, which is read by sensors at the subsequent print stations. This information is used to adjust servo rotation speed to compensate for changes in web length. Infeed and outfeed tension is also servo controlled. The flexo line is completed by a Prati rewinder.

The complex flexo and offset operations at Cattaneo are controlled and co-ordinated by a dedicated MIS system which the company developed jointly with software experts Coconut Bay (www.coconut bay.it).

Markets

The main market sectors served by EtiCont are food and drinks, which demand a wide range of pressure sensitive laminates including metallized PPs. 'We were surprised at the possibilities to print such a wide variety of substrates compared to offset,' notes Marco Cattaneo.

The Flexy 'S' press at EtiCont does not include a rotary Screen unit to lay down whites on clear films, but the company has carried out successful trials using UV flexo white as a substitute.

A key PS growth market is wine labels, as more Italian vineyards install automatic label applicators and embrace the design possibilities opened up by PS labels. Here, Paolo Cattaneo identifies a limitation for flexo, as it cannot print effectively on the range of 'antique' offset papers traditionally used for wine labels.

Another area where Cattaneo sees growth potential is for short runs of corrugated boxes. 'The market for flexo printing of corrugated boxes is growing, but the technology is not changing to allow for printing of shorter runs. Today we see a move to standardize box sizes and differentiate through the use of labels.'

Most of EtiCont's business has come from existing offset customers, and Paolo Cattaneo refuses to employ sales people for the flexo division. 'We're new in the labels business and we don't want to take business from other label printers. We just get business through our reputation. If you employ a sales person today then tomorrow they will be your competitor.'

There is no question that Cattaneo's foray into flexo labels has been a success, and the company is looking at purchasing a second Flexy machine. This will be a more stripped down press, probably without servos, to handle simpler labels such as those for olive oil and sausage labels, leaving the Flexy 'S' to handle more complex converting jobs. Shrink sleeve label trials are on the agenda for the end of this year, when EtiCont's operators will have more experience with the press.

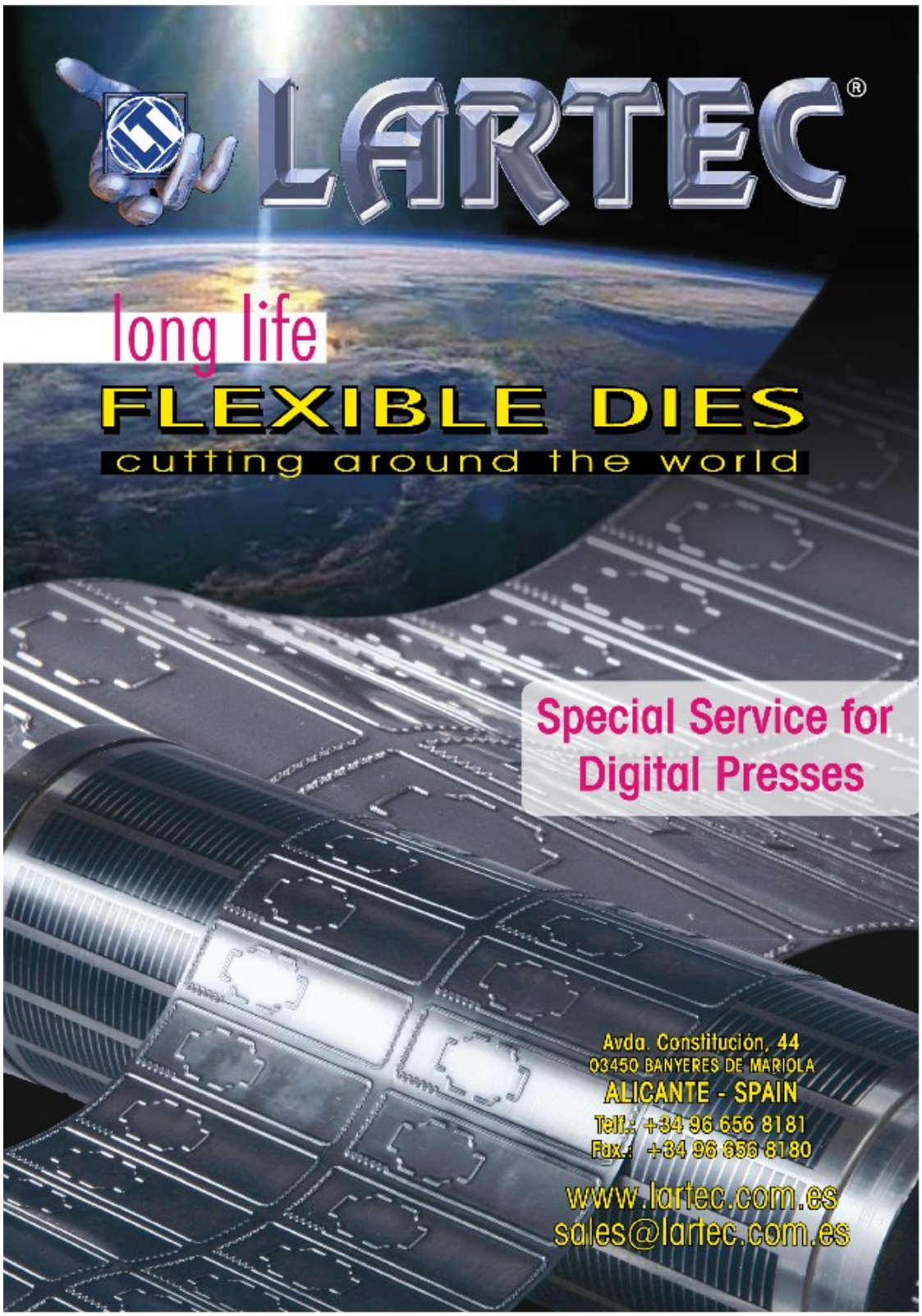
For the future, Paolo Cattaneo sees more growth potential in the labels business than offset. 'In the mid-1990s we had to make a decision about future production. We chose forms and not labels and that was our delay in understanding the market.' ■

Digital

Paolo Cattaneo says that run lengths are decreasing. 'Even where runs are long, they are divided into smaller lots. We recently had a job with half a million pieces, but divided into lots of 500-1,000.'

Cattaneo's commercial print division has extensive experience of digital printing, running two Xerox digital color presses. Some trials have even been conducted printing sheets of warning labels. 'But there is no profitability in digital, it is just a service for customers for jobs up to 10,000 pieces,' says Paolo. 'Flexo is cheaper and can print on a wider range of materials.'

The company has fully embraced digital pre-press on the offset side, running an Agfa thermal CTP plate processing line.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China opening

James Quirk reports from the opening of UPM Raflatac's new factory in Changshu, China

UPM Raflatac celebrated the opening of its new 40 million dollar labelstock manufacturing center in Changshu, 100 kilometers west of Shanghai, with around 400 local customers and end users in attendance.

The new facility represents an important landmark both in the company's history and in the development of the Chinese label industry. It will serve both the Chinese market and the wider Asian Pacific region with Raflatac's range of standard and specialty self-adhesive label materials.

The Tampere, Finland-based company has been present in China since 1999, with sales offices in Shanghai, Beijing and Hong Kong and slitting terminals in northern and southern China. The new factory has been built next to the UPM paper mill on the Yangtze River in a nearby 200 hectare site.

'The factory in Changshu completes our set-up here in China,' said Heikki Pikkarainen, president of UPM Raflatac. 'There is also plenty of land available at this site should further expansion be required.'

The event included a conference in which key figures from Raflatac gave presentations about the company and its plans for the Chinese market, before attendees were taken to the official opening of the factory.

Jussi Vanhanen, senior vice president, Asia Pacific, UPM Raflatac, provided a background to the UPM Group, Raflatac's parent company. 'Over the past 10 years, China has become increasingly important to UPM's businesses. UPM has invested over one billion US dollars into China.'

'For the past 20 years,' he continued, 'UPM Raflatac has consistently been the fastest-growing labelstock company in the world, showing average global growth of 15 per cent – two-to-three times the average market growth. For the next five years, our focus will increasingly be on China.'

He revealed that the new Changshu factory was home to

A sustainable future

A key aspect of the new facility in Changshu is its environmental sustainability.

The factory is located next to the power plant used for UPM's paper mill – and can therefore use energy from there instead of placing further burden on local energy resources. The site also hosts its own effluent treatment center and a harbor.

'Environmental matters are becoming an increasingly important part of the way we all do business in this industry,' said Jussi Vanhanen. 'The environmental standards of our new Changshu factory are the highest in our industry around the world. We don't use solvent adhesives and we clean all the water we use so as to prevent a burden on the Yangtze River.'

'We are very proud of the environmental aspects of the plant,' said Heikki Pikkarainen. 'We have decided to take an active role in developing the sustainability of self-adhesive labeling technology. We're aiming for a sustainable future.'

UPM Raflatac Label Design Awards

The factory opening also hosted the announcement of the results of the UPM Raflatac Label Design Awards 2007 – a contest that was open to professional designers and design students attending China's top 100 design schools.

Chinese designers were asked to create an innovative label for an imaginary home care or personal product called 'New Era', using materials from UPM Raflatac. A total of 2,101 entries were submitted, with 1,722 in the student category and 379 in the professional category.

The awards were organized in cooperation with China's Central Academy of Fine Arts (CAFA). The judging panel chaired by Xiao Yong, professor of graphic design at CAFA and made up of Min Wang, dean of the school of design at CAFA; Zhou Zhongzheng, CEO of Taiwan Zhengmei Group, Shanghai Zhengwei Printing Ltd; Huang Li, chief editor of Package & Design magazine and senior designer; Tapio Vapaasalo, professor of graphic design, University of Art and Design, Helsinki, Finland; and Jussi Vanhanen, senior vice president, Asia Pacific, for UPM Raflatac.

First prize in the professional category was awarded to Beijing-based freelance designer Li Yang for 'Genesis-color'. The judges said that the design 'made good use of the printability of the adhesive material, creating a strong visual identity'.

In the student category, Zheng Jin-de of Hangzhou's Zhejiang Industrial University was awarded first prize for 'New Era Hair Gel', which used a 'bold, minimalist visual for a product series', according to the judges.

The first, second and third place winners in both categories received a cash reward, while 20 runners up in the student category received an honorable mention and a diploma.

Top: Jussi Vanhanen, senior vice president, UPM Raflatac Asia Pacific; above l-r: Robert Sun, general manager of UPM Raflatac China; and Heikki Pikkarainen, president, UPM Raflatac

both Asia's first curtain coating technology and first fully automated adhesive mixing, as well as having Asia's first automated warehouse in this industry.

'We have brought in our most experienced technicians from Europe and the US to aid our operations in China,' he said.

'The decision to invest in a new factory was made in September 2005,' said Heikki Pikkarainen. 'We made our first commercial deliveries from the new factory in December 2006. It has been just 17 months from the investment decision to the opening – which is a great achievement. With this factory, we can begin a new era of labeling in China.'

When asked if the quality of products produced at the new facility would be equal to the company's offerings in Europe and the US, Pikkarainen responded: 'At least: the quality expected by customers in China and Japan is very high.'

During a press conference, Pikkarainen told journalists that the factory in Changshu was one of a series of initiatives by UPM Raflatac to increase its product offering around the world. 'In March RFID capacity was doubled in our Finnish factory,' he said, 'and we are building a new label stock factory in Dixon, Illinois, which will allow 90 per cent of the US market to be within 48 hour service range.' An RFID facility was opened in Fletcher, North Carolina, in 2005. ■

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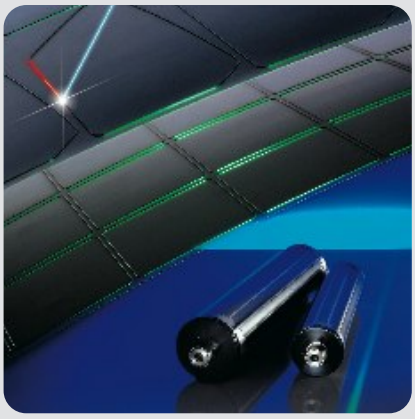


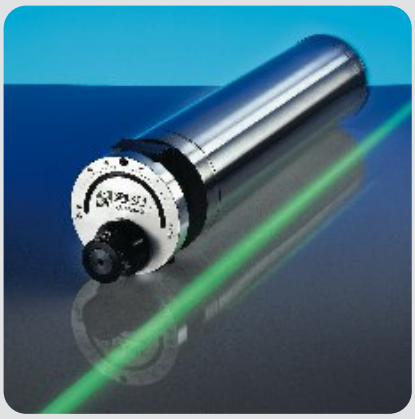


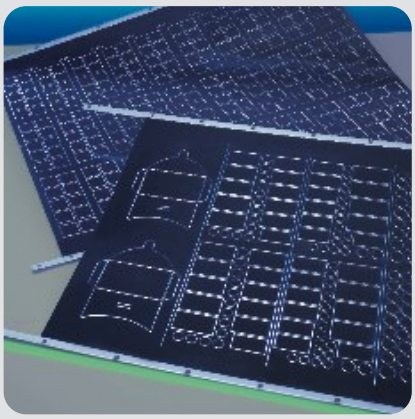


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Dscoop 2007 – helping converters connect the digital dots

Danielle Jerschefske reports from the second annual HP Indigo users group meeting, Dscoop, to find out what digital means to current users and interested converters

The 2007 second annual Digital Solutions Cooperative (Dscoop) conference, held in Tampa, Florida, February 1-3, offered HP Indigo users a state-of-the-art education on digital printing, and also gave interested label converters a chance to see the benefits of digital innovation. Dscoop attendees, with the support of HP professionals, learned how to use an HP Indigo press to help connect the dots of digital success in the label industry.

Digital printers use their HP Indigo presses for a range of applications, including personalization, variable information and authentification. And, they have found make-ready time to be shorter, labor time more efficient and short run orders less wasteful than runs on conventional presses.

Current HP Indigo user Richard Geller is very happy with the three digital presses Amberley Labels has been working with for four years now. Amberley uses a ws4000 and two ws4050 presses. Located in Dorset, United Kingdom, Geller uses his presses most often to produce cosmetic labels and admits, 'we do have some color matching concerns for lipsticks and eye shadows and such, but have a very good pre-press system in place to produce the best quality for our brand owners. Really, for us, Indigo has been great and it has definitely increased our turnover and profit margin more than conventional.'

In addition, Amberley can provide its customers with short run capability, a marketable feature. Quickly completed runs give their customers competitive capability for trial launches and marketing campaigns. Amberley's make-ready time for the press is one-third less than that for conventional and uses less material. 'It has been a massive saving for us, not having to make plates or worry about their condition,' Geller adds.

In Monterrey, Mexico, Pharma Label Etiquetas Perfectas uses a ws4000 and ws4050 press, and had a ws4500 installed while at the conference. Manuel Martinez, general manager of the pharmaceutical division and digital production, believes, 'it is easier to print many products on the digital presses, still with the same quality as a conventional press. It saves us much time and cost by placing a digital order.' He adds, 'I really think there is growth in the [digital] market, but we really need to educate users on the possibilities. The help offered here by the Dscoop group is very valuable.'

Bob Scherer, CL&D digital; Terie Syme, Prestige Label; Christian Menegon, Hewlett Packard

Martinez anticipates further FDA regulations for the pharmaceutical industry, and believes that with digital printing, Pharma Label will be able to give their customers what they will need. 'Legislation is helpful,' he says. 'It forces the customer to look at our capacity and structures, helping them realize we are not like every other printer.'

HP Indigo user Dan Welty, director of marketing at John Henry Packaging Group, agrees with Martinez; he likes the challenge of the FDA and feels that digital printing also gives his company an added value to offer its customers. 'Only 15 per cent of the labels printed on our digital machine are pharmaceutical. Because we're in California, most of our labels produced are for wine bottles. Customers want variety – hence shorter runs and, of course, more quickly,' Welty says. 'Our digital press allows us to supply on demand.'

Many HP Indigo label printers at Dscoop have increased their customer base because of the presses' digital capabilities. Steve Fleissner from Model Graphics in West Chester, Ohio has been able to offer new customers digital solutions using his ws4050 and is looking for more ways to increase sales. 'I see now from

this conference that small companies need to have a sales plan to win more digital customers,' Fleissner says. 'They're out there. We just need to look at the industry from a marketing standpoint and go about it that way.' Model Graphics has plans to market the personalization feature of digital printing.

Learning through discussions with HP Indigo users, prospects at the conference are convinced digital solutions for the label industry are fast becoming a reality. 'It is just over the next hill,' says Ron Brown, president of Label Graphics in Alberta, Canada. Brown does not own a digital press, but will. He says, 'I want to stay ahead of the game and be able to offer my customers what they want. An HP Indigo press will give me the ability to give my customer more value, more options.'

Another very interested converter, Mike Falco of Topflight Corporation, plans to purchase an HP Indigo press for his label company for two key reasons: (1) because of the ability to connect through software to Topflight customers and (2) because he knows his customers increasingly want short run capability. 'Seventy-five per cent of our runs are less than 2,500,' Falco says. 'There are many values with the HP Indigo press: it eliminates waste, shortens the make-ready time and reduces labor. All of these reductions are a value to a customer.' Much of Topflight's business is in the cosmetics industry. Falco does have some concerns with the color quality of digital, but says he sees vast improvements being made – and, therefore, still plans to join the 'digital club'.

All questions about digital printing and the value it holds for label converters were addressed at Dscoop. For example, high consumable prices, color matching and product marketing were of concern to many in attendance. Consumable vendors discussed prices with attendees, users verified color matching advancements and HP offered its new Capture Business program to all users, especially for those wondering how to sell digital when conventional has served very well in recent years. Label printers definitely took home new ideas to sell digital capabilities to their current customers and, more important, new ideas to gain future ones.

Terie Syme, operations manager for Prestige Label and board member of the Dscoop committee says, 'our three largest digital customers order only digital.' Syme wants to help inform other label printers about the many opportunities Prestige has found by investing in the HP Indigo 4050. Leading the way as a board member, Syme has already given her peers an encouraging example to emulate.

The feedback Syme received about Dscoop 2007 was overwhelming. 'We have gotten a great response,' she said. 'Next year we hope to get even more users involved where people can offer their specialties to others. That's what will make it even better.' ■

News in brief

Dive into the WaterLabelWorld with Brigl & Bergmeister

No other beverage enjoys the same degree of popularity as water. Annual consumption of packaged water is well over 500 billion liters. Water has to be marketed to create a viable business for processors. B&B sees an opportunity to help achieve this, and wishes to strengthen its position in this beverage segment as a partner for label requirements.

WaterLabelWorld seeks to provide a decision-making guide for selecting the right label material for everyone involved in marketing water. As a label paper manufacturer, B&B has created a collection of papers that takes account of the technical rigors of printing, labeling and logistics, as well as the demands of marketing and design.

'The special feature of WaterLabelWorld is that this brochure was created in cooperation with the supply chain,' said the company in a statement. 'Examples have been created in collaboration with partners from the international designer scene and from printing and finishing, using characteristic label papers, intended to inspire further innovative ideas.'

This information is being sent out to the beverage industry, label printers and the label supply industry worldwide in the first quarter of this year. The content gives information on technical data and potential applications, and the marketing demands on labels and packaging. The sample labels enclosed with the brochure invite you to 'see, touch and feel'.

This campaign is supported by several other information programs highlighting the value of WaterLabelWorld label materials for all user groups.

First Edale Lambda in the UK

Following the launch and two overseas sales of its all new line of 'plug and play' printing and converting equipment, the Lambda, Edale has secured its first UK Lambda order from a major UK player in the labeling industry.

The specific Lambda is one of the largest configurations the company has been working on. Jeremy Westcott of Edale comments: 'We are delighted that our first UK Lambda order is with this company, who has kindly offered us the use of their facilities to demonstrate the machine to potential customers. Furthermore, we are very pleased that the machine is going into this industry to be producing a product at the cutting edge of technology.'

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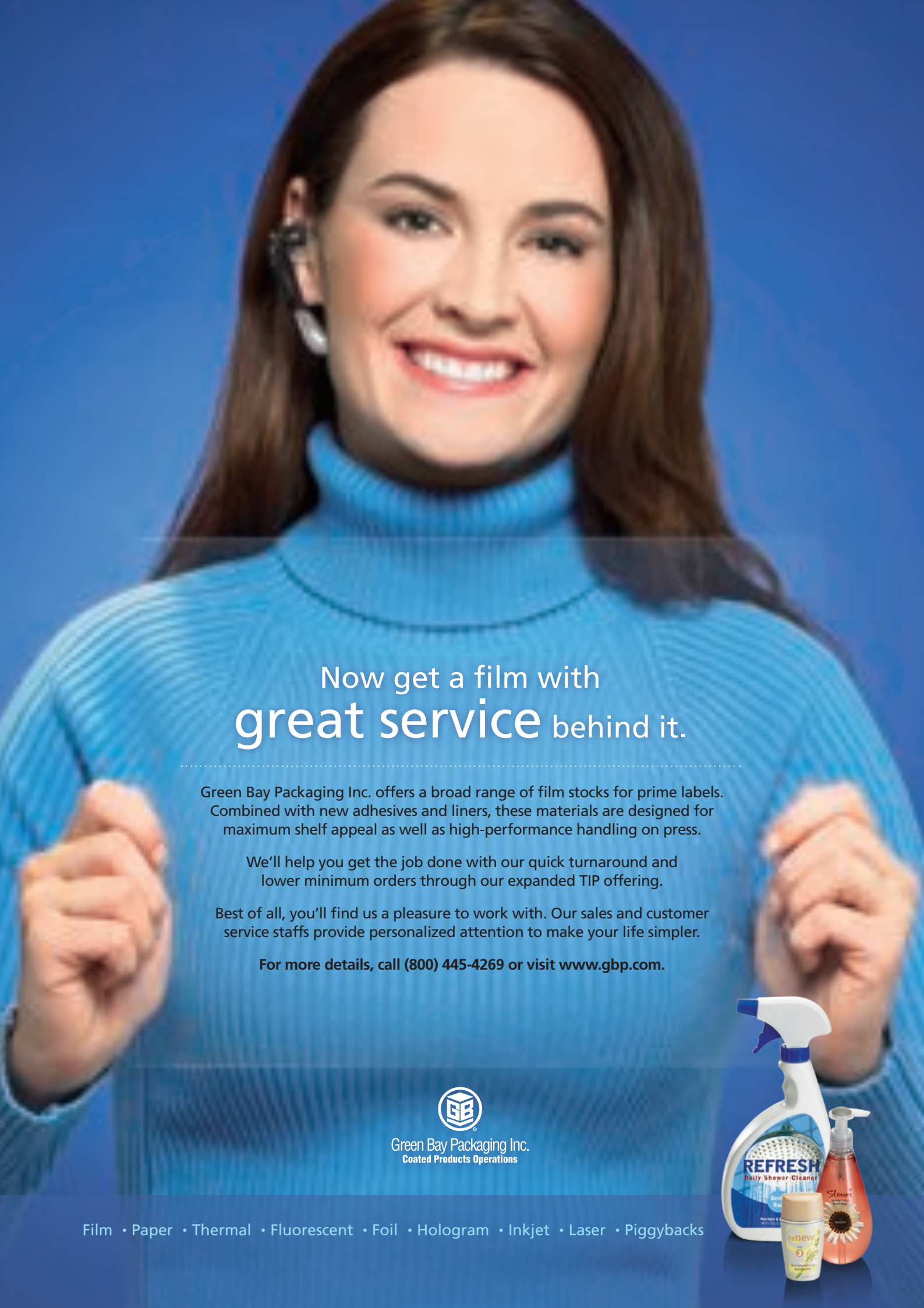
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Trade Associations 2

Following from her last *L&L* article, **Danielle Jerschefske** continues her round-up of US Association meetings, including the LPIA's Fall conference, TLMI Awards and the recent Naples TLMI converter meeting

LPIA Fall Management Conference

Members of the LPIA proved to be welcoming to a newcomer to the industry. On a skipper plane from Phoenix to Flagstaff, two gentlemen passengers were kindly asked by the flight attendant to move to the last row, to even out the weight of the plane.

As I shared a laugh about the request with Lou Iovoli and Jack Turan of Hammer Packaging – LPIA executive committee member and former chairman, respectively – they invited me to join them for the forty-five minute road-trip to Sedona we had ahead of us. Clearly, like TLMI members, this would be another great group of people.

Conference in the desert

At the meetings the next day, speakers discussed how consumers are driving retailers to be more environmentally aware and health conscious. These are in the newspapers, on the news, and even kids are talking about it. The trick is figuring out how to fit it into the label printing industry. The capability of an industry supplier or converter to address these concerns and trends, and to provide a unique solution for the customer, is what will differentiate their company from those who do not.

It was said best at the LPIA meeting by Art Turock, president of Turock & Associates: 'You must transcend the rules. Futuristic thinking is how to sell not just labels and packaging, but the experience.'

Two trends that are now established and moving forward, specifically in the food and beverage markets, are 'health consciousness' and 'environmental awareness'. Consumers want to be able to easily read on the label the health benefits that the product offers. This same consumer also wants to know that the resources used to package the healthy product are recyclable, thus promoting a greener earth. The need for more efficient recycling procedures was also raised.

Gary A. Hemphill, managing director & COO of information services for Beverage Marketing Corporation, presented the LPIA attendees with 2005 beverage market research explaining the growing healthy lifestyle trend. The research shows a consistent decrease of carbonated product sales and a steady increase of bottled water sales worldwide. 'Value added water is a growing segment within the bottled water market [which] experienced a breakthrough growth in 2005 thanks to several product lines,' Hemphill informed his LPIA listeners. Bottled water reinforced with energy additives, wellness and nutrition additives, and weight management additives, were a few of the new product launches that have proven successful – a good example of a niche where a supply company can leverage its place in the label industry and supply consumer trends. Brand strategy and industry trends are indeed closely related.

TLMI awards converters and suppliers

The Fall congress of the Tag & Label Manufacturers Institute, Inc. (TLMI) provided the occasion to honor converter and supplier members with a series of annual awards.

- G-3 Enterprises, Modesto, CA, won the Best of Show Award in the 29th TLMI Annual Awards Competition, which drew 276 entries and honored 51 companies resulting in 90 awards
- G-3 Enterprises won a total of five awards (including its Best of Show), with three additional first-place and one second-place award
- Multi-Color Corporation, Cincinnati, OH, led all companies with nine awards, including six first-place honors. Other multiple award winners included Collotype Labels International Holdings Pty Ltd, Adelaide, South Austrailia, which won eight awards; TAPP Technologies, Langley, BC, Canada, which won seven awards, and Dow Industries, Wilmington, MA, which won five awards
- One company, KimBells Pack, inc., Quezon City, The Phillipines, won four awards. Coast Label Company, Fountain Valley, CA; Tailored Label Products, Menomonee Falls, WI; McDowell Label & Screen Printing, Plano, TX; Labelgraphics (Glasgow) Ltd., Glasgow, Scotland, and York Label won three awards each
- Companies winning two awards each included Banta Specialty Converting, Milwaukee, WI; Mid Atlantic Label Inc., Forest Hill, MD; Prestige Label Co., Inc., Burgaw, NC; Spear, Mason, OH; Label Technology, Inc., Merced, CA; Spectrum Label Corporation, Hayward, CA; Smyth Companies, Inc., Minneapolis, MN; Spectrol Inc., Mississauga, Ontario, Canada; and Renaissance Mark, Laval, Quebec, Canada

Two executives from family-run Graphic Solutions International, LLC, Burr Ridge, IL, were honored as TLMI Converter of the Year. Company president Suzanne Zaccone,

and vice president Bob Zaccone, were honored for their commitment to TLMI, the industry as a whole, and their local community. (Suzanne served as President of the organization from 1998-2000.)

'Our success can be attributed to 115 hard-working, entrepreneurial spirits,' credits Suzanne. 'Forward thinking, careful planning, long hours, hard work, strong and consistent implementation, and having partners who trust and understand each other are the keys.'

Graphic Solutions International LLC, formerly Graphic Solutions, Inc., is a national and international custom print house registered to ISO/TS 16949:2002, specializing in pressure sensitive labels, aluminum nameplates and polycarbonate panels. It manufactures electroluminescent lamps (EL), RFID antennas, printed circuitry and thin flexible batteries for microelectronics, as well as a turn key RFID system.

The TLMI Environmental Leadership Award for Innovative Technology was presented to Plastic Suppliers for extruding film from resins made from the starch of corn. EarthFirst PLA film can be used in a variety of applications, not the least of which is face stock for pressure-sensitive label substrates. The film is compostible and meets sustainable packaging initiatives.

Ricoh Electronics was honored for developing a total environmental management system throughout its corporate culture. The company was recognized for instituting practices and principles that conserve natural resources and reduce pollution, and for 'embracing sustainability that brings social and environmental responsibilities into balance'.

TLMI Supplier of the Year was named as Cindy White, president of The Channeled Resources Group, Chicago, IL, an international supplier of paper and film printing materials. In addition to serving as President of her company, White has served on the Board of Directors of TLMI, as Chair of the TLMI Communications Committee, and as a member of various TLMI committees.

'Not only is she leading a highly successful company to even greater heights, Cindy has found the time to give generously to her industry and her community,' said John Hickey, chairman of TLMI and CEO of Smyth Companies, Inc., St. Paul, MN. 'Her energy and insight have contributed greatly to TLMI's success, and we are pleased to recognize her many contributions with this award.'

Top left: Environmental Leadership Award for Technical Innovation – presented to Ricoh Electronics, Inc. (left to right) Dylan Uboldi of Ricoh Electronics; Calvin Frost, chairman of the TLMI Environmental Committee.

Top right: 2006 Meeting Chairs: (left to right) Calvin Frost, The Channeled Resources Group; Ferd Rueesch, Jr., Gallus Ferd. Rueesch AG; Michael Kelliher, FLEXcon, Scott Pillsbury, president, Rose City Label

Bottom left: Converter of the Year: (left to right) Bob Zaccone, vice president, Graphic Solutions International; Tom Polischuk, editor in chief of packagePRINTING Magazine; Suzanne Zaccone, president, Graphic Solutions International,

Bottom right: Supplier of the Year: Cindy White, president, The Channeled Resources Group

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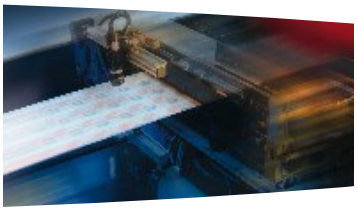

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TLMI Annual Converter Meeting 2007

The TLMI Annual Converter Meeting 2007 was held at the Ritz Carlton golf resort in Naples, Florida. A highlight was the announcement of the winner of the prestigious Eugene Singer Award for Management Excellence. One of TLMI's highest honors, this award recognizes excellence in business management measured and defined by an established set of growth and profitability ratios through the TLMI Management Ratio Study.

The Singer Award is given annually to four label-converting companies – each company within a certain sales range category. The 2006 TLMI Eugene Singer Award recipients are:

- New Mexico-based Stixon Labels won for the third consecutive year in the small company category. The small company category is defined by annual sales of less than $6 million
- New Jersey-based Luminer Converting Group won for the mid-range company category, defined by sales of $6 – $14.9 million. This is Luminer's first TLMI Eugene Singer Award
- Florida-based Consolidated Label won for the medium company category, defined by sales of $15 - $35 million. This is Consolidated Label's fifth consecutive TLMI Eugene Singer Award and the company's third time winning in the medium company category
- Wisconsin-based Belmark, Inc. won for the large company category, defined by sales greater than $35 million. This is Belmark's ninth TLMI Eugene Singer Award

TLMI president, Frank Sablone, commented, 'TLMI would like to congratulate this year's Eugene Singer Award Winners. As an industry association our central mission is to constantly deliver value back to our members; and the TLMI Management Ratio Study has proven to be a benchmarking vehicle that does just that. Participation in the Ratio Study was higher this past year than it has ever been, and it's an honor to be able to continue to provide this service to our converter members.'

The Converter Meeting was also the occasion for the announcement that TLMI label converter members had won first-place in several World Label Association Awards Competition categories.

In its seventeenth year, the winners of the World Label Association Awards Competition are chosen from a group comprised of first-place winners from association label competitions around the globe including TLMI, the Japanese Label Foundation (JFLP), FINAT, and the Australian Label Association (LATMA). Label samples from companies are judged against each other in a variety of categories to determine the 'World's Best Labels.'

TLMI converter member award winners, label product names and print process categories include:

- Collotype Labels won in the Offset Line category for its 'Archetype' label
- Tapp Technologies, Inc. won in the Offset Line and Screen/Tone category for its 'Solaris' label
- G-3 Enterprises won in the Flexo Wine and Spirits category for its 'Bridlewood Blue Roan Syrah' label
- Dow Industries, Inc. won in the Multi Process Line category for its 'Ken's Cocktail Sauce' label
- Nosco won in the Coupon (any process) category for its 'Opti-Free Replenish' label
- Smyth Companies, Inc. won in the Innovative Use of Inline Procedures category for its 'Coors Cold Wrap' label
- Tailored Label Products, Inc. won in the Electronic Printing category for its 'Cambria' label

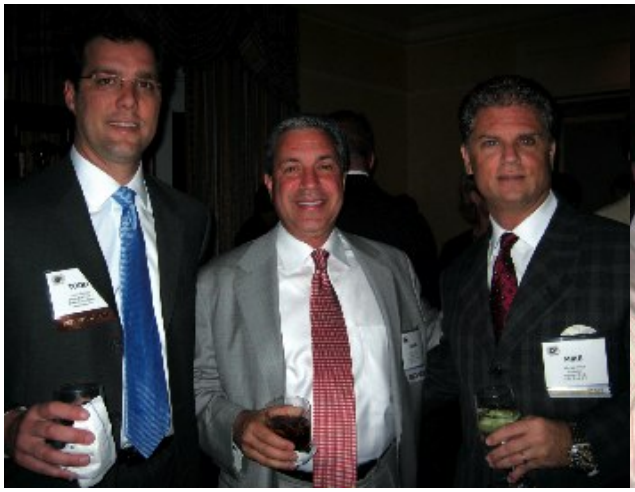
TLMI converter members who received honorable mentions include:

- Coast Label Co. in the Flexo Line and Screen/Tone category for its 'Roex L-Lysine and L-Proline' label
- Collotype Labels Ltd. in the Offset Wine and Spirits category for its 'Sockeye 2005 Pinot Noir' label
- Dow Industries, Inc. in the Flexo Cosmetics category for its 'Victoria's Secret Holiday' label

'A Family Affair'

TLMI Converter Meeting attendees were able to listen to a few of their peers discuss trials they have overcome in making a

Todd Endres, Frank Gerace, Mike Falco



David Blatt, Seri Blatt, David Carmany

Left-right: Thomas Dahbura, Todd Kennedy, Duane Wall, Jeff Dunphy

successful transition from one generation of a family owned business to the next. A high percentage of the label printers in the United States are run by families and TLMI offered this session as a way for its members to better understand that they are not alone in dealing with these issues.

Thomas Dahbura, his brother, sister, mother and father all work together to manage Hub Labels, Inc. At times, everyone has input for business decisions that must be made. Thomas said, 'sometimes I feel like I have a big aircraft carrier with five admirals – we just keep going in circles.' The trials experienced are tough and frequent, but he has learned how to be a strong leader with the right tools, running a very successful company.

Duane Wall of Creative Labels told the group how he and his father handled working together while maintaining a strong personal relationship. 'My dad knew when I addressed him as Dad, I was talking to him as his son. When I addressed him as Fred, then our conversation was business,' he says. It was very helpful to have this demarcation between their work and personal relationship and it also allowed Duane to retain all his love and respect for his family.

Jeff Dunphy of Design Label Manufacturing Inc. learned how valuable it was to have a trusted third party help with a succession plan. Jeff and his sister, the CFO of the company, purchased the business from their father in 2002. He laughs remembering the transition, 'I know the deal was fair because we both were not completely satisfied in the end.' Trustworthy outside help was also welcomed by Todd Kennedy and his two brothers who now run The Kennedy Group. Last to speak on the panel Todd said, 'the more you think things are different, you realize they are really the same.' Todd's father had a very important rule which is still strictly followed by the band of brothers: 'brother first, business second.'

A sense of camaraderie seemed to develop amongst panelists and their listeners. At the conclusion of the panel discussion, an enlightened Julie Chavez said, 'Well, I learned we are all in the same boat.' She is one of four sisters helping run her family's second generation business. ■

News in brief

Singapore converter launches RFID system

Label manufacturer and RFID converting technology specialist Worldlabel – a division of Innotech Resources Pte Ltd, based in Singapore – has introduced its Infinity V1 RFID tag and inlay embedding system for Smart RFID label converting. The machine targets many different market sectors including supply chain, consumer packaging, as well as pharmaceuticals and baggage tracking.

Operating at speeds up to 100 labels a minute, the machine provides a low cost method of converting RFID tags/inlays to be embedded accurately into a paper or film label. It can handle varying batch size labels and can embed a different type of RFID tag in a different area of each label. An on-line bad tag detection and removal system is incorporated.

Operation of the machine is independent from downstream conversion processes, such as lamination and cutting process. It has a buffer station that hold up to 800 mm of completed reel, making it easier to interface the machine into a conversion line.

The Infinity V1 can inspect and then embed only readable RFID tags from the inlay reel onto the liner in the RFID conversion process. Rejected RFID tags will be reeled up instead of dispensed onto the liner.

The system can be inserted into label converting lines or used stand alone. 'We will still continue converting RFID labels but decided to introduce the Infinity because of market demand,' said Alex Choong, president of Worldlabel Asia. 'We received some inquires for our proprietary technology to be transferred to several converters and therefore realized that the market, in many cases, is moving towards specialty applications, not just the standard run 4 x 6 inch labels.'

Italian agent for ETI

ETI Converting Equipment appointed Giovanni Ravelli, from Litotec, Milan, as the ETI Converting agent in Italy. ETI has more than 50 machines installed worldwide serving diverse markets including cosmetics, wine, beverages, beer and food.

Electro Optic opens die plant

Electro Optic has moved and opened up a new manufacturing center for rotary and flexible dies in Germany. In a statement, Erwin Lindl, CEO said: 'This probably the currently most sophisticated die manufacturing site world-wide.' Full report in the next edition of *Labels & Labeling.*

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Female roles in the label industry

Labels is still a predominantly male industry, but, as **Danielle Jerschefske** reports, women are now making an impact in all areas from press operator to president

Press operators / training

The United States Department of Labor defines a 'non-traditional occupation' as any occupation where women hold less than 25 percent of the positions. According to USDL statistics compiled in 2000 and 2005, the total number of women working as press operators was 17.5 per cent and 15.6 per cent respectively. So at less than 25 per cent, a press operator is clearly a non-traditional female occupation. Other professions defined as non-traditional include architects, funeral directors, chiropractors and parking lot attendants. To help put things in a better perspective, only 14 per cent of all working women are employed in non-traditional fields.

The Flexographic Trade School in North Carolina offers two training fields, pre-press design and flexographic printing. Fifty per cent of the graphic arts students are women, but the ratio is much lower on the technical side: less than five per cent of students enrolled in flexo printing are women. Art Fields, president of FTS, explains, 'we do want to get women involved, but an operator must be able to handle seventy pounds. There are not many women that choose to handle that weight day in and out. It is just not an environment women want to be in.'

This is not to say that no women have gone through the FTS printing press program. In fact, Fields could not think of a single woman who started the program who was not successful. Based on the work Fields has seen performed by female students in the school, he feels: 'women make a better quality product, more consistently than men; what they get done is better, not as productive maybe, but better quality.' He also believes that most women are naturally better at focusing on the smaller details, whereas men are more oriented towards productivity.

FTS boasts a 100 per cent placement rating. 'The number one need of a label company is a label press operator,' says Rob Smithson, CEO of Flexographic Trade School. Yet, the role is 'non-traditional'.

Similarly in the Midwest, female students at Di Trolio Flexographic Institute in Illinois comprise a relatively low percentage of enrollments for the vocational, flexographic press operator training program. In 2005, the school had only four women enroll and complete the 18 week program; in 2006, there were no women enrolled and none so far in 2007. Three of the four female graduates in 2005 are now working in the industry.

Sarah Gallagher, project manager at Di Trolio, knows there is a great demand for press operators in the Chicago area. 'We have had a 100 per cent placement rate since July of 2005,' she says. 'There is a higher demand for skilled operators than there is supply.' Gallagher went on to say that Di Trolio receives at least one phone call a week from a local printer looking for a trained operator. And she thinks because many converters in the greater Chicago area are smaller, there are more possibilities for a flexible work schedule, which can be quite appealing to many women who need to care for their children. So why are there not more female operators?

Gallagher, who earned her Masters in education at Northern Illinois University, believes there are not many women in the position because most people are not aware what a flexographic press is. 'Women just don't know the vast opportunities that exist in the industry or, that most of the products they see in a grocery store were completed on a flexo press. True, it is traditionally a male dominated position, but these are things women can do easily. With team lifting, fork lifts, hand cranes and new innovation, there really is not a great need to be able to lift heavy objects on a daily basis. We just need to move farther away from

Female TLMI leaders

Suzanne Zaccone, vice chairman of GSI Technologies
First female board member 1997
First female president of board 1998-2000, 2006 winner 'Converter of the Year'

Julie Chavez, VP of Stixon Labels
Board member since 2002

Cheryl Caudill, graphics manager for Multi Plastics, Inc.
Board member since 2005
Chair of industry trends committee

Cynthia White, president of The Channeled Resources Group
Chair of communications committee
2006 winner 'Supplier of the Year'

Suzanne Zaccone, Beverly Chavez, Julie Chavez

Year	Total press operators	Total female operators	Total per cent female
2000	292,000	51,000	17.50%
2005	218,340	34,061	15.60%

all of the stereotypes and make the opportunities available,' Gallagher says. Di Trolio is working hard to inform the local Chicago high schools and their students about flexography and the Di Trolio program benefits.

'During the program, the whole printing process is emphasized,' Gallagher describes. 'When students are finished they usually work as an entry level press operator on a one-or two-color press.' It is a short course, only ten hours per week. However, this allows students to have a part time job or manage their household while at the same time, learning new, crucial hands-on skills. The average Di Trolio graduate starts at $12.88 per hour. 'One female graduate, in particular, enrolled into the program as a single mother, on welfare, making minimum wage,' Gallagher remembers. 'Now she is making double the salary, with benefits and is no longer receiving state assistance.'

There are women learning to operate a press at their work site. For instance, just outside Chicago, a small local printer, Uni-Label, is currently training one of their valuable female employees to be a press operator. Evelyn Avelar previously worked at the location as a rewinder/inspector. Now she is two months into her training for press operation. 'I asked to try it,' Avelar said. 'I want to learn how to make the labels on the presses because it is more interesting and I think the job will give me and my family a better future. It is a more flexible job too. It is not easy, but I am happy to be learning.' So despite the occupation being non-traditional, there are women on the shop floor printing labels.

Women in management

Kathy Welsch and Kathy Maslovaric have been working in the industry for a combined total of over 35 years. Both women work for GSI Technologies under Suzanne and Bob Zaccone. Welsch works as GSI's customer service manager and art department manager while Maslovaric helps lead the company as the production manager.

Kathy Welsch started as a receptionist with the company 28 years ago at age eighteen. She says, 'I have never encountered challenges other women may have faced because I always had Suzanne as a guide. She is aggressive and gets the job done.' An industry wide role model, Suzanne Zaccone has been Welsch's personal icon for years. 'Suzanne has always been a strong female figure. She leads by example. She continually perseveres and pushes through. There is nothing that can stop her.' Welsch is grateful to have this close, professional guidance.

'GSI has a working history of women in management,' says Kathy Maselovaric, who knows she is working on a level playing field. She sees the label industry as, 'very bright' and believes 'in the future, it will just get brighter'. 'Opportunity is more often presented to young women now that schools offer flexo training,' she says. Welsch agrees that opportunities for women are more prevalent and considers the 'good-old-boy network' mentality to be changing.

Technical women

'DuPont has an extensive history of women in various roles,' Charlotte Cushings says. A DuPont veteran, Cushings is now the company's senior technical analyst for the DuPont Packaging Graphics Divison. 'DuPont really embraces diversification in management.'

Cushings manages two technical areas for the global company. She manages the training programs for the DuPont Cyrel Customer Training programs with Mark Mazur, technical consultant for imaging technologies; in addition, she manages technical support for customers, providing valuable help to DuPont clients.

Stixon Labels, a New Mexico based company managed by four sisters, recently won the prestigious TLMI Eugene Singer Award for 2006. This is the third consecutive year the Chavez sisters have been recognized by the industry for outstanding management.

'I have not dealt much with opposition in my current position,' says Cushings. 'Customers take to what I do very well. When they don't agree, we discuss it and come to a mutual conclusion.' Cushings is the go-to girl for Cyrel customers. She knows the technology and is a published author of technical articles.

In the adhesive sector of the label industry, Lori Jones is an associate industry scientist for Dow Corning. Also a published writer, she began her technical career in 1976 just after receiving her bachelor's degree in chemistry from Bowling Green University. Jones' husband, Darrell, has been her strongest role model. An accomplished Dow scientist, 'he didn't treat me any differently than anyone else. Darrell always challenged me to ensure I had a scientific background to help me better understand,' she says. Jones felt his openly critical nature helped her move into the role she has now. Now a strong resource for adhesive support and problem solving, Lori is grateful to have received reliable, professional guidance

Jones' advice for success is, 'to be dedicated and make sure you know what you are talking about.' There are long hours involved with the technical side of printing and much more traveling required than other industries.' She does not have children and feels her job is one where a woman could not properly manage a family. 'You have to understand what the demands of the job are,' she says.

Females in the future

With the colorful spectrum of roles women play in the label world at this point, there is no doubt that Kathy Masloveric's prediction is true: the future looks bright for women in the label industry. As education in the field expands and improves so will female involvement. As the exemplary group of women highlighted in this article shine bright, their leadership inspires all others involved in the industry, female and male.

Katherine Harper: flexographic icon

It's still a tough industry for women, but for the last 30 years Katherine Harper has blazed a path building a flexographic supply company and pushing the benefits of flexographic education for male and female students alike. **Danielle Jerschefske** reports

Katherine Harper is a highly regarded woman who has spent the last 30 years assisting her husband, Ron, build their international anilox roll supply company, Harper Corporation of America, to a preeminent position within the flexographic industry. When Katherine founded the company with Ron in 1971, she knew she was stepping into a man's world. When asked how she did it, her response is, 'I got involved and knew what I was talking about. You need to ask questions, gain knowledge and earn respect, but never let the men know that you already know the answers. Once you figure this out, you are on your way to acceptance; men become your best mentors.' But Katherine also notes, 'it is still a man's world, honey'. When she started out, however, she could never, even in her wildest dreams, have imagined all the avenues of achievement she would travel with the support of her life-long companion and business partner, Ron.

Katherine attended her first TAPPI meeting with Ron in 1978, the only female in among over 700 male attendees. 'I was very proud of that', Katherine said. 'I wanted to be involved and be a part of it.' Being the only woman in attendance everyone was asking who the woman in the dress suit was. Even a competitor of Harper Corporation laughingly joked, 'Ron, you're not fair, you brought your wife. Everyone is asking who she is and now you and the company are getting so much publicity.'

Looking back, Katherine laughs while remembering their reaction. 'There were about five men, in particular, who really supported me. And, of course, there were always those who resisted.'

Pre-press information

A report titled 'Women in the Labor Force: A Databook', a collaborative effort between the US Department of Labor and the US Bureau of Labor Statistics , published in May of 2005, provides information about another facet of the printing industry. According to this report, there were 55,000 pre-press technicians working in the industry in 2004. Of that number, over half, 51.2 per cent, were women.

By 1990, Katherine was on the executive council of the corrugate division of the Technical Association of the Pulp and Paper Industry and became the first female in the history of the association to be named the chair of the international conference in 1994. A fellow board member continually interrupted her at these meetings, trying to run things the way he felt was appropriate. Katherine tells, 'I gently told him I appreciated his comments and eagerness, but that this was my show and if he didn't cut it out, I was going to kick him out.' Katherine admits that she never had a problem dealing with intimidation because she grew up with two older brothers.

Her ambition and perseverance continued through to the following year when she served as the chairman for the 1995 FFTA forum: again, the first female in their forty-year history. Katherine planned the conference, which included inviting the South Mecklenburg High School navel reserve drill team to perform for attendees. Because there were numerous companies represented she had the national flags of about 14 countries marched in out of respect and appreciation.

She billed the conference as an educational opportunity on flexography. 'At the time there wasn't enough being done to educate people on what flexo was all about. Industry professionals were hungry to learn about printing. These seminars proved the old idiom true – if you build it, they will come,' Katherine says. 'We had an impressive attendance; I was very happy.'

Managing a hectic and demanding professional life was not easy while raising five children. Katherine, not surprisingly, has managed to pass on many of her inspirational qualities and love for the printing industry to her children. Her daughter, Margie Kluttz, was recently appointed to president of Harper Corporation, and her granddaughter, Natalie, is in school for graphic arts with a focus on flexography. Does Natalie know how to run a press? 'Yeah, I can run a press. I don't want to be a press operator though', she says scrunching her nose, still bright eyed. 'There are so many other things I can do in flexo; I am just not exactly sure where I want to go yet.'

(L-r) Natalie Harper, Katherine Harper and Margaret Klutz

Katherine Harper's advice to young women wanting to get involved in the industry: 'Well first, disregard the "men versus women" attitude. We were made to complement each other, not challenge one another. Next, go in and ask for help. Your peers will eventually lift you up once they realize how dedicated you are.' And lastly, Katherine advises eager young ladies to: 'be dedicated and be yourself.'

'You don't need to act like a man to succeed in a man's world. When I joined the Executive Women's Club in Charlotte, I showed up and all the girls were dressed like men – pinstripe suits, ties, and handkerchiefs in their pockets.' Those women thought if they dressed like the men, then they would be able to succeed. 'I asked them if members had to dress that way because I was not going to do it. I am a female and proud of being a female, and I will dress appropriately.'

Always decked out to the nines, looking fabulous and often donning her signature diamond heart necklace, Katherine recently has spent much of her time giving back to the community. Her generous attention to local schools and her efforts to increase the number of high school and collegiate flexographic programs in the United States have made quite an impression on the industry. The Central Piedmont Community College, for instance, 'labeled' its printing school the 'Harper National Flexographic Center' and the southwest campus is named the 'Harper Campus'. Katherine also actively participates in raising funds for the Phoenix Challenge, an annual competition for flexo students across North America. 'It gives the kids a chance to show off all they've learned. And they are really great, too.'

Students gravitate to Katherine's warm, ardent charm. Katherine's proclivity to hug everyone she meets is instantly infectious. 'I hug everybody', she said as she wrapped her arms around me and I understand instantly how she was able to overcome the barriers that have confronted her through the years. Katherine is an icon in an industry where women are few and far between. She has given young women around the world an excellent role model to follow and a chance to witness what they might accomplish if they too put forth the effort. ■

News in brief

Avery dedicates China research center

Avery Dennison has opened the Philip M. Neal Asia Pacific Research Center, based in Kunshan, Jiangsu province in eastern China, that will act as a gateway for the company's new products and technology into the Asia Pacific region.

The research center is named after Avery Dennison's fourth chief executive officer, who retired from the company and its board of directors in 2005. It is the latest in a series of investments in China which include manufacturing, distribution and sales operations in Guangzhou, Nansha, Kunshan, Tianjin, Chengdu, Fuzhou, Qingdao, Suzhou and Shanghai.

The facility will be used to conduct extensive testing, analysis and engineering of pressure-sensitive constructions that will support major strategic initiatives in the region. The Neal Research Center is more than 4,000 square meters in size, houses 12 research laboratories and will employ 50 engineers and scientists, when fully staffed. To accelerate the product development process, a new pilot coater will also be installed to enable a variety of coating trials and generate new product samples.

'The new research center is strategically located close to our production facilities and our customers' operations,' said Martin Daffner, research and development director of the research center. 'This proximity enables us to respond quickly to customers' needs and ensures effective communication with production and marketing teams. The center also allows us to design and develop pressure-sensitive products for the Asian market and fine tune throughout the production process, from raw material to end-user application.'

In China, Avery Dennison has been averaging more than 25 per cent annual growth for the past ten years and is now the country's largest producer of pressure-sensitive label materials, tags and tickets for the retail apparel markets.

Beardow Adams acquires Fentac

Beardow Adams, European manufacturer of hot melt adhesives and hot melt pressure sensitive adhesives, has acquired the business assets of Fentac Adhesives Limited. Fentac, which was founded in 1988, produced hot melts and other industrial adhesives.

Beardow Adams has the single largest hot melt manufacturing plant in Europe – 12 individual production lines with a capacity of 50,000 tonnes/annum producing hot melts as pastilles, pellets, prills and slats, and pressure sensitives in film wrapped EcoBlocks and conventional silicone paper wrapped blocks.

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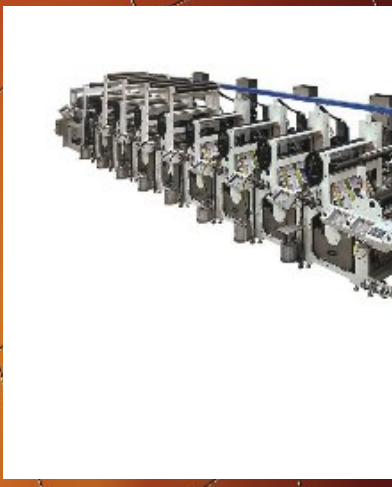

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RAKO moves to screen engraving

Leading European label converter RAKO Etiketten has installed a direct laser engraving system for high-volume imaging of screen cylinders. **Andy Thomas** reports from the company's plant in Witzhave, Germany

RAKO has enjoyed fast growth since its inception by founder Ralph Koopman in 1969. With over 800 employees at its 17 companies across nine European locations, the company is one of Europe's largest suppliers of narrow-web products. It converts not only self-adhesive labels, but also flexible packaging films and sleeves, and security products such as holograms, RFID systems and article surveillance. Self-adhesive labels – the traditional base of the business – still account for the largest share of the company's annual €150 million turnover.

RAKO started out as a flexo printing operation and was one of the early adopters of the rotary screen process, which it began to offer from 1996. Soon after, the company installed offset-rotary screen combination presses.

RAKO's use of rotary screens has increased four-fold at Witzhave in the last three-to-four years. Overall, 3,700 screen designs went into production in 2004. In 2005, this rose to 7,000, and to 12,000 for the end of 2006.

The demand for screen came initially from cosmetics customers, though this soon spread to food, beverage and household chemicals applications. Screen applications have moved from simply providing the white coverage for the 'no-label' look to being used for more sophisticated designs – especially tactile effects using varnishes, which led RAKO successfully to launch its own brand of High & Clear varnishes. Most recently, there has been growing interest in Braille and haptic (tactile) applications.

Rako has 24 screen-printing heads in total, installed on eight of the company's 33 Nilpeter presses, and on a further two Gallus presses. Some presses have up to four screen stations to create these more sophisticated varnish designs.

The sharp growth in rotary screen usage at RAKO was compounded by the trend towards shorter runs, which forced the company to explore possibilities for increasing pre-production efficiency.

Rako is a major users of Stork Prints' nickel, engraveable Rotamesh cylinders, and used conventional film and UV-light

Laser engraving explained

Stork's laser engraving system is based on the 'in-the-round' concept. In the rotaLEN unit, the screen cylinder is placed round the drum, which rotates at high speed while moving horizontally through the engraving unit. The complete printing forme thus passes under a stationery laser beam.

A 500-Watt semi-sealed CO2 laser generates a high intensity light beam. The plate or sleeve material absorbs the light, which is converted to heat, resulting in thermal decomposition. Other modes – such as those used in the Helios system – accommodate different types of polymer plates and rubber sleeves, including seamless ones.

Engraving the nickel stencil involves burning away the positive image to create the open areas. The screen is, as usual, already coated manually with emulsion and end-rings are added before this point. If stripped, the screens can be re-engraved as many times as is possible with conventionally imaged screens.

The engraver is driven by Stork's bestIMAGE software, which delivers a high level of design control thanks to its 3D pre-processing function, enabling imaging of very fine positive and negative structures.

The rotaLEN engraver offers quality benefits over conventional exposure, which demands precise placement of the film to avoid registration issues. Direct engraving does not depend on the path of light to create the raster (image) area edge. Instead, very focused laser optics burn at a much wider variety of precisely programmed angles. The beam's intense focus creates precise edges for higher levels of contrast, smaller text and finer linework. Another big bonus is the elimination of chemicals.

Stefan Behrens reports that the technology required a very short learning curve. 'Our staff had mastered it within one-and-a-half days.'

exposure to re-image screens with new designs. This is a lengthy process, however. Even excluding the post-production stages such as stripping, it can take up to 90 minutes.

Rako's management took a keen interest when Stork developed its direct engraving system for the packaging market. This new imaging concept offered a much simplified, and cost-efficient means of producing both screen and flexo printing formes without using film or chemicals. Also, no lengthy exposure, washing and drying processes are needed.

At Labelexpo 2005 in Brussels, Stork launched two narrow-web laser engraving units: the Helios 6010, which engraved all relief print formes – flexo, letterpress and dry offset – in addition to nickel screen cylinders, and a unit specially developed for rotary screen printing, the rotaLEN 5511.

Because of the sheer volume of screen designs it printed, RAKO chose the rotaLEN system, which was installed and in operation by the end of October 2006.

'Stork's rotaLEN provides us with the perfect solution in the face of greater screen throughput,' says Stefan Behrens, RAKO's pre-press manager. 'It delivers top-class, defect-free quality, total consistency, and a simplified workflow, relieving the scheduling pressure at our pre-production stage.' Behrens reports that the average screen imaging time is now just 15 to 20 minutes. 'This represents an immense jump in productivity for us.'

A very important benefit, according to Behrens, is reproducibility: every label printed with a laser engraved screen cylinder looks identical, meaning that a complete run is free of defects. This was not the case when exposure was used. Most importantly, the screen-design reject rate has been reduced to zero.

'Since installation, every one of the screens engraved has delivered perfect printing results,' enthuses Behrens. 'Previously, on more complex designs especially, we would experience some minor problem with perhaps five-to-eight percent of the screens engraved. A defect would mean a new screen had to be engraved, while the press is left standing. This is certainly a thing of the past.'

Repeat designs are easy to reproduce, pixel perfect, should the need arise. With the image digitally stored, it is simply a question of reloading the file, and an identical screen is engraved.

This brings a very important benefit to RAKO. 'Our client base is increasingly global – they want fewer suppliers and thus expect us to deliver pan-European, sometimes worldwide labeling solutions, and on top of that, total consistency in quality,' says Stefan Behrens. 'The look and feel essential to that brand's integrity must be the same wherever it is seen. The rotaLEN 5511 is a very important step in helping us deliver that.'

Flexibility in job scheduling is greatly improved too. The pre-press department is easily capable of engraving the high number of screen designs required for RAKO's 24/7 production schedule. On one occasion 80 screens were engraved in a single day, and in January this year a total of 980 screens were engraved. ■

Engraving history

Stork Prints originally developed direct laser engraving for the textile industry. The first commercial system, an STK LE2000 for screen-cylinder imaging, was installed in 1986 at the Lörrach plant of the German-Swiss textile manufacturing concern KBC.

The machine had a top speed of 600 RPM, so a typical screen would be engraved in about one-and-a-half hours, while the frequency was relatively limited compared with today because the whole laser system would switch on and off. The LE 2000 system provided over 12 years' highly productive service at KBC, where it imaged over 70,000 screens and is still in operation today in Russia.

Stork developed a full digital workflow with the launch in 1992 of its Image 3000 software package, a CAD system which enabled files to be prepared digitally for engraving.

Stefan Behrens, RAKO's pre-press manager, with the Stork laser engraver

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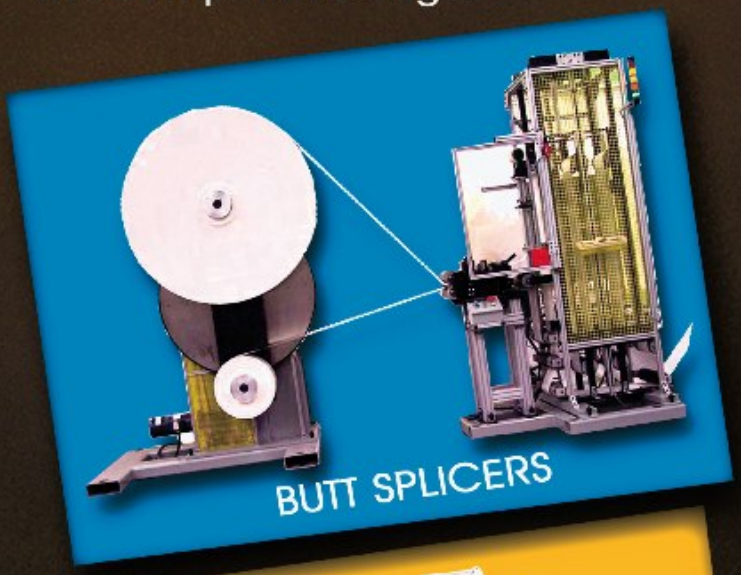

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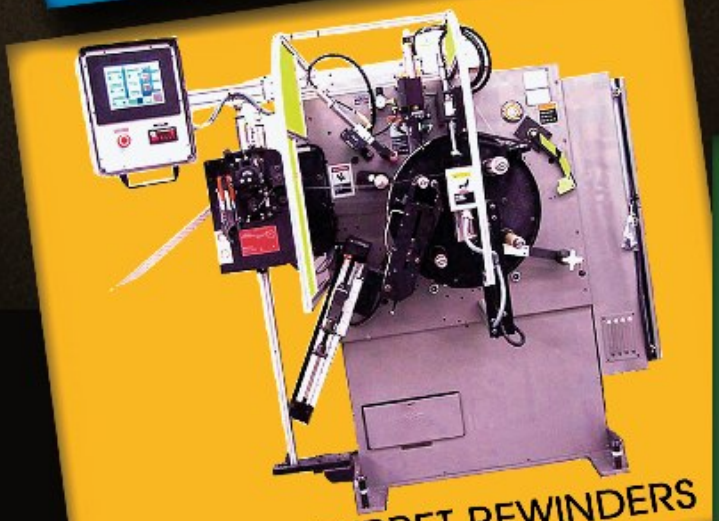

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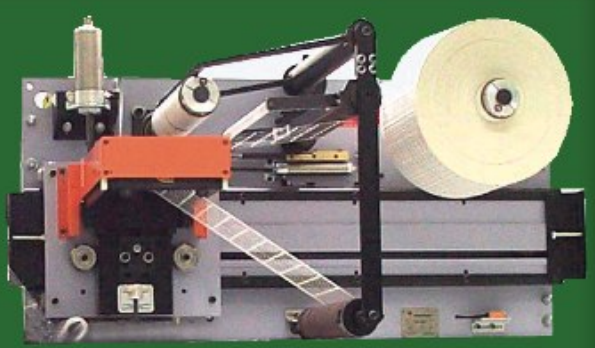

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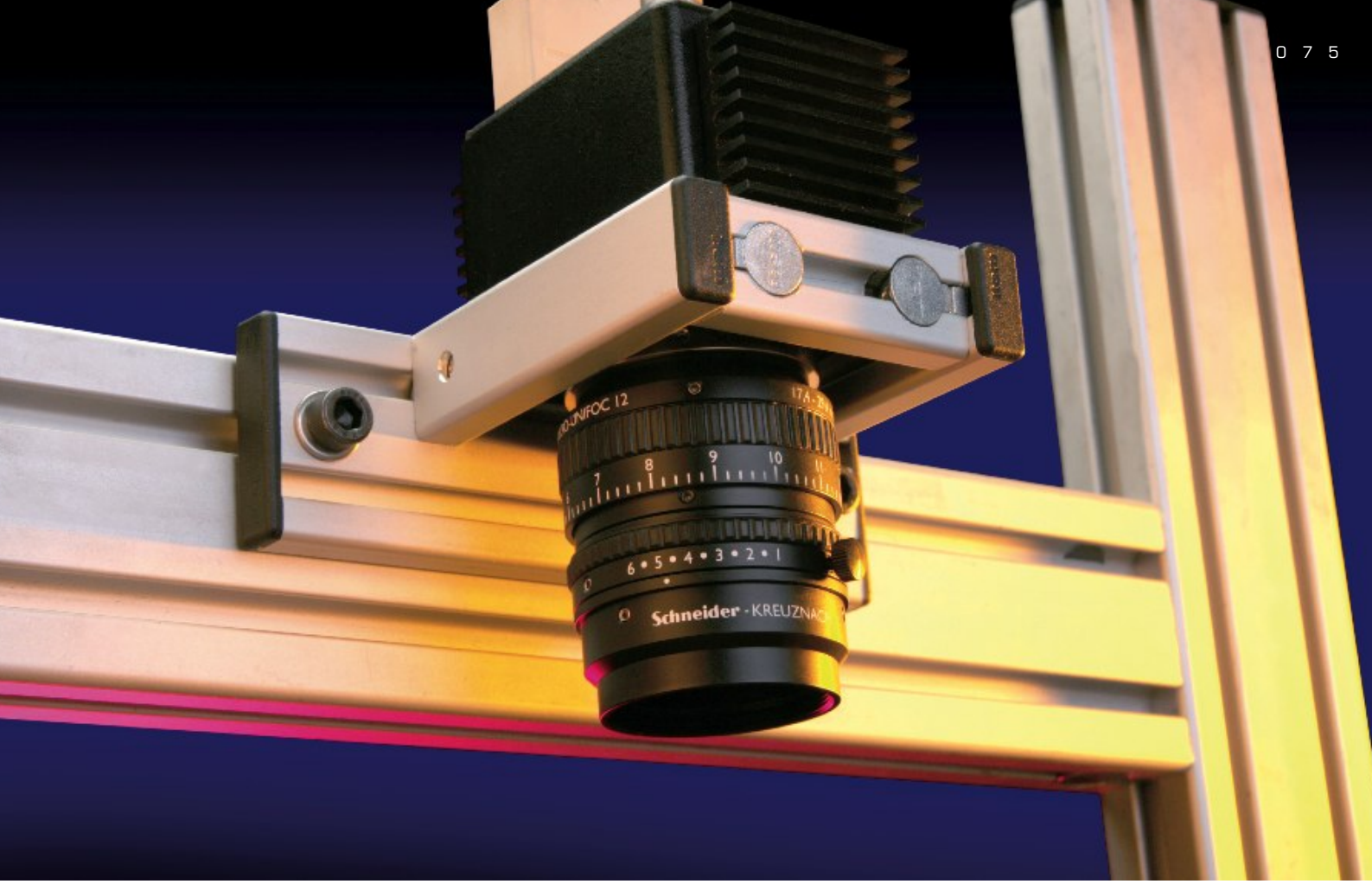

Pharma printer buys 100% inspection

Pharmaceutical label printer MY Healthcare has opted for a new inspection system from young British company Surfscan – with excellent results. **James Quirk** reports

Liverpool, UK-based converter MY Healthcare prints labels for all of the top ten pharmaceutical companies in the world. Producing labels in a sector notorious for strict quality control, it has invested in a web inspection system that has allowed it to increase production capacity from 150,000 to 200,000 square meters of labels per month – while working fewer hours.

The system comes from a young company that is the first in Britain to do 100% line inspection. Surfscan, based in Cardiff, Wales, was founded in 2002 by engineers Neil Parker and Andrew Hall, who between them have over 30 years of experience in the market.

The pair spent three years conducting intensive market research, product development, and rigorous testing within the industry, before launching a range of web-line inspection systems that use linescan technology to meet the industry's demands for 100% inspection.

MY Healthcare has, since 2005, purchased three of these systems. The first, Surfscan's CHECKpress system, was installed in May of that year on one of the converter's two 8-color MPS UV flexo presses. Impressed, MY Healthcare added two CHECKrewinder systems a year later.

'We are a lot more efficient thanks to Surfscan,' says Alan Williamson, production co-ordinator for MY Healthcare. 'Quality complaints have gone down; internal rejections have gone down. We used to have four checking processes at finishing level – but that has been reduced to two thanks to the

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L-r: Alan Williamson, production co-ordinator, MY Healthcare, and Neil Parker, co-founder and MD of Surfscan, in front of the inspection system on the converter's Scantech finishing machine

improved quality coming off the press.'

The CHECKpress system reduces the amount of waste between press and rewinder while increasing running speeds and reducing downtime. Using stabilized illumination and a high-quality digital linescan camera, the CHECKpress system can scan for print defects on almost any web width.

MY Healthcare runs its Surfscan CHECKrewinder systems on two Scantech slitter/rewinders. While the press inspection system serves as an aid, it is on the rewinders that the true 100% inspection comes into play.

The two systems can work hand in hand or individually – as demonstrated by the year gap between MY Healthcare's purchases. In combination with the CHECKpress, a defect map can be drawn on for checking of faults, while alone the CHECKrewinder can be configured to search for set defects.

Surfscan's product range is made up by the CHECKproof system – which serves as the printer's first line of quality control by referencing the customer's digital artwork to ensure there are no discrepancies.

'The system has saved us money – which has freed us up for more investment on the print floor,' says Williamson, who states that the company is looking to bring in more new machinery. As well as the two MPS 8-color presses, MY Healthcare runs a MPS 6-color UV flexo press and two Kopack 6-color UV letterpresses.

MY Healthcare, founded in 1899, also prints cartons, leaflets and printed foil, though self-adhesive labels are its main business. It also has sites in France, Italy and Ireland.

The company began to specialize in pharmaceutical labels in the late 1980s, and today 95 per cent of the labels it produces are for that sector. 'We were only a small company then,' says Williamson, 'and our four stage checking process helped make us unique.'

Williamson says that ease of operation and low cost were key selling points when MY Healthcare opted for Surfscan's system. With a 50 per cent reduction in quality costs from this time last year, he agrees that 'the Sufscan system has had an impact'.

Surfscan's co-founder and managing director Neil Parker isn't surprised that his system has had such a positive impact at MY Healthcare. 'We have algorithms that are specifically developed for pharmaceutical printing, so it is very well suited,' he says.

MY Healthcare is currently Surfscan's best customer – with three systems bought and another being contemplated. Surfscan has installed around 17 systems across Europe in the short time since its products were launched, while orders have been placed for a number more.

Parker says that the next step for the company is to evaluate potential for the integration of color camera technology into Surfscan's systems, while a further product, CHECKrecord, is due to be launched soon.

With its product holding its own in the most stringent of sectors, this young British company has much to be excited about. ■

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Veekay Graphics' facility in Rabale, Navi Mumbai

Combi success in India

Spanish press manufacturer Rotatek is benefiting from the growth of the Indian label market, as a recent Open House demonstrated. **James Quirk** reports

Around 70 printing and packaging companies attended an Open House at Veekay Graphics in Rabale, Navi Mumbai, to see demonstrations of Spanish press manufacturer Rotatek's Combi press.

The event, organized by Rotatek's Indian distributor Creed Engineers, was a reflection of the rapid development of the India label market in recent years.

Rotatek is reaping the rewards from a focused, long-term policy towards the Indian market. Since 1996 the company has sold more than 30 presses in India – for label, direct mail, security, and billing printing.

The man who has sold these presses is Frenchman Gaëtan de Charry, who has worked for Rotatek for 18 years. Having visited India regularly for the past decade, he has seen massive changes in the country over the years.

'Ten years ago we saw this was an important market,' he says. 'Now, I see many foreign companies coming into India. But it takes time.'

He acknowledges the support of Ranesh Bajaj, managing director of Creed Engineers: 'It is important to find the right partner. Once we'd done that we sold our first press here within one year – which is a fast entry into the market. Together we visited all the printers, one by one, to give a proper focus to the market.'

> "Rotatek is reaping the rewards from a focused, long-term policy towards the Indian market. Since 1996 the company has sold more than 30 presses in India"

The Combi at Veekay Graphics is the first of its kind in India. A combination rotary offset-flexo press with variable format, it is available in 440mm and 520mm web widths and is capable of printing substrates from ranging from 12-400 microns. It combines simultaneous register control, web inspection and ink flow while ensuring low print waste.

The Combi is, as its name suggests, extremely versatile. It can combine flexo and offset with other converting and finishing processes, while the press can be configured for the production of labels, cartons, mailings, commercial printing, flexible film and more.

Also on display were AB Graphic's Flytec 2000 and 3000 systems – which provide rewind, slitting, finishing, numbering

Above (l-r): Ranesh Bajaj of Creed Engineers; Pradeep Gupta of Axis, Gaëtan de Charry of Rotatek; Nitin Pathak of Veekay Graphics; and Mukesh Kabra of Axis. Right: The Combi press from Rotatek

and inspection capabilities in one single operation. The integration of these multiple steps is achieved through the use of a web accumulator system that separates the inspection and cutting function.

The Combi is a top-end press, indicative, says de Charry, of the quality of the Indian label market.

'There are some good quality local press manufacturers, but for the big margin jobs, for high quality labels, the top printers look to import,' he says. 'Many foreign press manufacturers think they'll get into the Indian market selling low-end machines – but this is not the case. Every press I have sold into this market is top quality.'

Gaëtan de Charry believes that India's background of offset printing gives the Combi an advantage. Rotatek is currently

> "There are some good quality local press manufacturers, but for the big margin jobs, for high quality labels, the top printers look to import"

enjoying the recent trend in the European market towards offset, given the company's roots in that process: 'Lots of people want to move to offset,' he says, 'Rotatek comes from offset. The industry's move to flexo stemmed from its high-quality finishing, but we can match that finishing with the quality of offset. The idea of the combination press is to bring the best of the different presses inline.'

Nitin Pathak, production manager of Veekay Graphics, part of the Albert Pre Press and Printmann Group, is impressed with the Combi press: 'Our turnaround times are much less thanks to the Combi,' he says. 'It also can shift easily from label to card.

'We are the first printer in India to do this king of converting – it gives us a big advantage in the local market.' ■

India vs. China

Ankit Tanna, son of Veekay Graphics' managing director Bipin Tanna, is doing a bachelor degree in management studies at H.R. College in Mumbai. He intends to join his father's business after graduating, and is currently writing a thesis comparing the developing markets of India and China.

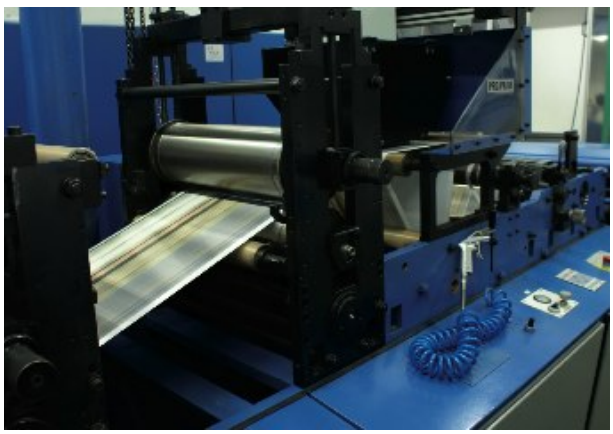
With the two countries touted as economic powerhouses of the future, his views provide an interesting insight into how the young generation of Indians sees its future.

'In India we have a culture of innovation,' he says, 'compared to the imitation that goes on in China. We want to be trend setters, not followers.

'Our population is an asset, as opposed to a burden: 70 per cent of India's population is below the age of 35. China will have an ageing population due to its one child policy. Our IT is booming, while our manufacturing capacity is growing at a rate of 12.3 per cent.

'The strength of our media is another advantage. In China, the government can change the media, while in India the media can change the government. Politically, our democracy is an advantage because it promotes innovation.

'For us, economic reforms began in 1991, whereas in China they began 13 years earlier, in 1978, so they had a head-start of 13 years. But we will overtake them, slowly but surely.'



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The factory floor at one of Apesa's two Sant Cugat facilities

Digital shift

Heavy investment and a move into digital printing have given Spanish converter Apesa a new lease of life. **James Quirk** reports

Spanish converter Apesa, based in Sant Cugat Del Vallès just outside Barcelona, is reaping the benefits of a two and a half million euro investment in new machinery last year.

The company purchased the new ws4500 digital press from HP Indigo – the first to be installed in Spain since its launch at Labelexpo Americas in September 2006.

Apesa, founded in 1979, also installed a 10-color flexo and silk screen press from Spanish manufacturer Imer, AB Graphic's Digicon finishing machine, and an inspection system from AVT.

We made important investments last year,' says José Manuel Gil, managing director. 'The new machines have broadened what we can offer our customers, and they also free up space on our other equipment.'

The investment in new machinery will this year be complemented by half a million euros of investment to develop the company's commercial structure. 'But first we needed the machines,' says Gil.

After purchasing the flexo press from Imer, Gil told HP that the company couldn't afford another machine. 'HP helped us to finance the purchase,' he says. 'They provide a great deal of support.'

The move to digital printing was new for Apesa. Previously, the company printed labels for the pharmaceutical industry – which make up 30 per cent of its business – on a Nilpeter 6-color letterpress.

'The Nilpeter letterpress was working 24 hours a day printing pharmaceutical labels,' reports Gil. 'Last year it ran for 2,800 hours, but more than half of that time was spent in setting up. Nilpeter's presses are superb, but for this kind of job digital is better.'

'We used to spend two hours setting up the Nilpeter press for just half an hour of production,' he continues. 'With HP's digital press, it's one and a half hours for everything.

'We believe strongly in digital – the sector is changing, not just at production level, but in attitude too. Conventional press manufacturers are improving their machines because they have seen that the industry is moving towards digital.

'The digital process represents a change in many aspects. The

Left-right: Enric Martínez-Abarca of HP; Eulalia Campins, sales director, Apesa; Catherine Magnard, export manager, Apesa; José Manuel Gil, owner and general manager, Apesa, in front of the new ws4500 digital press from HP

"You learn a lot about quality and documentation when producing pharmaceutical labels,' says Gil, 'that's why we installed the AVT inspection system"

press is very easy to run, for example, and it is easier to calculate prices. The problem of changing plates is removed, and all extras such as inks are included. We can produce the same quality as offset.'

The printing of pharmaceutical labels requires extremely high levels of accuracy. 'You learn a lot about quality and documentation when producing pharmaceutical labels,' says Gil, 'that's why we installed the AVT inspection system.'

Apesa's production is equally divided between self-adhesive labels and cartons & tags. Gil admits that he is thinking of investing in a second digital press for the production of the latter – 'probably from HP. We want to continue with digital in the future.'

As well as the Nilpeter letterpress, Apesa's 2,800 meters squared of factory space – spread over two facilities on the same street – boasts a 7-color arpeco machine for tickets and tags; a 4-color Gallus T180 press; Omega and Vectra inspection machines from AB Graphic, plus two from arpeco. The company uses pre-press software from Esko, and it is all done in-house.

Ninety per cent of the company's adhesive papers come from Avery Dennison, while the remainder is made up by Raflatac and local Spanish suppliers Manter, Gombau and Torraspapel.

Sixty-five per cent of Apesa's business is in its local market, while France, Germany and the UK make up the rest. Gil says that he wants to develop a strong structure in Spain and Benelux for pharmaceutical and cosmetics labels.

'These areas are complicated, and come with good margins,' he says. 'There are 400 label converters here in Spain, so competition is high. We are looking to invest in high-quality label applications.' ■

Culture shift

As well as changing machinery, Gil reports that the company has installed a new culture amongst its workforce. In order to improve working conditions, air conditioning has been installed all over the factory, for example.

'We used to be very rigid in structure but now we have young people with new ideas,' he says. 'The work environment is changing – there is less of the old-fashioned mentality nowadays. As a result, the workers are happy and productivity is up.'

HP moves European industrial center to Spain

HP's factory based near Apesa in Sant Cugat del Vallès is set to become the company's main industrial center in Europe.

'Digital sales in Europe are rising,' says Enric Martínez-Abarca, formerly Iberian sales manager for HP Indigo and recently promoted to European sales manager. 'Different processes allow for greater competition, and digital allows printers to give their clients a greater array of choices – personalization, for example, and promotional options. It is very flexible.

'The trend towards short runs in the market is reflected in the increased success of digital printing.'

Since its launch at Labelexpo Americas, HP has sold five ws4500 presses into the Spanish market. 'The press has been well-received in the market,' he says.

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Green 101

In the first of a regular series of articles on how environmental issues will affect the label industry, **Danielle Jerschefske** asks what is the real meaning of 'Going Green'?

More label buyers are asking printers how 'green' they are. Brands want to know what their suppliers are doing to support a 'greener' environment and what they can offer their demanding, ever-growing 'green' consumer population. So what is the meaning of green?

A March 15, 2007, Wall Street Journal article defines green as: 'a term used to describe products or materials that are renewable, recycled, low in chemical emissions or that are in any way touted to be good for the environment and/or human health.' Green can also be used to describe an environmental business practice.

Given such a broad definition, it is understandable that gross misconceptions exist from consumer to converter on what constitutes 'green' action. A converter needs to figure out what terms such as 'sustainable' and 'renewable' mean to their business; then learn to use 'green' business practices to embrace customer needs.

It might be necessary to explain the trade-offs involved with 'green' actions. For instance, choosing to reduce your carbon footprint certainly helps reduce atmosphere-changing gases; however, the technologies used to filter the footprint may have offsetting, negative consequences.

Certification

The International Organization for Standardization (ISO) 14000 Certification Series is a set of international standards from which an Environmental Management System (EMS) can be developed for the entire print process. It is important that a company consider ALL aspects of its operation when developing an EMS, which can be achieved either inside or outside the 14000 certification process.

Once achieved, it is the company's responsibility regularly to review the operational controls established through the EMS process, and make changes as needed. 'Documentation of actions taken provides proof of accountability,' explains Marcia Kinter, VP of government and business information for the Specialty Graphic Imaging Association. Documenting an EMS demonstrates 'responsible care'.

Ask the right questions

Remember that a customer's perception of terms such as 'sustainability' may not be what you think. Are they asking whether you track and implement current environmental regulations – or simply if you recycle? Remember that waste and energy reduction, cleanliness standards, as well as safety thresholds, can all count as sustainable practices.

Talk to your suppliers and find out if their products can meet your customers' 'green' concerns.

Eco-help

Where can you get help in implementing your EMS? Trade associations are the primary resource for printers. In North America, national associations such as the Printing Industries of America, the Flexographic Technical Association and the Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute are places to start. Local branches will have more detailed information on state and regional environment regulations and standards. In Europe, FINAT is in the process of developing recycling schemes for liner waste and keeps a close eye on upcoming environmental

Green practice

- Wal-Mart's recent announcement of a 'packaging scorecard' for its 60,000 plus suppliers worldwide is guiding 'green' to mainstream. Starting in February 2008, Wal-Mart will use this scorecard to evaluate each supplier to determine who is 'greener' or more sustainable. By 2013 the company plans to reduce packaging across its global supply chain by five per cent. Wal-Mart reports that suppliers are already filling the database. Is there a label scorecard in store?
- The global Marks & Spencer retail chain has announced a plan to make itself carbon neutral, as well as eliminate waste going to landfill. This will certainly involve audits of its labels and packaging programs.
- On the cutting edge of green innovation, Rich Cohen, founder of Distant Village Packaging, is a treeless paper supplier for custom handmade packaging. 'The paper is made from wild grass, an Asian plant in abundance and a renewable resource,' he says. 'We have already created rolls of paper and are interested in investigating how to create labels out of the sustainable roll. We are looking for the expertise in the label industry to make this happen.'

legislation from the European Union.

Another great resource for information is the Printers' National Environmental Assistance Center. The PNEAC mission is 'to assist regulatory agencies…by delivering current, reliable environmental compliance and pollution prevention information to printers…' PNEAC offers case studies and fact sheets about environmental compliance and pollution for each sector of printing from offset to flexography.

The IoPP Sustainable Packaging Task Group is an additional source for 'green' information applicable to the industry. This group of packaging professionals works together to extend the work already achieved by the Sustainable Packaging Coalition, focusing on green definitions, metrics and education.

A final word. Establish a 'green' identity as part of your branding strategy. Your environmental position should be clear and transparent. Consumers, customers and employees should all know what you do to be 'green' and how you enforce the company standards. Do your employees believe in being 'green'? Is there a company plan in place to ensure that all 'green' goals can be properly met? Above all, is management on board with the 'green' initiative? ■

Bio-buzz words

Bio-degradable: the ability of a material, such as paper or plastic film, pressure-sensitive label stock or printed labels, to break down or decompose under 'natural' conditions. Often confused (sometimes deliberately so) with Compostable

Compostable: products which will bio-degrade only under very specific environmental conditions, depending on factors such as oxygen, sunlight and the microbial environment. These conditions are often only met in an industrial composting system

Eco: concerned for living things and their environment

Eco-Label: a seal or logo indicating that a product has met a set of environmental or social standards

Energy Efficiency: reduces costs, reduces impact on environment and ensures there is energy for the future

Environmental Management (ISO definition): 'what an organization does to minimize harmful effects on the environment caused by its activities, and continually to improve its environmental performance'

Greenwashing: false image created by a corporation to appear environmentally responsible

Recyclable: materials that are able to be reprocessed and used again

Sustainable: applied to the label industry, it is a very broad term. It is best to listen and clarify with the customer to ensure you are catering to their specific needs

Unifit adapters can be provided with a metal-reinforced interlock notch for wall thicknessees of 11.1 mm

News in brief

Universal plate adapter

Rotec has launched its Unifit universal adapter sleeves, which allow a range of repeats to be handled on Sleeve-on-Sleeve systems without the need for additional air cylinders or thick-walled printing sleeves.

The Unifit series is suitable for both conventional cylinder presses and quick change cantilevered machines and can be combined with all types of sleeves.

The adapters – aligned to the size of the Stork sleeve system – have their own air-flow-systems, so are largely independent of the air outlet arrangement on the underlying carrier cylinder. rotec simply needs to know the sizes of the chamfer and position of the first ring of holes on the carrier cylinder to manufacture the adapter.

For seamless photopolymer systems such as Cyrel Round, rotec offers the H/C Unifit Bridge Adapter, incorporating a compressible structure available in three densities.

The Unifit adapters are manufactured from a synthetic resin and fibre compound material which rotec says retains an almost constant outer diameter under temperature fluctuations and increased air humidity. TIR value (Total Indicator Reading, i.e. maximum deviation of the outer diameter during a 360° rotation) is below 0.025 mm, measured on a carrier cylinder with a TIR value of less than or equal to 0.005 mm.

As standard Unifit adapters are available in wall thicknesses from 10 mm – 10.5mm for the seamless variant – to 60 mm, though special sizes are available upon request. The adapters can be provided with an L-shaped metal-reinforced interlock notch at wall thicknesses over 11.1 mm to ensure safe and accurate positioning. This also makes it easier to slide the printing sleeve off the adapter, since it is locked by the interlock on the air cylinder.

Tutorial - optimizing UV offset

XSYS and Nilpeter recently set out to measure the parameters involved in producing top quality, consistent UV offset. **Niklas Olsson**, global brand manager, XSYS, reveals the results

UV offset printing is truly a balance as all factors depend on each other. The basic principle is to enable the ink and water to stabilize over time, and maintain a sharp printed image. The basic principles with UV offset are :

- Offset plates do not have raised images
- Image is created through the principle that certain areas of the plates accept water (hydrophilic) and other areas will 'reject' water (hydrophobic)
- The non print area is hydrophilic and therefore attracts water. The print area is hydrophobic and therefore attracts the ink to be printed.
- Ink is mixed with water (emulsified). This mix is transferred via blanket to plate, and ink-water particles are split to the respective surfaces.
- The wetting of the plate depends on its surface energy and surface tension. Different areas of the plates have different surface energies, and either allow the water to form a continuous film, or makes it bead up and move away.
- The ink has to function with water, blanket, plate & material
- This process is sensitive to changes in water, ink, temperature and humidity

These parameters need to be understood and controlled to achieve consistent print quality.

The success of the offset process derives from the fact that oil and water do not mix. Traditional offset inks are based on different olineous resins, and the same principle applies in UV offset, except that the ink is based on acrylated resins.

The water spreads out well in the non-image area of the plate, and much less in the image/print area. The interfacial surface tension between the water and the plate is much greater in the image area.

Dampening system

The dampening system of the printing press keeps the non-image area of the plates coated evenly with water. When the particles of water and the ink (traditionally oil) hold each other in place, it is

First offset RCS installation in Austria

Carini GmbH, a globally active label converter based in Lustenau in the Vorarlberg region of Austria, has become one of the first label converters to install the new Gallus RCS330 offset press.

Carini specializes in printing both roll and sheet labels, and was looking for a cost-effective way of producing short and medium-sized runs of high quality labels, as well as converting a wider variety of materials.

'In addition to the food industry, we also supply the pharmaceutical and cosmetic industries. With the Gallus RCS 330, we can offer a wide range of product decoration options,' states Edgar Sohm, managing director at Etiketten Carini.

The Gallus RCS 330 at Carini is equipped with six offset printing units, three UV flexographic units, two screen printing units and one hot foil embossing unit. These printing methods can be used individually or combined.

Explaining his decision to purchase the RCS330, Edgar Sohm adds, 'We were won over by the overall press concept. It fits in with our company's strategy of combining flexibility and reliability with constantly high quality. Benefits include maximum flexibility due to the modular design, short setup times, greater cost-effectiveness thanks, among other things, to the automatic rewinding and unwinding unit, and a reduction in waste – all this while still producing maximum print quality.! With special products such as label roll or multilayer labels, we are looking to offer our customers additional advantages in their respective markets.'

Sohm says the highly automated press has great advantages for offset printing. The automatic startup ensures minimal waste during setup. The temperature of the inking unit is constant and the ink capacity in the inking unit is continuously adapted to the operating speed. The wetting unit fountain roller and the doctor roller are both driven directly. 'The Gallus RCS 330 thus ensures highly reproducible quality combined with minimal setup times and less waste.'

Parameters required from a Narrow Web UV offset ink	Parameters which will affect the UV offset print performance
• Color strength	• Repro
• Dot gain (paper, film, over screen ink)	• Dotgain compensation
• Cure Speed	• Plate type (positive / negative)
• Operating window (water tolerance settings)	• Plate process (baked, un-baked)
• Lithographic properties / emulsification (no tinting at extremities)	• Blanket (type, shore hardness, compressible)
• Tolerance of water fluctuations	• Ink
• Adhesion to synthetic substrates	• Water type (hardness, conductivity, ph) & amount
• Scratch resistance	• Fountain solution type (buffer capacity, conductivity)
• Chemical resistance	• Amount
• Hot foil & transfer printability	• IPA/alcohol
• Odor & low migration (Dependant on end use)	• Print speed
• Duct behavior	• Humidity
	• Substrate

called emulsification. An ink can however become 'waterlogged' or 'over-emulsified' as the amount of water increases. Once over-emulsification is reached, there is no way to recover the ink except shutting down the press and fully cleaning the ink system.

Fountain solution

A plate's water receptivity decreases as the plate runs on the press. The fountain solution is a mixture of chemicals that helps maintain a plate's receptivity to water in the non-image area. The fountain solution has three tasks

- Lowering surface tension (water is 79dynes/cm)
- Increasing the plate's receptivity to water
- Maintaining a plate's water receptivity

Most Narrow Web fountain solutions are 'neutral'. Reverse osmosis systems are typically used to purify water and remove minerals, and are easiest to control. The fountain solution should be monitored during printing by measuring pH and conductivity. (however most fountain solutions are buffered today, which prevents pH change during the run).

Printing Ink

A good offset ink will maintain a fine and stable emulsion irrespective of changes in other parameters, and will have a large 'operating window'. This means better productivity, and stable print quality for printers.

The pigment level of the ink will affect the ink / water balance and the only way to control this is by monitoring the density reading during a press run. By maintaining a set density, the least amount of ink is always being applied. Basically an optimum ink/water balance is achieved when the least amount of ink, and the least amount of water is used. This generates the 'least amount of problems'

Less is best……!

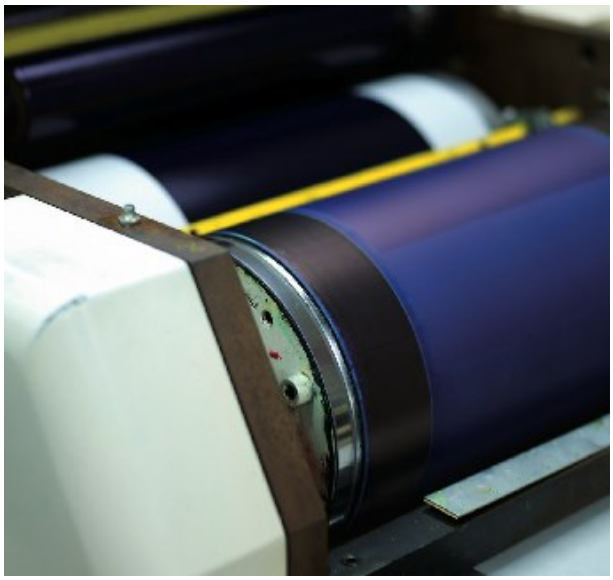
Optimizing offset quality through process standardization

XSYS Print Solutions has been working with Nilpeter to develop a 'road map' for beginners in UV offset, to get some fundamental principles correct and to more quickly obtain good offset quality. We also investigated all parameters involved in trying to determine how to improve the quality of UV offset printing. Initially all of the parameters required from a narrow web UV offset ink were identified. Secondly the parameters which will affect UV offset performance properties were listed and from these, key print performance variables were identified and studied

It is obvious that there are many more variables in UV offset printing to consider, compared for example to UV flexo printing. In order to improve overall quality, all of the potential variables need to be mapped and understood. The intention with the 'road map' is to develop a program to help printers print 'right from the start'. However only a few key ink parameters specifically affect offset print performance!

The key printing performance criteria are identified as being:

- Color strength
- Dot gain (paper, film, over screen ink)
- Cure Speed
- Operating window (water tolerance settings)
- Lithographic properties / emulsification (no tinting at extremities)
- Tolerance of water fluctuations
- Adhesion to synthetic substrates
- Scratch resistance
- Chemical resistance
- Hot foil & transfer printability
- Odor
- Duct behavior



Repro
- The quality of the final print is determined by the quality of the plate, related to the original image.
- Correct fingerprinting and plate correction should be completed.
- Standardized guidelines are available, and where possible should be followed.

Dotgain/compensation
- Where dotgain curves are understood, the repro should be compensated to allow for this
- Dotgain is dependant on substrate and fount conditions used

Plate type
- Most plates are generated by ctp process.
- Plates can be either positive or negative

Plate process
- Our experience is that a baked plate is easier to work with, and has longer lifetime.

Blanket
- Quality of top coat (Good chemical stability, without swelling with UV inks)
- EPDM is commonly used

Print speed
- Will affect fount levels required to maintain a clean print
- Automated fount dosing on press?

Humidity
- Should be controlled to avoid fluctuations
- Will affect fount if humidity is too low or high (ideal 50-60%)

Substrate
- Will affect stability of fount solution, synthetics typically hardest

EPDM
- EPDM rollers that are compatible with UV must be used.
- Should be set with a minimum of bounce to the plates, to avoid scum lines

UV offset road map – by looking at basic ingredients, fine tuning

The key to high quality consistent UV offset printing is to map and understand all of the variables within your process. When changes are made, the effect downstream on the printing process and end result needs to be understood.

But once all variables are set, the key to maintaining a high quality UV offset print result is to maintain an optimum ink/water balance in the press. This is described as 'The relationship between the mixture of ink and water that provides the best printing outcome whilst using the least amount of both materials'.

Basically, the least amount of ink and the least amount of water will lead to the least amount of problems. Again….. Less is best! ■

New ink

XSYS Print Solutions has recently introduced a dedicated UV Offset ink for narrow web presses. Lithocure 3G was developed using the combined resources of Flint Group and XSYS Print Solutions, and is designed to optimize ink & water balance.

Comments Niklas Olsson, global brand manager at XSYS, 'Leading converters across Europe have been involved in the test phase, and tell us Lithocure 3G offers excellent litho print properties, and is very stable on press, irrespective of press settings and fluctuations. They have commented on the printability and color strength across a variety of print substrates, from matt paper to synthetic films – a real advantage for today's multi-capability narrow-web presses.'

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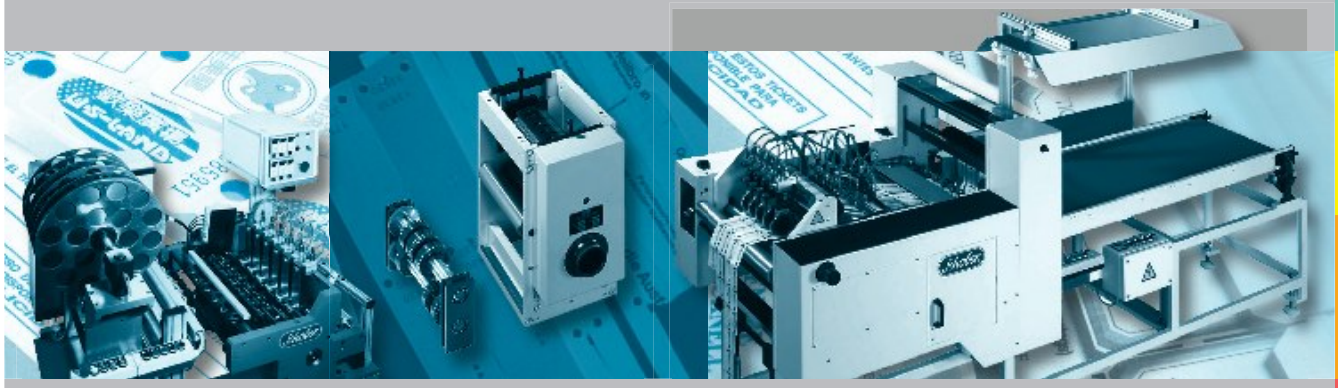

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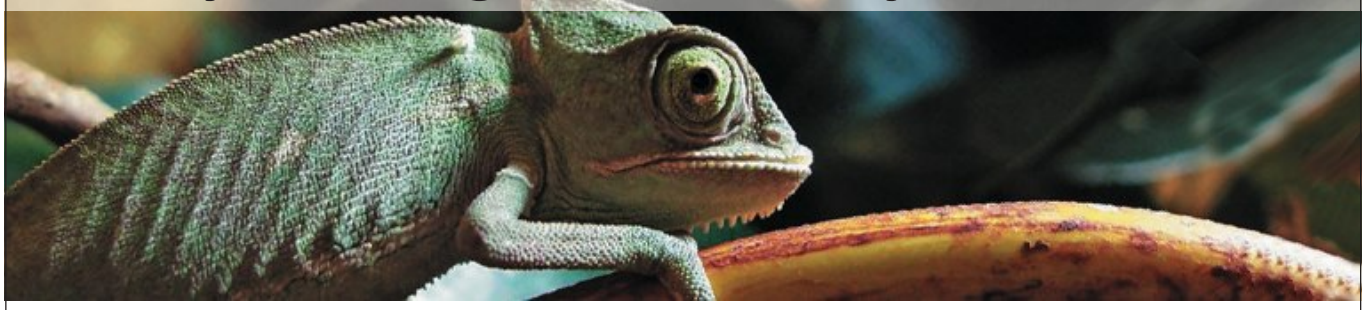

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A market for the taking

Structural change in the labels sector is creating opportunities for converters willing to look at new business strategies from product differentiation to joint ventures, as **Marcus Clifford,** managing director of mergers & acquisitions consultancy BPIF Mcinnes reports

The labels and labeling market is hugely diverse and the nature of what constitutes a label is changing as it becomes integrated into the packaging itself. At the same time, market dynamics are accelerating consolidation pressure across the labels sector, and this is creating business opportunities for companies with clear strategies built around initiatives to create value.

Let us take the UK as an example. The size and shape of the UK label industry is not easy to quantify. The Keynote consultancy suggests it is a £480 million turnover sector while the Plimsoll consultancy suggests £3.14 billion after rolling in a wide range of suppliers and manufacturers of equipment. The British Print Industries Federation (BPIF) suggests that there are some 250 self-adhesive and printed labels companies in the UK, with around £500 million turnover.

Let us examine the following complimentary options for business growth:

- **Product and service differentiation**
  Marketing, Marketing and Marketing. Marketing is still a much under-utilized business tool and many simple strategies are not being taken onboard.
- **Merger and acquisition**
  Merger and acquisition activity is on the increase across all sectors, but needs proper planning and control procedures.
- **Joint ventures and collaborative alliances**
  Undertaken with the right due diligence and control, JVs and alliances are a great way to add value with reduced risk – and greatly underutilized. Many JV's and alliances lead to successful acquisitions.

The Plimsoll consultancy provides a great deal of analysis of the UK label industry over the last ten years, and its research highlights some interesting trends.

Sales trend – 10 year view

- The average company saw sales decline by around 3.5 per cent
- Some showed an average decline around 18 per cent
- Some increased sales by around 11 per cent
- In general larger companies grew at around 4.2 per cent compared to smaller companies at around 0.1 per cent

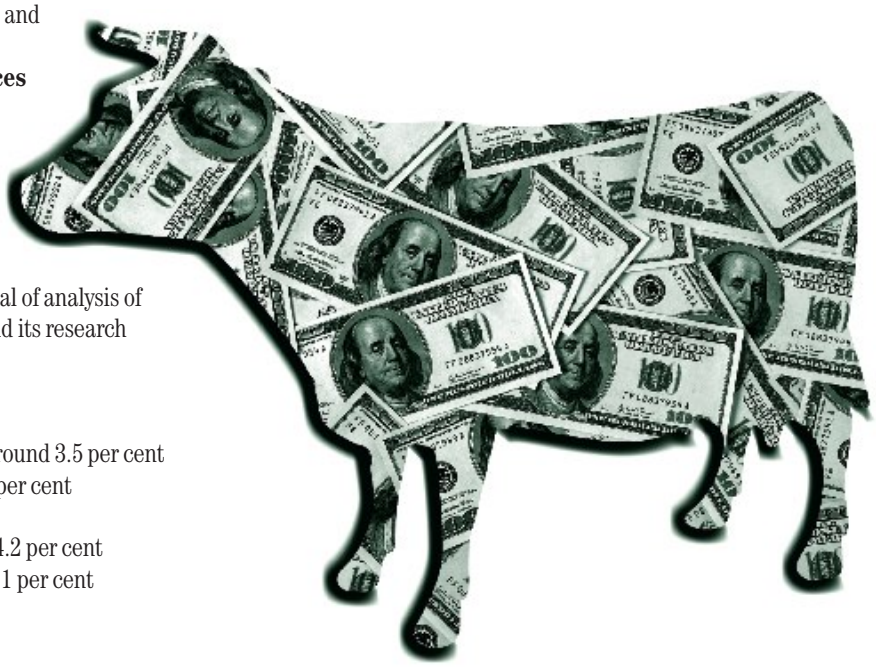
Sales return on assets – 10 year view

- Of companies whose sales are falling only half took action to reduce assets
- This is an industry which struggles to manage high fixed costs against variable costs
- Generally larger companies are less efficient in generating sales from their asset base – around £1.35 sales for every £1.00 invested

A well-invested business supports efficient manufacturing, but increased efficiency alone is not enough to combat the competitive forces faced by the sector. Structural change and strategic change need to go hand in hand, and here is the opportunity for those who want to take it.

Gross profit margin – 10 year view

- The average labels company generates 33.8 per cent gross profit margin (GP)
- Some 20 per cent of companies record 50 per cent plus
- Push to increase gross profit is noticeable
- In general smaller companies outperform their larger counterparts. Average GP of the smaller company is around 50.5 per cent, compared to 29.3 per cent for larger companies.



Pre-tax profit margin – 10 year view

- Almost one third of companies record a loss
- Small number able to improve pre-tax profit margin
- Most show at least one year of loss making or a few years of declining profit
- Current average pre-tax profit margin is around 4.5 per cent – with a huge variation across companies
- Smaller companies outperform larger ones - around 9.1 per cent against 5.5 per cent
- Adding back directors' fees increases profitability by around 11 per cent!

Pre-tax return on total assets

- Latest figures show around 45 per cent of companies suffered a fall in pre-tax profit return on total assets
- Around 30 per cent of companies achieved 10 per cent return
- A typical company achieves 3.8 per cent return on investment
- In general smaller companies outperform larger ones

The trends highlight that shareholders need to revisit the structural and strategic opportunities that are available. Recent research undertaken by BPIF Mcinnes on how companies see the future shows they are very open to ideas and opportunities. Those that are not are in a more vulnerable position.

New research

BPIF Mcinnes research targeted a wide range of labels companies in both size and market areas served across the UK.

Key highlights

- Companies are positive about themselves but not the sector
- Structural change will increase and consolidation pressures are high
- M & A activity being considered seriously in the UK and wider geographical area
- Investment seen as an ongoing necessity
- Acquisitions in label sector and those complimentary to it are being considered more increasingly
- Companies are developing clear strategies and are actively undertaking strategic reviews

BPIF Mcinnes was launched last year to help ensure that consolidation activity has a more successful outcome, since all too often the real value of a deal is not realized.

Companies merge or acquire for the wrong reason and with limited advice, which may result in them making the wrong choices. Consolidation should strengthen an industry, but that is not always the case in print. We aim to create a service that can help companies make the right strategic choices, groom them for that process and subsequently provide a full range of financing options that allows the new business to flourish. ■

Where to find help

BPIF Mcinnes and the Plimsoll consultancy are working on a number of initiatives to create information which helps positive strategic and structural decision-making. BPIF Mcinnes sits at the centre of the UK print, Media and Graphics sectors and manages a wide range of initiatives where buying and selling businesses are concerned. For a confidential discussion on all areas relating to buying and selling businesses contact Marcus Clifford at BPIF Mcinnes on +44 207 915 8408.

For more information on Plimsoll's research in the labels and printing markets visit www.plimsoll.co.uk, or call senior analyst David Pattison on +44 1642 626 400.

Track and trace

Keeping a tag on hams

Albion Systems Ltd of Altrincham, UK, is helping a specialist meat supplier to streamline its production with track-and-trace labels.

For more than a hundred years, Bearfields Ltd has specialized in the production of high-quality meats.

Albion Systems' 'lock and loop' tags give Bearfields' operatives the opportunity to hand-label every joint of pork that enters their production system, which involves the curing, finishing, and packing of their respected Danefarm joints and steaks. The 'lock and loop' tags are made by Albion Systems from a special tear-resistant material that accepts traditional print, thermal transfer print, and pen and pencil marking. They are heat-resistant to 90 deg C, and fully metal detectable as is essential for food packing lines.

Each joint is processed with its own dedicated 'lock and loop tag' firmly attached to the flesh by the loop process.

Says Sammy Mangion, Bearfields' operations manager: 'Basically, the "lock and loop" tags Albion make for us – which are EFSIS-compliant – perform the same function as a hospital wristband, and for maintaining the quality and integrity of our cooked meat products, they are just as important. Before we begin to fill in the product data on the tags, we choose the appropriate color of tag: blue for natural hams, green for traditional cure, and so on. The tag is then matched to a joint, batch coded, and the details recorded: kill date, date of receipt, and then, as each process is completed, details of cure date, cooking date, time, and temperature. That way, we are always in complete control of the history of the joint – and able to maintain our long-established quality standards.'

Albion Systems can also supply 'lock and loop tags' to withstand the higher temperatures experienced in the bakery industry.

When performance counts

Performance and engineered films? **Barry Hunt** gives an overview of what they can do

'High performance' and 'engineered' seem rather grand-sounding terms to apply to a seemingly inert item like film. But while they all look the same, we know that individual films can incorporate many different types of properties and technical characteristics. As a labeling substrate, the way in which all their molecular structures fit together as polymers determines the film's end-use criteria. Here we concentrate on the two polyolefin heavyweights: polyethylene (PE) and polypropylene (PP). Of course, certain specialized polyester face stocks and release liners are equally high performers, as are the various paper or film-based synthetic labelstocks for niche markets, but PE and PP form the basis for most filmic PSAs and unsupported packaging films.

In all cases, manufacturers naturally enhance the properties of a substrate to improve its end-use versatility and practical functionality. This in turn reflects some notable advances with polymer resins, blending formulations and coating treatments. Collectively they have brought more specialized applications, such as holographic laminates or special security-related coatings. The net result is a strong international films segment that now accounts for at least 20 per cent of total label applications, with filmic PSAs dominating the healthcare, cosmetics, toiletries, pharmaceuticals and industrial segments. Film-based labeling is also at the heart of end users' efforts to reduce manufacturing and distributions costs by using lighter plastics containers with thinner walls. The latest types of rigid and semi-rigid tubes and resealable packs are other examples.

Applications like these demand higher performance in the shape of extra emphasis on squeezability and a label's ability to conform to the contours of a specific shape or package. Downgauging, where films are produced with lighter and thinner layers, is another key element here. Among the benefits are lower raw materials costs and reduced energy costs during manufacturing. Lighter materials mean lower total packaging costs for end-users and environmental benefits connected with waste recycling and recovery schemes. PSA face stocks that are typically 50 micron (2 mil.) clear or 60 micron white result in reels that contain more finished labels, This in turn reduces total roll changeover times during printing and at the inspection and slitting stages. Fortunately, printing and converting thinner films is less of a problem on most modern presses. Even overlaminating or packaging films as thin as 15-20 microns can be handled reasonably well, aided by servo-driven control over web tensions, color registration and other key functions, supported by heat sinks, chill drums or plates.

The stiffness issue

Whether a labelstock is thick or thin has no effect on the label's main functions of promoting products and imparting information. Thickness does, however, affect the relative stiffness, or rigidity, of the labelstock. This property allows the material to resist bending forces, which is crucial during dispensing from labeling machines. Stiffness is not a problem with paper labels, but it could dampen the development of thin PSA films.

This view is held by Tarquin Crouch, labels segment manager with ExxonMobil Chemicals. He says manufacturers could easily make even thinner-gauge labelstocks, but dispensing on conventional wipe-on labelers is an inhibiting factor. He suggests instead that the ratio of stiffness to thickness becomes less of an issue when labels are applied with vacuum-based technology. 'Many packagers use this type of pick-and-place technology. For example, it has become an integral part of labeling fruit using conformable 30 to 40-micron PE stickers. Cooperation between converters and dispensing machine makers, supported by some large end users, would mean label buyers had access to much thinner, and therefore cheaper, label laminates to gain potentially enormous savings'.

Another key aspect of downgauged engineered films is that they improve the decorative qualities of clear-on-clear filmic labeling. A typical construction may combine a 50-micron top-coated BOPP facestock with a 30-micron or lower PET release

Conformable films – these are from Avery Dennison – are driving marketing strategies in the toiletries and beauty care market

liner. As industry leaders, both Avery Dennison and Raflatac have targeted the fast-expanding European beverage sector. It has embraced the no-label look for everything from premium-quality bottled beers, wines and spirits to the rather more controversial alcopop-styled drinks aimed at the youth market. Clear-on-clear volumes are also building in the PET and glass bottled water segment, helped by improved adhesives that remain clear under all conditions, including types for labeling bottles before pasteurization and filling. The more traditionally-minded brewery segment is also using new types of clear or metalized wet-glued filmic labels applied by dual-purpose film/paper machines.

Introducing properties

To put the manufacturing process in context, all densities of PE films and the majority of BOPP and OPP films are cast in a 'stenter' frame. The plastics melt is extruded through slot dies directly onto chill rolls which control cooling and maintain flatness. Cast films can be made to narrow thickness tolerances with high levels of dimensional stability. The alternative process involves blowing, or extruding, the plastic melt through a ring-shaped die to form a tall bubble. After various treatments it is subsequently collapsed, laid flat and slit for winding. Innovia in the UK is the principal user of this process.

Multiple-layer films are made with a coextrusion process based on forcing layers of blended polyolefins through a slot die. The blends determine the properties of individual layers. With a filmic PSA the formulation of the top layer must obviously provide a printable surface that readily accepts die cutting and coating treatments. The core layer determines the facestock's physical characteristics, such as dimensional stability, strength and conformability, while the bottom layer is formulated to promote anchorage for various types of adhesives.

Filmic release polyester liners are also multilayered to ensure good tensile and tear strength, as well as ultra-smooth surfaces for the adhesive. This is especially critical for clear-on-clear labeling. Off-machine coating of film surfaces is another method of introducing functionality and good printability, including special barrier properties where required. Quick changeovers make coating an ideal alternative for shorter production runs.

> "Clear-on-clear volumes are also building in the PET and glass bottled water segment, helped by improved adhesives that remain clear under all conditions, including types for labeling bottles before pasteurization and filling"

Most proprietary films involve orientation. Here, the web is stretched to align the polymer molecules in either the machine direction (MD) or in the transverse, or cross, direction (TD). It increases the film's tensile strength and elongation-to-break ratio, as well determining gloss levels, haze and the opacity of white grades. In food packaging, orientation enhances a film's barrier properties to resist gas and moisture vapor. MD and TD orientation produces biaxially-oriented polypropylene (BOPP) for optimum rigidity and squeezability. Many applications only require MD orientation, hence the many OPP variants which also form the central core of multilayer films.

Polyolefin developments

As the workhorse of the film world, PE filmics feature good

The 'no label look' inspired Innovia's Rayophane cellulose film

conformability, printability and die-cutting performance, plus good stiffness during dispensing. Engineered versions include FLEXcon's optiFLEX SQUEEZE recommended for labeling the full-squeeze tube applications, where permanent bonds to specific areas of the container are essential. Avery Dennison's Fasson Primax and FasClear engineered films were pioneering examples of multipurpose polyolefin films. This one-size-fits-all approach is now augmented by Global Co-Ex (GCX), a 65-micron multilayered film available in white and clear grades with a topcoated option.

According to Derrick MacDonald, product management director. Fasson Roll North America, GCX provides stiffness/rigidity in the machine direction (like BOPP) and conformability in the transverse direction (like PE). 'It has gained global market acceptance especially in the personal care market segments. We are beginning to see it win business in both traditional BOPP and PE facestock applications because of stock keeping unit (sku) rationalization efforts on the part of the converter.'

PP volumes have been steadily increasing over the last decade, led by large international conglomerates like Exxon-Mobil Chemicals, AET and the Treofan Group. This sector has also attracted manufacturers is developing parts of the world to meet expanding global demand. Richard Britton, Treofan's UK-based product manager, says that the mainstay BOPP and OPP grades meet most of this demand, but cast films that have no orientation are also gaining ground. 'We have found good markets for the newer types of multilayer packaging grades that feature various barrier properties, rather than conventional single-layer cast films. Overall, the improved properties of PP have assisted sales. For example, PP never had the stiffness of PE, but a new generation of BOPP and OPP grades gives increased rigidity than was previously possible although they have thinner gauges.'

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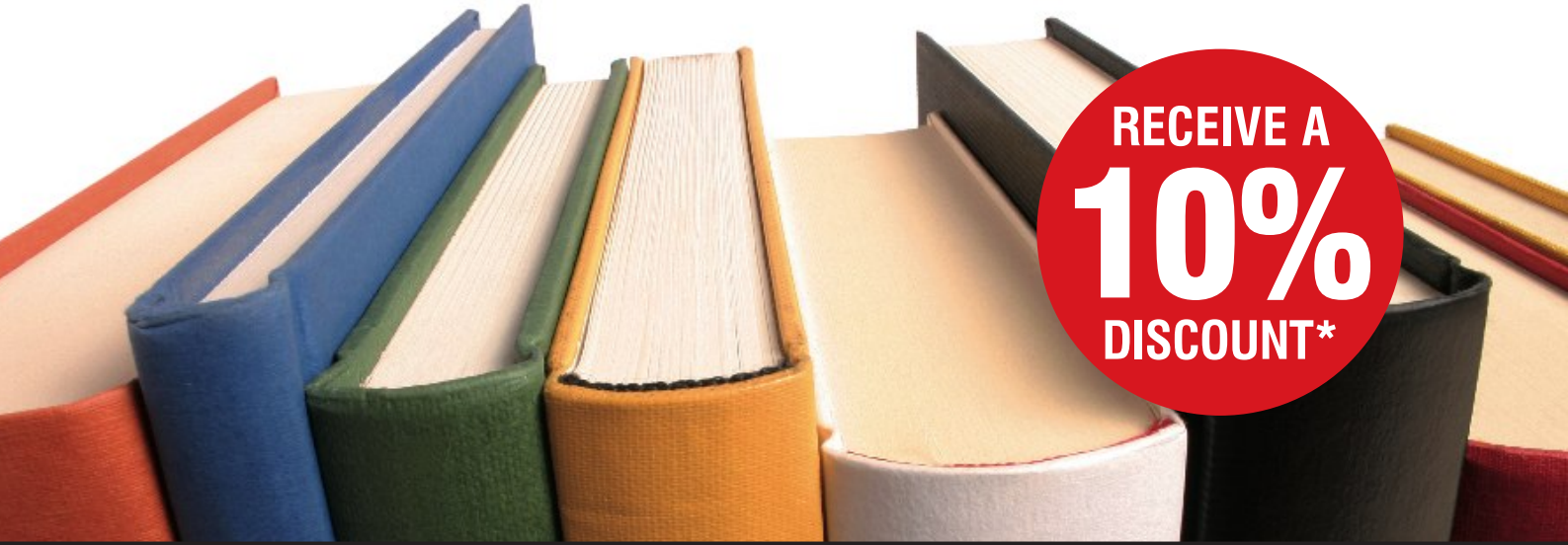

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Roll-fed shrink films from Avery Dennison exhibit up to 40 per cent shrink

Clear, white and metalized grades of OPP have a small, but growing share of the PSA market helped by developments with hot-melt and solvent-based adhesives. Other opportunities include OPP as a direct replacement for paper for bottled waters and beers, while retaining wet-glue labeling machines. Its usage is also growing for cut-and-stack labels printed by sheet or roll-fed offset presses, followed by off-line guillotining to size for dispensing from a magazine.

The IML sector is proving an especially good growth sector for OPP, as Britton confirms: 'We find that injection-molded IML is gaining ground in China and the developing parts of Asia, as well as the US market, which is normally associated with blow molding. Besides a greater number and variety of applications, there are more suppliers and more people who understand the process. That's why it has moved beyond traditional dairy and household products to include items like paint cans and confectionary packaging.'

An alternative to PSA labeling, the Roll-On, Shrink-On (ROSO) method allows end-users to gain the decorative benefits of shrinkable BOPP films rather than paper while retaining their conventional wraparound label applicators. It is a useful process for decorating contoured soft drinks bottles, aerosols or cans. ROSO film labels are wrapped around the container and sealed with a hot-melt adhesive instead of being formed into a tube prior to application. The container then passes through a shrink tunnel, with heat applied only to the areas requiring shrinkage. A major player here is ExxonMobil through its Label-Lyte ROSO films. An upgraded version offers a developmental 40-micron higher-shrink film, which it says increases on-bottle shrinkage to approximately 20 per cent using an optimized shrink tunnel.

A newer variant is Roll-Fed Shrink (RFS) from Avery Dennison's Performance Polymers Division. It uses a coextruded blend of PE and PP with a thickness of 50 microns, or 2.0 mil. The reels are printed and slit as for a normal wraparound labels and applied to the container. The seams are sealed separately using an ultra-low viscosity UV adhesive before the containers enter the shrink tunnel. RFS has a shrink capability of 40 per cent to ensure good conformability.

Sunder Rajan, director, new business development, Avery Dennison, Performance Polymers Division, Films, claims RFS has already attracted 'tremendous interest' from

"The same interest in sustainability could revive the fortunes of cellulose acetate, which is sourced from woodpulp and available in clear, gloss or matt grades"

end users and converters. 'It allows end users to label contoured containers at a lower cost compared with shrink sleeves. On PET containers it aids recyclability because it separates easily in a water bath. None of the current shrink sleeve materials are easily separable from PET". Rajan adds that the technology is suitable for narrow and wider-web printers alike and avoids the extra steps of seaming and inspection.

As a postscript, it is worth noting the arrival of films made with biodegradable polylactic acid (PLA) based on plastic resins derived from corn starch (see Issue 5 of *L&L*, pp 79-83). NatureWorks PLA, which also makes PLA plastics for water and soft drinks bottles, offers a proprietary PSA film with a uniform orientation and a stiffness level to aid reliable dispensing. Other manufacturers include Green Bay Packagers, which supplies EcoVantage in clear and white grades. Spinnaker Coating of Troy, Ohio, offers similar grades for its EarthFirst film. Treofan supplies the Biophan grade and is optimistic about the future of PLAs for adhesive and non-adhesive labeling. It has accordingly transferred the manufacture of Biophan to a larger plant in Germany to meet expected demand. Its biaxially-oriented film is made in single and triple-layer versions.

The same interest in sustainability could revive the fortunes of cellulose acetate, which is sourced from woodpulp and available in clear, gloss or matt grades. An example is Innovia's ultra-clear NatureFlex NVLC with print and adhesive-receptive biodegradable coatings and good stiffness for dispensing. Acetate is brittle and resistant to tearing, so makes good tamper-evidence labels and seals, but it does not resist solvents and is not conformable. In a similar vein, Innovia's Rayophane, is a regenerated cellulose facestock offered as an alternative to clear plastic films for labeling glass and plastic bottles. It's rather ironic that the films industry can simultaneously create interest in some old and new non-plastics products, while introducing a new generation of high performers – but all good for the labeling industry in the end. ■

Paper news

Stora Enso launches PET bottle paper

Stora Enso Speciality Papers has launched its EcoSet wet-strength label paper, specifically designed to meet the rising market demand for PET water bottles. EcoSet has been tested throughout all facets of water bottle label production.

Stora Enso initiated development of EcoSet label paper in response to growing demand by brand owners in North America to purchase locally produced PET water bottle label paper that would offer an economical and ecological alternative to current label substrates. EcoSet is produced at Stora Enso's Stevens Point (Wisconsin) Mill in the US.

'EcoSet offers a clear competitive advantage to North American water bottle label producers,' said Eckhard Kallies, vice president of packaging papers. 'Our local production of EcoSet reduces supply chain costs when compared to other beverage label substrates.'

EcoSet is offered in basis weights of 43 lb., 46 lb. and 49 lb. (70, 75 and 80 gsm) and according to the manufacturer features a high-fidelity print surface for good artwork reproduction, and wet-strength label properties for dependable printing, die-cutting, labeling and product distribution processes. 'A good brightness and gloss level, along with label opacity when wet, make EcoSet an excellent choice for beverage label applications,' says Stora Enso.

Torraspapel launches Metalvac metallized paper range

Torraspapel, part of the Lecta Group, has released a new sample catalogue of its Metalvac metallized paper range, developed for a wide variety of applications including labels, gift items, cigarette and prestige/luxury boxes.

The catalogue includes samples of all of the grades that make up the Metalvac range, including the various finishes: Linen, Pinhead and the new Brushed.

The catalogue is completed with technical data sheets including information on appropriate printing systems.

Metalvac, Torraspapel's range of high-vacuum metallized papers, is fully recyclable and holds the ISO 9001 quality certificate and the ISO 14001 environmental certificate.

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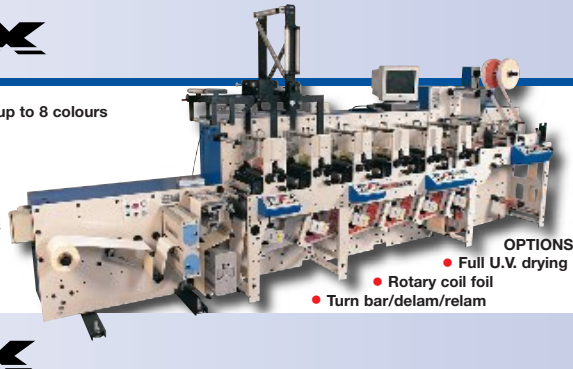

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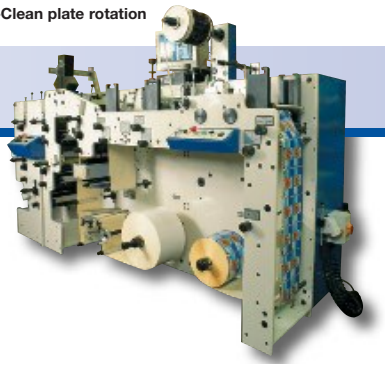

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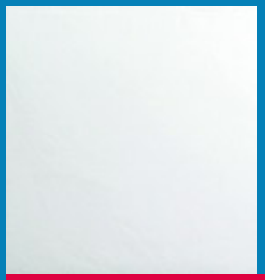

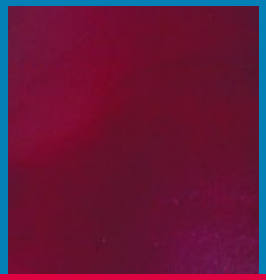

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The York Label challenge

York Label has worked closely with Scantech Automation, of Toronto, Canada, to develop a label inspection, slitting, and rewinding system which seamlessly integrates with the company's new 20-inch presses. **Andy Thomas** reports

York Label has concentrated hard on developing carefully documented and highly automated label manufacturing facilities which integrate quality control at each operational stage. When it came to specifying a new label inspection, slitting and rewinding line, Scott Hoofnagle, York's vice president manufacturing, and the company's manufacturing engineering group worked closely with Scantech Automation to specify a system which links the label finishing process with products forwarded from the pressroom.

Specification of the new finishing system – a customized Scantech Printrack LR – followed York's installation of a highly automated 20-inch wide printing and converting system, which includes non-stop unwind and rewind roll transfer systems.

'The development of a new label finishing platform which has been truly linked to the previous printing and converting step has been a seamless team effort between York and Scantech,' comments Scott Hoofnagle. 'We were very much involved in the assessment of each developmental step along the way. Our new Printrack LR exhibits a true integration of York's requirements and ideas with Scantech's long-proven history of conceptual innovation.'

The list of bespoke requirements and Scantech's solutions makes interesting reading:

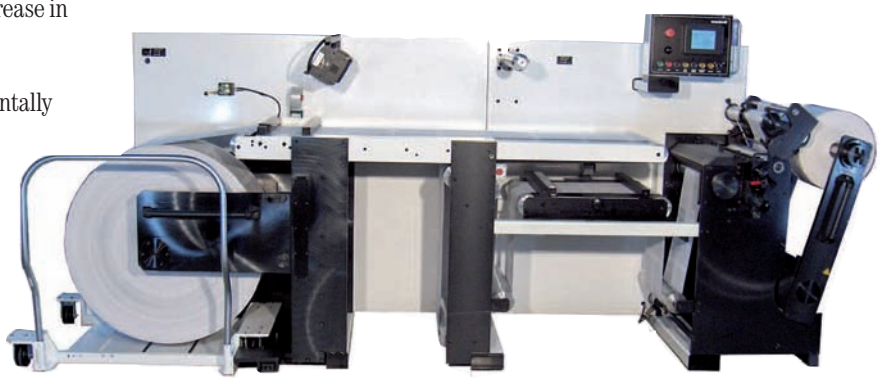
1. Challenge: Since York was intending to use the Printrack LR system to process high-quality labels – including fine vignettes and other details – they asked for an extended inspection zone. At the same time, they wanted the inspection zone to be located close to the slitting and rewinding zones so that the operator could see all three zones within the same general field of view. They wanted this accomplished without increase in the footprint of the machine.

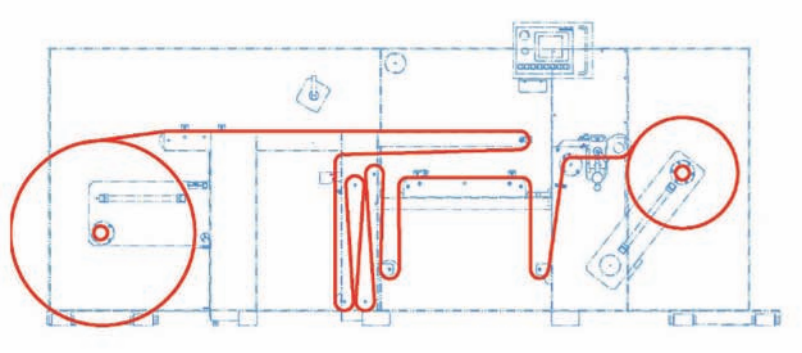
1. Solution: Scantech developed a horizontally extending and retracting inspection zone. The inspection table extends toward the slitting and rewinding zones for common viewing when the machine is running at high speed, then retracts when the operator has stopped the machine to repair a fault.

2. Challenge: York wanted to transfer all printed master rolls from press to finishing without having them touch the floor between the press rewind and the loaded unwind on the new finishing systems. The intent was to prevent any damage to the outer layers of the printed rolls and to preclude strain injury to either the press operator or the finishing system operator. York also wanted to minimize the floorspace required around the finishing systems.

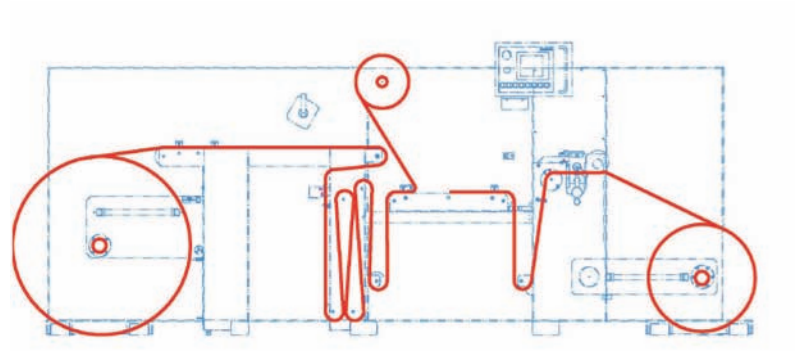
2. Solution: Scantech designed the unwind roll loading system of the Printrack LR to accept loading directly from the transfer carts arriving from the automated delivery end of the presses. The large unwind rolls are frontloaded from the transfer cart to the unwind shaft of the Printrack LR and the unwind shaft is front supported before the roll is lifted from the transfer cart. Using this design to front load rather than end load has reduced floorspace required. Also, the integration of transfer cart operation between presses and finishing systems has eliminated roll damage during transfer and reduced the possibility of operator injury.

3. Challenge: York asked for enhanced ergonomics and setup accuracy on the slitting systems. They were moving to wider web processing formats and were concerned about the weight of the removable cassettes with respect to operator safety and to the high cost of multiple cassettes and cassette transfer carts. Also, they wanted the ability to make minor adjustments, inspection, and washup to the in-process slitting assembly without having the operator strain to reach into and over a wider format machine.





Inspection table in run mode



Printrack LR with inspection table retracted

3. Solution: Scantech designed the slitting assembly section of the machine such that it could be withdrawn from its in-process location out into the operating aisleway for inspection, cleaning and knife adjustment without damaging the web. After making the necessary changes, the operator can reinsert the slitting system into its in-process location – again without damaging the web.

The upper slitting shaft cartridge can be preset with high knife positioning accuracy, which saves cost and weight and improves safety. This is done, and checked, off-line using a digital knife positioning system. The absolute – as opposed to relative – positioning of the blades can be pre-advised in the job engineering docket.

4. Challenge: York asked that efforts be made to minimize the operators' need to move along the face of the finishing machine when switching from inspection to fault repair and splicing functions.

In conjunction with these requirements, York engineers asked that the inspection zone and the fault splicing zone be placed at different elevations, each at its most ergonomic height. These design improvements, properly integrated, would reduce operator fatigue and improve productivity.

4. Solution: Scantech engineered the inspection zone and the fault splicing zone of the Printrack LR such that they are now placed one above the other, each in its most ergonomic elevation. When the operator now spots a fault and stops the machine, the inspection zone is automatically retracted. This allows the operator to transfer from inspection to fault splicing mode, and then back to inspection mode without ever moving physically along the machine face.

5. Challenge: York asked for an operating system which could 'remember' all job settings including all unwind drive and rewind drive tension control parameters. Their aim was to use the company's order processing system to remember and reprogram the machine for specific order repeat or for 'family of materials' recall.

5. Solution: Scantech designed an operating system that allows all tension parameters for servo and other motor drives to be remembered and recalled along with other job parameters. This means that the operator or operators do not have to interact with the unwinding and rewinding tension controls during a continuing or repeat production run.

6. Challenge: A large percentage of work processed through the finishing systems is film on film (clear-on-clear) pressure sensitive labels. York wanted major innovations which would improve the control and repeatability of soft wrap-to-wrap rewind tension profiles on finished rolls.

6. Solution: Scantech designed an inertia-controlled motor driven rewind system that is directly coupled to the rewinding cores. This transmits direct sensitivity of the rewind rolls' requirements to the rewind drive system, thus directly effecting smooth control over wrap-to-wrap rewind roll softness.

Commenting on the successful joint project, Allan Prittie, director, conceptual engineering at Scantech Automation, says: 'Many of the technical challenges label manufacturers face today require radically different solutions which take the ultimate machine format far away from that of standard label finishing platforms. It is a privilege to be working with such demanding but also very knowledgeable and involved people as at York to create ergonomic, effective and non-wasteful solutions to those challenges.'

In the course of this project, Scantech has registered a series of patents for the modified Printrack LR system, and is currently lodging more patent applications for a system being developed for a UK label converter. ■

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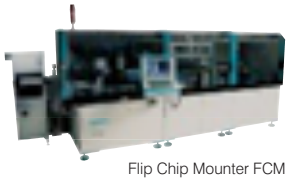

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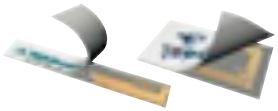

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Slitter rewinder news

Alcoa turret rewind manufactured by Retroflex

Retroflex goes for flexiblility

Retroflex is now promoting a flexible range of slitting and rewind systems. Says the company: 'These units can be simple single position; single spindle units or turret type systems complete with automated splicing and transfer capabilities in shaft type or shaft less designs. They can be designed to work with existing equipment, or they can be part of a new machine line. Unwinds can be center braked, center driven or surface driven. Rewinds can be center or surface driven or a combination of both.' The available sizes are from 1-1/2" to over 100" wide with roll diameter up to 72". The units can be cantilevered dual frame or lift arm, depending on the customer's needs. Precise tension control is achieved with either a tension roll or dancer roll system. Slitting systems can be manually adjusted or fully automated.

Arpeco adds servos

Arpeco has incorporated a new three- motor servo drive system and a large 12" color Touch Screen Operator Interface into its TRP9 inspection slitter rewinder. The new system was first seen at Labelexpo Americas in Chicago configured with an optional 24in (610mm) rewind, Missing Label Matrix Detection (MMLD),

film package with ironing roller, bowed roller and closed loop rewind tension. The 16" (407 mm) machine operates at speeds up to 935 feet/min (285 m/min).

Interestingly, the TRP9 at the Chicago show was fitted with an AVT Helios 100% vision inspection system with a Webflow Link to a Gallus Press.

Meanwhile, Arpeco and PAT Technologies announced earlier this year the formation of a strategic alliance that will enable Arpeco to offer the Rotoworx line of expandable and reconfigurable modular diecutting and converting systems.

The Rotoworx system is a combination digital UV coater and semi-rotary die-cut and converting system. Complementing a digital press, the Rotoworx system gives 'the ability to perform flood or spot coating, textures and special effects, requiring only a digital file', according to a statement. The Rotoworx system can also be configured to perform many converting functions including thru-cut onto a conveyor.

Smag partners with E+L

Smag has announced a partnership with Erhardt + Leimer to include the highly specified Nyscan camera system into its range of slitting/rewinding equipment, according to a joint statement issued by Stephane Rateau of Smag and Dr Proeller and Dr Merkel of E+L.

The Nyscan camera system can be incorporated into Smag's modular slitter rewinder models based around the C4R+ platform. The C4R+ can be upgraded to higher specification Intermediate and Advanced models. It can be configured to a blank label converting press or can have up to two flexo print stations added in-line.

The C4R+ base unit can thus transform itself into a Comet model or can be configured for registered die cutting for use in digital web converting.

An interesting technical feature is the twin nip assemblies located either side of the slitting cassette, designed to create a constant tension to the web at the point of slitting irrespective of the unwind or rewind tensions or their diameter, which is important when handling filmic label stocks.

Etisoft installs Parkland slitter

Etisoft, one of Poland's major suppliers of industrial labels, has provided Parkland with its first slitter order in that country. Etisoft has installed a customized duplex center rewind slitter based on Parkland's SM150 Series II design for converting self-adhesive paper and foil laminates.

With a maximum material width of 2,040mm and an 800mm rewind diameter, it represents one of the largest SM150 models made by Parkland. The machine has integral shaftless unwind, dovetail rotary shear and razor slitting system, automatic unwind and rewind tension control, air differential rewind shafts, laser core positioning and a rewind reel push-off system.

Slitter rewinder news

The ability to customize standard machines to meet demanding user requirements has become a specialty for Parkland.

At the same time, Parkland says it has been experiencing continued growth in sales of its branded Air Differential products, including customized shafts and chucks for new machines, retrofits and OEMs. Recent installations include cantilevered air differential shafts for a laminator, individual arm type air differential shafts for a coating and laminating line and large diameter air differential chucks for use with special oversize cores. The roller type, self-expanding, air differential shafts have been fitted as original equipment on a machine used for specialty narrow width slitting.

Ashe succeeds with clear labels

Ashe Converting has sold two Opal 2 slitter rewinders for dedicated processing of clear-on-clear filmic labels, with the aim of eliminating expensive downtime and material waste. 'Filmic label substrates, when slit and rewound, have been problematic for many label converters,' says Ashe, whose Opal 2 system incorporates accurate tension control which allows it to handle a wide variety of substrates ranging from 12 micron unsupported film to 400 micron board material. Direct brushless a.c motors give automated linear tension control as well as taper tension control.

Turret rewinder developed by KTI

The new KR Series Turret Rewinder from KTI offers 'the control of an off-line finishing system with the efficiency of an in-line turret rewinder,' according to the company. Rolls are taken off the end of the press ready to use.

Tension control is achieved through a series of integrated web handling components, including a dancer roller, web guide, and a nipped infeed. The KR is available with an individual servo motor attached directly to each spindle.

Options include automatic core and tail gluing.

Ashe Opal 2 slitter rewinder

AB Graphics adds turret rewinder

A new addition to the range of slitter/rewinders from AB Graphic International is the Vectra HS 4 Spindle turret rewinder for producing small rolls of labels at high speeds. This purpose-built 330mm web width turret rewinder can produce rolls of labels minimum diameter 30mm maximum 150mm. Speed is dependent on the diameter of the mandrels used with up to 150meter/min possible using 30-50mm diameter mandrels. Up to 90meter/min are achievable with 12-25mm diameter mandrels.

Features include closed loop tension control, seven second cycle time (8.5 cycles per minute), auto fill hot melt core gluing, constant mandrel end support for small diameter mandrels down to 12mm., touch screen controls and job save facility for up to 500 jobs. A system programme is included for print and apply label closure and the line is completed with high-speed automatic core loader, heated plate to reduce small labels from pre-dispensing and auto roll eject.

GM launches small roll rewinder

Grafisk Maskinfabrik has launched its SRR55 small roll rewinder, designed for tickets, stamps and rolls of small labels. So far five systems have been sold.

Slitter rewinder news

The new KR Series Turret Rewinder from KTI

The machine can be controlled via a touch-screen, or through an external PC where the rewinder is hooked up to an online database, for example for ticket systems. When thus hooked, up the rewinder can feed reports on skipped rolls, defective registration or splices to the central database. Optionally an inkjet can be incorporated to mark the backside of the web.

The SRR 55 features automatic roll close and roll eject systems. The roll is closed by a label after processing, and an option is to wrap blank paper around the roll before it is closed to prevent damage. In terms of technical specifications, core diameter is 10mm-30mm, roll diameter 10mm-50mm, web width 10mm-55mm. Speed is up to 13 sec / roll (3 meter roll). The unwinder is 76mm/3" with a maximum diameter of 500mm.

DM has also launched the latest version of its LST330 slitter-rewinding and inspection machine, a two-way rewinder with web tension control, nip and adjustable splice table with pneumatic splice clamps. Features include missing label and waste matrix detection – one lane as standard, which may be increased to four lanes – automatic slow down towards job completion and automatic positioning of faulty labels on the splice table. The LST330 is prepared for mounting of inkjet or code systems as well as stroboscopes or vision systems.

KTI launches Turret Rewinder

The more that can be accomplished in-line with your press, the more efficient and profitable you will become. Finished roll rewinding is often taken off-line to a finishing system to be rewound. The new KR Series Turret Rewinder from KTI offers the control of an off-line finishing system with the efficiency of an in-line turret rewinder. Rolls are now taken off the end of the press and ready to use.

A superior level of tension control is achieved through a series of integrated web handling components, including a dancer roller, web guide, and a nipped infeed. However, the meat of the operation is in the servo driven spindles. KTI is facilitating the evolution of the turret rewinder as finishing applications become more and more demanding. The KR is available with an individual servo motor attached directly to each spindle.

Great pains were taken to design a unit that is compact yet comprehensive. Several options are available to further enhance the KR's overall performance, including automatic core and tail gluing. The KR and its components are organized into one neat package that can be tailored to meet the needs of each individual customer.

KTI has been manufacturing the highest quality automatic splicers and turret rewinders for over twenty years. In that time, they have maximized the production of web fed operations throughout the world by eliminating the downtime associated with changing rolls. Roll changes are a major source of downtime for printers and converters everywhere; their effects can be minimized by utilizing automatic web transfer equipment from KTI.

Label Graphics installs flexibles slitter

Label Graphics of New Jersey – a leader in the pressure sensitive label market for 29 years – is expanding into the rapidly growing flexible packaging market with the installation of a slitter from Karlville Development to process cosmetics products.

The Karlville SLITHS-1000 wide web format slitter runs with an unwind diameter of 1,000 mm and a rewind diameter of 500 mm with an option for a 600 mm rewind diameter with a slip differential rewind shaft. It features a vacum hug drum for wrinkle-free pull nip while combining high precision slitting blades, close loop tension and drive control system. At a speed of 300 m/m, this slitter works with most types of plastics and laminates used in industries such as pharmaceuticals, beverages, cosmetics, pressure sensitive and shrink sleeve films.

Karlville's slitting line consists of the SLIT, SLIT-HS and SLIT-UHS. The SLIT and the SLIT-HS come in widths of 1000, 1300 and 1600mm, while the SLIT-UHS come in 1300 and 1600mm widths.

Slitter rewinder news

Ehret launches variable strip cutter

Ehret has launched its LA-VSC 520C variable strip cutter, designed specially for cutting strips out of offset printed rolls. Every offset press has an unprinted gap at the printing plate, which has to be cut out. In the case of bleeding color from label to label, a cut must be made between the single stripes. The sheeter is able to take cuts of different sizes across the web width, transporting them securely to an external exhaust system. The sheeter is driven by a separate servomotor and is equipped with a sophisticated register control system claimed to guarantee fast register control and good cutting accuracy. For register control a print mark is necessary, or the converter can choose the window option, where any repeating print line can be used as a print mark.

Maximum production speed is 185 m/min (615'), max web width 520mm (20 inches).

Custom slitting from Contract Converting

Contract Converting, a leading supplier of non-pressure sensitive roll stock to US converters, has enhanced its Roll Express program, which delivers fast turnaround custom slitting for a wide range of high performance packaging and label materials. New grades in the program include Igneous, Tundra, Trilogy and Propel substrates claimed to provide durability, thermal stability, print crispness and high-speed performance without the high cost of maintaining a master roll inventory.

The recent addition of a Kampf lightweight film winder has expanded the firm's technical capabilities, which now include duplex/center surface slitting, two-drum surface slitting, film winding, and roll doctor winding, with web width capabilities in excess of 80 inches, and slitting as narrow as two inches.

In addition to custom slitting and 24-hour turnaround for shipment of orders, several leading pressure sensitive manufacturers utilize Contract Converting as a slitting and rewinding distribution center for their customers' orders.

Stanford shows shrink sleeve slitter

As part of its line of shrink sleeve equipment, Stanford has introduced the Model 738 slitter rewinder, described as a cantilevered duplex differential center winder. Web width is 30" (762 mm) to 50" (1270 mm), and wider web options are available. Speed is up to 1,500 fpm (457 mpm), with 2,000 fpm (610 mpm) optional. Unwind roll diameters are 32" (812 mm) and 40" (1016 mm), with 50" (812 mm) wide as an option. Rewind roll diameter is 24" (610 mm) and 32" (812 mm).

The 738 complements new seaming and doctor systems launched by Stanford for the rapidly growing shrink sleeve label market.

Rotoflex rolls out e-drive

The latest of Rotoflex's inspection rewind machines is the VLI eDRIVE series. 'Among other benefits, VLI eDRIVE machines offer consistent performance, low maintenance, lower tension/higher speeds, easy job set up and operation, and an electronically synchronized motor driven system,' says the company.

Features and options include auto inspection system, label remover, shear and razor slitting systems, auto web gripper/feeder, a new touch screen operator interface, semi-automatic two spindle turret, clear on clear count sensor and auto tension control. The systems are available in web widths from 261mm(10.25in) to 700mm (28in), with machine speeds up to 260m/minute (850fpm).

Rotoflex now offers eDrive on its entire inspection machine line including the smaller vertical (VSI) and horizontal (HSI) inspection series to the larger, more sophisticated VLI and HLI series.

Titan sells 100th SR8

Bobst Group (Business Area Flexible Materials) has confirmed the sale of its 100th Titan SR8 cantilever slitter rewinder to Dutch converter Sarebo BV, a small converting operation which specializes in the supply of a diverse range of polypropylene and laminated foils and wraps for producers of food products. The machine features a free standing unwind, vacuum splice table, manual positioning of razor knives, laser core positioning and edge trim extraction systems. Running speeds are up to 600 m/min.

Bar Graphic introduces Elite

Bar Graphic Machinery launches its new Elite entry level range of free-standing slitter rewinder and die cut slitter rewinder systems. The Elite inspection rewinder incorporates BGM's Cartridge Slitter System fitted as standard. This enables the operator to set the blades without taking them away from the machine. Easy access is also provided for setting the blades in situ if the operator prefers, as the slitter shafts can be rotated independently.

More technical news @ www.labelsandlabeling.com

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Print trial management

Print trials are an essential tool for converters looking to innovate or meet new customer expectations. But they must be properly managed, as consultant **Mark McNulty** explains

A print trial can be one of the most frustrating or rewarding parts of a converter's business. If everything goes well you will be printing a new design for a happy customer, improving on an existing design or have found a product that adds value to your operation. However, more often than not a trial produces endless downtime, frustrated customers, irate press operators, unacceptable waste and a reluctant compromise. The reasons for failure are as many as they are avoidable.

- Unrealistic expectations
- Lack of a clear plan/target
- Poor communications
- Lack of technical expertise
- Assumptions

Unrealistic expectations

What exactly are we hoping to achieve? Match exactly a label that is already being supplied? Improving (define!) on an existing label? Producing a new design? Trying a new product that we hope will give us a commercial and/or technical advantage?

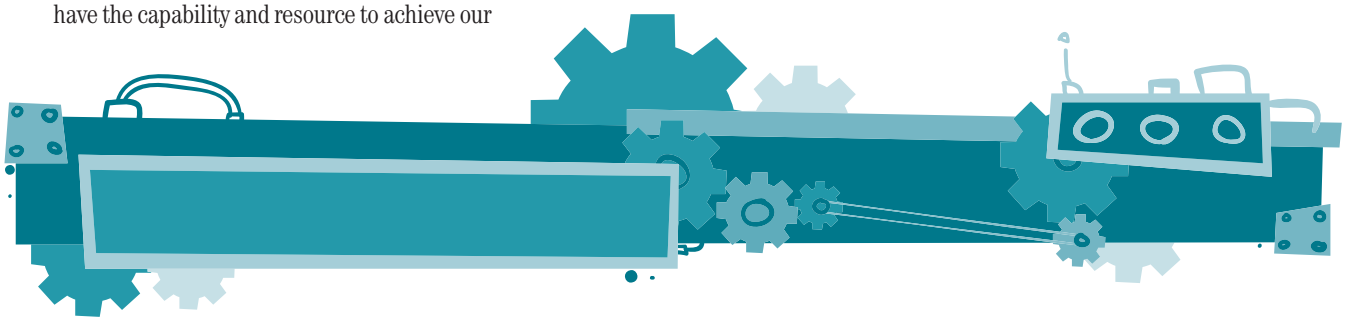
Each of these scenarios will require a different approach to the trial. Most important, they must be both technically and commercially attainable. Has anybody bothered to check the price of that high-lustre silver or 'special varnish' that the ink company so kindly recommended? Can we print this ink on that material and cure it at a speed that makes the label profitable?

Too often nobody dares to ask the obvious – do we have the capability and resource to achieve our aim? Many converters fail to explain to their customers the limitations of the materials and processes they have at their disposal for fear that they will take their business elsewhere.

Take as an example the numerous trials undertaken by label manufacturers to achieve a silk-screen look using flexo technology. Results vary, due mainly to the number of variables – ink, anilox, press, plate/tape combination to name but a few multiplied by press and lamp condition, material, overprintability and operator competence. This has resulted in countless lost hours and inmeasurable waste throughout the industry.

Although the reasoning behind the initiative is sound enough – the flexo process is more readily available and cheaper than screen – I have yet to see reliable costings that would indicate this option as a serious replacement for screen. Bear in mind that the flexo filmweight advised is sometimes as much as double the equivalent screen weight, hence almost double the ink spend allowing for the difference in price between flexo and screen inks. Excessive film weights not only hinder curing but can also lead to register and diecutting issues.

This is not to say that under certain circumstances UV flexo cannot provide a UV screen solution, but the pros and cons have to be seriously considered beforehand and expectations adjusted accordingly.



Lack of a clear plan/target

A trial involving a new label material will require less preparation than a trial to print a new label – right? Wrong, a new material, for instance, might be fine for one process/ink system, but will it work under all conditions? Is it compatible with the requirements of the end-user? It might be 20 per cent cheaper but will it convert on press at an acceptable speed? Over a long run are there any issues – web breaks, waste-stripping, ink compatibility? Without a clear plan/brief, how are you to decide that the trial has been a success?

Having a trial correctly reported and logged is of vital importance to the smooth running of a successful converter. Understanding the issues and outcomes can often save time and reduce the cost of future trials if quality information is captured and discussed on a regular basis.

Behind every trial a clearly defined commercial and/or technical objective has to be agreed and communicated. The trial objective should take the form of a pre-trial brief; and from the outset suppliers and end-users should be informed of the initiative and any comments or concerns which were noted and actioned.

- A new material – what exactly has changed? A new liner? Will this cause problems during die-cut or on the application line? Even if the material has a commercial advantage in terms of price per metre, will technical limitations offset the saving? The commercial advantage must be costed throughout the entire production process before the trial can be considered a success or failure.
- A new ink – what value is there in the product? By changing to a stronger black for example, how will this impact on matching existing formulations? Will this product require additional storage or replace existing ink? Have there been issues with the old black? Have customers expressed a desire for an alternative?
- A new design – what exactly are the customer's expectations and requirements? Have discussions taken place with, and between, repro and ink supplier? Is there a 'plan B'? Sometimes, even the best planning can produce a result that was not anticipated. Having the ability to produce a variety of options can often lead to a satisfactory outcome.

Poor communications

I have lost count of the number of trials that I have attended where even the most basic of information has gone unchecked. Take for instance color; is it PMS, match to sample or match to swatch? How will it be decided that the target color has been achieved? Gretag? By eye? And under what lighting conditions? Will a varnish be applied that will alter the shade?

Interestingly, I have found that the larger the organization, the more likely it is that the necessary or correct information is lost in an e-mail in somebody's 'follow-up' folder.

> "The larger the organization, the more likely it is that the necessary or correct information is lost in an e-mail in somebody's 'follow-up' folder"

Without doubt the most successful trials are those that have a trial co-ordinator - usually the technical or production manager – with a clear and well-communicated brief. The manager must ensure a clear line of communication between the converter, suppliers (repro, ink, material etc.) and end-user.

Lack of technical expertise

No matter how much time, effort and resource is invested in a particular product or initiative, if the personnel involved are dealing with systems or manufacturing processes that they have little or no knowledge of, then the chances of success are severely compromized. All too often key production operatives are unaware of what is expected or planned and may not possess the necessary experience to successfully carry out the task required of them. Even though the press is capable of printing on the adhesive, lamination and hot-foil all in one pass, has the operator the knowledge and experience to manage the whole process and keep everything in register? Is extra training required? Has the press manufacturer been contacted, and is it possible to have additional technical support in case things start to go wrong?

Don't assume anything...

By far the biggest cause of wasted time, effort and resource, is when somebody, at some point, makes an assumption without bothering to check that the information is correct. The more people involved in the trial preparation, the greater the risk that valuable information will not be shared or understood. It is vital that a dedicated trial co-coordinator/manager should be appointed to have overall control of the project. Even something as simple as testing a new ink can prove fruitless if nobody has a clear understanding of when, how and why the product is being tested in the first place and what use will be made of the results. ■

Chemistry free CTP

German label converter Faubel GmbH is looking to expand the quality and productivity of its offset presses with the installation of an 'environmentally friendly' thermal CTP system

Investing in chemistry-free offset CTP production has proved to be a profitable strategy for Faubel GmbH, a label specialist based in Melsungen, Germany. The Presstek Dimension450 Excel platesetter has delivered significant gains in productivity and positive return on investment within its first year of operation.

As a traditional label printer, Faubel typically works with letterpress and flexo printing. However, the firm identified a clear trend towards offset for its production requirements. Reinhard Kuge, general manager, explains:

'Although label production has always been the domain of letterpress and flexo printing, we see promising opportunities for increasing the productivity and quality of our offset process. For example, our job orders require us to use a variety of special colors that are difficult or even impossible to be reproduced with flexographic printing. Moreover, flexo cannot be standardized. Our goal is to continually expand the offset segment of our production over the next few years.'

Faubel is already fully standardized on digital prepress and is only processing CTP plates in its offset sector. 'New printing jobs are only accepted as digital files these days, and any unchanged reprints of films that were previously supplied are now digitized. The Dimension450 Excel CTP platesetter has enabled us to create a streamlined digital production process that is also environmentally friendly.'

Originally headquartered in Kassel and known as Faubel & Co. Cartonagen- und Papierwaaren-Fabrik Cassel, the company was founded in 1855. In 1875, a pharmacist named L.A. Döring joined Faubel, and influenced a primary focus on the pharmacy and pharmaceuticals sectors. This proved to be a profitable niche market for Faubel, earning loyal customers and a reputation for quality printing. Following World War II, Faubel built a new facility in Melsungen and rapidly grew to 20 employees by 1948. 1963 marked the firm's entry into offset printing and by 1968 a new, larger production facility was built to handle the steadily increasing job load. Ever attentive to the innovative use of technology, in 1979 Faubel acquired a web-fed press for producing specialized PS labels.

Faubel Compact Label is both a pack insert and a label, providing up to 80 pages of fold free product or patient information

By 1986, Faubel had expanded its production capabilities again and installed a Nilpeter web-fed press that turned out 12 x 9 cm labels at a rate of about 50,000 an hour, equivalent to ten times the production rate of 1979. Faubel upgraded its production facilities again in 1988.

Faubel received DIN ISO 9001 certification in 1994 and launched a restructuring program the same year, which resulted in a gradual withdrawal from the pharmacy sector. Now the major focus is on the pharmaceuticals industry. In compliance with the new German Packaging Ordinance, Faubel ceased folding box production in 1996.

Today Faubel produces a wide variety of labels and includes everything from very simple adhesive labels off the roll, to special patented labels. Faubel holds a German and European patent on a booklet label called the 'Faubel Compact'. The Faubel Share Label is another example of the company's in-house engineering capabilities. The Faubel Compact Label is both a pack insert and a label, providing up to 80 pages of fold-free product or patient information. These booklet labels enable pharmaceutical manufacturers to gain greater flexibility in logistics and distribution.

Another Faubel specialty product is sandwich labels. These can be best described by the formula 1+1=3: printed on both front and back, as well as on the adhesive surface, the label offers three sides of information and ensures well optimized surface utilization. Faubel's advanced label offerings include wrap-around, vignette labels and security labels. This variety and complexity of label offerings required a CTP solution that offered maximum flexibility and productivity for producing specialized or short-run jobs.

Choosing a CTP system

Faubel had demanding specifications for its investment in a CTP solution. 'As a label printer primarily for the pharmaceuticals industry, and as an ISO-certified business, we place a high priority on clean and pollutant-free production. For this reason, we needed to invest in a system did not generate chemical waste, operated

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economically and would support high productivity,' says Reinhard Kuge. 'The system also had to be very flexible because we use seven different plate formats in our machines.'

Kuge explains why the Dimension450 Excel platesetter was selected. 'We wanted a solution that offered relatively low costs per plate, but still achieved exceptional print quality, high resolution and a long service life,' stated Kuge. 'Because of the variety of different labels we produce, and with frequently changing content, we don't archive our plates – typically we need a lot of plates even for short print runs. So, printing plate costs must remain within reasonable limits. Presstek was the only supplier that met all of our requirements.'

Jens Pöppe, manager of Faubel's prepress operations, is enthusiastic about his hands-on experience with the Presstek system: 'The Dimension450 Excel is the ideal solution for producing a number of small printing forms in a short amount of time. Because the system operates without any chemicals or other processing devices at all, we can insert the printing plate in the press just a few minutes after the form has been created. In this way, we're extremely flexible, even if corrections come up last minute. No other semi-automatic CTP system can produce our seven plate formats to specifications.'

The Dimension450 Excel is a four-page platesetter and utilizes thermal ablative imaging. With this chemistry-free technology, printing plates can be processed in daylight and require no baking, gumming or chemical processing. The platesetter can produce printing plates in formats ranging from 240 x 240 mm to 680 x 780 mm, enabling Faubel to handle all formats. The capability to image up to 17 printing plates per hour ensures a high level of productivity, even for rush jobs or short, continuously changing runs.

The unit has a small footprint and takes up only minimal space in Faubel's production line. 'The Dimension450 Excel's cleaning system is just 153 cm long, or two to five times smaller than the processing devices of other platemaking systems. In terms of floor space costs, this is a real advantage,' says Pöppe.

Another important advantage of the Dimension Excel system is that the same machine can make both dry and wet offset plates. Only the washer needs to be changed in this case, so Faubel can react quickly when a process requires a switch from wet to dry offset.

Faubel is using Presstek's Anthem Pro wet offset plate, a chemistry-free thermally imaged digital plate that requires only a simple water rinse after imaging to prepare the plate for printing. The plate can achieve a run length of up to 100,000 and is fully compatible with all the inks and damping solutions used on the offset presses at Faubel.

Chemistry-free production has meant easier and cleaner operation for Faubel's production team. Jens Pöppe also notes that the system has been easy to operate, even with minimal instruction: 'For example, one of our experienced printers was working the late shift, and had no previous training on the new machine. After just 15 minutes of technical assistance by telephone, he made a new plate all by himself and was able to continue printing.'

Faubel is well equipped to strategically expand its offset capabilities. 'We produced about 10,000 plates this year and reduced our manufacturing costs with the Dimension450 Excel platesetter by 25 per cent. We've observed a significant increase in productivity, and the system meets our objectives for environmentally-safe production,' says Reinhard Kuge. ■

Presstek Dimension 450 Excel platesetter

Lean principles

The principles of Lean Manufacturing can be applied throughout the labels supply chain. **Howard Letendre,** director, finishing technology, at FLEXcon, explains his company's implementation and the lessons converters can learn

Lean Manufacturing is a systematic approach to identifying and eliminating all kinds of waste through continuous improvement. It allows you to more efficiently 'flow' the manufacture, shipping, and delivery of the product to meet the demand of the customer. Advocates point to Lean's contribution to quick and substantial improvement in productivity, increased responsiveness to customers, sustained sales and earning growth, and competitive advantage.

FLEXcon is a strong advocate. We are an ISO 9001: 2000-certified global manufacturer of pressure-sensitive film products and a Star company in OSHA's Voluntary Protection Program (VPP). Since beginning our Lean Manufacturing process in 2003, we have achieved a 90 per cent improvement in on-time deliveries, 20 per cent reduction in waste, 35 per cent increase in total productivity, and 40 per cent reduction in accidents. So far, our dollar savings from Lean efficiencies are more than 10 times what we invested in rollout, education, and training for our 1,200 employees.

As part of their training, workers participated in a team exercise that measured the effects of workflow changes on their assembly of miniature 'Lego' airplanes. Measurable productivity improvements resulted from simple measures such as relocating parts closer to where they are needed, or re-distributing tasks to assure all team members were contributing at all times.

FLEXcon's McDonough building – site of the Lean program

Employees quickly grasped how workflow can be analyzed and improved to manufacture high-quality products faster.

Through training and constant emphasis on efficiency improvement, we have integrated Lean Manufacturing concepts into FLEXcon's corporate culture, quality process and approach to problem-solving. FLEXcon's process involves the Lean Manufacturing concepts of Kaizens, 5S Visual Workplace, Kanbans, Waste Reduction, Value Stream Mapping, and Cellular Manufacturing.

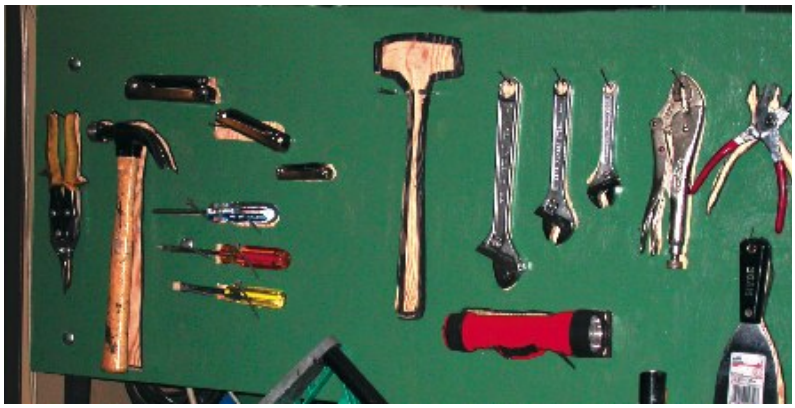
Kaizens

In a Kaizen, a multi-department team of production and management employees is assigned to a specific problem, carefully maps out and analyzes the process(es), then recommends solutions, coordinates the changes with management, and measures results. FLEXcon has applied Kaizens to many aspects of our operations. Our Packaging Kaizen, for example, looked closely at how we prepare pressure-sensitive film products for shipment to customers after rolls have been slit. Frequent backlogs in packaging were causing machine downtime, lost productivity, and late orders. Labor-intensive 'bull work' was required to hoist and transport the finished product from the slitting equipment area to the packaging area, several hundred feet away. Heavy physical work was also required for the packaging itself. As part of our remedy, we installed new equipment including a powered conveyor to transport rolls from the slitting machines directly to the packaging area, where they are automatically wrapped and packaged for shipping.

The new process saved not only time and effort, it reduced our workers' susceptibility to back injuries. We have experienced NO back injuries in this aspect of our production since the new equipment was installed.

We also made use of the 'Cellular Manufacturing' concept – moving related manufacturing activities and equipment close to each other to enhance workflow. Using this concept, we reorganized our plant layout so finishing machines were aligned directly to the Automated Packaging Line conveyor, and the conveyer was directly aligned to the packaging area. This created a seamless process in which a FLEXcon product coming off the slitter can be ready for shipping in four minutes.

Howard Letendre, director, finishing technology, at FLEXcon



A familiar Lean sight – a tidy tool bench

Other team efforts included:

- An Industrial Truck Kaizen, where we identified plant locations where pedestrians and in-plant vehicles often would arrive at the same time, creating potential safety issues. To remedy this, we mapped safer routes for walking, strengthened the visual cues on the pedestrian path itself, and trained everyone on the new procedures.
- A Finished Roll Integrity Kaizen, where a FLEXcon team scrutinized the causes and effects of producing rolls that are too loosely wound, too tightly wound, or telescoped. With this analysis to guide us, we tweaked processes, put controls on certain machines, and locked some controls out, to assure our finished rolls would meet a single, consistent standard. We also developed material/machine 'recipes' to assure the desired process conditions would be repeatable.

5S visual workplace

With the 5S visual approach, clear visual cues help to identify and expedite processes. The cues may range from color-coded cards and labels for quick identification of certain activities or materials, to the creation of a neat, clutter-free working environment. In line with each of the five S's, we Sort (remove unnecessary items from each work area); Set in Order (such as installing 'shadow boards' to indicate where workers should place tools after use); Shine (set preventative cleaning schedules); Standardize (put certain key procedures in our ISO documentation); and Sustain (assign specific areas for regular cleaning by certain personnel).

The tool shadow board is a particularly interesting solution. For many years, most FLEXcon production workers had their own set of company-purchased hand tools and kept them in individual toolboxes or elsewhere in their work area. Through a special program to collect these personal tools, we substantially reduced the quantity in our production facilities and standardized the ones we make available for team use. We created a board with an outline or shadow of each item (e.g., screwdriver, mallet, hammer, and wrench), showing where each should be hung after use. The use of shared tools and a visual cue for storage created a less cluttered workspace and reduced the danger of tripping. In addition, the use of shared tools is saving us approximately $1,000 annually in replacement costs.

Kanbans

In Lean Manufacturing, visual records or signals are known as 'Kanbans', and can add precision to the work process. For example, FLEXcon introduced a system of color-coded labels to identify each operation in our plants. Adhesive coating, topcoating, and laminating, for example, each have their own distinctive color. The colored labels on a product roll allows the operator to see from a distance whether all processes on that roll are complete or what remains to be done. Among other benefits, this eliminates the possibility of a roll being transferred to finishing prematurely.

Color coding and other visual cues are also used in our new scheduling system. A status board allows workers to see from a glance the status of each product run. It indicates whether there is backlog of work on a machine or whether a crew has just finished a task and is available for a new assignment.

Among other efforts, FLEXcon introduced a system of Kanban cards as markers in storage bins or stacks, to indicate the level where it is time to replenish the supply. The markers function like a 'time to reorder' notice, are viewable from a distance, and are used for items ranging from pallets, to cardboard, to corner boards, to bungs. This system has replaced our old method of storing similar materials throughout the plant, which often required a time-consuming parts count by the materials handler to locate available materials to complete a particular job. The new system makes sure we stay ahead of things and don't run out of materials during a shift.

Waste Reduction

In Lean Manufacturing, 'waste' means more than just leftover materials on the shop floor. It includes overproduction and excess inventory, unnecessary motion by workers, and bottlenecks that cause excessive waiting.

This expanded definition inspires us to find time- and cost-

saving opportunities we might otherwise miss. For example, 'waste' includes unnecessary transportation within plants. Our Transportation Kaizen investigated how we use our material handling vehicles such as fork trucks. We found ways to reduce mileage by 29 per cent and travel time by 10 per cent. New procedures included the design of transportation hubs and 'milk run' routes for certain trucks that would allow them to drop off their materials, then pick up materials at specified locations during the return trip. This eliminated having material handling vehicles drive empty during the return trip. We developed and posted a precise drop-off and pick-up schedule throughout our facilities so operators on all shifts would know when and where materials would be available.

Value stream mapping

When a Kaizen team creates a map showing the step-by-step process by which a product is manufactured, finished, and shipped, the bottlenecks often become clear. A careful, thorough mapping process helps us identify, reduce, or eliminate tasks that do not add value. By applying this process to our coating machine setup process, for example, we identified ways to reduce the waste and time required for setup between product runs. Measures included shortening clean-up times and reducing total footage of product in the start-up mode prior to the first 'good' foot on a roll. Additional inspections by our in-process Quality group were introduced to help us find and correct problems during the run rather than after it was completed. This reduced the need to re-run jobs. Such measures have contributed to our ability to manufacture and deliver the orders to customers more quickly.

Keys to a successful Kaizen

The Kaizen is the cornerstone of FLEXcon's Lean Manufacturing process and we have found success most likely when we have the right internal experts on the team, i.e., people close to the problem with first-hand knowledge of the processes being analyzed; and a cross-section of people from multiple departments – operations, safety, maintenance, and management, for example – to assure a variety of perspectives.

Members of the Kaizen team must know their findings and recommendations will be acted on by management. This inspires others to get involved and take action. Through team empowerment and management commitment, we have been able to establish consistent, effective policies and procedures with strong employee buy-in.

Overall, FLEXcon's ongoing Lean Manufacturing process has helped make us a more efficient and successful company, with estimated savings in the millions of dollars. We continue to use Lean concepts in a range of activities, from manufacturing and shipping products to streamlining office procedures. We share our Lean experiences with our customers and suppliers, and learn from them as well.

Undecided about adopting the Lean Manufacturing approach in your operations? Consider the potential benefits in terms of increased efficiency and productivity, reduced costs, and improved safety. Then ask – can you really afford not to get involved in Lean Manufacturing? ■

Howard Letendre, FLEXcon's Ddirector – finishing technology, has executive responsibility for the slitting, sheeting, packaging and shipping of products from FLEXcon's manufacturing facility in Spencer, Massachusetts. A FLEXcon employee for 29 years, Letendre has held several manufacturing positions over the years and was promoted into a management role in 1994.

Rotoflex changes drives

The highly demanding accuracy requirements for the die cutting system on Rotoflex's Vericut digital label converting line has led the company to choose a new generation of drives and controllers, as **Andy Thomas** reports

Rotoflex has selected the Siemens drive-based Simotion D motion control system with Sinamics drives to control the die cutting system on its new Vericut digital label converting line. This will now be the equipment of choice for future machine generations.

The Vericut label die cutting unit operates with a continuously turning magnetic roller with flexible die cutting plates, which are held in place on a magnetic cylinder. Depending on the label format, the magnetic plates wrap around the roller circumference at anywhere between 300 and 360 degrees. This can result in a gap in the cutting pattern. To prevent gaps, the label web motion is operated intermittently. During each rotation of the magnetic roller, the substrate web briefly travels in the opposite direction to the production movement at precisely the right time. At the end of the plate gap, it is resynchronized to the roller.

The reversing motion is controlled with an output cam. The exact die cutting positions are recorded with sensors using registration marks on the web and transferred within a fraction of a second to the controller to correct any deviations. Individually driven dancer rollers situated before and after the die cutting station decouple the reverse motion of the web in this area from the continuous motion of the line. This requires a die cutter positioning accuracy of ± 0.1millimeter (0.004 inches) at a maximum web speed of more than 90 meters/minute (295 feet/minute).

The most important component of the new high-performance solution is a Simotion D445 motion control system that integrates motion control, technology and PLC functionality in a compact Sinamics S120 drive system, permitting cycle times in the millisecond range without the usual interfaces. The first Vericut machine equipped with the new technology includes nine servo-controlled axes. A Simatic Multi Panel MP270 Touch is used for the operator control and monitoring of all the processes.

More axes possible

The 18-axes limitation of the old control system was the primary reason for the conversion to the Simotion D445. Additional axes would have required another controller. Up to 64 drives can be connected the new Siemens motion controller. Lines – also retrofits – can be augmented with additional modules, for example laminating and lateral or cross cutting.

The relationship of the positions of the magnetic roller and the label web changes with the contact angle of the die plate. It therefore has to be recalculated for each label format change. The Simotion controller describes this relationship very precisely using a simple output cam comprising both a linear and an exact sinusoidal component. It reduces the time for the online calculation to a fraction of a millisecond. The operator has practically no waiting time.

Thanks to the new smoother control and drive solution, downtime for format changes is further reduced, which provides significantly improved running and a die cutter positioning accuracy of ± 0.05 millimeters (0.02 inches). This means the machines not only cut labels more precisely, but also at higher web running speeds.

The use of standardized blocks developed by Siemens for a wide range of 'converting' tasks also simplifies configuring of various control modes such as dancer roller position control, tension control with torque limitation and speed correction or torque control (indirect tension control). Also, the blocks are completely open. This is a significant difference to the previous solution, and allows manufacturers to make changes themselves and to customize the functionality to specific needs. ■

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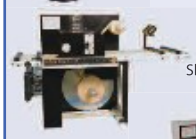
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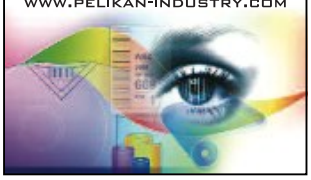

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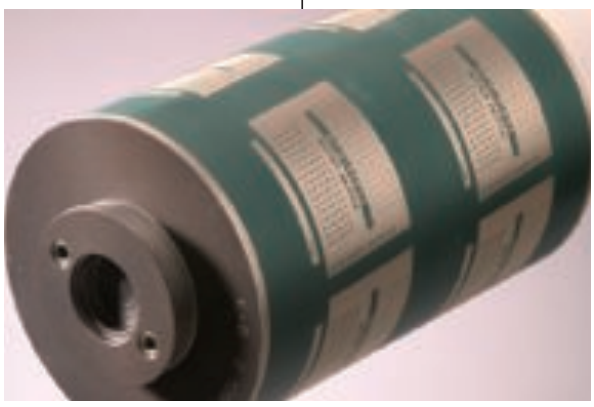

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