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Labels & Labeling

The wider world of narrow web

Aug/Sep 2007
Issue 4 Volume 28

Labelexpo preview

What's showing at the world's biggest labels show, Labelexpo Europe 2007

Analysis

Latest developments in UV, IR and EB drying and curing systems

Web inspection

Special feature on the latest advances in press and rewinder inspection systems

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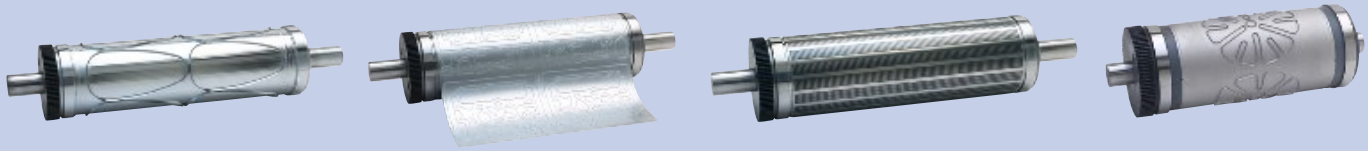

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Leader

Welcome to the Labelexpo Europe preview issue of *L&L*. This will be an exciting show, with new press launches from some of the biggest names in the business. One of the worst things about the job of *L&L* editor is the exciting news you know – but are not allowed to talk about until the show! I can tell you that there are some very big announcements to be made concerning digital printing and rotary offset in-particular.

We will also see the launch of a new printing technology in the narrow web market, keyless offset, where an anilox roll and chambered doctor blade ink the plate, dispensing with the multi-roll offset ink chain. Also, look out for closed loop, in-line densitometric control of offset ink keys.

There will be new video-camera register control systems, which allow the printing of smaller register marks anywhere on the web, and of course, wider use of servo motors to control multiple axes on the press and rewinder.

"Expect to see great strides in the PS sector as well – particularly in new high performance, conformable films, as well as reduced platinum and thinner liner systems"

The trend towards wider press widths for unsupported film materials including shrink sleeves and flexible packaging will also be seen. Dedicated film slitter-rewinders for these products are starting to appear for the first time.

Expect to see great strides in the PS sector as well – particularly in new high performance, conformable films, as well as reduced platinum and thinner liner systems. Converters will also be invited to look at manufacturing their own specialist PS substrates in-house.

On the digital front there will be further developments in 4-color inkjet systems, and a chance to see how far laser die cutting has come. In pre-press we will see systems capable of imaging multiple plate types in the same machine – offset, flexo, letterpress and screen.

So enjoy the show and be sure to call in for a chat with your *L&L* editorial team.

Andy Thomas
Group Managing Editor

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Labeling news

Manufacturers agree flexo industry standard for air cylinders

Polywest and rotec – manufacturers which supply the great majority of printing formes and adapter sleeves used for flexo printing worldwide – have agreed to combine their efforts to standardize air cylinders for sleeve workflows. This means that for the first time, say the companies, label converters will be able to order standardized air cylinders from more than one manufacturer – an initiative which could help accelerate the development of a recognized industry standard and significantly reduce sleeve procurement costs.

The joint initiative follows a meeting in Summer 2006 when sleeve manufacturers joined forces under the umbrella of the German flexo association, the DFTA, to agree standardized criteria for air cylinders. Apart from Polywest and rotec, attendees included AKL, DuPont, Inometa, MacDermid and Rossini. The meeting produced recommendations for ten design parameters relating to the surface quality, shape and diameter of the air cylinder as well as size and positioning of outlet openings to guide the compressed air, all based on the widely used Stork system.

Since then there has been no officially agreed, industry-wide standard, prompting the initiative from Polywest and rotec.

Heinz Lorig, MD of Polywest, and rotec MD Mario Busshoff make a comparison with the automotive industry, where car wheels are made up of standardized components of axle, rim and tire. 'Similarly, the complete system for a flexo printing form,

Mario Busshoff, MD rotec (left) and Heinz Lorig, MD Polywest

often consisting of air cylinder, adapter and sleeve, requires quality criteria and set parameters for all individual components.' The DFTA agrees that the dimensional accuracy and quality of air cylinders must be included in any flexo standardization system, and has published the recommendations on its own web site.

In the longer term, Polywest and rotec have far-reaching standardization goals, including a reduction in the wide range of sleeve sizes. This alone would open up big opportunities for cost savings in the flexo process chain.

Atlas expands rotary die portfolio

Gardall Manufacturing Corporation of Wood Dale, Illinois, has been acquired by Atlas Die. Gardall is a manufacturer of rotary dies, print cylinders and anvils for the narrow web label, tag, and specialty converting industries. Mohammad Azim, former Gardall president and owner, will assume the role of vice president and general manager of the newly formed Rotary Products division for Atlas Die. Azim will have business responsibility for both the solid and flexible dies produced at Atlas Chem-Milling (ACM) located in Elkhart, Indiana.

Ken Smott, Atlas president and CEO, said, 'We are excited to welcome Mohammad and all of the Gardall employees. The addition of their solid tool product offering will be an excellent compliment to our current portfolio.

Having Gardall as part of the Atlas Die family will enable our customers to reduce their supply base with "one stop shopping" for solid, flexible, and steel rule tools.'

Atlas maintains its corporate headquarters in Elkhart, Indiana and operates manufacturing facilities in Palmer, Massachusetts; Charlotte, North Carolina; Elkhart, Indiana; Glendale Heights, Illinois; Atlanta, Georgia; Greensboro, North Carolina; and Richmond, Virginia.

VPF invests in hotmelt coating line

Veredelungsgesellschaft mbH für Papiere u. Folien & Co. KG (VPF), manufacturer of special self-adhesive materials, has ordered a hotmelt coating and lamination line from Max Kroenert. The coating-head is manufactured by Nordson, Lüneburg, Germany.

Besides the standard hotmelts (composition rubber adhesives), VPF will also be able to process UV-linked hotmelts. Compared with the dispersion acrylates and solvent adhesives already offered by VPF, this adhesive will offer advantages such as resistance to humidity, ultraviolet rays, and temperature resilience.

The facility offers a maximum coating width of 1,260mm, allowing VPF to produce small-to-medium batch sizes, with frequent changes of materials.

'We are convinced that this is a good step to further develop VPF's position as a flexible provider of special self-adhesive materials with a wide range of applications, to the advantage of our customers, at home, and abroad,' said the company in a statement. 'We now offer the three essential adhesive technologies for extremely different applications regardless of the desired print carrier or release-liner.'

Michelman announces investments in Europe

Coatings, emulsions and dispersions specialist Michelman has made significant changes to its international organizational structure in Europe and Asia as part of a strategy of more rapid global growth.

A holding company, Michelman International SARL has been formed in Luxembourg, along with a new sales, marketing and customer service office. Concurrently, significant capital for increased manufacturing and warehousing capacity is being invested in the company's Aubange, Belgium facility to meet increasing demand in the European, Russian, Mediterranean, EU-nation and North African markets.

Michelman has also added three new European distribution partners, Campi y Jové is its exclusive agent in Spain and Portugal, Safic Alcan in France, and IMCD Group in the Nordic region. European senior account manager Vladimir Nunez said: 'Our European business is exploding. We went out and found the best distribution partners in their respective countries to support and grow our customer base.'

Meanwhile Michelman is moving its Asia-Pacific business center in Singapore – including manufacturing operations, sales, marketing and customer service responsibilities – to a new location twice the size of the current facility. The additional space is needed for new equipment to better serve the Asian market, as well as staff additions.

Peter Roggeman, formerly EMEA commercial director at Michelman, has been promoted to managing director of Europe and Asia. 'Michelman has done a stellar job building a highly-respected presence in the Euro-Asian markets, serving its global customers with world-class product and support,' comments Roggeman. 'The new investments we're making across the two continents have raised the stakes significantly, and will allow us to expand our presence and capabilities, while maintaining the high level of service and support that our customers have come to expect.'

Clondalkin Group acquires Keller Crescent

Clondalkin Group – the international producer of flexible and specialist packaging products with over 40 production locations throughout Europe and the United States of America – has acquired Keller Crescent, the independently owned producer of folding cartons, labels, inserts, outserts and other packaging components servicing the North American pharmaceutical and healthcare markets.

Keller Crescent is headquartered in Evansville, Indiana, and operates three main production plants in Evansville and Indianapolis, Indiana, and in Charlotte, North Carolina. It's a supplier of secondary packaging products for the pharma and healthcare markets, which account for more than 90 percent of sales.

Tom Smythe, president of Keller Crescent, said: 'We are very pleased to become part of Clondalkin's family of businesses. This is a great strategic fit that creates a real packaging powerhouse to serve the pharmaceutical/healthcare packaging markets. Our geographic reach and production capacity has dramatically increased as a result of joining the Clondalkin Group.'

Norbert McDermott, Clondalkin Group CEO, said: 'We are delighted to complete the Keller Crescent acquisition. Keller Crescent is deservedly the strongest independent brand name in the pharma market in North America and is synonymous with top quality service and supply of packaging components to the pharmaceutical markets.'

News in brief

Nilpeter releases first Brazilian presses

Nilpeter has produced its first batch of Brazilian-manufactured label presses, designated the FBR-series. BR is short for Brazil. By producing machines at Nilpeter do Brazil Ltda, the company's Brazilian customers will enjoy duty exemption. Seven Brazilian printers have bought the press, with the first installation commencing in week 26. The FBR-press shares many features with the Nilpeter FB-Line produced in North America.

Green light for UPM Raflatac Poland

UPM Raflatac has received an operations permit to construct its new self-adhesive label materials factory in Kobierzyce, Poland. The 90 million euro factory investment was announced in April. The new production and logistics centre will serve the growing eastern European markets and meet increasing demand for filmic label materials and products with hot-melt adhesives European-wide. Construction of the factory will begin August 2007, and production is scheduled for start-up in the final quarter of 2008.

3 Sigma Corporation receives ISO

3 Sigma Corporation has received its ISO certification 9001:2000, following a final audit by Intertek Testing Services, N.A. Bill Brunswick, production quality manager, coordinated the initiative at 3 Sigma: 'It was a lot of work and effort from everyone on the 3 Sigma team, but the results are well worth the investment. As we continue to grow, particularly into more complex and technical applications, the ISO standards and processes we've implemented will help us manage and deliver those products more effectively.'

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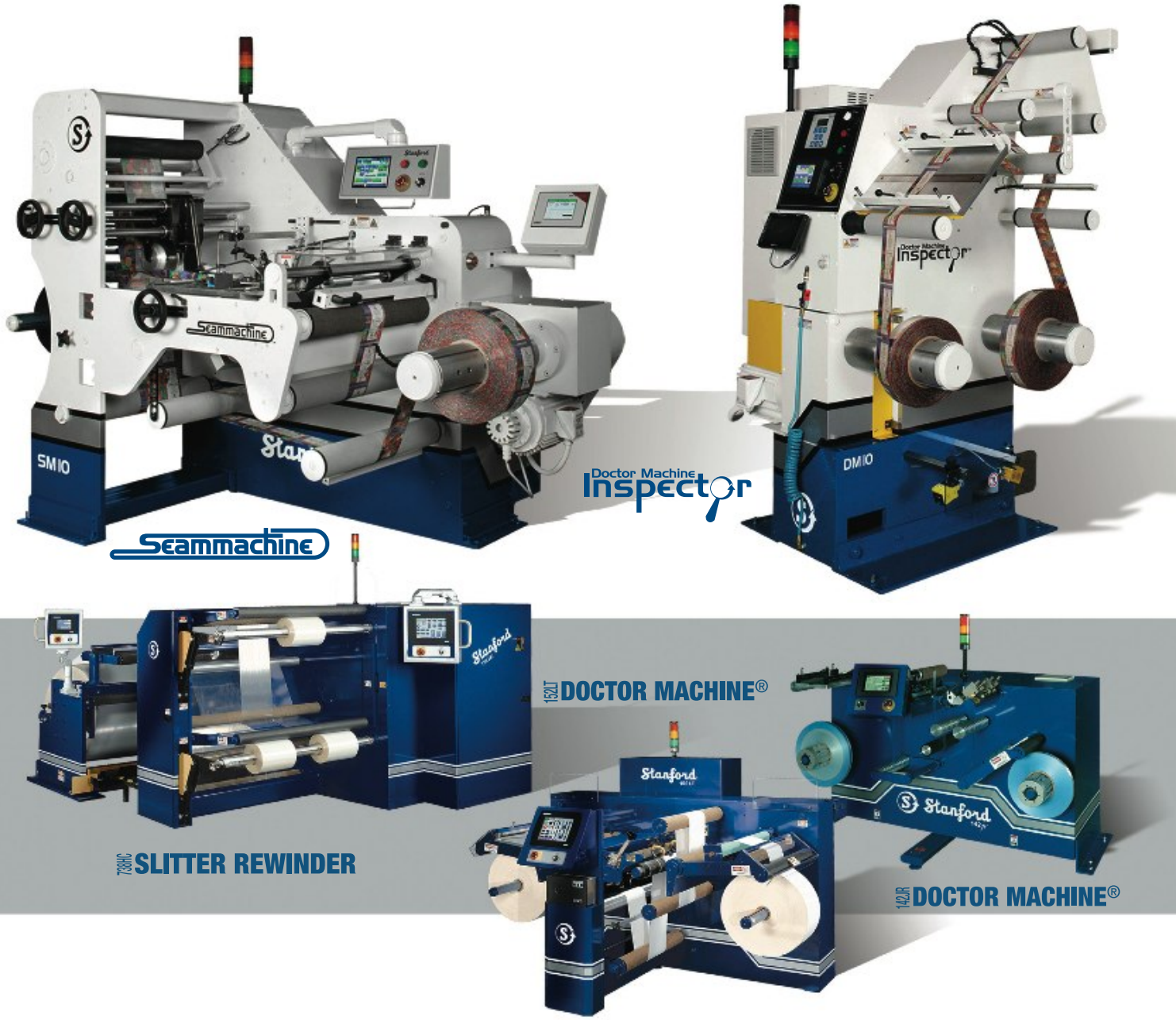

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Labeling news

Multi-Color sells packaging division

Multi-Color Corporation has agreed to sell Quick Pak, its packaging services division, to New Jersey, USA-based NFI Industries for $19.2 million.

Quick Pak is a provider of high volume promotional, packaging, custom assembly, and turnkey project management for major health and beauty brands, consumer product manufacturers and national retailers.

Multi-Color president and CEO Frank Gerace commented, 'This transaction allows Multi-Color to focus on our core label business where many strategic opportunities exist, including emerging print technologies and domestic and international acquisitions. In fact, we are presently in the process of reviewing and analyzing several targets. As a result of our recent $100 million Revolving Loan Agreement and the proceeds from the sale of Quick Pak, we are positioned to acquire significant assets to continue to build a global label company for the fast-moving consumer goods marketplace.'

BMO Capital Markets acted as exclusive financial advisor to Multi-Color in this transaction.

Fasson invests in Quakertown plant

The Fasson Roll North America division of Avery Dennison Corporation has invested $20 million in coating and finishing capacity at its Quakertown, Pennsylvania facility. This additional capacity will support the expanding product needs of the food, beverage, household and personal care markets.

'Both local and global brand owners and retailers will benefit from our expanded manufacturing capacity,' said Albert Groen, global business director, food and beverage. 'Our manufacturing investment will allow us to broaden our range of products offered to various markets, while utilizing our in-place service programs to meet turnaround needs.'

The Quakertown, Pennsylvania facility serves as one of the major strategic manufacturing and distribution hubs for Avery Dennison. Many of the products being manufactured in Quakertown will be available through Fasson EXACT, a service program that provides converters with the exact width required, resulting in cost savings through reduced trim and waste.

More news @ www.labelsandlabeling.com

TLMI updates mission statements

A new mission and vision statement has been approved for the TLMI (Tag and Label Manufacturers Institute). The TLMI's mission statement now reads: 'TLMI is a member-driven association strongly committed to providing business solutions that enhance the prosperity of its members and the narrow web tag, label, and packaging industries.' Its vision statement reads, 'The premier member-driven association for the label and packaging industry.

Commented TLMI chairman John Hickey, CEO of Smyth Companies, Inc., 'The TLMI's new mission and vision statements more effectively reflect the association's goal, as our industry's most prominent member-driven trade group, to assist our membership in reaching their organizational goals and to plan effectively for the needs of tomorrow.'

TLMI's past chairman, Scott Pillsbury, president of Rose City Label, additionally commented, 'the narrow web industry is changing at a faster pace than ever before. It's our job, as members of TLMI's board of directors, to ensure the association continues to be an independent and invaluable resource for companies of every scale, in every North American region.'

BASF offers REACH service

Following the rollout of the EU REACH chemicals regulations, BASF is expanding its portfolio to include a consulting service to manufacturers, importers and end users. The range of services extends from status quo analysis and employee training sessions on pre-registrations to all areas of registration and approval. BASF experts offer data gap analysis, exposure evaluations, and support in the preparation of approval documents.

'Manufacturers are interested in knowing which of their substances are subject to the new chemicals regulations,' noted Dr Andreas Kicherer, head of the Success team at BASF Aktiengesellschaft. 'Anyone who imports chemicals for use in formulations wants to know what requirements must be met before such chemicals can be imported into the EU. And users want to know what information they have to provide to manufacturers. Our experts first analyze whether and how the given company is affected by REACH. In a second step we work together with our customers to identify their special requirements in order to develop the right solutions.'

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Labeling news

Wineries fight fraud

Some of Napa Valley's most prestigious wineries have moved to employ a new anti-counterfeiting technology from Kodak to protect their brands and customers. According to industry experts, counterfeit wine could affect as much as five percent of wines sold in secondary markets

Colgin Cellars, HL Vineyards, Vineyard 29 and Staglin Family Vineyard are using the Kodak anti-counterfeiting technology – originally developed by Creo under the Traceless brand name – which uses invisible markers that can be added to printing inks, paper and other packaging elements, and are detectable only with proprietary handheld readers. The readers are leased to customers and delivered in tamperproof packaging.

Ann Colgin, owner of Colgin Cellars, commented: 'While Colgin Cellars has not experienced any problems with counterfeit wine, the issue has concerned me for some time. As a vintner and an auctioneer, I felt it was necessary to take a stand and ensure my customers a guarantee of authenticity. Within 45 days, Kodak evaluated solution options, conducted a pilot test, delivered a proposal, and implemented a solution that protects Colgin Cellars products.'

Shari Staglin of Staglin Family Vineyard notes that the recent recognition by the EU of the Napa Valley name and brand makes it even more important to offer customers a way of authenticating their products. Jennifer Lamb, owner, HL Vineyards, adds: 'Our passion for winemaking and our vineyard is driving us to vigorously address the issue of wine fraud. The Kodak solution fits our needs because it's simple yet robust. We're excited to be one of the first in our industry to use it and we hope others will employ similar protections.'

For winemakers with unique bottling methods, this anti-counterfeit solution can be adapted to fit their product specifications. Chuck McMinn, owner, Vineyard 29, appreciates the technology's flexibility. 'At Vineyard 29, our label information is silk screened directly on the bottle. Kodak was quick to adapt their technology to our specific needs. Our anti-counterfeiting solution does not interfere with the process we use to bottle our wines – it only enhances the product by ensuring the authenticity of our wines to our customers.'

Schreiner selects DataLase

The DataLase Packmark solution has been chosen by Schreiner MediPharm to apply lot and bar codes on to pharmaceutical labels. DataLase Packmark enables the variable information to be integrated into the design of the label, in keeping with the 'clean' clinical look that is favored on pharmaceutical labels.

Traditionally, when pharmaceutical companies are using laser marking systems, a patch of black ink would be applied on the label and then ablated to produce a negative image. The DataLase Packmark system uses a low power CO2 laser to produce a positive black image on a white background without ink ablation. The area to be marked is coated and the laser causes a chemical color change in the coating. This process demonstrates high-speed marking capability and excellent resistance against rubbing. No additional printing foil is required.

The lifetime of the laser is over 30,000 hours and compared to thermal and ink jet printers it requires little maintenance and no replacing of print heads due to wear and tear.

'We are extremely pleased with the results achieved with DataLase Packmark,' says Peter Seidl, director technical support, Schreiner MediPharm. 'By replacing traditional marking systems with this solution we have managed to produce labels that are in keeping with the pharmaceutical style, while also achieving reductions in costs and time as well as increased production efficiency.'

News in brief

Flint Group completes acquisition of Day International

The acquisition of Day International by Flint Group was completed on 31 May. Day International, a manufacturer of and distributor of printing blankets, sleeves, pressroom chemicals and printing supplies will operate as a business unit of Flint Group.

Harper announces Brazilian agent

Global anilox supplier Harper Corporation of America has chosen Uniplastic Ind e Com Ltda to be the exclusive agent for Harper anilox products in Brazil. Uniplastic is a privately owned company offering solvent inks and tape products and technical assistance for Brazilian converters in the narrow, medium and wide web segments of the flexography industry.

Meech appoints Czech distributer

Limex-Technik, based in Frýdlant, Czech Republic has been appointed as a distributor for static control specialist Meech International. The company will be responsible for the sales of Meech's Series 200 and Series 900 static control solutions in the rubber, textile, printing and associated industries. Established in 1995, Limex-Technik has particular expertise the sales and technical support of web guiding and cleaning products.

Siegwerk opens joint venture in Nigeria

Siegwerk has set up a joint venture company in Nigeria with local entrepreneur Alberto Naim's Pouka Inks. Siegwerk holds 80 percent of the new company, based in Ibadan in south-western Nigeria.

Labeling news

Ahlstrom expands La Gère

Ahlstrom, a global leader in high performance fiber-based materials, has completed the expansion of its production capacity of supercalendered release base papers at the La Gère plant in France.

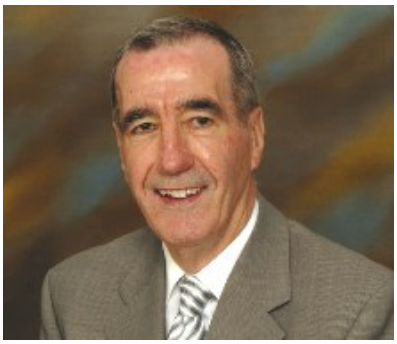
The investment comprised the speed-up of the PM6 paper machine, the construction of a new 2,800 square meter building to hold the redesigned finishing and loading department, and the installation of a new high-speed winder.

The project started in the second quarter of 2006 and is expected to increase the plant's annual production capacity of supercalendered release base papers by over 35 percent while enabling a significant improvement of product quality. The project followed a similar operation at the company's Turin, Italy, plant in early 2006.

Alex Mulvenny honored

Alex Mulvenny, Labelgraphics founder and chairman, has been honored with an MBE (Member of the British Empire) in the British Queen's Birthday Honors List. Mulvenny has given outstanding service to the printing industry for more than 55 years and used his success to help revitalise and inspire business and community life in a deprived area of the city of Glasgow in Scotland.

Mulvenny has exhibited an equally determined commitment to training and development, not only of his own staff, but for personnel in the printing industry in general. 'His philosophy throughout has been to put something back for his



employees, the industry and the local community, and this he has consistently endeavored to do through both his business and personal life,' said the citation.

Multi-Color expands print capabilities with Omet

Multi-Color Corporation recently announced that it has purchased a new combination flexographic/rotogravure press to expand its printing capabilities and provide added flexibility to meet its customers' increasing desire for customized decorating solutions.

This combination press, manufactured by Omet of Italy, will be the first of its kind in the United States. This wide-format press is custom-configured with flexographic, gravure, screen, and foil platforms, setting new industry standards for both print quality and productivity.

According to Don Kneir, president of the Decorating Solutions Division, 'With the new press we will continue to lead the marketplace with innovative decorating solutions. This new technology addresses one of the market's top issues; to deliver complex and intricate graphic designs in a timely and cost effective manner.'

Jack Mackert, vice president of operations, added: 'This press can produce the tighter registrations that will enable us to print labels with the highest reproduction requirements. In fact, this press was specifically designed to enhance the decorating options we have to offer our customers.'

pressXchange.com targets narrow web industry

pressXchange.com, the website for used printing, packaging and converting machinery, is looking to increase its presence in the narrow web sector. The website provides a platform for buyers and sellers worldwide to find each other.

'Back in 2000, we recognized the strength of the internet and have seen our visitors increase with the growth of this platform,' says John Roadnight, founder of pressXchange.com. 'We now register up to 1,500 new visitors each month and around 43,000 unique visitors every month.'

pressXchange.com, published in nine different languages, covers many of the printing industry's major brands, from Heidelberg to Komori.

'To make it easy for users to find the perfect machine, we have broken down our ever-growing listings into key areas of interest, such as web offset, bindery, converting and the narrow web market,' says Greg Bowman, commercial manager.

Bowman, believes that the narrow web sector can become a key area for pressXchange.com: 'With printers across the globe looking for machinery in all key areas, we believe the narrow web market is the fastest growing area. We are spending a lot of money on key word site optimization and bringing in printers within the narrow web sector looking for labels and packaging presses.'

'We have more than 94,000 registered users, 61,800 of whom have signed up to receive regular updates and bulletins,' continues Bowman. 'The latest statistics show that 54 percent of business decision makers have brought a product or service after seeing it on a B2B website. This explains why more than 190 used machinery dealers now use our site as their primary sales source.'

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Labeling news

Packaging design contest

International Forum Design (iF) will launch the first ever 'iF packaging award' at interpack 2008, April 24-30. The competition is aimed at entrepreneurs across the entire packaging industry – whether they are manufacturers/designers or developers of packaging, packaging materials, graphics and packaging machinery. All those interested in participating are allowed to submit entries to one or several of the eight different categories. These are made up of the many forms of packaging, including sales and transport of packaging, as well as packaging machines, packaging materials, graphics and construction. For an entry to be eligible, none must be more than three years old. In the packaging concepts category, designs that have not yet gone into production or are only available in prototype form may also be submitted.

An independent jury of experts will perform the judging, basing their evaluations on a comprehensive set of criteria. Amongst other things, attention will be paid to design quality, ergonomics, choice of materials and the degree of innovation. Particular emphasis will be placed on the focal aspects of the category an entry has been submitted to.

Winners will receive the iF label as a quality seal for the award-winning design. And five outstanding entries will also win the iF gold award. These will be celebrated at a prize-giving ceremony on April 24 2008 – the opening day of interpack 2008.

Potential entrants will be able to find detailed information about participating and entry forms at www.ifdesign.de. The closing date for all entries is December 15 2007.

Rude Health organic foods chooses BioTak

Rude Health Organic Foods has chosen BioTak, a 100 percent biodegradable label made from renewable and replenishable resources, incorporating a completely biodegradable adhesive and face paper made by Berkshire Labels, to complement its packaging.

Nick Barnard, sales director of Rude Health explained, 'Rude Health produces a very high quality range of products and we wanted to work with a supplier who is able to offer us a completely sustainable label with excellent print quality, color consistency and high levels of service. With Berkshire Labels we have found all these qualities with the added benefit of BioTak which is biodegradable and compostable. We are really pleased to be working with a company that is committed to minimizing their impact on the environment.'

The mueslis and porridges are sold in bags which are all sustainable and complemented by Berkshire Labels' white semi gloss BioTak label. They are approved by the Soil Association, another

customer of BioTak and can be purchased at J Sainsbury's, Tesco's plus many other health food stores across the UK.

The BioTak range from Berkshire Labels has been developed to conform to EN13432 and has now entered the final stages of testing with 'very positive results' already achieved, says the company.

PrisymID expands into food & drink industry

Further expanding its client base in the UK food & drink industry, PrisymID has been awarded two contracts due to its 'fast turnaround, reliability and consistent label quality'.

The company is providing Williamson Fine Teas with plain and printed labels in varying sizes for its extensive range of quality teas as well as supplying wholesaler C & S Catering in Berkshire with printed labels for its sandwich sleeves.

Karen Gibbins, production manager at Williamson Fine Teas, commented: 'We produce teas of the highest quality and in turn we demand high standards of our suppliers, which is why we choose to work with PrisymID. As we have thousands of different product lines exported worldwide, reliability is vital as any breaks in production, no matter how short, can be costly. A test of any company is how they react under pressure and PrisymID are always quick to respond to our needs, providing next day delivery when necessary.'

The labels appear on Williamson's product lines including its eye-catching tins of loose teas featuring blends such as Earl Grey, Assam and Caramel. The labels, printed in six different languages including Japanese and Russian, carry essential information including a description of the tea, quantity or weight and instructions.

Chris Saunders, managing director of C & S Catering, agreed: 'When dealing with packaging for the sandwich and snack market, fast turnaround times and competitive pricing is essential. We, therefore, demand high standards from our suppliers. PrisymID certainly meets all our criteria. We can rely on the company to deliver on time every time and the quality of the labels is always excellent.'

PrisymID has recently expanded its bureau printing facility in Wokingham in order to meet the needs of its growing client base in the food and beverage industry. Specializing in short-to-medium runs of labels and tags, the company can supply up to eight-color printed labels in any shape, size, color or quantity and include company logos, variable text barcodes and graphics.

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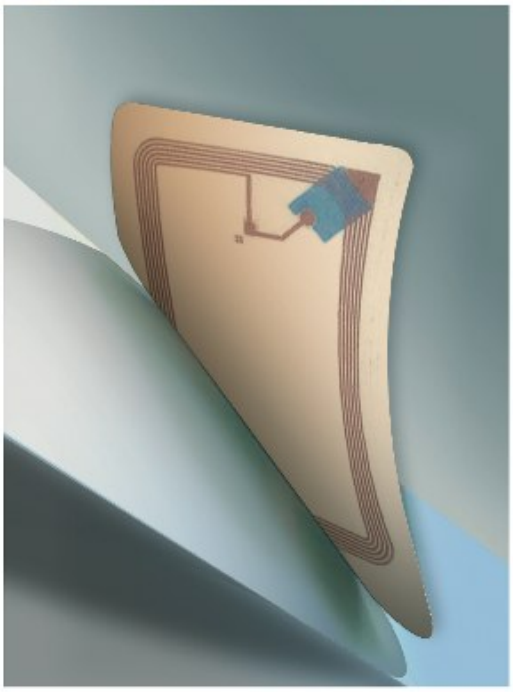

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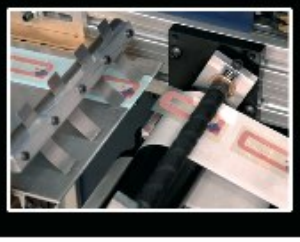

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Labeling news

Global speakers line up for PISEC '07

Organizers of PISEC '07, the global forum for brand, product, document and image security & protection, have announced the confirmed participation of a number of key organizations and individuals for the 2007 event, to be held in London November 19-21. At the same time they have also gained official support of the UK's influential Anti-Counterfeiting Group.

Following on from the successful Barcelona event last October, the theme of this year's two-day conference is 'Combating Counterfeiting and Piracy through Innovation, Investment and Technology', and the conference features an international program of senior speakers from brand-owning companies, governments and organizations, all experts in the escalating global problems of IP crime and identity theft.

Speakers already confirmed include: John Dryden, director of science, technology and industry, OECD; Mike Ellis, global head of brand protection, Beiersdorf; Sven Krahn, director marketplace protection, eBay Europe; Syed Raza, director of loss prevention, Europe & Asia, Polo Ralph Lauren; John Franks, regional security manager EMEA, Merck Sharp & Dohme Interpharma; Professor Russell Cowburn, Imperial College London; Dr Guido Hoogewijs, general manager, Belgian Pharmacists Association; Janice Kepart, 9/11 Security Solutions Ltd; Alejandro Portilla, business excellence manager and Douglas Frazier, head of global protection, Abbott Laboratories, Michael Keogh, trade mark attorney, British Petroleum; Ann Wilson, Seven for All Mankind, and Dr Satyamoorthy Kabilan, chief technical officer, Ver-Tec Security Systems. More speakers will be announced shortly on the event's website www.pisec-world.com.

Buzz Carter, the PISEC '07 organizer, said: 'PISEC is really moving up a gear in 2007 and we are delighted by the quality of the speakers who have shown eagerness to contribute to this fascinating program. We are also delighted to be working closely with the ACG, who represent the interests of many global brand owning and end-user companies, all faced with enormous brand protection and security challenges. We are looking forward to a ground-breaking event in London.'

Ruth Orchard, director-general of the Anti-Counterfeiting Group (ACG), which campaigns against the trade in fakes on behalf of UK manufacturing industry, said: 'With PISEC '07 taking place here in the UK, this is a great opportunity for ACG to support a program which will examine current issues in brand protection, with major companies sharing their strategies and experience.'

Mark Andy loses Ray Moore

Ray Moore, Mark Andy's service manager, has died of a heart attack at the age of 56. Announcing the sudden death, Adam Baer, Mark Andy's vice president of customer support described Moore as: 'a remarkable asset to Mark Andy over the past 23 years.'

Moore was well known from Australia to Austria as 'the contact' for press installations and a full range of technical troubleshooting. He is survived by his wife, Mary, two children, Kim and Michael, and four grandchildren.

Adam Baer commented, 'Our customers have enjoyed the friendship of a truly dedicated colleague, who will be deeply missed.'

Retailers 'stuck in labeling time warp'

Research from Zebra Technologies has revealed that while 40 percent of UK retailers mark down their prices daily or weekly, 84 percent have no technology in place to cut the time spent on changing and correcting price labels.

Esko signs distribution agreement in South Africa

Esko, the global system integrator for packaging pre-production, has signed a distribution agreement with Kemtek in South Africa. Under the terms of the agreement, Kemtek is responsible for selling and servicing the complete Esko product range in South Africa and the surrounding countries of Namibia, Botswana, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Angola, Zambia, Malawi, Tanzania, Kenya and Mauritius.

Toshiba TEC Europe launches RFID@TOSHIBA

Toshiba has launched a new strategy set up to ensure that RFID users are able to maximize the full potential of the fast-growing technology: RFID@TOSHIBA.

RFID@TOSHIBA will offer a complete end-to-end RFID infrastructure solution providing customers with the main components of an RFID implementation from consultancy right through to after sales service. As part of the consultancy service Toshiba will define the application and identify the correct technology, calculating ROI, deliver commercial proposals, propose suitable components and ensure that standards are met. If the client chooses to go forward with the proposal the Toshiba RFID team will then provide project management which includes developing project plans, liaising with all the suppliers right through to piloting test results.

Cover story

In a special project between Zeller+Gmelin, Gallus, Leonard Kurz and COE, the front cover of this edition of *L&L* was printed in-line by a combination of UV flexo and cold foil stamping

The front cover of this edition of *Labels & Labeling* magazine was printed by a combination of UV flexo and UV cold foil stamping with UV printing inks and UV adhesive for stamping from Zeller+Gmelin on a Gallus EMS 410 press.

'Combining UV flexo and cold foil stamping requires a machine with a good in-line printing and processing on wide range of different materials,' said Andreas Rascher of Zeller+Gmelin, who led the project. 'The Gallus EMS 410 gave us this choice. It´s an flexible and multi-purpose machine system with strengths in in-line printing and processing of self-adhesive labels on paper and plastic (PE, OPP, etc.), as well as monofoil labels, OPP and PET wrap-around, in-mold and shrink sleeves, flexible packaging and a wide range of other applications.'

Two cold foils from Leonard Kurz were used: the overprintable version of Alufin KPW for the cover, and the SB Arrows/AL-KP holographic foil for the atomium.

'For the cold foil stamping, we used our special developed UV adhesive Uvalux U0841,' continued Rascher. 'For the print we used our Uvaflex Y7 series (4-color set). It's an odor-reduced UV flexo ink series.'

(l-r): John Fehrenbacher, Zeller+Gmelin; project leader Andreas Rascher, Zeller+Gmelin; Uli Schwärzler, Gallus; Stefan Hampl, Gallus; Andreas Schulze, Zeller+Gmelin; Thomas Grünitz, COE

The anilox rollers were specified as follows:

- cyan: 360 l/cm, 3,5cm3
- magenta: 360 l/cm, 3,5cm3
- yellow: 360 l/cm, 3,5cm3
- black: 360 l/cm, 3,5cm3
- cold foil I: 140 l/cm, 8,8cm3
- cold foil II: 160 l/cm, 7,7cm3

The working width of the Gallus press is 400mm.

The UV flexo repro and plates for the front cover were produced by Carl Ostermann Erben, which used digital Dupont Cyrel Fast DFH printing plates. ■

Zeller+Gmelin

Zeller+Gmelin is a specialist manufacturer of printing inks with more than 140 years of research, technology and experience. Since 1970 the company has been active in UV curing technology and is today one of the leaders in this market. Zeller+Gmelin has a number of facilities in the USA, UK and Europe and has a wide network of distributors worldwide. The company focuses on self-adhesive label printing, in mold labeling and flexible packaging. For more information about the printing of this front cover at Labelexpo Europe visit:

Zeller+Gmelin GmbH & Co. KG:
Hall 11 – stand P100

Gallus Ferd. Rüesch AG:
Hall 5 – stand B50

Leonard Kurz GmbH & Co. KG:
Hall 7 – stand K70

COE – Carl Ostermann Erben GmbH:
Hall 11 – stand R60

FINAT label awards

This year's FINAT label awards presented a difficult job for the judges as quality levels continue to rise. **Andy Thomas** reports

A complex label for Nivea hair care shampoo has won the FINAT 2007 Label Awards. The label, printed by tesa Bandfix AG for the Nivea Hair Care Samt Glanz brand, was deemed 'a superb example' of the combination of screen, offset and gravure printing in subtle tones of pink, well-produced blue type and containing silver images. It won the unanimous approval of the FINAT judges who had no hesitation in giving it the Best in Show award as well as first prize in the competition's combination printing process.

The 27th annual awards were presented at FINAT's annual congress, held at Berlin's Maritim Hotel on May 31.

In addition to European companies entering the competition, prize winners included printers from the Philippines, Peru and Canada – which demonstrates the growing international interest in the competition. A selection of these winners will be entered for the World Label competition being judged at Labelexpo in Brussels in September.

More than 240 entries from 23 countries competed in four categories with 17 winning class awards and 65 others receiving highly commended certificates.

Identities of entrants were hidden from the judges, led by the competition organizer Tony White, who said their job 'was made more difficult because of the very high standard achieved'.

The judging team was particularly impressed by the overall excellent use of color and outstanding graphics and were gave their special jury award to Skanem Introl SA for its 'Bubble Bath' label which, they said, 'was a bright and busy label which used color to the maximum benefit with very good execution of the flexo and screen processes and a design that exactly reflected the intention to make the label attractive to children.'

Tony White said: 'Year after year we are amazed at the quality self-adhesive label printers achieve. It just gets better and better and this year's entries were all outstanding examples of the printer's art. It makes it very difficult to choose winners because standards are now so high.The evidence of this competition proves that our customers can have no finer or better labels than self-adhesives.'

New FINAT president Jan Frederik Vink presents an award to Helmut Schreiner for his company's printed circuit label

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The category winners were:

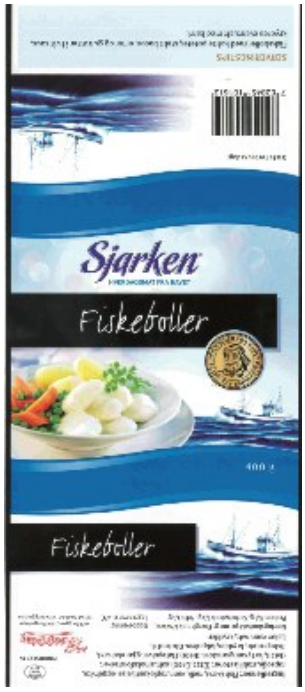
- **Marketing and end-use applications**
  Overall group winner: Kimbells Pack, of Philippines, for Kaluwi Virgin Coconut Oil.
- **Alcoholic drinks:**
  Illospear, of Wales, for Bud Light.
- **Food:**
  Can Hassas Kagit of Turkey, for Camel Coffee.
- **Household:**
  Airep, of France, for Olivier Or Brun.
- **Industry:**
  Skanem Hobro A/S. of Denmark, for Grunfos Direct Sensors.
- **Cosmetic:**
  Skanem Introl SA, of Poland, for Bubble Bath.
- **Pharmaceutical:**
  Kimbells Pack, of Philippines, for Kaluwi Virgin Coconut Oil.
- **Security:**
  Securikett Ulrich & Horn GmbH, of Germany, for Bayer Void.
- **Booklets and coupons:**
  Stratus Packaging, of France, for Multipage refermable avec vernis stylo bille Panzani.
- **Sets of Labels:**
  GundlachLogo – Logo Etiketten GmbH, of Germany, for Lörch-Edelbrände kirsch.

Printing processes

- **Flexo:**
  Collotype Labels, of Australia, for St Arnou Premium Blonde.
- **Letterpress:**
  Kuresa S A, of Peru, for Fabuloso Fresca Lavanda 1 liter.
- **Screen:**
  Schäfer-etiketten GmbH, of Germany, for Salitos Tequila.
- **Offset lithography:**
  Tapp Technologies, of Canada, for Rideau Vineyard Jazz FBI 2004 Tempranillo.
- **Digital:**
  Ettiketto Labelling Systems AB, of Sweden, for Sadolin.
- **Combination:**
  tesa Bandfix AG, of Switzerland, for Nivea Hair Care Samt Glanz shampoo.

Alternative uses for other products

- **Non-adhesive labels and tags:**
  Skanem Stavanger AS, of Norway, for Sjarken Fiskeboller.
- **Cartons:**
  Too few entries for an award but Kimbells Pack, of Philippines, was highly commended for Placenta Herbal Beauty Soap.
- **New applications or uses of a label press:**
  Schreiner Group, of Germany, for a printed circuit label that enables the display to be lit up.



Clockwise from top: Kaluwi Virgin Coconut Oil by Kimbells pack of Philippines; Sjarken Fiskeboller, by Skanem Stavanger; Nivea Hair Care Samt Glanz shampoo by tesa Bandfix and a printed circuit label by Schreiner Group

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The Codimag Viva 340 5-color waterless offset press at Gràphiques Lappi Martorell in Abrera, near Barcelona

Offset strategy

Spanish printer Grupo Lappi's recent purchase of an offset press from Codimag is another step in the company's aggressive expansion plan. **James Quirk** reports

Offset printing technology has enjoyed a well-documented surge in popularity in Europe in recent years. Often it is driven by the brand-owners, who specify the use of offset for printing labels for high-end products in sectors such as wine, spirits and cosmetics.

For Spanish printer Grupo Lappi, the recent purchase of a Codimag Viva 340 waterless 5-color offset press forms part of its plan to expand its product offering while also increasing its regional presence.

Founded in 1959, Grupo Lappi is headquartered in 18,000 square meter facility in Seville. It began specializing in labels in 1974, and produces wet-glue, self-adhesive and sleeve labels for the wine and spirit, mineral water and food sectors. In 2004 it bought Gràphiques Martorell, based in Abrera, just outside Barcelona. For ambitious owner Antonio Lappi, this move represented just the first in an ongoing plan to cover the Spanish market.

'We are looking to buy more companies in Spain,' he states. 'We want four in total, spread around the country to serve all the regions.'

Grupo Lappi has a turnover of 17 million euros and employees 149 people over its two factories. The company's expansion plan is so precise that Antonio Lappi's aim is to achieve a turnover of 33 million euros and have 248 employees by 2011. The 3,500 square meter factory in Abrera, Barcelona, is currently being expanded.

The company is mainly present in its local market, though 22 percent of its business is in the UK and Ireland, France, Portugal and the Caribbean.

The offset press from Codimag was installed in March of this year at what is now Gràphiques Lappi Martorell, and complements the company's range of flexo, letterpress and sheetfed offset presses from companies such as Heidelberg, Man Roland, Omet and Nilpeter.

The Viva 340 is equipped with two Stork rotary screen systems, a flexo varnish unit and hot stamping, and Lappi believes it will help the company diversify its product offering.

'To have a machine with this flexibility and configuration allows us to enter different markets with no barriers,' he says. 'Our clients are looking for increasing quality, and this gives us the

Antonio Lappi: 'We are looking to buy two more companies in Spain'

opportunity to offer them a label with greater specifications.'

'The combination aspect is key,' he continues. 'We can do offset, flexo and rotary screen on one label. Codimag's press has the advantage of not needing cassettes to be changed, and it produces great quality.'

The Codimag Viva 340 is particularly suited to the wine sector where Grupo Lappi is most prominent. 'We like to work in high value markets, such as wine, Cava and Champagne,' says Lappi. 'We want to drive the markets that offer this extra value.'

This is Codimag's fourteenth offset press sold into Spain, and export manager Pierre Panel reveals that they are all printing wine labels: 'The wine label market has always been strong for offset,' he says. 'Now we are also seeing it more and more for cosmetics and household products.'

Codimag started manufacturing offset presses in 1999, and they represent around 100 of the company's total worldwide press sales of 250. Thirty percent of the company's sales are into its local French market, while Spain, Italy and Germany are also important areas.

'There is a trend towards offset at the moment – many multi-national brands are asking for it,' says Panel. 'The wine market in France has moved from wet-glue to self-adhesive labels in recent years, and we have various offset machines with embossing and hot stamping equipment working for the Champagne business.'

Sales outside Europe include North and South America, Russia and Eastern Europe. Codimag has three presses in each of Brazil and Canada, while its second sale into South Africa was made this year. Panel also reports that the traditionally flexo-dominated US market has been 'opening up towards offset in the last three to four years'.

'Offset is the first printing technology – it is very simple,' says Panel. 'There is no need to make complicated file

L-r: Pierre Panel, Codimag; Antonio Mayordomo, Impryma; Antonio Lappi and Santiago Cuberes, Grupo Lappi

changes. Plate preparation time is less than 10 minutes; flexo plates are much more expensive. This press starts where digital finishes: it typically prints runs of between 5,000 and 50,000 labels.'

'The Spanish market is regional,' says Antonio Mayordomo of Impryma, which has been Codimag's distributor in Spain and Portugal for the last 10 years. 'Waterless offset is more popular in the region around the Pyrenees. The wine market in Spain is very much focused on waterless offset.'

'In the last few years, flexo has replaced letterpress as the main print process,' he continues. 'But recently the market has been overflowing with flexo machines, so offset and combination printing are becoming more popular.'

Antonio Lappi is a firm believer in the advantages of combination printing: 'It is the future of printing – mixing flexo, offset and screen,' he says. ■

Lean logistics at Unilever

Unilever has significantly reduced the cycle time of its labels artwork process following implementation of a new software system. **Andy Thomas** reports

Unilever's European Deodorant Division (Unilever Deo RTC Europe) has announced the implementation of a software solution which fully automates the creation of its artwork for TUC (Trading Unit Code) labeling and other associated secondary packaging. Developed by UK developer Kallik, the AMS Trade system provides an easy to use, highly automated artwork authoring, development and management software solution, which dramatically reduces costs, cycle time and risks associated with artwork management and production.

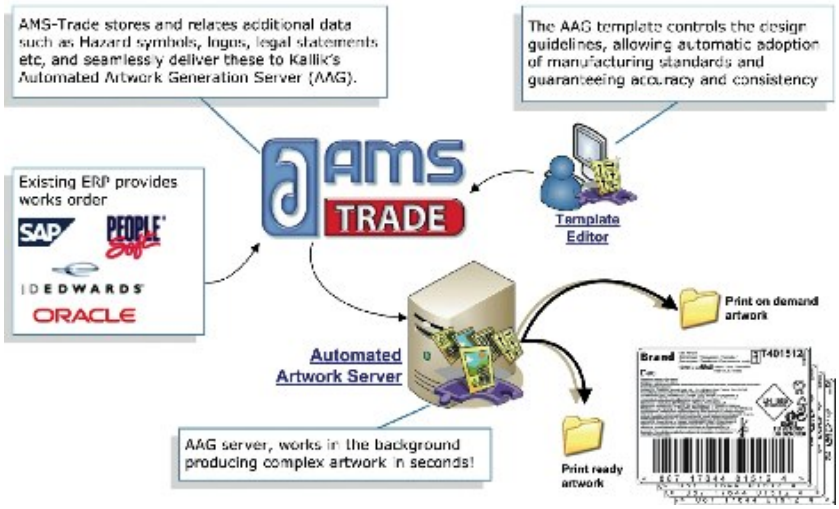
Using AMS Trade, Unilever Deo RTC Europe has reduced the cycle time of its labeling innovation process by 98 percent – processing a three-month backlog of 400 pending artwork designs in just a few hours.

Unilever evaluated a number of options to improve the speed and output quality of its artwork production process. The aim was to ensure consistent barcode compliance and facilitate the 'on-demand' online printing process, which until recently was duplicating data and increasing the risk of errors. Unilever says that Kallik's AMS Trade was selected primarily for its functionality, ease of use, and low risk implementation process, zero impact on existing systems. The application, which utilizes data published by Unilever's existing SAP system, was deployed in under four weeks.

Peter Garratt, packaging technician Unilever Deo RTC Europe, comments: 'Kallik's AMS Trade solution is exceptionally simple to use, perfect for non-technical users wishing to generate a TUC label artwork in seconds. What's more, we now have one consistent record as the source for both on-line labeling and off-line printing needs.'

Reflecting on the application's flexibility, Kumar Abraham, packaging development manager, Unilever Deo RTC Europe says, 'The Kallik AMS Trade application can handle complex multi-lingual languages across Western Europe, CEE, and Asia Pacific markets, as well as a broad range of secondary packaging. As such it is a scalable product capable of facilitating Unilever's entire secondary packaging portfolio.'

Neil Gleghorn, CEO, Kallik, said, 'Kallik understands how printed packaging errors can slow and even prevent products getting to market – the risk of a product recall due to barcode and content errors on secondary packaging are high, and with acceptable tolerances becoming ever smaller, the associated risks will only increase.'



Gleghorn added, 'The manual creation of artwork on Macs and PC's only increases this risk further. By automating the whole artwork creation process, we significantly reduce the risk of errors and facilitate the process reduction times witnessed at Unilever. I believe that it is important to have a secondary packaging artwork process that supports efficiency drives within a primary packaging artwork process. The faster, more accurately and consistently secondary artworks can be produced, the lower the risk to planned strategies for product availability in store. We look forward to continuing our relationship to implement AMS Trade in further Unilever plants.'

Gleghorn says that Kallik's own research estimates that 80 percent of all packaging artwork requires amendments and that 65 percent of companies' time in product development lifecycle is spent in packaging and artwork management activities. 'This high error rate is incredibly time consuming to rectify and costs UK companies millions of pounds a year.'

Comments Mike Fairley, strategic consultant at Tarsus' Labels Group, 'I see this as all part of the quest by brand owners/retail groups to reduce label costs, complexity and timescales in the label production cycle. Converters are going to see many such changes over the next few years.' ■

MPS. The system behind the brand.

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James E. Hammer, president & CEO Hammer Packaging, stands next to his Drent Goebel VSOP

Hammer goes rotary

As part of its on-going technology investment program, Hammer Packaging has invested in a Drent Goebel VSOP press. As **Danielle Jerschefske** reports, it is proving a hit with CPCs

Hammer Packaging, located in Rochester, New York, installed the first Drent Goebel variable sleeve offset press (VSOP) in the United States at the beginning of 2007. James E. Hammer, president and CEO, is committed to reinvesting 10 percent of sales back into his company each year, to keep the technology in the facilities current. Hammer knows that technology keeps you at the top – precisely where he wants his company to be.

Primarily a sheet-fed, cut and stack film label printer, Hammer feels that a roll-fed operation is a better fit for film production, and acknowledges that there is a higher demand for film-based labels and flexible packaging. With the Drent Goebel press, the company has the opportunity to take what they know in the sheet-fed sector and apply it to roll fed.

The new 17-33.5 inch Drent Goebel VSOP allows Hammer, for the first time, to run variable repeat lengths in offset. The whole unit does not need to be changed as the circumference variation is in the sleeve. The technology allows for easier and quicker change outs. Each cylinder has its own servo drive; each sleeve has its own zero point. The VSOP automatically puts the plate cylinder and the blanket cylinder in register, producing quality quickly. In other words, the Drent Goebel press gives Hammer's customers the capacity to be more flexible at a lower cost, with a

Good impression

Hammer Packaging is ranked 81 in the 2006 Printing Impressions 400 list with a 22 percent increase in revenues from 2005.

'These rankings are a result of our continuous investment in state-of-the-art technology to reduce costs, expand our product offerings and address new and changing innovations in our packaging marketplace,' says James E. Hammer, president & CEO.

Managing information

In order to accommodate its rapid growth and to lay foundations for its long term business objectives, Hammer Packaging is replacing its information management systems in January. The company will implement Radius Solutions Limited's PECAS Vision software, a single integrated end-to-end solution that will tie together its multi-facility operations.

'Now that we have five different facilities, it has become more difficult to track down the right person to get information whenever we need it. We require a system that we can easily use for real-time access to accurate business information,' says Jason Hammer, manager of production services, at Hammer Packaging.

The new system will automate manual processes and eliminate the need to internally maintain multiple systems, databases and spreadsheets to manage daily operations and reporting. Hammer Packaging wanted to deploy technology that would enable its employees to increase productivity, automate processes, and eliminate manual rework.

'We feel it is critical to provide our employees with the tools to get their jobs done as efficiently and effectively as possible,' Hammer further explains.

Hammer Packaging feels the industry-specific focus and references of PECAS Vision are very important, as well as its strong capabilities in the areas of scheduling, work-in-progress tracking, and lot traceability. Ease of use is also an important characteristic.

speedy turn around.

With consumer trends changing at a rapid pace, consumer products companies must be keenly aware of their buyers' desires. Hammer Packaging recognizes these trends. It decided to purchase the Drent Goebel VSOP to help its customers satisfy consumer demands and also to take Hammer into markets it has never penetrated before.

'Next generation packaging requires our customers to make each experience with the consumer personal. They want to take it to the next level so a consumer can associate with the brand,' Lou Iovoli, vice president of sales and marketing, explains. 'Pepsi-Cola's new initiative is the perfect example of how a brand wants to reinforce why a consumer makes their purchase. They plan to change the graphics on their products over 30 times in one year to create an interactive experience. It is the new wave.'

The 8-color VSOP press makes supply chain management more adaptable, and allows Hammer to adjust as customer demand changes: short runs, more SKUs, more promotional opportunities, more changes. The Drent press gives Hammer Packaging the ultimate flexibility throughout the supply chain.

Commonly known as the 'beverage printer', Hammer is able to use this technology to broaden its products' appeal. 'This technology is putting us into other markets, which shows there is a need for this type of printing technology,' says Iovoli. 'We are ordering more cylinders to fill our arsenal, to keep pace with the number of test runs interested parties are requesting.'

"This technology is putting us into other markets, which shows there is a need for this type of printing technology"

At this time, Hammer is in talks with major multinational consumer products companies to discuss how VSOP technology can best suit their needs. Additionally, it is in the middle of a multi-million dollar bid for the business of a company which is highly interested in the quick turnover, changeability and variability aspects that Hammer can offer with the Drent Goebel press.

'We believe,' says Lou Iovoli, 'we are creating a new niche in the market of offset printing for roll-fed applications. We are re-defining alternatives for consumer packaging.' With the Drent press, Hammer can give customers high-end graphics equal or superior to gravure without the cost of cylinders.

Doug Wegman, marketing manager, says, 'With this press, our customers can change the graphics as frequently as they want

Variable sleeve sizes allow rapid repeat changes

"With this press, our customers can change the graphics as frequently as they want without incurring any extra cost. For changes on a gravure cylinder, they would pay about $1,000 a cylinder to change what they needed"

without incurring any extra cost. For changes on a gravure cylinder, they would pay about $1,000 a cylinder to change what they needed. It is ideal for marketing teams at these large companies to be able to do this at a low cost.'

An additional cost-saving advantage of the press is its ability to print on most any substrate. Hammer is proud to be using the newest generation Pentalabel PETG film, OT-E749/22, developed by Klöckner Pentaplast (Gordonsville, Virginia), incorporating the next generation of co-polyester from Eastman Chemical.

'The film provides uniform shrink and the graphics consistently look good,' says Jim Mullen, business manager of shrink films, Klöckner Pentaplast. 'With up to 76 percent shrinkage, we have the possibility to reduce the cut size of the label.'

Klöckner offers a high yield white version that does not require a white ink overcoat and allows surface printing. Because Hammer has experience with surface printing film, it is able to utilize this expertise on the VSOP. The Klöckner film easily handles any scuff problems and is much more cost effective than clear.

In addition to low costs and high flexibility, the Drent Goebel VSOP press also offers customers quick turn over when wanting to make last minute changes. 'We can offer customers the ultimate flexibility they have never had, while able to turn out jobs in days, not weeks,' says Iovoli. It takes much less time to make new web offset plates. A flexo plate can take 45 minutes to an hour to complete, while gravure could take days.

Hammer's VSOP press

Another benefit of the VSOP would include its EB curing capability which offers a higher gloss, and is also approved by the FDA for food labeling.

Hammer plans to double its size again within the next three years. (It has doubled already since 2002.) 'We want to keep ourselves in the front of the industry – leading not following,' Jim Hammer tells. There are plans to install an identical press in the next year because of the broad range of materials handling, the unique opportunity to configure the press to expand in growing market segments, and because Hammer believes it will be able make ROI. ■

Pepsi-Cola frequently changes packaging graphics

In its 109-year existence, Pepsi-Cola's look has changed just 10 times, but this year alone, background graphics will change more than 35 times. This steady rotation of designs reflects the fast, ever-changing interests of the elusive 'millennial' generation. The new graphics will be on more than eight billion Pepsi-Cola cans, bottles and cups throughout the world.

'On the surface, this might look like a packaging update, but it's much more than that. We're changing the way we interact with consumers – and now we're doing it on their terms,' said Cie Nicholson, senior vice president and chief marketing officer of Pepsi-Cola North America. 'When people pick up a Pepsi, they'll be getting much more than a great tasting cola. They'll be getting a passport to the things they enjoy most.'

'We've learned that young people embrace change and seek discovery, connectedness, personalization and multiculturalism. We believe this restyle touches on all these trends,' said Ron Coughlin, chief marketing officer, PepsiCo International. 'Now our consumers will have a different experience each time they buy a Pepsi.'

Skanem's new factory in Thailand represents the company's first expansion outside Europe

Skanem opens Thailand factory

European converter Skanem has opened manufacturing operations outside its home continent for the first time. **James Quirk** reports from the inauguration of its new factory outside Bangkok

One hundred and forty visitors from all over South-East Asia gathered for the opening of Skanem's new factory located 55 kilometers south of Bangkok, Thailand. The event marked the company's first expansion outside Europe, and indicates a clear statement of intent towards the fast-growing Asian markets.

The 4,200 square meter factory, situated in a 13,000 square meter plot in Amata Nakorn, was opened by owner and CEO Ole Rugland; Alf Møller, managing director of Skanem Bangkok; Ruengsak Mahawinitchaimontree, deputy governor of Chonburi province; Police General Chavalit Yodmani, chairman of Amata Corporation, which owns the business park; and Arne Lundby, Chargé d'Affaires of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangkok.

> "We see Asia as a long-term growth market, and Thailand is the first step. We have shown that we understand the need to move near our customers to serve them better"

'We see Asia as a long-term growth market, and Thailand is the first step,' announced Rugland in his speech during the ceremony. 'In September 2005, Skanem was challenged by a multi-national customer to set up an operation in Thailand. It is a country that the company already knew well – we have been doing business here for 20 years.

'A market survey was conducted, and the board made the decision in January 2006. We purchased the land in May 2006, and construction began in July. This factory was completed in less than a year.'

In their speeches, Police General Chavalit Yodmani offered his congratulations at the speed and scale of the achievement, while Ruengsak Mahawinitchaimontree praised the choice of site – saying that due to the nearby port and international airport, the plant was strategically located and suitable for exporting.

Arne Lundby of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangkok, which played an instrumental role in the project, told how the move heralded the country's first multi-national label printer.

'The Skanem Bangkok team feels proud of what it has

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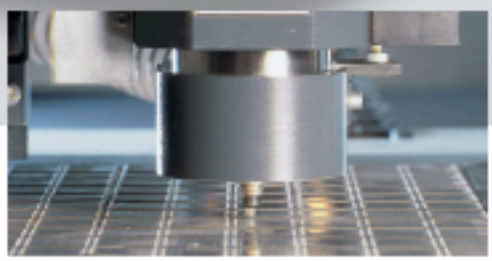

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l-r: Alf Møller, managing director of Skanem Bangkok, and Ole Rugland, Skanem's owner and CEO, outside the company's new factory in Amata Nakorn, 55 kilometers south of Bangkok

achieved in a relatively short period of time,' said Alf Møller, 'and we are all very excited about starting production next week.'

The factory is equipped with two 16-inch Nilpeter FA-4 9-color flexo presses, one of which also contains a gravure unit. They boast corona treatment from Vetaphone, in-line servo-driven rotary die-cutting technology, hot foiling and UV curing. Slitting is handled by two machines from German company LeoMat, both of which are equipped with Print/Vision/Helios inspection units from AVT.

Pre-press software comes from Artwork Systems; there is a fully integrated computer to plate system (CTP) from Kodak; a washout/exposure/dryer from Dupont and plate mounting from JM Heaford. The factory has a raw material warehouse of 600 square meters, and an overall capacity of 12 million square meters of label per year.

There are 25 employees at factory, but that figure will likely increase to around 35 by the end of the year. Delivery of the first batch of labels is scheduled to begin in July.

"The Skanem Bangkok team feels proud of what it has achieved in a relatively short period of time, and we are all very excited about starting production"

Nilpeter Asia

Nilpeter Asia Pacific, based in Thailand, has installed a total of 13 presses in the country since the office was opened in 2002. The Danish press manufacturer has a market share of around 75 percent of new machinery installed in Thailand, and 30 percent are servo machines. There is one other FA-4 in Thailand, while an order was recently taken for what will be the country's first FB-line press.

Martin Sommer, marketing manager for Nilpeter Asia Pacific, is excited about what Skanem's move could mean for the local label industry: 'It is not only beneficial for us, but for the Thai label industry as a whole,' he says. 'It will help to improve the quality of the market in Thailand and in the rest of Asia.'

'The Thai market is growing,' he reports. 'Many sheet-fed printers are looking to move into label production. It is a market with great potential.'

Fritz Kistler, managing director of MAN Ferrostaal Thailand, Nilpeter's agent for the region, agrees: 'Offset is dying here – the growth at the moment is in flexo and labels.'

'Flexo gives many opportunities,' Sommer continues, 'not only for labels, but also for flexible packaging, in-mold, and much more.'

Skanem, now one of Europe's largest label converters, was founded in 1905 in Stavanger, Norway, as a manufacturer of metal cans. While its headquarters remain in that town, the company has expanded throughout Europe. There are three factories in its home country: in Stavanger, Oslo – dedicated to pharmaceutical labels – and Moss. Skanem also has sites in Poznan, Poland; Willich, Germany; Ronneby and Skurup in Sweden; Hobro, Denmark; Moscow, Russia; and four in the UK – Durham, Cardiff, Liverpool and Newcastle. With the addition

One of two Nilpeter FA-4 9-color flexo presses at the factory

l-r: Arne Lundby, Chargé d'Affaires of the Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bangkok; Police General Chavalit Yodmani, chairman of Amata Corporation; Ruengsak Mahawinitchaimontree, deputy governor of Chonburi province; and Ole Rugland, owner and CEO of Skanem

"Møller reports that there are already plans for two more presses, while further expansion in the factory will take place when production levels demand it"

of the factory in Thailand, the company has a total of 14 sites in eight countries, employing around 1,100 people. It offers a wide variety of labels: including peel & read; sleeves; booklet; re-sealable; holographic; fragrance; returnable; Braille & tactile; in-mold; and hanger labels.

'We started as a Western European company,' says Rugland, 'but we have shown, through our movement into Eastern Europe, for example, that we understand the need to move near our customers to serve them better.'

Rugland reports that the company also looked at China as a potential country its expansion: 'but as a European company, we found that it was easier to start our expansion, in terms of infrastructure and politics, here in Thailand,' he says. 'The speed of the factory's creation demonstrates the smoothness of how things operate here.'

'Many of our international customers are already here,' he continues, 'including the likes of Procter & Gamble and Unilever.'

The factory will primarily serve the local market, and also the rest of Southeast Asia. 'The region is close-knit in terms of trade,' says Møller, 'like Europe.'

Møller reports that there are already plans for two more presses, while further expansion in the factory will take place when production levels demand it. Skanem's European recycling project, about which you can read more on page 39, will be implemented soon. ■

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Reclaiming liner

Maratech and Skanem are working together to kick start release liner recycling in Europe. **Danielle Jerschefske** reports

Skanem, a Norway-headquartered converter of self-adhesive labels with operations throughout Europe and a new facility in Bangkok, Thailand, is collaborating with Maratech to pick up release liner waste from its customers in Europe. 'The recycling process is going really well with a number of Skanem's end-users,' says Calvin Frost, CEO of Channeled Resources Group (CRG). 'We need more printers to help get their customers involved. Skanem has sincerely tried to make the most of these practices.'

Label converters have a key role to play in facilitating cooperation between recycling companies like Maratech and end-users, as the example of Skanem shows. Industry experts estimate that 90 percent of the two million tons of base stock produced each year in Europe and North America go straight into landfill.

According to Calvin Frost, the manufacture of pressure sensitive products generates about 25 percent waste. The printer throws away 20 percent of what remains, leaving only 60 percent of the original product. The rest has gone straight to landfill. Unless we take action to tackle this waste, stricter regulations can be anticipated in Europe and potentially in the US.

The cooperation between Maratech and Skanem began years ago and has recently picked up momentum with the involvement of one of Skanem's multinational consumer products customers headquartered in the Liverpool, UK area. 'We decided to begin there with the pick-up process because of the close proximity to both the Maratech and Skanem facilities,' says David Harrisson, multinational sales director at Skanem. 'We both wanted to be able to monitor the process closely.'

A few months after the successful implementation at the Liverpool facility, the recycle pick-up procedure was rolled-out to other multinational companies in Europe. Both Frost and Harrisson believe the process is maturing as people start realizing there are more environmentally sound ways to manage waste.

Maratech facilities in Marathon City, WI

'Skanem believes passionately in recycling and does not want to put waste into the ground,' Harrisson says. 'The end user just needs to pack the waste in a suitable way for shipping and Maratech-UK picks it up and ships the product to India where recycling facilities will properly pulp it for further use. It is a big step in saving tons from going into the dump.'

Some end-users have been hesitant to take advantage of this service. Their apprehension, they say, is because of the cost, because it entails greater responsibility, and the difficulty of implementation. 'There is a concern about getting this process moving,' says Frost, 'so we have decided to make the process easier on the end user.'

As past president of FINAT, Harrisson brought the initiative to the attention of the FINAT Congress in Berlin last June. Building on these contacts, Maratech-UK started test trials in England for a single-pallet recycle service.

Any end-user in the UK can send a pallet of spent liner for GBP £40 (US$80) to the Maratech facility in southern England – a price lower than the taxes imposed to ship spent liner to a landfill. Previously, end users needed to save their liner until a certain weight was accumulated and then Maratech would pick it up. This new, simplified process allows the end user to ship their waste immediately.

Maratech-UK will stockpile the pallets until there is a minimum of 20 tons stored and then will ship it to China or India. The trial is estimated to last 90-120 days. If it proves successful, Maratech will move the trial to the Netherlands, Germany, France and other continental European locales.

Some in the industry do not view recycling as a manageable option. Others believe that the effort involved in stopping tons of waste from going into a landfill is, itself, a 'waste'. But there are other forces on the move.

Preparing stock for shipment

'If Wal-Mart puts pressure on them, the process will definitely accelerate in the next two to three years,' says David Harrisson. 'They cannot keep putting waste into the ground and burning it – it is not a sustainable solution. We are reliant on FINAT members to make this initiative possible.'

Printers' production of matrix release liner waste is another area that Harrisson plans to address with the help of Maratech. Right now, Frost ships matrix release liner from North American companies to Pellet America in Appleton, Wisconsin. There the waste is turned into energy pellets which can be used to replace coal. So technically, the options are there – the industry just needs to take responsibility.

'The initiative has to accelerate,' Harrisson says. 'There is a cultural feeling that is making people more aware of how their movements affect the environment. Ultimately, customers are going to put pressure on the supply chain.' ■

Maratech

North American-based Channeled Resources Group (CRG), Maratech division, is located in Marathon City, Wisconsin, with 56 employees. The company supplies secondhand, pre-slit rolls of material to converters across North America, providing an alternative to landfill and saving millions of tons of usable paper and film rolls. Maratech is duplicating this procedure at its UK facility.

Cindy White, group president of CRG, says, 'There is certainly gratification found in working to find ways to protect the environment. We really do care.'

The company purchases excess rolls of paper and film from manufacturers including Fasson, Mactac and Green Bay Packaging, at the rate of about 6-8 truckloads per day. The quality control supervisor at the plant sorts each delivery to check for defects, places the roll in inventory, then notifies the sales team of the stock. The 200,000 square foot facility had 18 rewinders and slitters which produce a variety of sizes and products for converters throughout the NAFTA region. Printers frequently purchase the secondhand stock to run trial jobs that do not demand very high quality. A converter can save around 20 percent on a paper order and as much as 30-40 percent on a film order.

CRG's Maratech-UK division serves as the liner recycling facilitator for FINAT. It collects the spent liner from end-users throughout Europe and ships full containers to the Asia Pacific region for repulping.

Security in São Paulo

RR Donnelley Moore, the result of the joining of two of the graphic industry's biggest and oldest players, has cornered the security stamp market in São Paulo. **James Quirk** reports

In all its years visiting factories, *L&L* has never experienced security like it. Pocket contents must be emptied; a security scanner walked through; a body search carried out by guards. Once inside the factory, 64 cameras are recording, 24 hours a day.

The reason for such stringent security is more than justified. For RR Donnelley Moore is, in the words of labels product manager Adolfo Chacon, 'the absolute leader' in the Brazilian security sector.

In 1996, the company began producing the 'Selo de São Paulo' – the security stamp labels present on São Paulo residents' ID cards. The intrinsic value of these stamps is such that if just one is removed from the factory and falls into the wrong hands, a person's identity can effectively be stolen. This writer has the underside of his collar checked when leaving, and is unsurprised to hear that there has never been a case of these stamps being copied.

Chacon is keen to emphasize that this security is not only because of the stamps; indeed, this philosophy extends throughout the company's product range: 'Security measure are needed for all labels,' he explains, 'because the labels are the brands of our customers.'

RR Donnelley Moore is the result of the joining of North American companies RR Donnelley and Moore Wallace in 2004. Combined, they form one of the largest graphic companies in the world, with an annual turnover of $7.2 billion and nearly 45,000 employees in 125 factories and 600 offices spread throughout more than 30 countries.

RR Donnelley was founded in Chicago, USA, in 1864. It became a key player in the editorial printing sector in 1928, with the printing of 200,000 copies of Time magazine. Ten years later, thanks to the creation of heat-set ink which guaranteed high speed production, the company published a 446,000 copy run of the first edition of Life magazine.

By the 1990s, the company had built up presence in South-East Asia and Latin America, and was widely considered one of

"This writer has the underside of his collar checked when leaving, and is unsurprised to hear that there has never been a case of these stamps being copied"

the worldwide leaders in commercial printing. It opened its first office in Brazil in 1999, and bought Moore Wallace in 2002 to help its move into the label industry.

Moore, founded in Toronto, Canada in 1882, had arrived in Brazil in 1968 through the partial acquisition of Formulários Nacional S.A., located in Barra Funda in São Paulo. By this stage, the company had already become one of the leaders in the forms sector – as well as offering the manufacturing and printing of labels, security documents and data capture and print management services.

The result of the acquisition – RR Donnelley Moore – is active in a variety of industries in Brazil. As well as labels, the company prints books, magazines, catalogues, telephone directories, calendars, tax and security documents and promotional materials.

'The Moore brand is very strong here in Brazil,' explains Chacon. 'We want the customer to be able to buy everything from us.'

RR Donnelley Moore is present in six sites around Brazil, though this São Paulo facility is the only one to print labels, production of which began in 1988 before the buyout. In 1996, the company, then Moore, bought a flexo press and moved into the production of prime labels. Three more presses were added in subsequent years, all 8-color machines with full options, and Chacon reports that the sector is becoming increasingly important to the company.

'Worldwide, labels represent five percent of our business, while here in Brazil the figure is eight percent,' he says. 'But it is growing rapidly. Recently the Brazilian label market has been practically doubling every year – it is getting more mature.'

The overall size of RR Donnelley Moore becomes apparent when you learn that, despite being a small part of its business, the company produces four million square meters of labels per year. Security is the company's biggest label market, at 50 percent of total output, while prime labels come in second at 20 percent. It is present in the cosmetics, food, chemical and automobile sectors, and also produces track and trace labels.

ISO 9001:2000-certified, RR Donnelley Moore's 7,000 square meter factory employs 300 people. As well as the flexo presses, the company boasts a wide array of offset and digital machinery, while testing is done at an on-site laboratory.

The vast majority of labels produced are for the local market. 'It is growing a great deal,' says Chacon, 'so we are not really interested in exporting at the moment.'

The company takes environmental standards seriously, and Chacon emphasizes that the factory creates very little pollution: 'We recycle everything,' he says. 'It is not very important in the rest of Brazil at the moment, but it is to us.' ■

Labelexpo Europe in brief

Avery Dennison

Shows the Paxar Snap 600 multimedia high speed printer for one and two-side printing of barcodes and variable information on a wide variety of media including fabric labels and tickets, as well as stickers and heat transfers.

Avery Dennison – which recently acquired Paxar Corporation – will also exhibit a wide variety of labeling consumables including coated polyesters and nylons, woven-edge satin tapes and inks for a range of print technologies.

Kocher+Beck

Kocher+Beck shows its full product range including flexible dies for flat at rotary applications, magnetic cylinders and bases and the latest GapMaster die pressure control system.

Bobst Group

Promotes the Group's latest machinery, including Atlas slitter rewinders; the Titan SR8 cantilever slitter rewinder fitted with Quick Shaft differential rewinds laser (line) core positioning, auto knife positioning, 600-800mm rewind diameters and running speeds up to 700 m/min; and Rotomec's gravure printing and coating & laminating equipment for flexible materials.

Electro Optic

Electro Optic recently moved to a new location, increasing capacity, and demonstrates its Eco, Silver, Gold and for longevity performance Dura- and Duraline Special dies.

Kanzan

Kanzan promises an interactive visitor experience with its 'Well Point' health kiosk. Visitors will be able to test how fit they are, and the results will be delivered on a Kanzan thermal paper printout, accompanied by freshly squeezed orange juice.

At the 'Jelly Bean Bar' guests will be able to fill a bag with the sweets, weigh them on the multi-functional Bizerba scales and then seal the bag with a 'linerless' thermal label.

In addition to the classic range of Kanzan labels, tickets, tags and gambling tickets will also be on show. A further highlight will be a practical demonstration of the various applications of thermosensitive film in a range of grammages.

RK Print

Shows the FlexiProof 100 and for producers and users of UV flexo inks, the FlexiProof UV bench top systems, enabling users to color match off-press.

A hand held device, the Esiproof, allows users to take proofs from multiple presses on the fly. It incorporates an anilox roller, EPDM stereo rollers and doctor blade.

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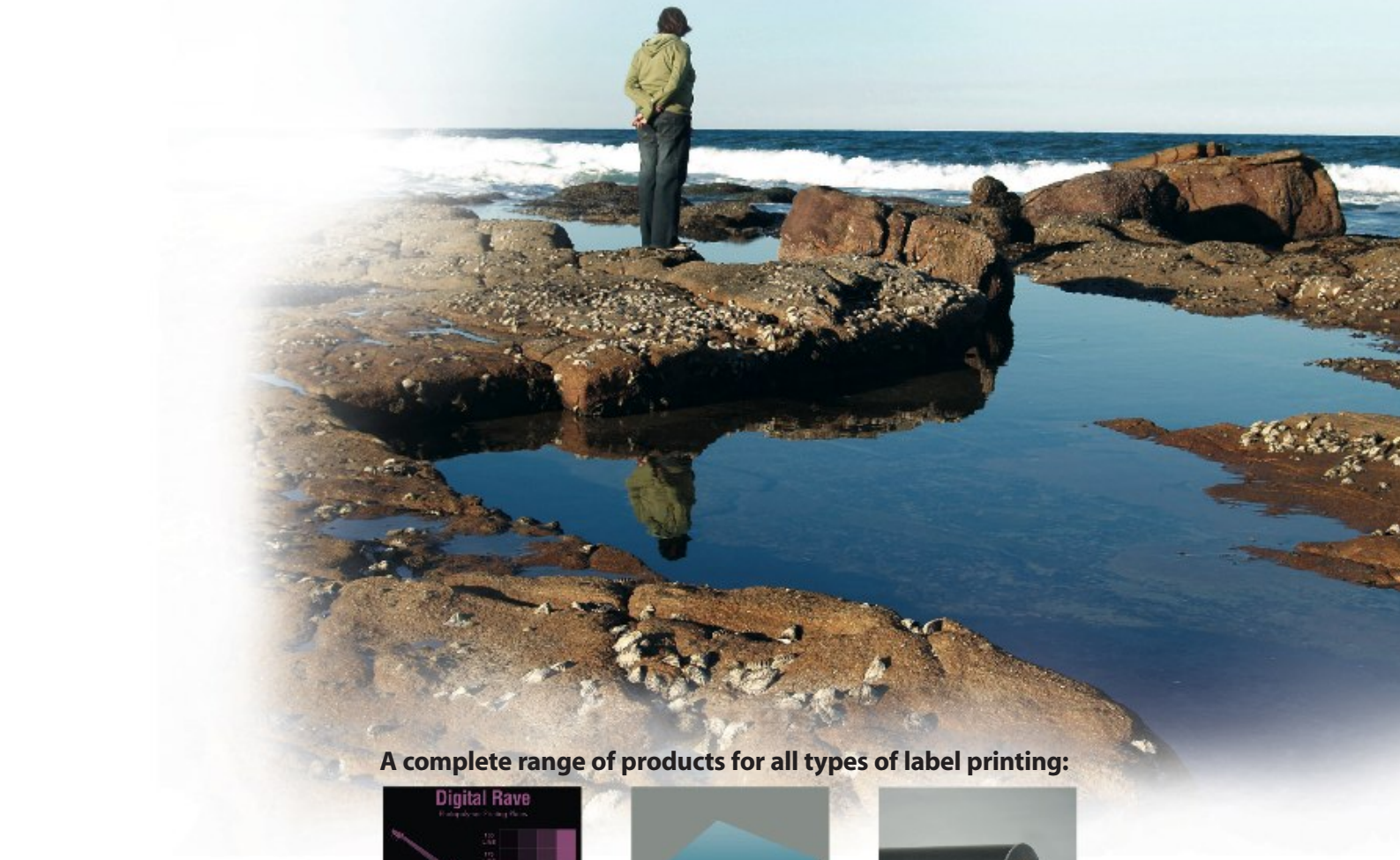

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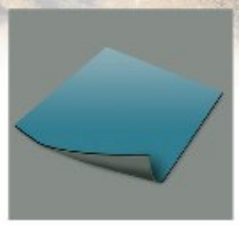

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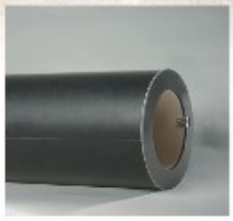

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Centenary pioneer

Mikael Dahl, joint owner of Nordvalls, is pioneering a new RFID model

Nordvalls 100 år 1907 – 2007

As it celebrates its centenary, Swedish label converter Nordvalls is pioneering a radical RFID model, as **Andy Thomas** discovers

Swedish label converter Nordvalls is celebrating its centenary with the launch of a company offering end-users a complete RFID service from label converting to IT integration.

This writer has long urged label converters to avoid becoming 'commodity' suppliers of low valued-added RFID labels and to move up the RFID value chain and form alliances with system integrators. This is precisely what Nordvalls has done.

The new venture is named RFID Constructors AB. Although a division of Nordvalls, it will operate as an independent company with its own marketing and sales activities, working with partners dedicated to different parts of the RFID value chain: IT consulting, print&apply systems, handheld readers, gate antenna, and software/hardware integration. Nordvalls of course, will supply the RFID labeling expertise, including selection of the correct inlay for the application, manufacture, printing, testing and where necessary programming of the labels.

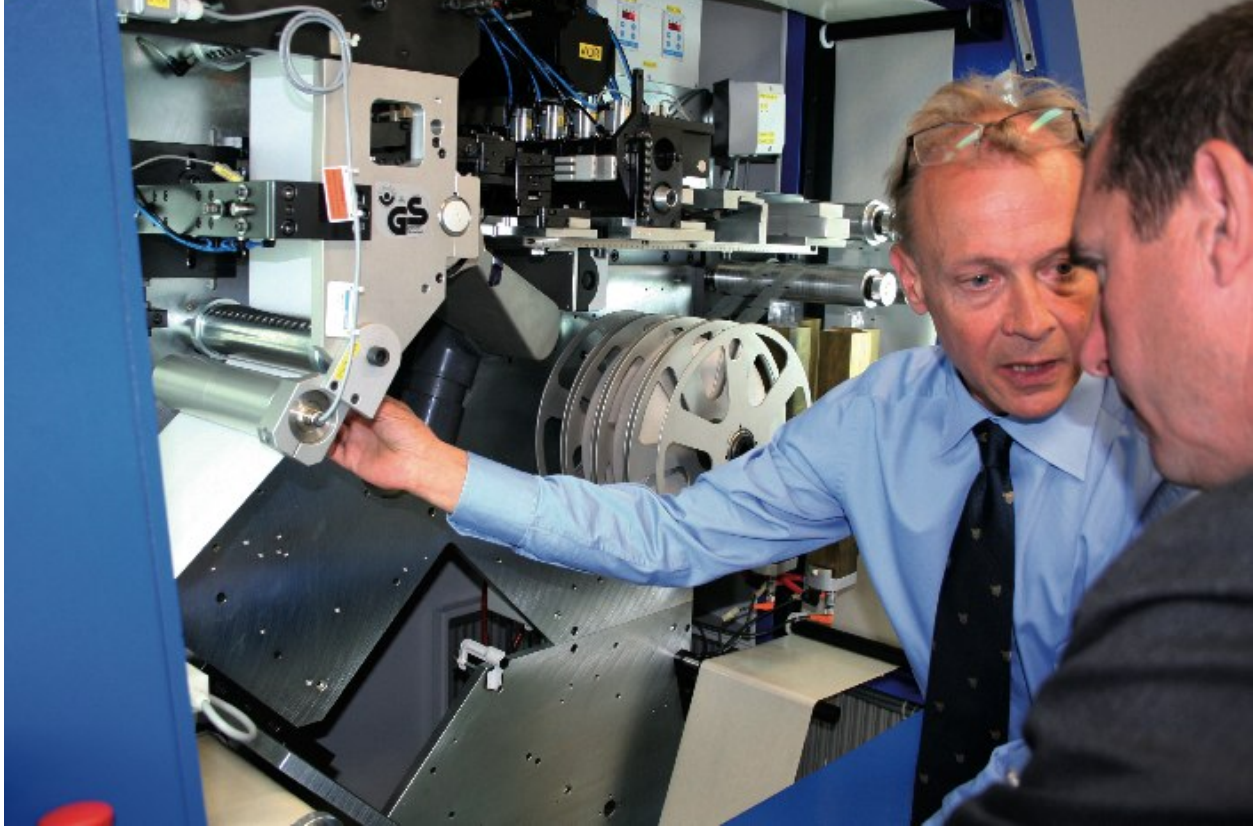
'RFID Constructors is now a complete RFID system supplier and specialist in system development and integration,' says Mikael Dahl, whose job title within the new area is business development manager. 'Our extensive network consists of the key players and equipment providers in the RFID industry, so our clients need only one interface to the whole industry.'

Nordvalls moved into RFID label converting 18 months ago with the installation of a Melzer SL-200 machine. Like other label converters who had taken the plunge however, Nordvalls found that the hype over RFID did not always translate into profitable business opportunities. The new company makes it easier for Nordvalls to develop customers on its own initiative, offering them a complete closed loop solution from one source – and selling RFID labels on the back of this turnkey solution.

Successful projects have included item-level RFID labeling for a sub-supplier to the automotive sector. The first application is for car bumpers. 'We give each part an ID by programming the chips, providing both for anti-counterfeit and track-and-trace,' says Mikael Dahl. 'One challenge was to find an adhesive which would not create silicone bleed, because you can't apply paint on a part with silicone on it. It took us a long time to find it.'

Another project involves a 'serve-yourself' retail outlet, where customers let themselves into an un-manned retail store by swiping a credit card. RFID labels are hand applied to the food products (in this case, fresh fish/seafood takeaway meals), and encoded with price and product information at the same time as they are thermal transfer printed. The customer's credit card is automatically debited at the exit.

Originally specified for HF, the project was moved to UHF because the RFID inlays are cheaper – Euro 7-8c against 20-30c respectively – and the greater data storage capabilities of HF are not required. It is currently being rolled out. Another example is RFID labels preprogrammed for sports and other events, which are also marked with a pre-printed sequential number. This printing/encoding bureau service – called Print Shop – is an extension of Nordvalls' VIP service for the logistics industry. In



Mikael Dahl explains the operation of the Melzer RFID label converting system

terms of hardware, Mikael Dahl notes that the latest Toshiba printer/encoder 'seems to be one of the few units on the market today which can handle labels with no minimum gap. Some other systems require a gap of 25mm between labels, which makes it difficult to produce small RFID labels.'

Nordvalls is also finding ways to integrate its HP Indigo digital printing press and RFID systems, with some previous jobs for 5,000 to 50,000 RFID labels printed and laminated on the Indigo before being made into a finished RFID label on the Melzer.

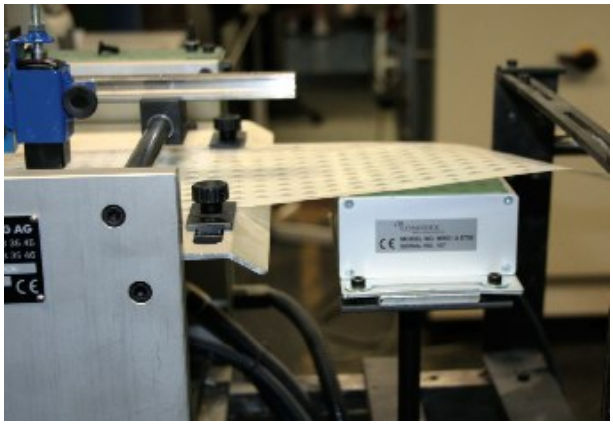
Other interesting projects under way include:

- Track and trace applications in the food sector, confectionery (dried fruit snacks) and pharma sector
- An ongoing contract for RFID tags on library books – so far Nordvalls' only HF application, which required modifications to the Melzer machine immediately after the machine was installed
- RFID windscreen labels handling ID and invoicing for a company which washes and services 150 city taxis daily
- Track and trace/anti-counterfeit applications with apparel end users are under discussion, as well as projects in the retail, process and transportation sectors among others.
- Nordvalls is considering adding a smart card module for short run, value-added applications like access cards and event tickets

History lesson

While Nordvalls pioneers a 'real world' RFID business , its press halls represent a fascinating overview of the last 25 years development of the PS labels industry – and an exciting glimpse of a value-added future.

The company was established in 1907 and remains a family-owned business. Sverker and Mikael Dahl represent the third generation. The company was founded by a brother to their grandmother, then developed over almost 45 years into a label converting business by their father, Gustav, who sadly passed away at the age of 89 earlier this year.



Testing RFID labels on the Q33

'It became his life work and we – and following generations one day hopefully – are honored to continue the company's business development,' says Mikael Dahl.

Nordvalls is based on an 8,000 square meter site in the country town of Sjöbo in South Sweden, where it employs almost 100 people and enjoys a healthy turnover of 19M euro.

Up to the mid-'70s Nordvalls was probably Gallus' biggest customer in Northern Europe. A Gallus Q33 intermittent letterpress machines is still in fine working order, equipped with UV lamps and dedicated to special production work. This press has also been fitted with an encoder to pre-program and test RFID labels.

In 1970 Gallus installed a Q500 500mm-wide 3-color flatbed letterpress, which for some time was the biggest label press in Scandinavia. This machine mainly produced short run sprocket punched computer labels, a huge product during the '80s and early '90s which today has been overtaken by direct thermo/thermotransfer technologies.

Nordvalls also installed the first ever Gallus flexo press, the A160, in 1974, a machine based around 2-4 color stations placed around a mini CI drum, complete with mechanical numbering boxes. This machine was mainly used for specialty ticket production.

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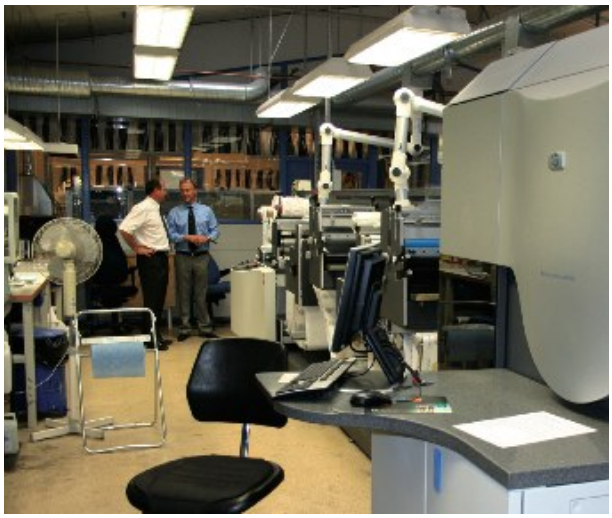
The Longford booklet inserter mounted on a Nilpeter B-3000 press



HP Indigo 4500 with Nilpeter finishing line

Danish Krona, Nilpeter became an even more important supplier though to the early 80s. In 1991, Nordvalls was the first Nilpeter customer to combine letterpress and screen printing in-line using a 10-color machine (5-letterpress and 5-screen units). Nilpeter installed its first ever flexo press in 1981, one of its first UV flexo presses – an F-3000 – in 1996, then its first MO3300 offset press in 1994. This press was running a body care label with cold foil when *L&L* visited, and is fitted with an Amal butt splicer system for non-stop production.

One unusual feature of the main press hall is a pair of Didde Zig-Zag machines, installed when Nordvalls was looking for a wider machine than Nilpeter offered to convert sprocket-punched computer labels in the early 1980s. The first machine was installed in 1983 in a 4-color configuration with fan folder, followed by one more – the biggest single Zig-Zag installation outside North America. Both machines are still in action.

Nordvalls' most recent acquisition is a 500mm MPS EP, a 9-color combination UV flexo/screen press installed in 2003. 'We chose the MPS because of several reasons but also they could offer a 20in wide machine and Nilpeter had a maximum width of 16in – although they have now gone wider with the FA series,' says Mikael Dahl. 'We like the MPS machine. We can change from 40 micron unsupported film to 400gsm cartons without having to change the impression cylinder and we liked the ability to change between screen and flexo in the same print unit without needing a cassette or rail.'

Nordvalls was one of the first European label converters to move into digital printing with the installation of a Nilpeter/Xeikon DL330 press in 1998. 'The problem was that the Xeikon did not have a fifth color station to handle white and could not handle heat-sensitive substrates which are such an important part of our output,' notes Dahl.

The DL-330 has now been replaced with an HP Indigo ws4500, which forms the core of Nordvalls' Digikett digital division. The ws4500 is paired with an on/off-line Nilpeter digital finishing unit equipped with two flexo units used to lay down metalized inks, laminations, varnishes and cold foil. 'We prefer running in-line, but when we get a second HP Indigo machine this finishing line will support both,' says Dahl.

All Nordvalls' presses are fingerprinted with ICC color profiles, which means the ws4500 can be used as a proofing press for the conventional machines. Average run length on the HP Indigo is 7-800 meters, and Nordvalls uses the Indichrome color mixing system to hit over 90 percent of the PMS color gamut.

Nordvalls images its flexo plates digitally on an Esko Spark XT imager, and is also getting promising results with ablation letterpress plates imaged on the same machine. The next project is to move to a filmless workflow for offset and screen.

Target markets

Currently, one of the fastest growing divisions at Nordvalls is its Medikett pharma labels operation, based in a secure, GMP-certified press hall. Nordvalls has been involved in pharma labels since the 1950s, and 30 percent of the company's business is in the sector.

The consumer goods and food & drink markets are also important to Nordvalls, which has developed a range of specialist re-closeable and booklet label products.

Duokett is a reclosable system constructed from a basic self-adhesive label with a silicone-coated top face, and a self-adhesive covering sheet printed on both sides. Typical applications include multi-language safety warnings on small packages where a booklet label is too big. Statoil, for example, replaced two separate labels for its West and East European customers with a single Duokett label printed on three sides, with messages in nine languages.

Multikett is Nordvall's multi-page label, incorporating a self-adhesive carrier and available in a wide range of page numbers (up to 32), text layout, fold positioning and sealing solutions. Two Nilpeter B-3000 letterpress machines are dedicated to Multikett production, equipped with Longford booklet insertion units. Booklets are not glued onto the labels, but laminated into place, with the lamination doubling as a reclosure device. UV screen units apply Braille print in-line.

As well as its core PS labels business, Nordvalls is majority owner of TTS AB, a litho printing company with special equipment for different folded and finished products. Until recently Nordvalls also part-owned print&apply systems manufacturer Mectec Electronik AB. Although the company was sold to Domino, it remains an important partner where Nordvall is asked to provide turnkey labeling solutions.

As a final observation, Nordvalls carries around €1M of stock for customer call-off. 'This is a service we feel we must offer, but it also allows us to produce longer runs where it suits our production planning,' explains Dahl. ■

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FINAT congress sees Europe on a roll

The FINAT annual congress in Berlin found the European label sector in generally good health when growth in central and eastern regions is taken into account. **Andy Thomas** reports

Self-adhesive label use in Europe has now exceeded the significant five billion square meters a year mark as sales in 2006 soared overall by 7.7 percent.

The figures were revealed by Jules Lejeune, managing director of FINAT, at the trade association's annual global congress in Berlin. The congress was held in conjunction with the German self-adhesive trade association VskE.

Over the last ten years, the use of self-adhesive labels has grown by 86 percent – from just under three billion square meters in 1996 to last year's 5.281bn. It passed the three billion square meter mark in 1997, and topped four billion square meters in 2002.

The down-side is that pressure on margins is keeping profitability low. 'I have shown you positive growth figures but we are in this business to make money and profitability, after showing negative signs in recent years, is still very low. However, our survey does show that consumer and business confidence across Europe is upbeat,' he said.

Nevertheless, last year's growth was achieved in each of the industry's main areas – paper rolls and non-paper rolls, paper sheets and non-paper sheets, paper sheets, non-paper rolls and paper rolls – although when examined across the five regions of Europe (Scandinavia, UK and Ireland, Central, Southern and Eastern Europe) growth patterns were erratic.

Lejeune pointed out that in the paper rolls market, Eastern Europe led the way with a 15 percent growth, although from a low base, followed by Southern Europe (up 6.9 percent), Central Europe (up 6.7 percent), with Scandinavia only showing a four percent increase and the UK and Ireland barely changing with just an 0.3 percent improvement. Overall paper roll sales grew by 6.4 percent.

David Harrisson hands over the reigns as FINAT president to Jan Frederik Vink

But in the non-paper rolls market – the fastest expanding sector – Scandinavia showed a 20.8 percent increase in demand and the UK and Ireland 6.4 percent. Southern Europe lagged behind with only a 5.8 percent improvement, but Central Europe (16.2 percent) and Eastern Europe (28.2 percent) had the largest expansion. Over the whole market non-paper rolls expanded by 13.2 percent.

Similarly in the paper sheet market, Scandinavia showed a 23.5 percent fall, prompting Lejeune to observe that in that area this medium is now almost extinct. The UK and Ireland receded by one percent and growth in Central and Southern Europe was only 2.5 percent and 2.8 percent respectively. Eastern Europe expanded by 17 percent. Growth of paper sheet based labels was six percent across Europe.

Non-paper sheet operations also showed a mixed pattern with demand receding in Southern Europe (minus 6.1 percent), the UK and Ireland (down 4.7 percent, only up by 1.9 percent in Scandinavia, by 14.9 percent in Eastern Europe and by 16 percent in Central Europe. Across Europe this averaged a 3.4 percent expansion.

The survey is based on information provided by eight major companies

representing an estimated 85 percent share of Europe's self-adhesive label industry materials consumption and operating in 27 countries.

Looking ahead at the short and medium term, Lejeune stressed that the business climate in the self-adhesive label sector continues to be upbeat. The strong development of business confidence as indicated by FINAT's quarterly member survey is also reflected in the positive assessment of order books, new orders as well as the volume of output. The down-side is that the profitability index, whilst positive, so far has remained behind other business indicators. 'I have shown you positive growth figures but we are in this business to make a return on our activities in order to invest in the future of our industry. No doubt this has influenced investment behaviour in our industry. According to our quarterly survey this is more and more driven towards product and process innovation as well as training and retraining in order to increase efficiency and cut out unnecessary cost, as opposed to expanding capacity by installing new buildings and capital goods or by hiring new people.'

Based on the results for the first quarter of 2007 FINAT anticipates a continuation of the growth trends of 2005 and 2006 into 2007, with overall business growing between six and seven percent, and filmic rolls continuing to grow more than twice the rate of paper rolls.

Global instability

The congress was held against the background of a relatively buoyant global economy. But Prof Dr Norbert Walter, head of Deutsche Bank Research and Germany's leading economist, told the Congress that next year's Chinese Olympics could herald potentially volatile future developments in 2008 and beyond.

Prof Walter said that economic pressures are already building up, but China will try hard to contain them, particularly ahead of the Olympics.

Financial worries in the United States, created by its $800bn a year current account deficit will put further pressure on its construction and automobile sectors and any attempt to alleviate the problems by devaluing the dollar will have knock-on effects on Asian nations that rely on the US IT market.

Because of social and economic pressures in China, particularly the need to create jobs, its government will be willing to revalue its currency only marginally for now, adding further worries to the world economy.

This, along with continuing high energy prices, will tend to drive up interest rates. It will mean that nations with currently strong currencies such as the euro and the pound sterling will become price uncompetitive, potentially jeopardizing trade in some parts of Europe.

Prof Walter said Germany, because of several years of successfully driving down unit costs, would be well placed to weather this storm, but other major EU nations, such as Italy, France and Spain, could be hit hard.

Helmut Schreiner, MD of Schreiner Etiketten and president of the VskE, looked at the current state of the German self-adhesive labels industry. He noted that the German industry is still made up mostly by small-to-medium sized companies. Some 15 percent of German converters have a turnover of under €1m, one quarter of have a turnover between €5-10m, and a further 40 percent between €10-50m.

However, the top 20 percent of companies, with a turnover between €50-500m, account for almost half of the German label market, while the bottom 15 percent are fighting for just four percent of the market and the 25 percent of €5-10m companies account for only 10 percent of the market.

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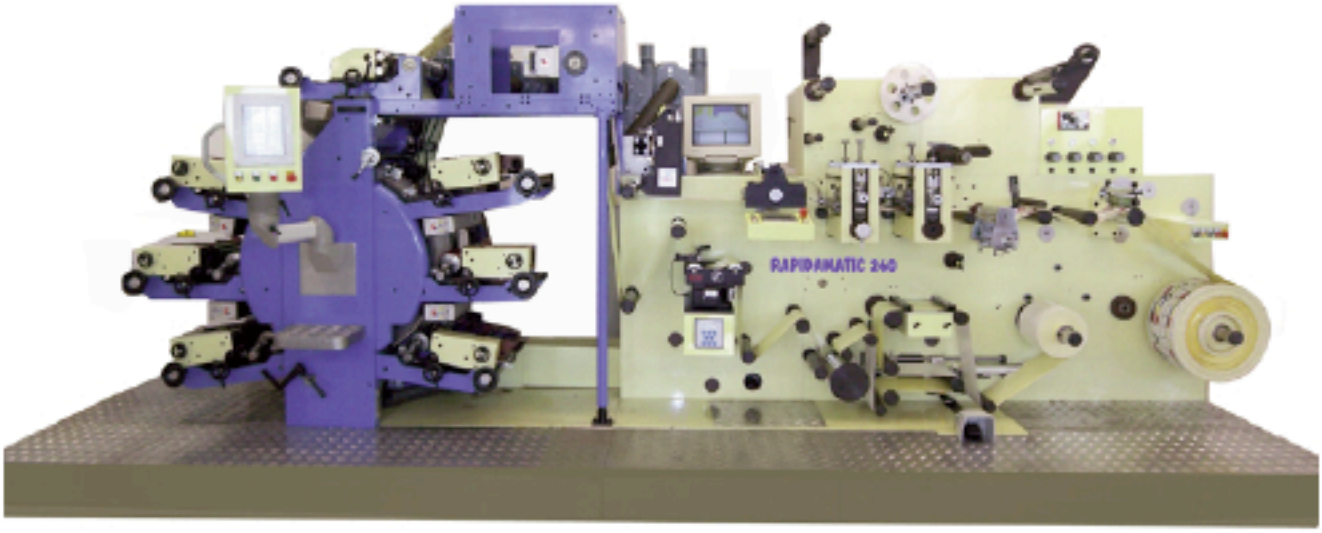

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At the same time, the business activity of the German paper, board and foil industry has declined sharply over the last five years by over eight percent. Overall, however, business leaders in the labels and package print areas are showing a rising curve of confidence since a low point in late 2004, reflecting the wider results of the FINAT materials survey.

Against this volatile background, developing markets looks set to continue to grow at double digit rates. Prof P V Narayanan, of the SIES School of Packaging in Mumbai, told the FINAT Congress that the Indian label market is set to grow by 20 percent in the next two to three years.

'Over the last ten years India has seen its retail economy fortunes soar at ten to 15 percent growth rates annually, to a present value of between $180bn and $230bn, and this is likely to continue over an extended period,' Prof Narayanan said.

This growth is reflected in the expansion of its label printing industry, which last year teamed up with FINAT and VskE to create the Indian-European Label Exchange. India is on target to print at least three billion square meters of labels a year by 2009-10. By comparison, the whole of Europe produced 5.2bn square meters of labels in 2006.

Prof Narayanan said: 'This trend indicates that India will double its 3.2 percent of world market share to 6.3 percent in square meter terms by that time.'

Reporting of the successful exchanges between European and Indian label converters which took place in New Delhi last December – supported by both FINAT and VskE, Prof Narayanan told the congress this business-to-business matchmaking event had been well received by the members of the Indian association LMAI and should be repeated on a biannual basis.

Management practice

The Berlin FINAT congress focused heavily on management techniques at a time of unprecedented change and challenge in the European labels industry.

Two German management gurus took a close look at management change trends in the self-adhesive label industry.

Frank Schomburg, co-founder and owner of nextpractice GmbH, a Bremen-based corporate consultancy, stressed that the new environment in label printing demands a willingness to change and envelop all the knowledge and skills within a company. 'The intelligence of single leaders is no longer sufficient,' he said.

While decisions still have to be taken 'top-down', solutions have to be developed 'bottom-up' and without this common understanding of the challenges, or the accessibility, transparency of information and the active involvement of the people concerned, the company's results will remain well below its potential.

Today's 'good' manager is more a team captain than an autocrat and has to view his colleagues 'more as a bed of roses than a thorny problem'. For an industry that has more than its fair share of companies that were started and driven by the determination of a dynamic one-man-band, the challenges of increasing globalisation and technical change demand an increasing orchestration of management talents within a company.

This view was reinforced by Prof Dr Jorg Knoblauch, an author of various management books, who believes his '33 roses' program can convert employees into co-entrepreneurs.

'As much as a company needs satisfied customers, it also needs satisfied employees,' he said. 'Establishing a company culture based on partnership and common values gives its managers the key to successfully converting their company into a learning organization able to stimulate its employees in taking their own responsibility and help to create a sense of ownership within the workforce.'

Other management related presentations were given on implementing a Six Sigma quality control program and conflict resolution in the workplace. ■

New leadership

Jan Frederik Vink and Andrea Vimercati were elected respectively president and vice-president of FINAT. Dutchman Vink, 51, is managing director of Kolibri Labels, and Italian Dr Vimercati, 34, is sales manager of Pilot Italia. They took over from David Harrisson, of the Skanem Group, who has been FINAT's president for the last two years.

Said Jan Frederik Vink: 'As a board member since 2002, I will continue on the path that has been set out under the leadership of my predecessors. As part of my mission for the coming years, I intend to put more emphasis on the quality of our networks, and to expand our portfolio of management tools and platforms. Furthermore, FINAT has built up extensive experience in managing the organizational and cultural diversity in our home market, Europe.'

Vink said that FINAT will also take a much more active role in the fast-growing Asian markets. 'With globalization around the corner, it is time to actively support emerging label markets in Asia by providing standards as well as the educational framework in anticipation of future label partnerships between our respective regions. There is a lot of development taking place in the Far East with lots of small label companies starting up to meet local demand and FINAT has a major role to play.'

Dr Vimercati outlined other issues which will also exercise FINAT over the next two years: 'the question of recycling, of public relations and our influence generally as well as giving more benefits to our members – especially with a new generation of owners and managers taking over in the years to come now that the present baby boomers are gradually moving out towards a well deserved retirement.'

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UPM Raflatac president, Heikki Pikkarainen

Positive growth encourages RFID and labelstock investment

Mike Fairley talks to UPM Raflatac president Heikki Pikkarainen about the company's expansion program and plans for the future

As UPM Raflatac passes the tenth anniversary of its first investment in RFID inlay production in Finland the signs are 'very positive for the future,' says Heikki Pikkarainen, president of the group, in an exclusive interview with *Labels & Labeling*.

'We have been very encouraged over the past two years by how well RFID is now growing,' he commented, 'particularly the growth coming from HF smart labels. Applications in libraries, CD and DVD stock-keeping and the metro are showing very positive results, and airlines are also now moving towards implementation – although implementation in the pharmaceutical sector is still relatively slow at the moment.'

In one recent development, Touch Automation, a US industry leader in developing automated dispensing solutions for movies, music and video games, now exclusively uses UPM Raflatac HF RFID tags to optimize key supply chain and consumer processes. Found in more than 1,000 grocery stores and other retailing locations across the USA, Touch Automation's systems provide consumers with an easy, convenient means to rent or purchase entertainment CDs and DVDs, while reducing the threat of theft and shrinkage.

In the automotive industry UPM Raflatac has also had recent success with a project to implement RFID technology into Hyundai/Kia Motors Group, a leading South Korean vehicle manufacturer, so as to improve the visibility of its automotive parts supply chain. 'In the first phase of this project,' said Pikkarainen, 'approximately 130,000 UPM Raflatac DogBone UHF RFID tags will be applied to parts boxes and packaging cases from five major suppliers while, in the second phase, 20 million UPM Raflatac RFID tags will be used annually to track all boxes and containers of automotive parts through the supply chain.'

In a further development this year, UPM Raflatac announced that it had been selected to supply RFID inlays – in cooperation with Moscow-based Comvision Russland – for contactless paper tickets on the Moscow Metro. Initially, monthly usage of the inlays will be five million pieces, rising to approximately 30 million inlays per month after the transitional period is completed at the end of summer 2007.

Such has been the success of UPM Rafalatac's investment in RFID that it announced in February that it was doubling its inlay

UPM Raflatac's new Changshu-based labelstock production facility is located about 60 miles west of Shanghai

UPM Raflatac celebrated the grand opening of its new pressure sensitives factory in Changhsu, China in March. (Pictured from left to right: Danny Zang, Jukka-Pekka Haapanen, Timo Johansson, Heikki Pikkarainen, Jussi Vanhanen, Robert Sun, Antti Wiksten)

The winners of the Label Design Awards 2007 were announced at the opening ceremony of UPM Raflatac's new pressure sensitives factory in Changhsu, China in March

RFID tag and inlay production capacity at its Jyväskylä production plant in Finland to address the rapidly growing demand for both HF and UHF products. This is an addition to the group's RFID production plant in North Carolina, USA.

Additionally, it has joined with ADT and Salpomec to open (on the May 2 2007) a unique Apparel RFID Solution Center in Lahti, Finland. The first of its kind anywhere in the world, this new facility demonstrates how RFID can significantly enhance supply chain management and in-store retail operations and is expected to host visits by up to 100 garment manufacturers, brand owners, retailers and logistics providers during the coming months.

Already at the global forefront in the development and high-volume production of HF and UHF radio frequency identification tags and inlays, Pikkarainen said: 'UPM Raflatac has made these investments to support continuously growing customer demand for RFID tags in a range of market places where there are now real benefit applications being realized. With twice the capacity and further scalability we'll be able to further secure our leading position in this fast-growing market.'

But it is not just in the RFID sector where UPM Raflatac is experiencing positive results. As a world-leading supplier of self-adhesive materials for a wide variety of needs in product and information labeling, the group is also making major investments in labelstock production. 'Last year was a good year for us – worldwide,' commented Pikkarainen, 'and this year has also started well.

'To continue our global sales – running at close to one billion euros in 2006 – we have been making major investments worldwide over the past couple of years, and that's still

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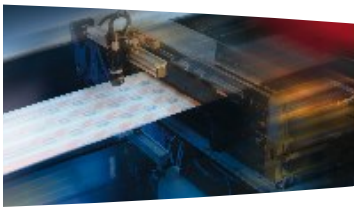

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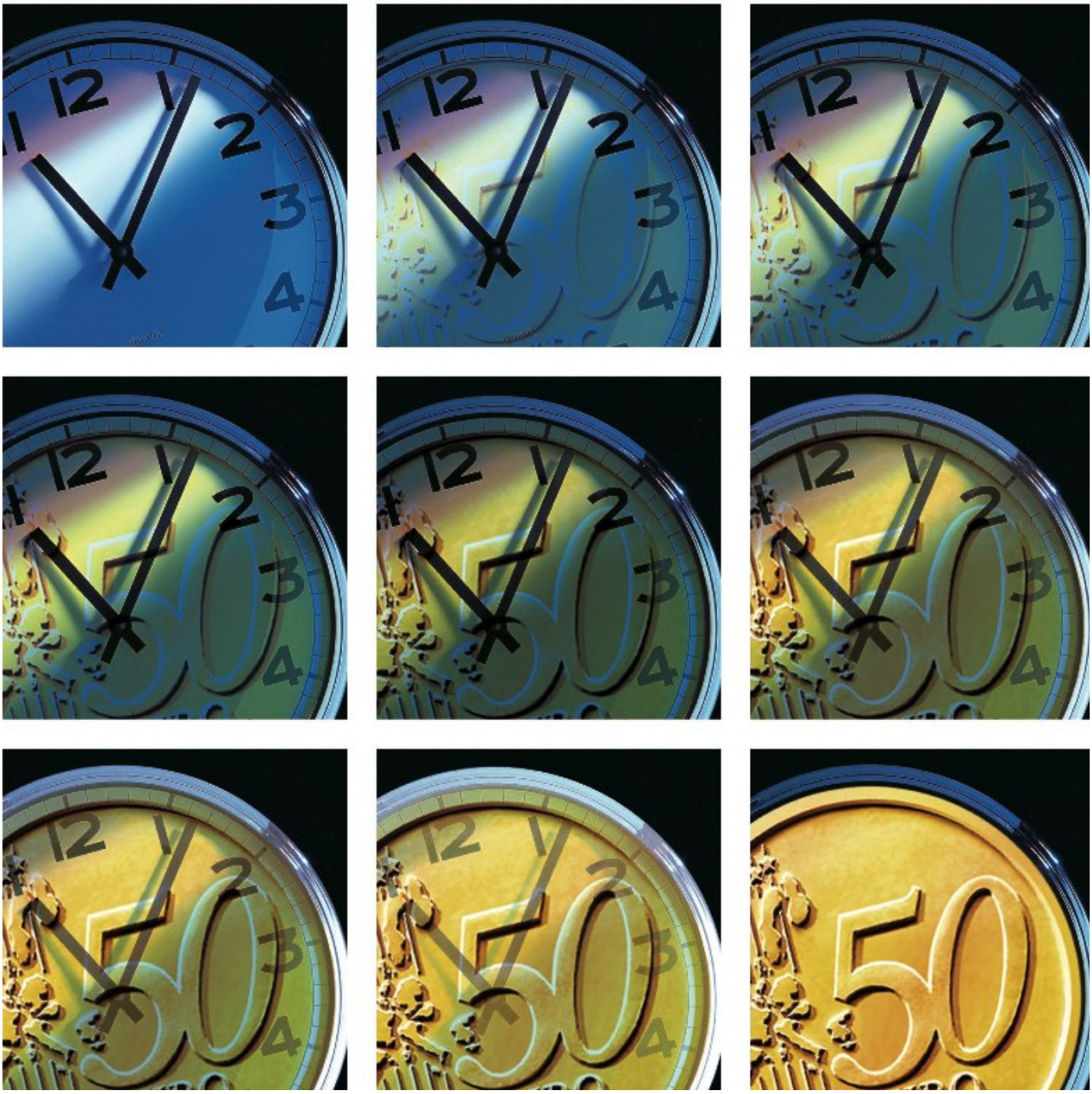

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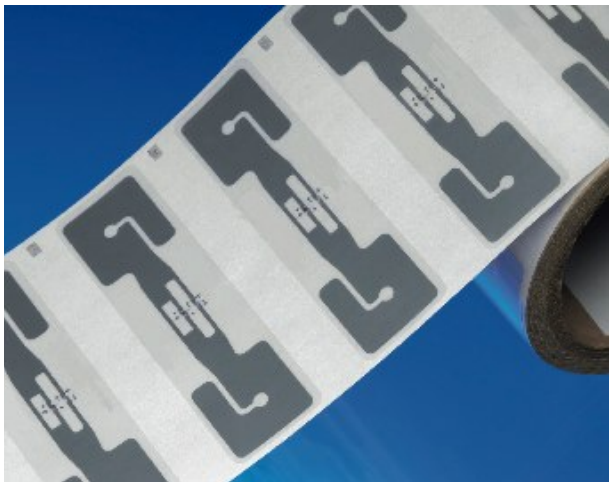
Mass transit cards have been a big market for RFID chips



Bespoke antenna design is critical to success of RFID applications

continuing at the present time, most recently with a new world-scale factory in south-west Poland that is scheduled to commence production during the fourth quarter of 2008. This new facility will be for the on-roll production of both paper and film products using water-based and hot-melt adhesive technologies. In particular, we see very good potential for VIP materials in the whole Eastern Block of countries.

'Also in Europe, we are building a new speciality products one meter wide coating line in Tampere, Finland, which will come on stream in early 2008. At the same time, we are strengthening our R&D capabilities in Finland and using this facility to bring an increasing number of new products to the market over the next couple of years. In particular, we are adding resources into the filmic side of our business, and further improving paper and film quality across our products and investing worldwide in additional slitting capabilities.

'Already this year we have introduced an improved, double-coated Raflagloss labelstock for the food, retail and other high gloss segment applications which we believe has the highest gloss of any product in this segment, giving converters and end-users a superior level of print resolution, color reproduction and highest contrast definition.'

Outside of Europe, UPM Raflatac is also making significant investments in China, India, Brazil and North America. 'In China,' explains Heikki Pikkarainen, 'commercial production of labelstock has started. We have received very positive feedback of our service and product quality and we are gradually expanding our product range in the paper and film areas. Everything is extremely positive for us in the country.

'In India we have recently opened a distribution center close to Mumbai. Labelstock is mainly shipped in from our coating plant in Malaysia at present. Indian taxes on imported material are slowly coming down and this should encourage further growth in this exciting new market. We are certainly following trends in India very closely.

'North America too, has been a good market for UPM Raflatac for some time and we continue to add to our production capabilities there with opening later this year of a new factory in Dixon. Further south in the Americas, Mexico continues to go well and we will open a new distribution terminal in Brazil, close to São Paulo, to better serve the South American market.

'Put together, UPM Raflatac is currently achieving an annual growth of around 10 percent worldwide – and this is before the new global capacity that is being built and developed comes on stream during the coming year. This follows on from a program of restructuring which we have been undertaking over the past few years. Although there will be some reduction in head count at certain locations with the new, more efficient, production lines coming on stream, we don't see any key issues for the future – apart from the environmental and sustainability issues where we want to take an active role also to promote the success of the whole PSA industry.

'Today, UPM Raflatac has a global service network made up of factories on five continents and a broad network of terminals and sales offices worldwide. New facilities continue to come on stream to add to capacity, paper and film products, RFID inlays and tags. Growth is still very encouraging worldwide and we believe we have a strong, ongoing future in the world of label materials and products.'

However, that is not the least of their ongoing achievements. Even the environmental, waste and sustainability challenge is being positively approached by UPM Raflatac. 'We have some very interesting new developments in hand at the moment,' says Pikkarainen, 'which we intend to launch at Labelexpo Europe. In particular, we are well advanced with plans for the establishment of a facility to collect substrate and matrix waste and convert this waste into a new range of high performance building products – but we will explain more of this at the show.'

For a company that only entered the labelstock manufacturing business with one coater around 30 years ago, and then made its first small acquisition of an industry competitor in 1984, UPM Raflatac has come a long way to become one of the two major players in the world in 2007.

Highly positive about the future, major expansion and investment programs in hand, growing success with RFID and a new business opportunity that targets the environmental challenge, there seems little doubt that UPM Raflatac will remain at the forefront of this ever-exciting industry. ■

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A New Line Has Been Drawn

Ian Wright, MD Harlands Labels (center), flanked by MPS' Nick Tyrer (L) and Eric Hoendervangers (R)

Harlands moves east

Since its acquisition by the global Clondalkin Group, Harlands Labels has moved rapidly into Poland and welded together an impressive pan-European group. **Andy Thomas** reports

Harlands Labels represents an excellent example of what it takes to become a global player in this age of end user consolidation. In the last seven years the company has been on a roller-coaster ride from administration, through a successful MBO, to acquisition by the global Clondalkin Group. Today the company is at the heart of a pan-European labels operation which spans the UK, Ireland and Poland as part of the specialist packaging division of the Clondalkin Group.

Harlands' managing director Ian Wright is today responsible for the P&L of what he describes as a 'label cluster' within the Clondalkin Group's European labels operations. Wright led an MBO at Harlands in September 2003 from holding company Grenadier, backed by high profile venture capital fund holders, and turned the company into one of the UK's most profitable labels businesses.

But it was already apparent to Wright that to survive as a major player in the toiletries and cosmetics sector, Harlands would have to follow its key end user customers like Avon into Poland and Russia. 'We were being faced with key customers making decisions to move their businesses to Eastern Europe, so there was considerable pressure to evolve our business and offer local supply,' recalls Wright. 'We found difficulty persuading our equity partners that we needed to create a plant in Poland and because we could not progress internally, began discussions with Clondalkin.'

Clondalkin, facing the same pressures in its European carton business, had already opened a plant in Poland, and Wright found a receptive audience for his plans. 'Both for Harlands and for Clondalkin the driver was the move of our common customer Avon to Poland and Russia, where it now employs some 3,500 people,' says Wright. 'We moved quickly from joint venture to acquisition discussions in May 2005, and 20 months after the MBO we sold to Clondalkin. It was strategically right for Harlands and was a good strategic fit for Clondalkin. It meant that we could move to Poland fast, and by the end of October we were operational there. By November we were trading profitably.'

Common kit

Ian Wright's investment strategy has been to install MPS presses across the labels businesses he controls.

Harlands had always been a Gallus letterpress house, with six combination UV letterpress/screen presses, and Wright made the transition to UV flexo on an MPS press well before the acquisition by Clondalkin.

'Before choosing the MPS we ran trials with various manufacturers for a year,' says Wright. 'It was our cash, and I needed a company that was going to support us, because we knew that the investment here had to be complemented in Poland – although at the time we did not know how to get there.'

Wright wanted inter-operability between presses at different plants – not just common tooling, but common fingerprinting and a common repro base. 'Customers today demand a

contingency strategy. Today we can have digital plates and screens made here in he UK and ship them to Poland. Dot gain curves are identical at both sites and we run the same plates and aniloxes,' says Wright. A common MIS has been set up between the UK and Polish operations.

Today there are three MPS presses in Clondalkin's European plants – 330mm wide machines in Hull and Poland, and a 16in machine at Chadwicks. The presses are converting a wide range of materials, including unsupported films in Poland and sachets at Chadwick's.

Letterpress to flexo

'Moving to flexo with the MPS has increased our efficiency, speeding up our processes and changeover,' says Wright. 'This is essential as we are faced with pressure from decreasing prices per label year-on-year and reduced lead times.'

As a long term letterpress house, Harlands has spent the last 12 months becoming more confident with flexo/screen printing. 'We've committed ourselves and our customers to produce work we formerly produced letterpress/screen,' comments Wright. 'For example, we have done a lot of work for the whisky industry on the MPS which two years ago we would not have considered. There are still jobs we choose to do letterpress/screen where we feel we can convert it efficiently enough.'

An example of a complex letterpress combination job is the label which is applied to the Chivas whisky carton. This makes two passes for the 10-color base label, before running through a press set up for screen. The labels are embossing on an intermittent flatbed 'because we can't get the same depth on rotary male/female systems,' says Wright. 'We also print the labels for the cartons because the carton boys can't hit these demanding quality levels.'

Wright says more letterpress jobs could be printed UV flexo, but there remain a lot of buyers, especially in 'traditional' markets, who do not want to be converted to flexo. 'We have won new work for the whisky industry and 90 percent of what we've won we convert very successfully on the MPS, and this has helped change the market perception.'

The decision to move from letterpress to UV flexo was not a big deal for Wright: 'Letterpress is dying,' he states unequivocally. 'The colossal change was within our workforce. We were high quality but low efficiency, and had to change attitudes and mindsets and move to a faster and more efficient mode of production, with less wastage. These attitudes take some time to overcome, for example moving from 35 m/min to 150 m/min. It is different in Poland, because they didn't know any different.'

Harlands moved into UV flexo with this 330mm wide MPS press

Harlands used the UK-based Manufacturing Advisory Service to implement this Lean Manufacturing program. 'At our first team meeting the first comment was "the company wants us to do more for less", then "what can this guy teach me about my job?" It took months to find out that it does not matter that this guy only knows about Nissan. He's not talking about changing the printing process. He's asking have you got the tools to make a changeover in 10-15 minutes?'

Doing business in Poland

Clondalkin has been as good as its word in supporting Harlands' move into Poland. 'The MPS is the core of the Polish plant, and when we're ready – possibly later this year – we will go down the MPS route for our next press in Poland,' confirms Wright.

In another joint UK-Poland project, Harlands improved its existing BRC IoP Category A accreditation to the more stringent and controlled Category B, meaning that the business is now able to produce labels for direct application to food products. The requirements of the new standard were replicated at the Polish facility, so the two production facilities now have both ISO 9000:2000 and BRC IoP Category B.

Harlands' hygiene manager Sue Webster worked alongside Kath Cotterill, Clondalkin group quality manager, to drive the project forward. 'We have also implemented an ongoing assessment and training programmed which is aimed at continued adherence and development of our certification,' says Webster.

Big groups

Given the chequered history of big groups in the labels sector, why does Ian Wright think Clondalkin will succeed? (Wright is in a good position to comment: he was MD at Double S Labels at the time of its acquisition by Mailway ten years ago).

'Clondalkin is totally focused on the print and packaging industry and always looks to acquire leading operations in niche or added value areas,' states Wright. 'Clondalkin invests in the management team, and the continuity that that offers.' ■

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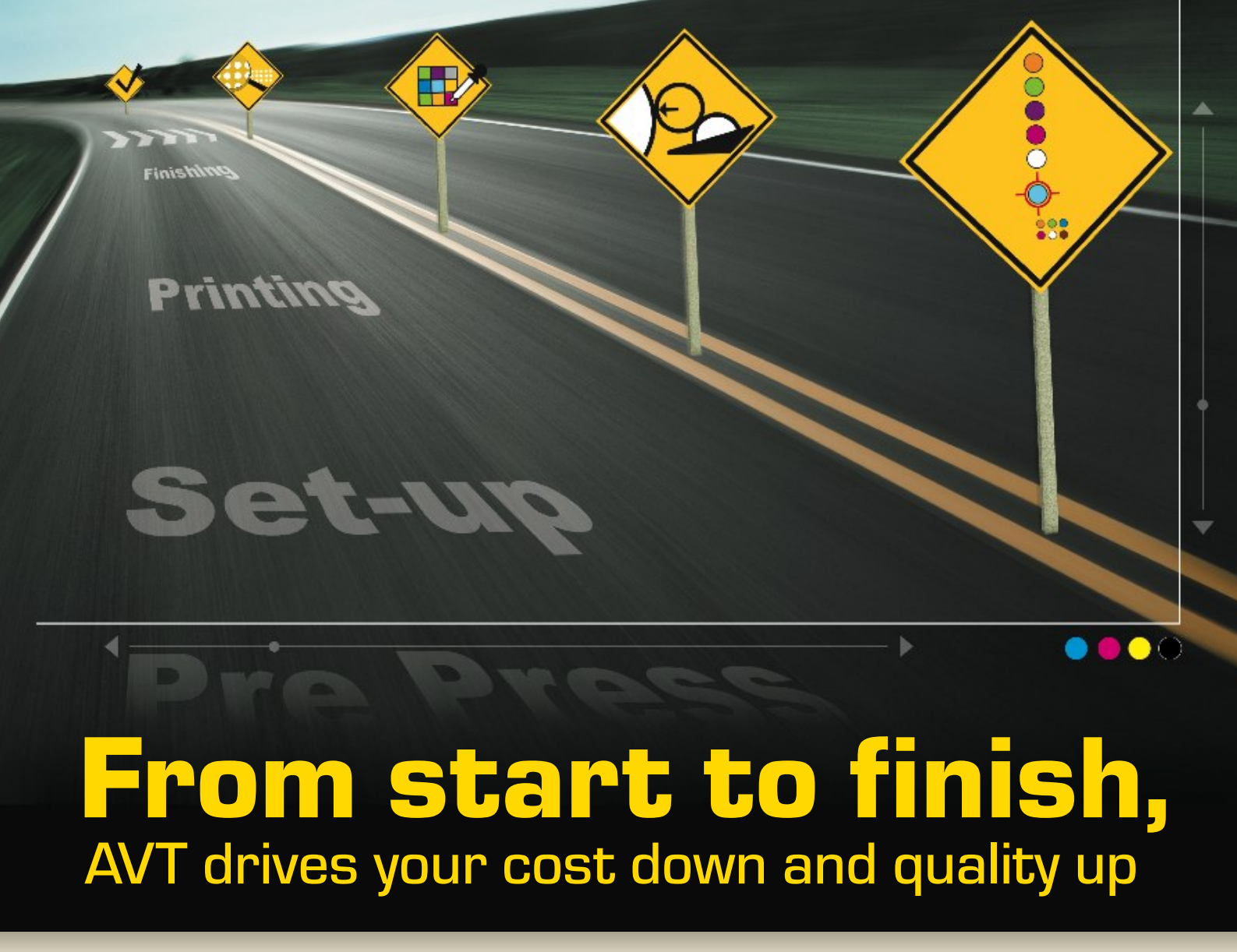

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EFI users Connect

EFI has made a major entrance into the labels sector with the acquisition of the Jetrion inkjet system. **Danielle Jerschefske** reports from EFI's annual Connect Users Group forum in Las Vegas

One thousand three hundred attendees joined the EFI staff at the Wynn Las Vegas Hotel/Casino recently for the company's Connect 2007 users' conference. Commercial and industrial printers had the opportunity to attend daily training seminars about EFI's technology. From workflow solutions to Rips to digital printing, customers learned more about how their products could help increase productivity.

Ken Stack, vice president and general manager, Jetrion Industrial Inkjet Systems, discussed the technology of a series of digital inkjet applications specifically developed for the label, packaging and direct mail industries.

First, EFI offers a hybrid Jetrion 3000, for work on direct mail and label applications. It is able to print variable data in-line, at up to 250 feet per minute. This one pass operation allows printers to complete new applications quicker, or add value to current ones by shortening production time and addressing emerging market demands.

One industry utilizing this hybrid technology is the tire industry. 'For example, Cooper tires needed seventy-five SKUs for a variety of tire sizes and styles. An industry like this requires robust inks that are reliable, durable and flexible,' says Stack. Whitlam Label Company printed the Cooper tires industrial labels on the Jetrion 3000 and is very happy with the outcome.

Next in the product series is the full-color Jetrion 4000 digital printer for flexible, corrugated and textile applications. EFI's proprietary inks deliver high adhesion to a variety of substrates.

Stack explained that the positioning of the Jetrion 4000 is different to the HP Indigo. While both are 'digital', the Jetrion is an inkjet application whereas the Indigo requires toner-based inks. 'Indigo presses are designed for the high end label market,' continued Stack, 'such as wine labels that require pristine clarity and outstanding photo quality. Most label companies don't need such high quality.'

Bob Napierala, Jetrion 4000 user and president of True Label, says, 'We're able to turn customer jobs around more quickly at costs closer to flexo than toner-based alternatives, and do jobs in-house that we previously outsourced.'

Jetrion designed the 4000 press for the middle market sector of prime and industrial labels. There are many printers, EFI believes, who can make use of the variability and short run capability of digital, but may not require high-end graphics.

The 4000 is available in four and eight inch widths, runs at sixty-five feet per minute, and comes installed with EFI's color and workflow software for process management. It incorporates Xaar grayscale printheads and a high quality UV coating system. Stack is eager to bring the press into the European market for the first time at Labelexpo Europe 2007.

Last in the portfolio is custom integration of the 3000 and 4000 for direct-to-product printing for the packaging industry.

From a broader prospective, EFI's CEO Guy Gecht presented the users group with his analysis for the future of the printing industry by discussing what he believes are 'The Big 5' issues: consolidation, power of information, digital printing, industrial printing, and Green.

First Gecht acknowledged the critical situation faced by commercial printers. As the industry has grown globally, so has the number of consolidations and acquisitions. 'Good or bad news,' he said, 'depending on your game plan.'

Gecht told his listeners they must 'capitalize on the value of the web'. 'It is a way to connect with customers like never before, 24/7,' Gecht says. Printers must utilize the latest information technology to excel. Gecht also stressed the power of automation to reduce human error.

Gecht feels that digital printing will be an extremely powerful piece of the printing industry over the next ten years. 'We believe that $118 billion is moving to digital printing by 2015.' The demands for shorter run capability, personalization and quicker turn-around time will drive digital printing to double-digit growth.

Industrial printing of labels and packaging is an important and growing sector of the printing industry, estimated by EFI to be worth around $98 billion. Gecht is particularly enthusiastic about prospects for the Jetrion technology in emerging markets like South America. 'The Jetrion 4000 is better suited for the average label printer. It goes faster than other digital label technologies and is cheaper per label making the ROI more favorable.'

Lastly, Gecht asked the Green question: optional or necessary? He was quick to point out how carbon neutral has hit Hollywood when advertising movies such as Shrek and The Hulk, and how consumer awareness is growing. 'This is going to shape our industry and we must pay attention.' ■

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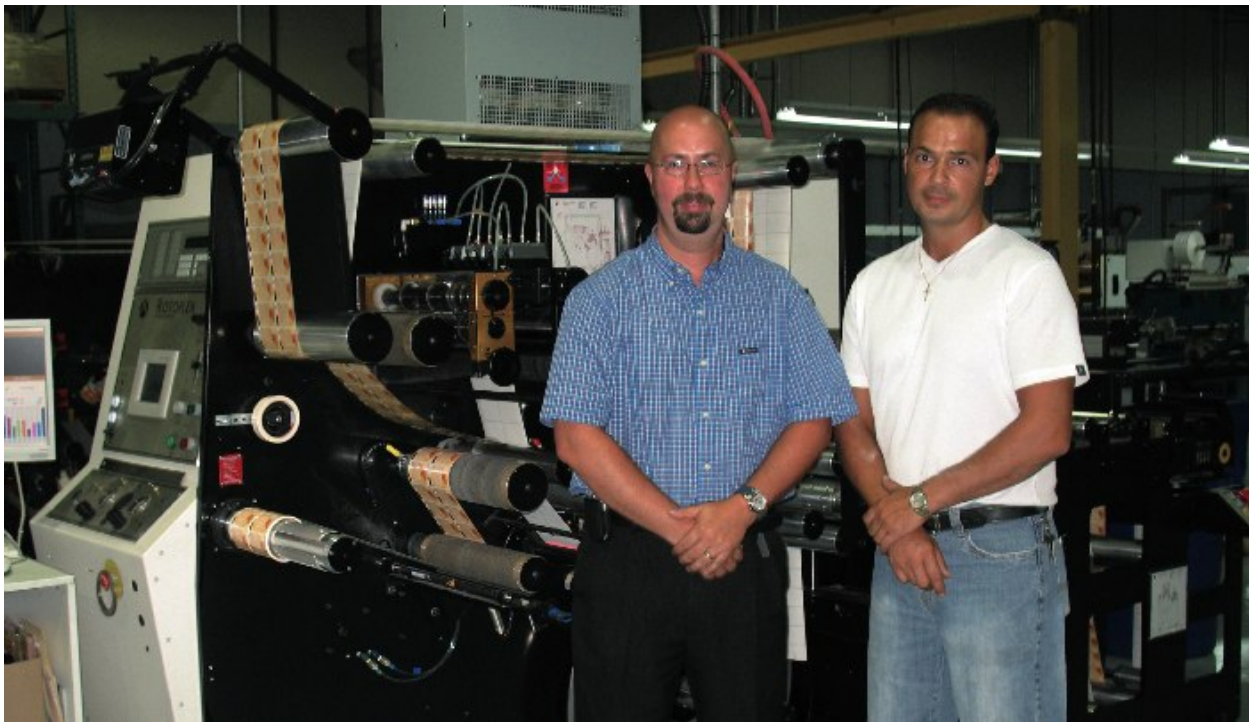


1. L-r: Guy Gendreau, QA director and Joel Boudreau, production manager, Groupe Lelys

Brand quality assurance

One of Canada's largest label manufactures meets stringent quality control challenges with consistent rewind tension and integrated vision technology. **James Quirk** reports

'Sneak-a-peek' at the quality assurance manager's preferred label supplier list at some of the largest brand manufacturers in North America and you will undoubtedly see the name Groupe Lelys. Meeting the challenges of brand integrity with stringent quality assurance initiatives, Lelys serves some of the most recognized brands in health and beauty, food and pharmaceuticals.

Listed among the top 50 printers in Canada, Groupe Lelys prides itself as being one of the most innovative solution-oriented manufacturers in the label and packaging industry.

The company operates two manufacturing facilities including Laval Quebec and Toronto Ontario; employing more than 90 people; producing unsupported, pressure sensitive and multi-ply labels.

With more than 50-years experience, this privately-owned label manufacturer has carved itself an enviable niche by strategically investing no less than $2 million annually in its capital resources. 'At Lelys, we know that maintaining brand recognition and consistency are of the utmost importance to our customers,' says Guy Gendreau, QA director, Groupe Lelys.

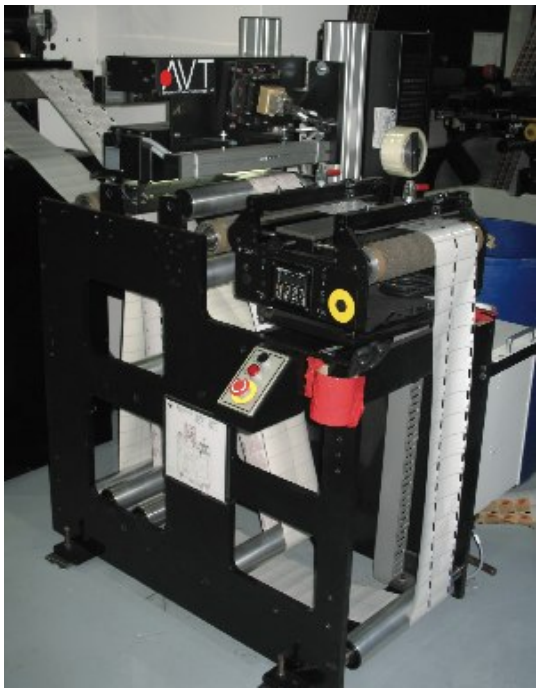
Manufacturers of leading brands invest significant resources in brand integrity as the label and package becomes the brands most important touch point. Leveraging this critical asset is strategically important to brands as the product must communicate its tangible qualities while competing for attention. As the demand for greater quality assurance increases, more and more brand manufacturers are looking to outsource the quality assurance process – resulting in higher levels of efficiency, quality control and cost reduction.

'A few years ago, most of our large customers had a quality control (QC) department, but in order to reduce costs many of these QC departments were closed,' says Gendreau. 'They basically wanted that same level of confidence and control, delivered in a comparable time frame – at better prices. To ensure standards were met, clients started asking for more options, like having a Certificate of Conformity, validating the numbers of labels per roll (reconciliation) and guaranteeing the integrity of the labels (vision systems). As a result, Lelys now performs all these tasks in-house – providing invaluable service to our clients. Our objective is to provide high quality products to help differentiate our customer's brands.'

Consistent and predictable tension

Tension control has become a critical requirement in label converting and package printing with the increased demand for film and unsupported substrates. Every stage including unwinding, web transport, slitting and rewinding demands consistent and predictable performance to improve product quality and ultimately reduce costs.

Recently, Lelys added a third Rotoflex VLI eDrive film slitting



(Above) Rotoflex VLI main operating panel with touch screen monitor integrated with AVT interface

(Left) AVT 100% vision system integrated with Rotoflex VLI film rewinder

and rewinding machine to its Laval facility.

'Purchasing the Rotoflex film rewinder literally saved one of our largest accounts,' says Gendreau. 'We were printing these perfect labels only to continually reject them at the finishing stage. It was at the point where we were shipping our best rolls to the customer only to have them rejected externally. Once the new Rotoflex film machine was up and running we immediately began to produce softer rolls with consistent rewind tension – improving the roll quality and reducing waste/rejection.'

With its electrical drive web transport system the Rotoflex VLI film rewinder offers consistent performance, low maintenance, lower tension/higher speeds, easy job set-up and operation. Compared to electro mechanical transport rewind systems where performance varies with wear and tear of the clutch and brake parts, the only moving part in the Rotoflex eDrive machine is the AC motor. As a result, the electronically synchronized integrated drive system enables maximum web control for the most delicate filmic materials.

'Our operators love the Rotoflex machine,' reports Gendreau, 'it's easy to operate and requires very little maintenance other than blowing dust off the components.

Job history including the optimal tension control and speed requirements can all be recalled easily from the touch screen monitor – eliminating guesswork.'

A number of options are also available including a slip differential shaft, ideal for applications where print or material thickness is not consistent across the web resulting in tension problems due to different roll diameters. The slip differential shaft allows each core to slip individually and is typically used in film applications.

Confidence and control

In February 2007, Lelys integrated an AVT vision system with its Rotoflex film machine to offer complete 100% vision inspection at the rewind stage. Gendreau stresses the importance of this quality assurance process before sending the printed rolls to the customer. 'Our own tough regulations, high standards and 'internal' brand focus on quality sets us apart from our competitors. We have redundant vision inspection procedures both on press and in finishing.'

According to Gendreau, the AVT system is easy to use and works seamlessly with the Rotoflex film machine. 'Whenever a defect is detected, our operator is alerted. We can quickly see the defect on the monitor and reposition the web for comparison. The Rotoflex/AVT combination gives the assurance to our customers that the quality is consistent through the entire production. The risk of contamination (foreign labels) is reduced to a minimum. In fact, this combination has already created new business for us.

One customer in particular has already increased their volumes significantly as a result of this advanced technology.'

'Our expertise in pharmaceutical products is second to none. Our Laval plant has been specifically designed to facilitate product research and maximize security to ensure that products meet and surpass customer expectations. Labels produced at the Laval plant are made from materials, glues and paper that undergo a thorough High Technology Inspection process as soon as they are received at our facilities to ensure they meet existing pharmaceutical industry standards,' continues Gendreau.

The internal brand

According to a recent critical trends report in the label industry, expanding product lines into new markets is considered the best investment of a company's resources. Group Lelys is continuously offering innovative label and packaging solutions to its customers through new technology and takes great pride in the 'internal' brand focus of its people.

'For over 30 years, our employees have made our company what it is today. We will always rely on our people to provide the best possible quality. Equipment like the Rotoflex and AVT system gives us the tools to add more checks and verifications in our processes – but it's our team that makes it happen. Since the market is changing; we decided to give the best tools to our employees – we are so proud of what's been accomplished. The combination of the right technology and people will continue to bring our company to higher levels. We have all gained from these positive improvements,' concludes Gendreau. ■

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IST's über UV fest

Presentations at IST Metz's recent open house gave visitors an update on how UV curing can help performance and quality. Report by **Barry Hunt**

Last year the IST Metz group posted a turnover of €90 million (US$120.78 million) derived from 13 UV curing companies and subsidiaries, which employ 570 people worldwide. This healthy performance in the thriving UV industry formed the backdrop for this year's 'UV Days' event, held 18-22 June at group headquarters in Nürtingen, near Stuttgart. The aim was to provide a forum for new and experienced users of UV curing, with networking as a major theme. Around 600 registered visitors attended the five-day event, including many from Russia, Poland and parts of Asia.

'It is the third time we have held this type of event, which we now hold every two years,' said Dirk Jägers, managing director. 'Because UV curing technology is so complex we must rely on the input from our partner companies. This year 27 companies were participating in a separate exhibition area, with all of them helping towards the event's informal atmosphere.'

A series of daily workshops themed around quality and productivity issues augmented the exhibition. There were also separate print demonstrations featuring practical examples of UV curing on a seven-unit Heidelberg Speedmaster 102 press in the company's UV Technology Center.

In IST's view, productivity is a question of inputs and outputs: reducing inputs by using energy-saving UV units and increasing outputs by reducing downtime. The need for moving productivity up the agenda has never been greater. All types of printers and converters now face more competitive pressures, excess capacity and squeezed margins, while the costs of energy, labor and raw materials, especially film-based products, climbs ever higher.

These factors have informed IST's product development program over the years, including a downshifting in recent years from lamps with an output of 200 W/cm to 140 W/cm lamps, as used on the latest MBS-5 system. The objective is to develop systems that use even more efficient lamps, although achieving the goal of a 100 W/cm lamp output is seen as a major challenge.

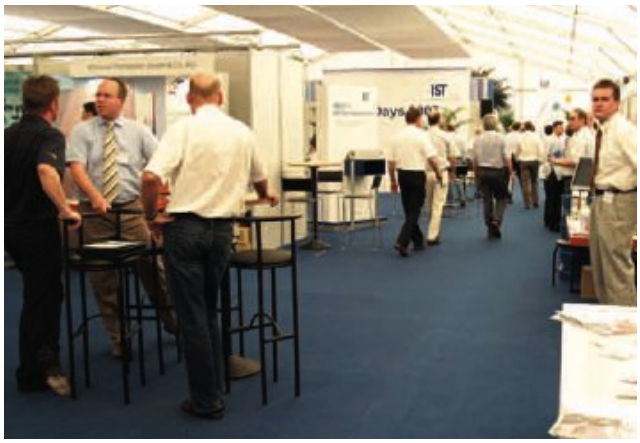
IST says reflector technology, UV lamps and power supply units affect increased productivity and safety of the entire UV process. By reflecting only UV light and removing IR energy, the URS reflectors used on the MBS-5 system are said to combine the advantages of the company's proven CMK cold mirror (dichroic) reflectors and the higher reflectance of polished aluminum types. Using advanced reflector geometry they are also said to increase the efficiency of UV energy by up to 30 percent from the same lamp output.

Also contributing to increased efficiency during lamp changeovers and maintenance is the reduced downtime afforded by its Fast Lamp Change (FLC) mercury lamps. Following the trend towards electronic control units as alternatives to conventional ballast transformers, IST is experiencing good growth for its compact ELC units. Although initially more expensive to install, they are far more efficient and consume less energy. By reducing electrical peaks at run-up and stand-by, ELC units also extend lamp lifetimes.

Reflecting its largest graphics markets, many of the workshop presentations at UV Days were biased towards offset-litho presses, with some glue-applied and in-mold labeling interest. Interestingly, the Heidelberg speaker referred to a collaboration with KBA, a rival German press maker, to certify hybrid and UV-curable inks for materials compatability, including inking rollers and offset blankets. The aim is to produce a common printing form using inks certified to fulfill ISO standards, as well as standardized dampening additives for the ink/water balance.

Several presentations discussed the adhesion of surface coatings and inks on various paper, film and foil substrates. Understanding the differences in the surface tensions, or energy, of the different materials seems essential. For example, before surface coatings or corona treatment the approximate surface energy of PP and PE was 28-30 and 30-32 mN/m respectively, compared with 45-46 mN/M for a polycarbonate.

A Sun Chemical presentation promoting SunCure offset and UV flexo inks stressed the importance of a good adhesion to obtain full cures with UV inks, based on the surface energy, age and use of primers for the chosen substrate. Light fastness was another essential factor, with values being lower on plastic than on board. The usage of pretreatment varnishes and the swelling characteristics of printing inks was also discussed in a presentation from inkmakers Jänecke+Schneemann. Zeller+Gmelin discussed its mono pigmented ink mixing system. Connected with a color metric system with spectral



IST's 'UV Days' exhibition included 27 separate exhibitors

photometer and rotation mixer, it is claimed to offer a wider choice of special colors compared with the Pantone mixing system. Siegwerk described the curing of opaque UV white flexo and offset inks and the characteristics of the chemistry required to obtain high opacity, while retaining good adhesion and overprintability.

Ciba Speciality Chemicals promoted its PrimeIT coatings, used as an alternative to corona treatments on clear, white and metalized BOPP films for UV flexo printing labels and packaging. Collano described the various properties of UV-curable PSA adhesives for clear-on-clear labeling, closure labels for wet wipe pouches, dry peel applications and booklet labels. Other third-party suppliers included HIP-MITSU, an Italian supplier of inline and offline coaters and laminators for PSA label production. Its various turnkey machines apply hot-melt and UV-curable adhesives through slot dies in continuous, intermittent, multiline or combined patterns to allow users to make customized labelstocks. Kocher+Beck were present, this time concentrating on inline diecutting with flexible dies on offset-litho presses rather than the more familiar rotary diecutting on narrow web presses. ■

Gravure opportunity

More narrow and mid-web press manufacturers now offer gravure as an optional module, reflecting the strengths of gravure as one part of a combination print job utilizing flexography or offset. **Andy Thomas** reports

One or two stations that can print visually attractive rotogravure metallic inks and apply heavy coating weights of adhesives, without sacrificing run speed, greatly increase the application range of the combination press. Special lamination adhesives, for example, as well as a wide range of functional coatings, can be applied in thicknesses that are impossible to achieve with a flexo print head. And although hot and cold foil give the visual appearance desired, they often limit the run speed of the line considerably.

An example of what can be achieved with in-line gravure is the complex label for Nivea hair care shampoo which won the FINAT 2007 Label Awards. Printed by tesa Bandfix AG for the Nivea Hair Care Samt Glanz brand, this label combines screen, offset and gravure printing in subtle tones of pink, well produced blue type and containing silver images (see p.22). It won the unanimous approval of the FINAT judges who had no hesitation in giving it the Best in Show award as well as first prize in the competition's combination printing process.

L&L has noticed a recent increase in the number of gravure heads specified by converters. Nilpeter, for example, which has specialized in putting gravure units in-line with its MO-series offset presses, is about to ship an offset machine with a gravure head to Baumgarten in Brazil, joining more than 25 gravure installations worldwide on narrow web presses.

Nilpeter has demonstrated its continued commitment to gravure with the development of a 420mm (16in) gravure unit. The cassette is designed to accept both conventional gravure cylinders and gravure sleeve systems. The unit is servo-driven, without the need for format gears, which allows register to be rapidly achieved and maintained.

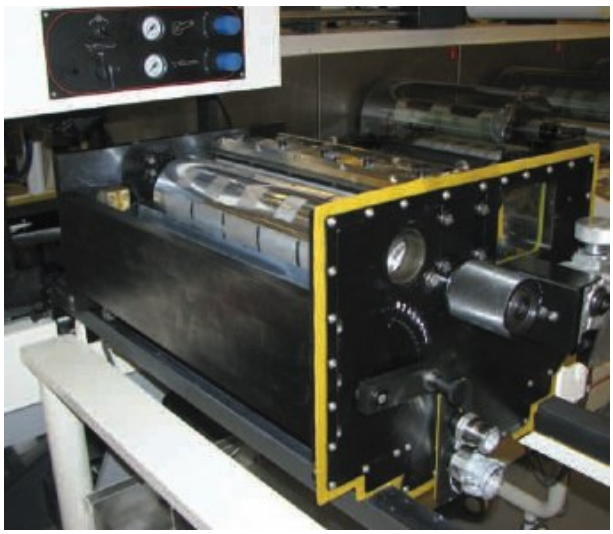
Omet's ARP Rotogravure unit, shown at its recent Open House on a Varyflex F1, can be slid easily into the printing line wherever required, as dictated by the printing sequence of each job. In April, Omet installed a Varyflex 670 line with ten flexo units and interchangeable rotogravure stations, at Turkish label converter Devrim's new production facility.

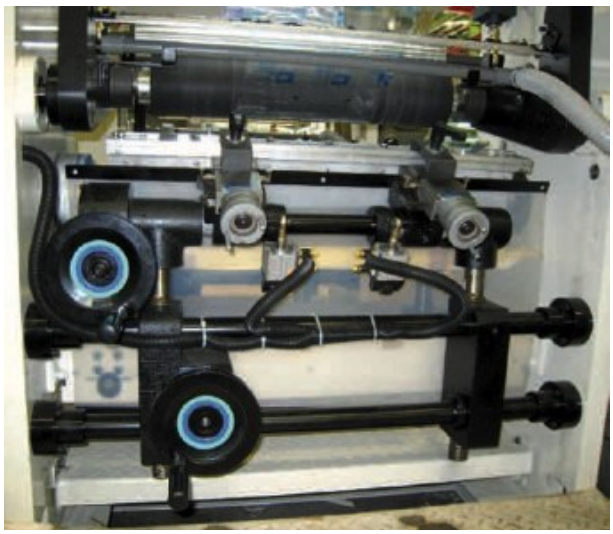
Mark Andy has developed a gravure module for its latest C2 press, building on a long Comco tradition of incorporating gravure heads into its ProGlide MSP lines in the USA. The company foresees great potential for the technology, particularly in emerging markets.

Other press manufacturers to install in-line gravure units include Drent Goebel, which shipped an offset-gravure combination machine to Tadbik in Israel. Gravure units are optional with a number of other press manufacturers including Gidue, Graficon's new uniQ and Muller Martini.

Two technologies which could really help propel take-up of gravure are sleeves and UV inks. Gravure sleeves are nickel-

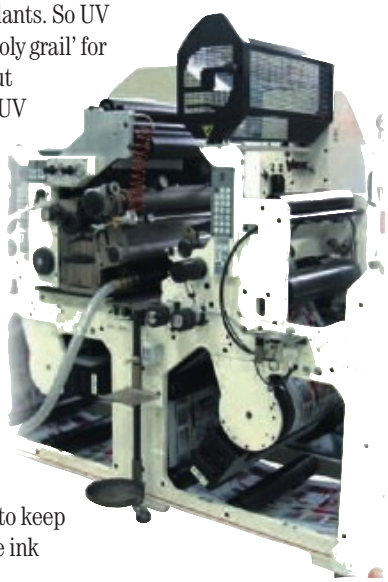
Gravure unit installed on a 16 inch wide Nilpeter FA-4





based with an engravable copper layer and chrome-hardened coating. Their main advantage is the easier shipping, handling and storage involved – particularly for converters who have moved to a flexo sleeve workflow – although the expense and lead-times of the engraving process remain the same as for cylinders.

Gravure inks are typically solvent-based, and large impingement-type hot air drying is required to accommodate the heavy laydowns and achieve high run speed. As well as these tough hardware requirements, many converters are reluctant to bring back a solvent-based workflow into their plants. So UV gravure is something of a 'holy grail' for the narrow web industry. But despite major R&D efforts, UV gravure is still not seen as a commercially viable technology option. Issues to be overcome include adhesion at high press speeds and incomplete release of the high viscosity inks. It is difficult to lower the viscosity of UV gravure inks while retaining high levels of pigmentation. Another challenge on longer runs is to keep the cylinder clean, since the ink remains undried. ■



Gravure manufacturers respond

The trend towards shorter label production runs and product customization has presented major challenges for the gravure press manufacturing industry, who have had to fight hard to keep gravure competitive with other processes.

Bobst group company Rotomec is one manufacturer which has reacted aggressively, and now claims 85 percent global market share for short run gravure printing machines.

The company's latest machine is the MW 60/80, which uses advanced automation systems to reduce waste, and has half the web length of a conventional gravure line, according to the company. Spokesman Silvana Ilari says the press produces 45 percent less material waste and uses 75 percent less ink than standard gravure presses at this size, leading to a 15 percent cost reduction on very short runs.

Ilari says the MW 60/80 is fitted with specialist UV/IR drying systems optimized for special lacquering applications.

Other added value in-line equipment can be integrated in the press configuration, including die cutter and matrix rewinder for trim waste, laminating unit and slitting unit. The machine can print reel to reel or reel to sheet depending on the end use application.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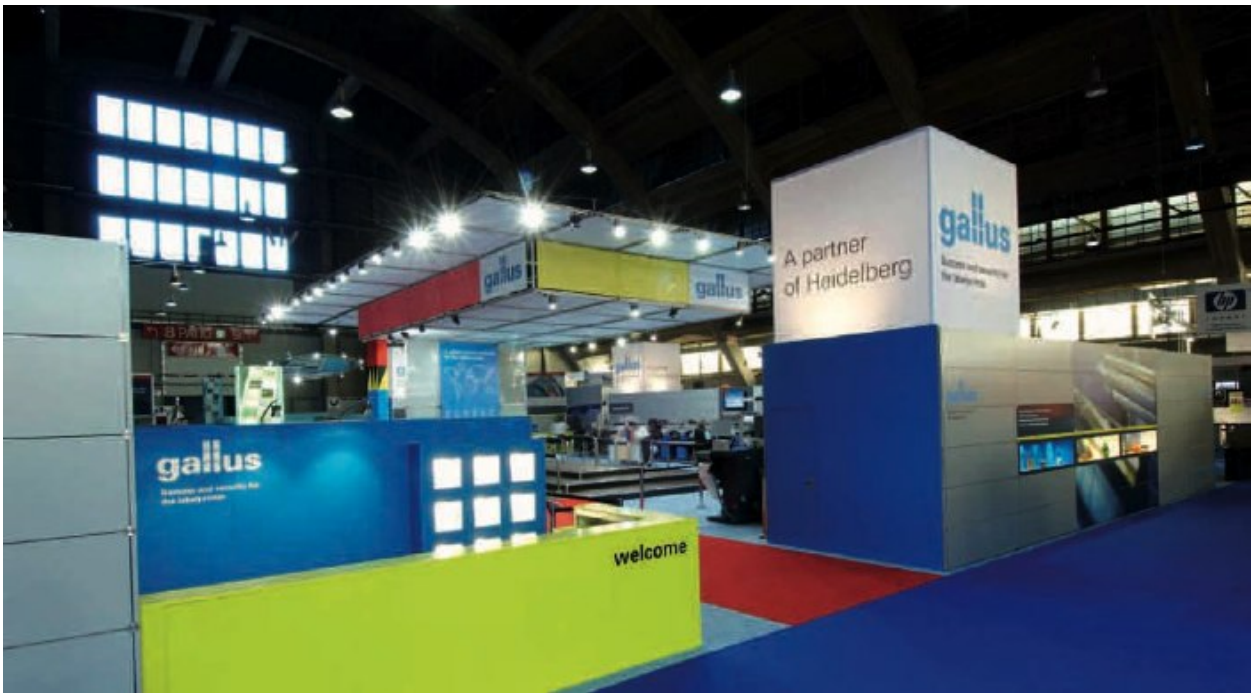


Gallus widens press program

Gallus will launch two presses at Labelexpo with new technology including closed loop color control, as well as a new generation of Screeny plates. **Andy Thomas** reports from St Gallen, Switzerland

Gallus will launch both its RCS 330 and EM 410/510 S series combination presses in new widths at Labelexpo Europe. The rotary offset RCS will be shown in a 430mm (16in) version and the UV flexo EM S in a 340mm wide version.

Gallus will also use the show to position its mid-web BHS press series, available in widths up to 850mm, as a solution for unsupported film products including shrink and stretch sleeve labels, wet glue labels and aluminum foils.

One of the key target markets for the wider RCS 430 press are sheet offset printers looking to move into roll labels, either wet glue, roll-fed PS or shrink sleeves. At Labelexpo the press will be shown running two jobs: a value-added beauty care label combining offset, cold foil, screen and flexo printing, followed by a classic wet glue label job running at full press speed.

Of great interest will be the incorporation of Eltromat's new closed loop color control system using densitometric readings of control marks on the web. The 8-color press will be configured with 7-offset units, a UV flexo varnishing station, cold foil and rotary screen, endless matrix rewinder and 100% inspection.

The EM 340 S press at Labelexpo incorporates several new developments including Gallus' Register Control system, a multi-ribbon cold foil station, a new UV system and a rotary screen unit. It retains the features of the EM 410/510 S series presses, including servo-driven print cylinder which allows handling of a wide range of unsupported substrates, front access, sleeve technology and the hybrid printing unit concept.

The press will be configured with seven hybrid printing stations, cold foil printing unit, diecut and rewind. The demonstration will highlight a conversion from screen to flexo.

Also on the Gallus stand is the latest variant of the 'entry level' EM280. This constantly evolving machine will be shown with a new outfeed section and substrate thickness compensation. The press will be specified with six UV flexo units, three rotary screen units and one hot foil stamping station, and will be shown producing commodity PS food labels and a promotional screen job.

Heinz Brocker (left), manager for rotary screen printing at Gallus, at the opening of the new Screeny plant

The Screeny plating line extends over three levels

Gallus will be promoting a new workflow advisory service which seeks to embed its presses in a culture of Lean Manufacturing to reduce the total cost of ownership (TCO). 'Customers invest in new technology and with taking the surrounding workflow into account, the investment's full potential is used' states Felix Egger, sales and marketing director at Gallus.

Screen stars

At Labelexpo Gallus will launch its new generation Screeny rotary screen printing system, the Screeny S. Screeny S is the first new product to emerge from the Gallus Group's new production facilities for screen printing plates, which were officially opened in June. The plant is in Herisau, near Gallus' headquarters in St Gallen.

The new manufacturing facilities, which have taken over the global supply of Screeny printing plates, represent an investment of some 12 million Swiss francs in new plant and process engineering for electrolytic coating.

Gallus says that the Herisau plant was not built to increase Screeny production capacity, but to support innovation in the screen process. Twenty new, specialist jobs have been created at the site, which also has important synergies with Huber + Suhner, the company that owns the land where the production facilities have been built.

The latest generation Screeny S plates incorporate a new mesh/nickel plating developed at Herisau. According to Heinz Brocker, manager of Gallus' rotary screen business, this makes the Screeny S plates more flexible and robust, and less vulnerable to damage from web splices or dust from paper substrates. They are also designed for longer runs.

This robustness makes the plates easier to clean, says Brocker, which is essential for reuse. Brocker suggest that with proper care, the Screeny S plate could be reused 5-6 times.

The electrolytic coating machine itself is built over three levels at the Herisau plant, and uses nano-level coating technology similar to that which puts the silver layer onto DVDs. The plant are houses training and analysis areas, where returned screen samples can be tested under conditions as close as possible to the customer plant.

Next year Gallus will begin the move towards a film-less screen workflow which will fit into label converters' existing CTP workflow systems.

'Most label printers have digital flexo rather than digital offset CTP,' Brocker points out. 'So we can use LAMS layer technology which can be imaged on a CDI or Thermoflex with conventional exposure and washout. We certainly have no interest in selling additional equipment.'

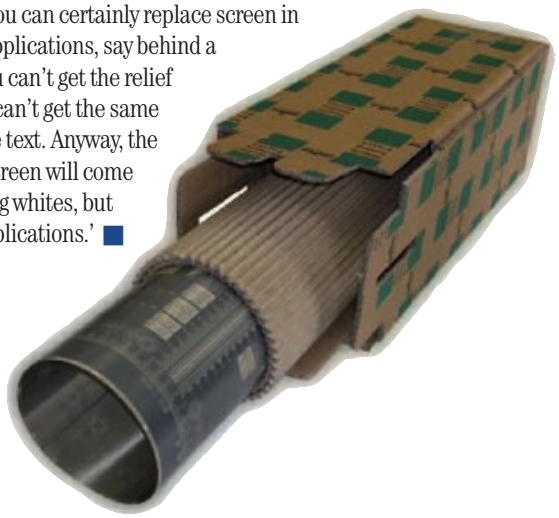
Filmless screen can also be implemented for label converters with offset CTP. 'We have looked at the BASYS system used for conventional offset plates, for example, but any violet or UV CTP technologies should work,' says Brocker.

Gallus will keep watching direct screen engraving technology, but Brocker believes that engraving is limited in its applications, particularly because of the high cost of the equipment.

Brocker is very much an evangelist for the creative possibilities of the rotary screen process. He points to the Australian and New Zealand wine industry as perhaps the most creative users of rotary screen. 'They are more creativity oriented than production oriented, and we have many examples of the label printer, the designer and our Gallus technical representative working on highly creative projects together.'

Although rotary screen is traditionally seen as a vehicle to lay down opaque white and protective varnishes, Brocker points to more creative uses, such as printing adhesives with a vignette raster to create re-closable labels, as well as tactile effects like Braille and tactile surface effects.

Brocker concedes that for some simpler applications the new generation of UV flexo whites can replace screen, but this has its limits: 'You can certainly replace screen in certain solids applications, say behind a barcode, but you can't get the relief effects and you can't get the same opacity on white text. Anyway, the real growth of screen will come not from printing whites, but from special applications.' ■



The Screeny S plate is more robust

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Multi-process

A new press from Graficon allows rapid change between print processes – including offset and gravure – at any station, and without the use of exchange cassettes. **Andy Thomas** reports

The Graficon uniQ 340 press

Graficon has launched a press which allows changeovers between waterless offset, flexo, letterpress, gravure, screen and hot foil in just a few minutes and without the need for exchangeable cassettes.

The Graficon uniQ is available in web widths of 340mm and 420mm, with a printing length from 304.8mm – 635mm and a maximum speed up to 150 meters/minute.

The Graficon uniQ can be configured as a dedicated letterpress, flexo or waterless offset machine, or use any combination of these processes along with screen, rotogravure or hot foiling at any position. The press is designed with up to five servo motors per printing group, driving whichever set of process components are installed.

The letterpress and waterless offset stations share a common inking unit. When changing process, this inking unit automatically moves off impression and up into the print tower. To replace with flexo, the anilox inking assembly – with optional chambered doctor blade – is simply lifted into the vacated slot in the base unit along with a new impression cylinder and the plate cylinder locked into place.

To substitute screen, a squeegee is inserted into a standard-sized cylinder, which is placed into the base unit. The ink hose is connected up through the side frame and the print cylinder locked into place. Both Gallus Screeny and Stork systems are supported.

To move back from screen/flexo to offset/letterpress with a different repeat is a straightforward task. The appropriate print cylinder is selected, and the inking unit automatically moves down onto impression to match the new repeat settings.

In control

The press is controlled via a user-friendly graphical interface, where jobs can be saved and recalled and where press functions like temperature and tension can be monitored for each print unit.

The web transport characteristics of different substrates are stored as pre-sets recalled from a pull-down menu. Materials are categorized by type – unsupported, laminates etc – as well as by thickness, elasticity and length correction factors. For pressure sensitive materials alone there are over 900 presets, including information on release liner type and thickness.

The press can handle a range of materials from 20 micron foils to 400 micron boards and has servo-driven chill rolls for heat sensitive substrates. For food contact applications Graficon can specify an inert gas curing system, a first machine with such technology was just recently commissioned.

The control panel allows pre-setting of functions including automatic length and cross register control, web tension, die pressure, CIP3 ink pre-setting on offset and letterpress units and impression/doctor blade settings for any flexo units engaged. With the press in makeready mode, the operator makes final adjustments by hand using easily accessible knobs inside the printing units.

The order of print processes for each job is set from the central control unit or directly on each print unit.

'Each combination of processes creates its own challenges,' points out Heinz Keller, chief design engineer. 'Gravure and offset, for example, hold the material in a nip, so for offset it is necessary to adjust the speed of the blanket cylinder to match the surface speed of the material, taking into account that thick

Heinz Keller, chief designer of the uniQ

"there is no reason why an offset unit should not be installed at print station two or three to print a critical detail on a letterpress job"

materials have higher surface speeds than thinner materials. For gravure the nips must turn in correct relation to the circumference of the gravure cylinder. These would be very hard calculations for a printer to carry out manually. The more variations in the materials, and the more processes, the more important it is to have intelligence built into the machine.'

Keller advocates separating artwork according to the optimum process combination for each job.

'Offset is good for long runs, for example, while letterpress can better handle short and medium runs. Letterpress is not good at rougher materials like cartons or antique wine label materials. But there is no reason why an offset unit should not be installed at print station two or three to print a critical detail on a letterpress job.'

Keller gives an interesting example of how different processes might handle whites on clear films. 'If you are printing white on 18 micron films, using screen with a film weight of 40 microns can lead to a highly unstable roll. Gravure, however, lays down only a 5 micron weight. In other circumstances a water-based flexo white might be fine as a base layer.'

The Graficon uniQ press is not a cheap machine, and is aimed squarely at the high end of the label converting market where rapid process change is required on short-to-medium runs of high value substrates. In this sector it faces tough competition from machines such as Gallus' RCS330 and Nilpeter MO/MA series machines. But it does offer a unique proposition – particularly in its continued advocacy of letterpress – and gives new life to a well proven process change system. ■

Martin Erni, Graficon sales manager

Letterpress advocate

Graficon was founded back in 1993, when ex-Gallus employees Alex Heiniger and Peter Tanner, saw a business opportunity to refurbish Gallus letterpress machines. The company's core business remains to strip down and rebuild Gallus R160s and R200s, which are transformed with new drive systems and a range of customized add-ons, from UV systems to booklet inserters.

When Gallus stopped manufacturing the R200 two years ago, Graficon started building its own RPS220 rotary letterpress machines, which share tooling with the R200. 'There are still customers round the world who want to buy R200s, new or rebuilt, especially with more sophisticated features such as servos and pre-setting,' comments Martin Erni, sales manager at Graficon.

Not surprisingly, Graficon remains a firm advocate of the letterpress process. 'Letterpress is a very simple process and its pre-press can use the same standards as offset,' says Heinz Keller. 'If you need exact color adjustment in flexo you have to correct the repro or use specially mixed colors, while with letterpress you can adjust the color during makeready. Letterpress also has advantages against offset. It can run from 10 m/min up to 60 m/min with no color change. You can't traditionally do that in offset because the ink/water balance is changing and this creates waste.'

And developments are still taking place in letterpress. In his office, Martin Erni has an example of a customer using laser-engraved letterpress plates to print vignettes fading to zero with a very stable highlight dot. 'This customer has guaranteed to his customer offset quality printing,' says Erni.

Perhaps surprisingly, Graficon has had a good deal of success with its T200 semi-rotary letterpress in Western Europe – in France, Austria, Germany, and Switzerland – to produce short runs of 4-8,000 complex multi-process labels as an alternative to investing in digital. Typical applications include cognac labels, wine and cosmetics labels.

The machine has low tooling costs and can combine 'cold' UV letterpress, UV/solvent flatbed screen, hot foil stamping/embossing, lamination and flexo UV varnish. The semi-rotary letterpress units have remote ink duct pre-setting.

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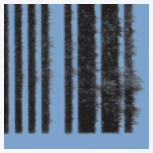

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Edelmann Graphics Evo-Print V-48 offset press

Offset move

German converter EKS-Label has installed an Edelmann Graphics Evo-Print V-48 with an eltromat automated print quality control system. **Andy Thomas** reports

Label converter EKS-Label GmbH in Kirchlengern, Germany is celebrating its jubilee year with a major new investment in offset technology. Founded in 1982 under the name HKS-Etiketten, the company is among the first label converters to install Edelmann Graphics' new Evo-Print V-48 label offset-flexo combination press.

EKS-Label directors Karl-Heinz Schroeder and Heinrich Knollmann have extended their factory to accommodate the new machine, increasing the production area to around 2,000 square meters.

EKS-Label took the decision to move into offset in 2004, since when it has invested around 2.6 million euros in its two offset production lines as well as a new CIP3/CIP4-based CtP pre-press system. The company's main markets are food, cosmetics and pharmaceuticals.

'The development of our company over recent years has shown that our investment policy has been correct,' states Karl-Heinz Schroeder. 'Already, after the installation of our first offset press commissioned in 2004, we have learned a great deal and achieved much success. Our discerning customers specify the highest levels and demand more often the use of offset print. With the Evo Print V48 label press we have taken a further important step in raising our performance and improving our competitive abilities.'

Edelmann Graphics is a well-known player in the business forms industry – which predominantly uses web offset machines – and since 2003 has been developing machines specifically for the labels market. It was this experience, in addition to a customer reference visit in Switzerland, which persuaded Karl-Heinz Schroeder and Heinrich Knollmann to invest in the V-48 machine.

'Edelmann Graphics are specialists in web offset presses that suit the label market extremely well and have only one competitor within web widths below 520mm,' notes Karl-Heinz Schroeder. 'The various print formats with 1/6" or 1/8" which are available between 11" and 26" and the offset and flexo processes as well as the special equipment allow us to look into the future with optimism.'

The EvoPrint V-48 press was developed by Edelmann Graphics in close consultation with EKS-Label. It has a web width of 485 mm and a maximum speed of 250m/min.

The press combines six UV wet offset and two UV flexo units,

with Print Concept UV dryers behind each print unit. The offset units are fitted with automatic ink unit temperature control and motorized length and side register. The flexo units are intended to handle combinations of primer or opaque white, and spot and full-out varnishing. A cold embossing module is fitted after the last print tower.

The press control system specified by EKS is eltromat's offcon 3, which integrates the functions of register control, web inspection and ink control in a series of linked modules. The V-48 is additionally fitted with eltromat finecolour ink boxes for automatic ink zone control and a digital link via CIP3/CIP4 to pre-press for ink key pre-setting.

EKS Label already had a positive experience using the offcon 3 system on its 6-color Rotatek Combi, as Karl-Heinz Schroeder explains: 'The touch-frame to position the camera by finger tip; the control of the print units and flexo inserts and the die cut in one system; as well as the control of the film application with micro marks, are essential ingredients towards fulfilling our highest demands for quality and productivity. The fast and trouble free acceptance test at Edelmann Graphics showed us that our new machine would give drastically reduced make-ready times and minimum waste.'

For increased productivity the press is fitted with a Martin Automatic butt-splicer and automatic rewinder. Other features on this V-48 press include web length adjustment, web edge control, web tension indication, ink stirrers and ink mist hoods.

Oliver Rabe, wink Stanzwerkzeuge, Julius Friedrich, director, Edelmann Graphics, Sven Friedrich, Matthias Westerholt, technical manager, EKS-Label, and Markus Hammerschmidt, eltromat

The press has a chill roller, dampening cooling with automatic alcohol dosing, as well as a de- and re-lamination station. An automatic circumferential and side register control system from eltromat is also integrated.

The two rotary die cutters are supplied with grid rewinder and modules for scissors cut, length slit and web back-side slitting. Accessories include an offset plate bender with register punching.

wink Stanzwerkzeuge supplied plate cylinders for the flexo units, as well as die plates and magnetic cylinders for the rotary die cutters. 'Since the introduction of regular checks by wink of our tooling our machine down time has been greatly reduced,' notes Heinrich Knollmann. ■

Installations

Esko installs JDF workflow at Austrian flexo platemaker

Esko has installed a JDF workflow at Glatz Klischee, a repro specialist and flexo platemaker in Bregenz, Austria. Since early 2007, Glatz Klischee has been processing jobs via a JDF interface between an Aramis MIS system from QBF (Quick Brown Fox) and Esko WebCenter and BackStage workflow solutions. The customers from Glatz Klischee are benefiting from a web portal 'Glatz.netpack' that interactively tracks each and every job through all production steps, from the initial inquiry to final print approval.

Manfred Schrattenthaler, general manager of Glatz Klischee, reportedly found Esko's solutions for automating and processing the prepress workflow to be the most comprehensive of its kind available today. 'Our entire industry has become much more short-lived and fast-paced,' explained Schrattenthaler. 'We found the ideal match for our requirements with a JDF connection between the Aramis system from QBF and the BackStage and WebCenter components from Esko.'

The company's web portal, Glatz.netpack, is powered by Esko WebCenter, which serves as the central communication tool.

Glatz Klischee has reportedly achieved perfect data and information management, combined with accurate scheduling. The current status of a job can be accessed immediately and uncertainty about which version is the most recent is a thing of the past. The approval workflow is optimized with to-do lists and e-mail notifications. A sophisticated user and authorization management system controls access and ensures top-level security.

Algerian printer opts for Omet

Algeria-based Flexoprint is the latest North African converter to choose Omet technology for the production of high quality labels demanded by the leading international brand owners that it lists among its customers. Founded by Abdallah Hamdane in the 1980s to supply flexible packaging for the food industry, the company moved into narrow web in 2004 when demand for new products produced on light filmic substrates began to grow.

With greater stability evident in the Algerian economy, Hamdane contacted Omet after seeing demonstrations of the company's label converting technology at various trade exhibitions. The outcome, after successful print trials at the manufacturer's headquarters in Lecco, Italy, was the order of a Flexy press, which was installed earlier this year. Fitted with a corona treater and servo driven cooling drums and tension control, the 7-color Flexy line is currently busy producing jobs on both filmic substrates and light alufoil.

With many leading international brand owners to supply, quality control is paramount to Flexoprint's continued success. Market research predicts a growth of seven percent in the Algerian demand for soft drink labels in 2007, and an even

Installations

ITW Labels boosts production with Martin Automatic butt splicers

ITW Labels has turned to Martin Automatic to increase the productivity on its existing label presses. The label converter recently installed its third Martin MBS butt splicer in less than 10 months at its St Charles, Missouri, facility. A fourth butt splicer will go into service in early summer.

ITW Labels (formerly Diagraph Label Group) is a converter of custom and blank labels. Kevin Gold, general manager of the multi-plant group, said: 'We already had several turret rewinders, so we knew the advantages of automatic roll changing at the end of the press. And we selected a matrix removal system to eliminate press stoppages at the matrix wind-up. The butt splicer was the remaining piece to give us a completely non-stop printing and diecutting process.'

The first two MBS butt splicers, designed to run supported pressure sensitive stocks, went into operation on narrow web flexo presses. Even using conservative numbers, Gold had estimated a short payback period. 'After two months of running with the splicers, we saw double-digit improvement in throughput on both lines, and the actual payback is proving to be substantially shorter.'

The third and most recent MBS butt splicer was installed on a diecutting press, and the fourth will go on another flexo line. Gold expects to retrofit the remainder of his presses with butt splicers later this year.

The Martin MBS system includes an inertia compensated festoon, a patented splice unit to make non-overlapping butt splices, and two cantilevered unwind positions with Martin's lift-and-load roll loading system. All controls for these components are mounted within the equipment, allowing automatic unwinding, splicing, and tension control.

Die market sees new player

Israeli company Suron is set to expand its flexible die business globally. **Andy Thomas** profiles the company's history, technology and plans

Going global from a national base is a major challenge for any company, and it is one now being taken up by Israeli die manufacturer Suron.

Suron is the biggest player in the Israeli domestic label converter market, claiming 85 percent of the country's flexible dies business and servicing top accounts such as Tadbik.

The company was established in 1976, and is located on the coastline between Haifa and Tel-Aviv – within easy reach of the international airport. Suron already has an office in the USA, and its products are starting to be marketed in Europe, the Far-East and the Middle-East.

Suron's core technology is producing intricate and precise metal parts by photo-chemical machining, also known as photo-etching. In photo-chemical machining a drawing detailing the customer's specifications is translated into a photographic image, which is then transferred to a metal panel. The panel is machined selectively by chemical etchants, resulting in a precise product identical to the original customer's drawing. Parts can be etched from a wide spectrum of metals and alloys, including copper, beryllium-copper, brass, kovar, nickel, molybdenum, steel, stainless steel and others.

Commenting on the photo-etching process, Eliav Silberberg flexible dies division marketing manager at Suron, says, 'Chemical etching avoids burrs, no mechanical stresses are built into the parts and the properties of the metal worked are not affected. There is no alteration of the metal hardness, grain structure or ductility, and hardened and tempered metals are machined as easily as regular metals.'

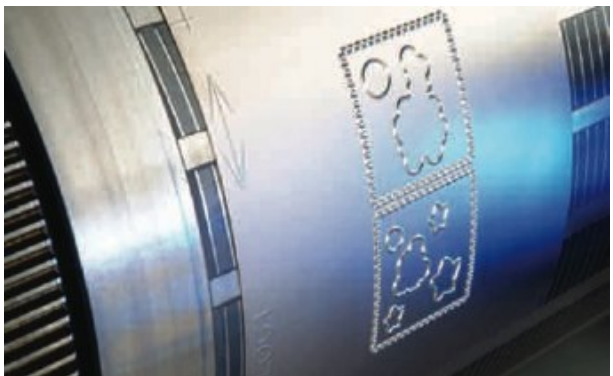
Silberberg says other advantages of photochemical technology include low cost tooling, fast turnaround, the ability to modify tooling at minimal cost and to produce fast and cheap prototypes.

Suron is a kibbutz industry, meaning that every member of its personnel is a combination of worker and owner. Says Eliav Silberberg: 'this manifests itself in motivation, care for equipment, striving for perfection, as well as the back up of the whole kibbutz to the plant in terms of financial and manpower infrastructure. This puts Suron at an advantageous position compared to similar enterprises.'

Since it was established, the plant's management has focused on products requiring a high level of accuracy, and it supplies high precision metal parts to major international corporations and smaller companies in the fields of microelectronics, telecommunications, electro-optics, aviation, fine instrumentation, bioengineering and computer systems.

Suron has transferred these skills to the manufacture of flexible dies. 'We are able to produce corners and angles at zero radius, and build several heights in one die,' says Eliav Silberberg. 'A specialty is extremely precise micro-perforation, where we have complete control of cutting lines and gaps lengths. We can put up to 50 perforations in one centimeter, on both arcs and complex shapes.'

Suron's development team works particularly hard on flexible dies for long runs, challenging the boundaries where label converters might traditionally choose solid tooling. Suron can also supply magnetic cylinders. ■



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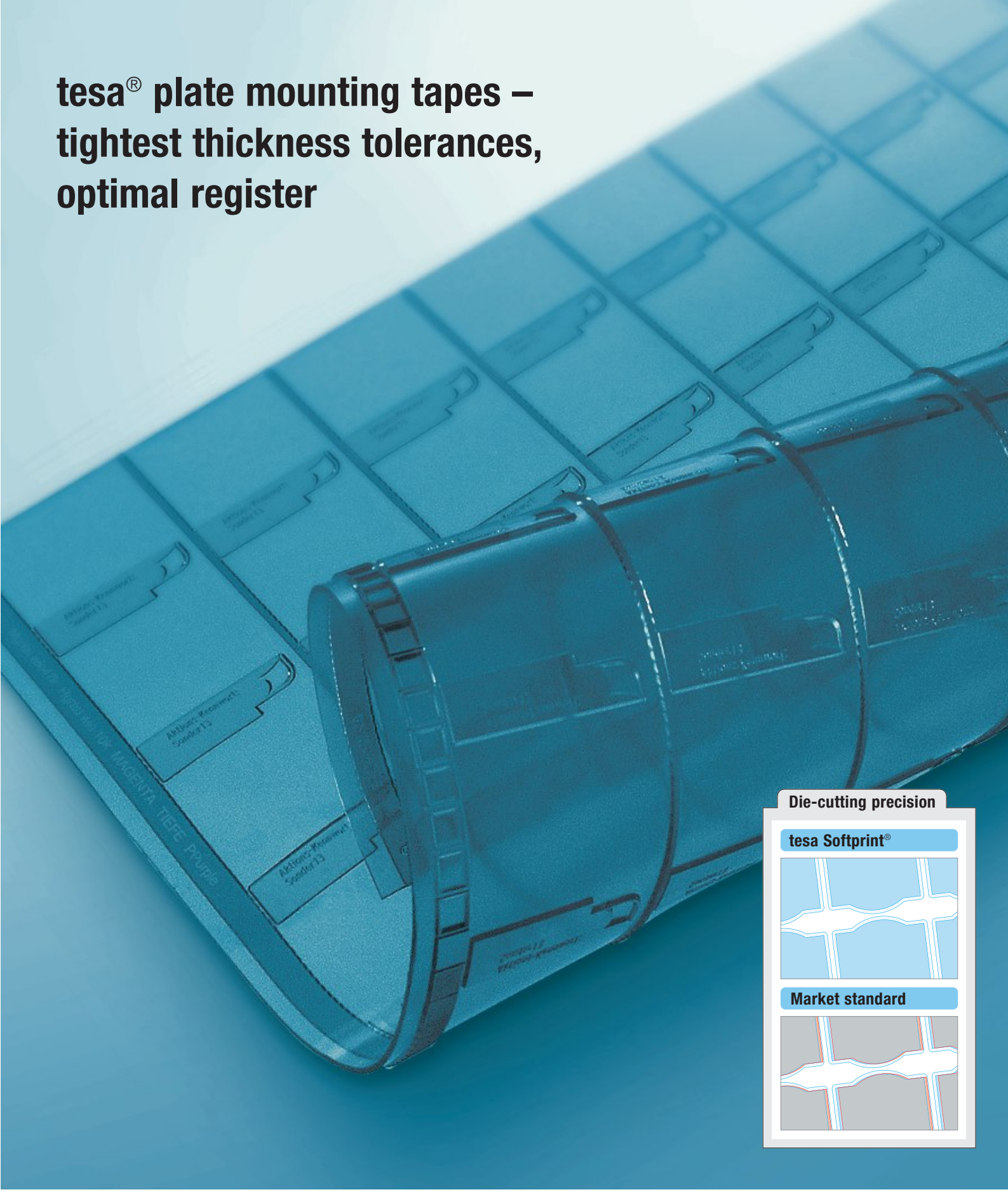

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Anilox offset

Keyless inking for offset presses, first found on sheetfed machines, has now moved to narrow web with the launch by Codimag of its Viva 420 offset at Labelexpo Europe. **Andy Thomas** reports

Codimag is coming to Labelexpo Europe with a breakthrough technology development – a keyless inking system for its new Viva 420 intermittent offset press. Named by Codimag the 'Aniflo' system, it is claimed the first implementation of such a system in the narrow web market.

Anilox inking is already an established technology in the commercial offset market, with Heidelberg's SM52 Speedmaster and KBA's Genius and Karat presses utilizing the system successfully (see boxout on page 92).

Codimag's Aniflo replaces the conventional offset inking roller chain with a short inking system based on just four equal sized cylinders– anilox, forme, plate and blanket rolls.

A chambered doctor blade supplies ink to the anilox, which is a sleeve specially engraved to break down the paste ink to a film using a cell pattern developed specially for the application.

This thin ink film is then delivered to a rubber forme roller, which transfers the ink to the plate and from there to the blanket. Forme roller and blanket cylinder are equipped with the same rubber blanket which can be easily dismounted from their respective steel cylinders.

There is no longer the need to regulate ink keys, as ink film is controlled by the anilox roll. Temperature settings on the anilox and blanket are used to modify ink viscosity to allow a density adjustment to the customer's requirements.

An infra-red heater adjacent to the blanket cylinder allows adjustment of the amount of ink released by the blanket – a warmer blanket releases ink more easily than a colder blanket, increasing ink density.

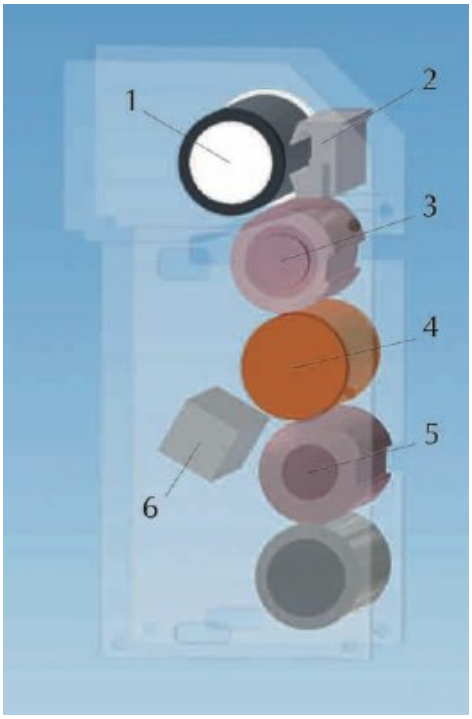
Pascal Duchêne, managing director at Codimag, does not believe that the loss of adjustable ink zones will have an effect on print quality. 'You can anyway only adjust the volume of ink in the web direction and not across the web direction, so it is a limited tool to begin with.'

Duchêne also points out that varying the temperature affects ink viscosity within a few revolutions, since there is no inertia in the inking train. 'On a standard offset press the operator might have to wait minutes between opening an ink key and the extra ink being released from the ink train. With the Aniflo we are waiting less than one minute to go from minimum to maximum ink viscosity and fine adjustments take just 5-10 seconds to have an effect on density.'

'The challenge is to translate, for the printer, temperature information into density information, so the temperature control becomes a density control,' says Duchêne.

Because the rolls are the same size, there is a 1:1 relationship between the inking train elements. In other words, the forme roller delivers exactly the same amount of ink that the blanket takes from the plate cylinder, and the image is repeated on all rolls at the same spot. This means there is no possibility of 'ghosting'. Conventional offset presses, by contrast, use three rubber rolls to deliver ink to the plate, and

Codimag Viva 420



1 – Anilox roll, with temperature regulation
2 – Ink fountain
3 – Form roller, equipped with rubber blanket
4 – Plate cylinder
5 – Blanket cylinder
6 – Infra Red lamp to control blanket temperature

ghosting can arise if there is an imperfect overprinting at the point where the images meet.

Quick color adjustments are made possible through very low thermal inertia in the system and elimination of all intermediate kneading rollers – which are also sensitive to UV inks and solvents. Forme roller inking pressure to the plate is set with bearers, which guarantees inking precision and stability.

Although motorized control of ink rollers and ink keys is increasingly common in offset machines – one fifth of the Viva 340 offset presses sold this year have motorized ink key adjustment, for example – this adds to the complexity and cost of the press.

To handle the full range of 'closed' and 'open' substrates handled by label converters, Pascal Duchêne thinks the printer will need just two anilox sleeves. Vellum papers for wine labels, for example, require more ink than PPs, while higher density PMS colors will also need to be planned for in anilox selection.

Labelexpo press

The Viva 420 wet offset press, which will be shown at Labelexpo, prints at 12,000 impressions/hour. Repeat length is 8in (200mm) to17in (432mm).

The press will be equipped with IST's MBS-5 UV units – the first installation on an intermittent press – with linear adjustment to press speed. A cooling plate on the mounting bar substitutes for chill rollers.

The Viva 420 will be equipped with in-line converting units already developed by Codimag for its 420mm wide Viva letterpress.

The flexo varnishing station uses a 22 shore letterpress plate mounted on a magnetic cylinder, avoiding the need to use double-sided tape. The hot foil stamping station uses a 1mm magnesium plate, servo-driven distortion adjustment and foil saving. The embossing module uses male-female magnetic cylinders for quick plate mounting and incorporates Kocher & Beck's Gapmaster system to control embossing depth.

As yet there is no Stork screen unit for this width of intermittent machine, but Duchêne is confident one will follow shortly.

It is interesting to note how Codimag is positioning this press. Its 340mm Viva machine has found niches in value-added short run sectors like the wine industry, and – typically – complementing Nilpeter MOs for short run, high quality offset work in the cosmetics sector.

'With our 17in repeat, offset quality and a short inking train, we can now compete directly with rotary offset,' proclaims Pascal Duchêne, who says the new Viva 420 is twice as productive as the 340. 'We don't need size change cassettes or tooling changes, we have much shorter set-up times and lower waste and no minimum idling speed during makeup. We are ready to print with 4x press length of waste material, which is just 40-60 meters, so we can as profitably print 50,000 labels as one million.' ■

Heidelberg trial

Heidelberg calls its anilox inking system Anicolor, and has implemented it on the Speedmaster SM52, although in an ink/water format rather than waterless. Anicolor was first trialled with Swiss commercial printer Fotorotar. Director Otto Brunner comments: 'for runs of less than1,000, Anicolor helps cut printing costs by around 30 percent' due to its extremely short set-up times, significantly reduced material costs, faster job changes, consistent and even ink application and reproducible quality for repeat jobs. With no ink zone adjustment required, makeready time has been cut by 40 percent press productivity improved by 25 percent.

Going waterless

Codimag has stayed with waterless offset technology since the launch of its Viva 340 press range in 1999. 'With waterless offset it is possible to go further in print quality and get higher densities and finer dots and lines, in positive as well as reverse type in solid areas,' says Duchêne 'The elimination of damping system allows avoiding ink/water balance issues, especially at low speed'

Earlier issues with temperature control have been effectively tackled by the Technotrans system which Codimag uses, while Toray's plate delivery in far more effective than was once the case. The plates can be imaged on any thermal CTP system operating at 830nm, then a cheap plate processor is required, making in-house CTP investment a viable proposition. A water-process plate is due to be launched soon by Toray.

All press components on the Viva 420 are standard for a waterless UV offset press, including inks, plates and pre-press.

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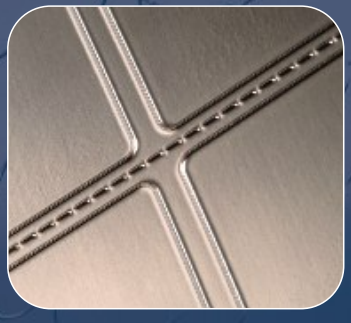

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Radiant power

More effective curing with less energy consumption is what users of UV and electron beam curing want. Are suppliers responding? Report by **Barry Hunt**

The cost of operating a full UV curing system in terms of energy used, lamp replacements and downtime may vary considerably from press to press, but it still represents a large part of the other fixed operating costs. But while converters' options are limited in respect of ever-rising prices for substrates and consumables, at least the suppliers of the radiant curing technologies – UV curing and electron beam curing – are doing their bit to reduce the cost of energy consumption and improve overall operating efficiencies.

This at least seems to be the trend in this highly competitive sector of our industry, which has benefited from an upsurge in UV flexo printing, as well as the rising usage of both rotary and semi-rotary offset. The emerging potential of UV-cured inkjet printing only serves to encourage further progress.

Designing systems with lower-powered lamps that still give adequate UV yields is one way of reducing energy consumption. In fact, this was a major theme at the recent five-day 'UV Days' event held by IST Metz, reported separately. Around four years ago most air-cooled systems ran with 200 W/cm lamps, and many still do. IST then introduced the MBS-2 system, which combined its new URS cold mirror technology with 160 W/cm lamps. In 2005 the third-generation MBS-5 came along, but with a lamp output of only 140 W/cm yet pushing out a claimed 82 percent improvement in the UV yield. The company calculated that an eight-unit narrow web press equipped with 200 W/cm interdeck lamps of 450-mm length would give an annual energy bill of €21,600 (US$28,987). That is assuming running 3,000 hours/year on a two-shift pattern with an hourly k/W cost of €0.10. Downshifting to 140 W/cm lamps could potentially save this owner €6,480 (US$8,696) a year, says IST.

A more widely adopted cost-saving measure is to replace the conventional ballast type of power supply and install an electronic power unit. While initially expensive, they are more energy efficient during printing and press standby periods. Combined with lower wattage lamps they should also extend lamp life. GEW (EC) typified this trend with the introduction of the e-System, with its e-Brick available in 9 kW, 12 kW and 22 kW versions. They power the 'cool cure' CC-Cassette, 'extreme cure' XC-Cassette and IR-Cassette for water-based flexo inks. The e-System mini has a 3.6 kW power supply for narrow web presses up to 10 inches wide. GEW claims the e-System delivers a proven 30 percent saving in energy, while delivering 20 percent more energy.

"A more widely adopted cost-saving measure is to replace the conventional ballast type of power supply and install an electronic power unit"

Dr Hönle AG offers the EPS electronic power supply with an output of 7.2 kW, which is adjustable between 30 and 100 percent. Linking two units gives a power output up to 12 kW. They are designed to increase the efficiency of the company's Uvaprint ACM and Uvaprint HP models, which have ACM (Advanced Cold Mirror) reflectors to reduce substrate temperatures.

IST Metz offers ELC power units as an option. Managing director Dirk Jägers says they typify the future of UV curing control: 'The units don't require large cabinets and are in fact compact enough to be incorporated into the press design. This is what manufacturers like Gallus, Gidue and others are doing for their new presses. Besides saving floor space, they also allow operators to ramp up the lamp's output in a stepless manner at levels of between 60 W/cm and 140 W/cm relative to the printing speed.'

Keeping cool

As well as energy saving, the need for more efficient heat management has also taken on greater significance. It is naturally interesting to the growing number of converters that have diversified into film-based flexible packaging products.

GEW's e-Brick electronic power unit comes in three versions

One important aspect of managing heat is to ensure efficient reflection of the lamp's output. It is especially important when one learns that in terms of electrical energy conversion, only about 28 percent of the total plasma energy of a UV lamp is actually UV light, 20 percent is visible light and 35 percent is heat producing IR light. Other spectral losses make up the remainder.

In recent years, system vendors have adopted computer-aided techniques to improve the geometry of the latest dichroic, or cold mirror, UV lamp reflectors. These are made from either polished glass or polished aluminum and coated with proprietary materials. Optimizing the profiles of reflectors in this manner as part of the system's heat management helps to increase UV radiation, but reduces the unwanted IR component. Cooling the heat sinks in the lamp housing by air to dissipate unwanted IR energy is sufficient on most narrow webs up to around 440mm wide, depending on the types of substrates used. Systems designed for wider reel and sheet-fed presses tend to use a combination of air and water cooling methods. For converting unsupported films there are systems available that incorporate integrated chill rollers to control web temperatures.

Staying inert

One of the side effects of UV curing is that airborne oxygen inhibits the formation of free radicals. This can cause incomplete crosslinking on the ink or coating's surface and give an unacceptable odor. Uncured monomers and photoinitiators can migrate through film and carton board to contaminate the contents. This is obviously unacceptable for direct food packaging, as well as some labeling of beauty products and children's toys. Cationic UV inks offer a highly specialized solution, which is identified more with wide-web CI flexo presses. A more appropriate method is to adopt gas inerting technology to purge the lamp housing with nitrogen or a similar gas to create an inert atmosphere. It means adding further costs to the UV system, but the inerted inks and coatings require fewer expensive photoinitiators. Furthermore, the gases can be recycled, ozone extraction is not required and lamp housings are cooled at a lower level.

Adding nitrogen is said to substantially improve the intensity of the cure and significantly increase processing speeds. Nitrogen inerting is found in GEW's N2 lamp heads, which plug into its e-Brick electronic power supply mentioned earlier. The system is based on a sealed curing chamber built around a dedicated idler roll. The purging gas is introduced to the chamber in a controlled manner using a 'nitrogen knife' at the web inlet and an injector at the curing point. The N2 system is available for printing and converting lines in arc lengths up to 150 cm (60 inches) to maintain oxygen levels between 20 to 2,000 ppm. Fully automatic gas level measurement and control minimizes nitrogen consumption giving low operating costs. 'We supplied our first inert gas atmosphere UV curing system over seven years ago so the technology is not new to us', says Malcolm Rae, managing director. 'We have continued to refine the N2 product and over the last few years we have supplied a number of systems for applications that include silicone release coatings, and varnishing of thermal activated substrates for labels and food packaging.'

Other suppliers offering basically similar nitrogen inerting system for PSAs and substrate coatings include IST with the BLK-U, Print Concept with UV-Inert, while Prime UV Systems in Illinois also offers this technology. The version from Dr Hönle is fitted to an Uvaprint system with Advanced Cold Mirror technology, but uses CO2 instead of nitrogen as the inerting gas. The objective of reducing UV energy to cure inks and coatings with reduced levels of photoinitiators remains the same. A continuous inerting regulation system keeps gas consumption to a minimum. As reported in *L&L* Issue 3 (pp 30-31), a twin-lamp version was trialed on a Müller Martini

An example of a nitrogen-based inert atmosphere system from GEW

IST's UMS-2 is a typical portable device for measuring UV outputs

Alprinta-74V offset press at 3P-Spezialdruck in Baden-Baden, Germany. The company later installed a second Dr Hönle inerting system on a new 420-mm wide Graficon uniQ 420, also used for film-based products.

Earlier this year Gidue announced it was working with Air Liquide France, which supplies nitrogen gas along with its Aldyne gas phase primer. Gidue's turnkey gas inerting system, named UV Time, will initially appear on the Athena mid-web UV flexo presses and is said to meet the usual food packaging standards.

With a greater emphasis on electronics as part of energy efficient measures, more systems have touch-screen controls to take the guesswork out of lamp changes. According to suppliers, many printers tend to change lamps well under guaranteed life spans. The usual conservative limit is 1,000 hours, but depending upon the quality of the quartz (vitreous silica) used in manufacture much longer lives are possible. For example, Primarc, a third-party UV lamp developer, guarantees 1,500 hours for its Quadcure lamps. The cost-cutting answer to is to continually monitor a lamp's useful working life. Various electronic diagnostic tools are available, including probes linked to UV meters for measuring spectral outputs, or UV dosage rates. This should be

"Another important distinction is that operators can control the dose and depth of penetration of the cure to include the thickest of pigmented coatings"

regularly carried out to ensure that lamp power levels are not ramped up higher than necessary (which does not do the press any good either).

One of the longest established third-party devices is the portable and programmable Sola-Check spectroradiometric system from UK-based Solatell. Dr Hönle offers a very different approach with its UVscan system, which measures the UV dosage at the web's surface using photochromic measurement strips made by tesa. IST offers the UMS-2 portable UV measuring unit. Backed by its FLC fast-change lamps, it is said to facilitate systematic lamp changes and reduce production downtimes. The relatively new Italian systems manufacturer, UV Ray, offers 'Plug and Cure' electronic cards, while its Teleset system can wirelessly calibrate, monitor and control a UV system from a remote location. EB curing update By way of introduction, curing inks, coatings and laminating adhesives with electron beams means there are no lamps. Instead, multi-filament tungsten arrays positioned across the web width emit the high energy of accelerated electrons to crosslink the chemistries. While resembling UV-curable inks and coatings, they do not need photoinitiators to pass energy to the substrate. Instead they have other costly components which ensure the odor and taint-free characteristics of EB curing, which is also free of ozone or VOCs.

Another important distinction is that operators can control the dose and depth of penetration of the cure to include the thickest of pigmented

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coatings, even when sandwiched between several layers of opaque materials. Unlike UV curing, all colors – including difficult white, black and blue – cure at roughly the same speed. Some converters have applied EB-cured coatings to replace multilayer laminations with a single ply substrate and a cured topcoat. All this explains why the technology is mainly associated with large-volume food packaging.

Essentially, EB curing is a one-shot, wet-on-wet technology. It can usefully coexist with UV curing. For example, to avoid the considerable expense of specifying a separate module with turner bar for single-color reverse-side printing, it is possible to print the single color in the first print unit and UV cure it before turning the web for wet-trapping the EB-cured colors or coatings. Similarly, an opaque white background could be UV-cured in the first unit for subsequent overprinting with wet-trapped EB inks. Delivery-end UV-cured coatings or laminating can also be applied over EB-cured printing. As with UV technology, EB curing must take place under a nitrogen blanket to avoid oxygen inhibition. But compared with UV curing it generally requires a third less energy and one half of the energy required for hot-air drying. Furthermore, the variable power supply is either 'on' or 'off', which allows the matching of cure rates to the running speed of the press.

With so many advantages over UV curing, it may appear strange that EB curing in the graphics industry has so far been mainly restricted to the production of coated products, metalized papers and some packaging using large units. Only in recent years have compact and relatively affordable systems become available. A new example is the EZCure-DF inline unit developed by Energy Sciences Inc for presses from 20 inches wide. The first installation formed part of a 33.5-inch wide Drent Goebel VSOP shaftless offset press installed last year by a Mexican packaging printer. Muller Martini has also installed EB-equipped Alprinta series offset presses to customers in

"One obvious way that EB's minority appeal could be broadened is to extend its benefits to flexo packaging printing"

Poland, Italy and the USA. Incidentally, ESI is part of Iwasaki and is unique in additionally offering UV curing through its Eye Ultraviolet subsidiary. Advanced Electron Beams, also based in Wilmington, Massachusetts, gave details of the AEB Webline, using stitchable emitter units at last year's Labelexpo Americas in Chicago. It had formed a partnership with Rotatek, which said it was trialing AEB modules on a new servo-driven offset press being beta tested.

One obvious way that EB's minority appeal could be broadened is to extend its benefits to flexo packaging printing. The most important development here is the introduction of the WetFlex process from Sun Chemical, adapted from its UniQure UV flexo inks. A packaging printer in southern Germany is using WetFlex inks on a 130 cm-wide Fischer & Krecke press. Lawrence Wild, director of Edlon Machinery (the UK and Ireland distributor for both ESI and F & K since the early 1980s) says: 'The global food packaging market is obviously huge, so wet-trapping flexo inks with end-of-line EB curing certainly opens some interesting prospects and could include smaller-width presses.' All-in-all, both methods of radiation curing have much to build on in terms of energy savings, improved operating efficiencies and basic user-friendliness. ■

Zero defects

When a customer issued Viking Label with the challenge to deliver labels with zero defects, the company installed a 100% inspection system as part of their QC regime. **Danielle Jerschefske** looks at Viking's experience with the technology

When a customer demands zero defects in their labels, it's up to the label printer to figure out how to meet that requirement. For Viking Label of Nisswa, Minnesota, this was exactly the dilemma it faced as one of its biggest customers, Golden Plump Chicken, laid down the gauntlet by requiring that they deliver only perfect labels.

'All of our clients have high quality expectations, but in this case, we were challenged to have 100% perfect printing, and we knew we needed a system to help inspect every aspect of our job,' said Herb Johnston, plant manager for Viking Label.

Set on a mission, Johnston and shift supervisors John Lundberg and Terry Giles began researching 100% inspection systems that would be compatible with their Mark Andy 10" 2200 10-color press.

Shark uses line scan camera technology – all other BST Pro Mark inspection systems use area scan technology – which inspects 100 percent of the material 100 percent of the time. The system was designed for use on presses or re-winders and is able to identify virtually any print defect.

When integrated with BST Pro Mark's work flow management solution, the system can identify all defective print and facilitate removal of the bad materials on downstream processes.

Viking produces about 30 million Golden Plump Chicken labels annually at an average press speed of 225 feet per minute. The labels are printed on a rigid polystyrene substrate, and run roll-to-sheet on the 2200. Every insert is inspected by the Shark system. The Shark at Viking contains dual 2048 pixel cameras, which allows identification of defects that are very small.

Lundgren and Giles agreed that their press operators like the defect management screen of Shark. It contains all the information needed to access the severity of identified defects and take action fast. Having a simultaneous display of the full repeat, a close-up of the defect identified (and highlighted), and a close-up of the golden master, supplemented with a zoom function, allows faster, more precise and efficient examination of defects and decision-making.

The Shark is part of an overall quality system, and is frequently used in conjunction with the PowerScope 3000 video system as it is here.

The Shark at Viking Label is able to not only identify defects, but to separate good material from bad.

BST Pro Mark also set up the Shark on the 2200 to help separate good from bad material, by linking the

Shark defect found output to a motor on the conveyer. 'When the Shark finds a defect, an alarm sounds and the conveyer speeds up, which puts a space in the stacks, effectively separating good labels from bad,' Lundgren said. 'Our operators can look at the screen and easily find where the defect has occurred and quickly correct it.'

Viking has a BST Pro Mark Powerscope 3000 video inspection system on all their presses, including the 2200 with the Shark. It is used for checking color and registration. 'If the Shark picks up a defect, the operator will look at the Powerscope monitor and zoom in on any color or registration problems,' Giles added.

It is interesting to note that Viking used the internet remote diagnostics facility offered by BST Pro Mark on the Shark system. 'If we had a question or problem, the service techs at BST Pro Mark would log into our system from wherever they were and they could see exactly what we were doing,' Lundgren explained. 'Through our wireless connection, they are able to see, troubleshoot and correct any issues that we had.'

Overall, the installation, set up and training process took less than three days. 'The Shark was not at all difficult to integrate into our press,' said Johnston. 'Once the equipment arrived, we took one day to install, one day to train the operators, and then all of the rest was done over the internet.'

Ultimately, it was the client that was impressed, said Johnston. 'Once the system was installed and we had their job running on it for a while, we invited them to the plant to see, first hand, what the Shark was doing for them. They were very impressed with the system, and more importantly – they are impressed with the results.' ■

The Shark 100% inspection system is installed on the Mark Andy 2200 10" press at Viking Label in Nisswa, Minnesota

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Process printing without fear

Process printing need not be a frustrating experience if jobs are properly planned, argues Harper Graphic Solutions' **Sean Teufler**

Flexo process printing continues to be a great opportunity for any converter to attract higher margin business by providing extra value to their product lines – provided, of course, that repeatability and consistency are established.

There are three decisive inputs before press that will make all the difference between success and failure: aniloxes, ink and prepress. There are no surprises in the components here; but it is how they fit together which is critical. Choreographed, predictable interaction determines success or failure. We'll discuss the parts first and then how to put them together.

First you need to determine whether your prepress workflow is sound. Make sure all the equipment is calibrated and in good working order to ensure your testing is repeatable. Then test your platemaking skills and determine what the equipment will yield for reproducible and consistent plate screen and minimum highlight dot.

The next step involves the correct interaction of ink, plate screen and aniloxes. To get started you need to target a consistent volume and density. Your ink supplier will know what volume their particular ink system will require to achieve a set density for cyan, magenta, yellow and black. Keep in mind that volume controls the majority of ink film thickness, so a consistent ink system is essential to determine correct density.

The anilox supplier will, in addition, need to know the plate screen and minimum dot you have selected, and the anilox line screen will be determined from this information.

"The key is to have the minimum highlight dot at least the size of the anilox cell opening. If this is not achieved, you will experience 'mechanical' dot gain"

How does it work? Basically, the mechanical interaction between the plate dot and the anilox cell must be considered. The key is to have the minimum highlight dot at least the size of the anilox cell opening. If this is not achieved, you will experience 'mechanical' dot gain. The minimum dots will appear speckled in the print due to the fact they are 'over-inking' when they land in the opening of a cell and 'under-inking' when they land between the cells.

Assume the plate screen selected is 150. The dot diameters are as follows:

1% – 19 microns
2% – 27 microns
3% – 33 microns
4% – 38 microns

The anilox cell opening for various line screens:

- 600 line, 38 microns, minimum for 4% dot, 150 dpi plate screen, 4:1 ratio l/s to plate
- 700 line, 33 microns, minimum for 3% dot

150 dpi plate screen, 4.67:1 ratio
- 900 line, 25 microns, minimum for 2% dot
  150 dpi plate screen, 6:1 ratio
- 1200 line, 18 microns, minimum for 1% dot
  150 dpi plate screen, 8:1 ratio

As you can see, depending on the minimum dot you want to select, there is a need to increase the linescreen of the anilox to maintain a cell size smaller than the dot diameter. The reason you see a 6:1 Ratio for a 150 plate screen is that most printers will go with a two percent or three percent dot, which the anilox will be able to support. Ideally, you want many anilox cells to support a single dot to ink it properly. As stated before, the dot that is too small for the anilox to support will get over-inked when it lands in the middle of a cell and under-inked when it lands in a post area. This will give the dot print an inconsistent look and make it difficult to maintain clean print during the press run. Fingerprinting will not solve or compensate for this problem, because it is an interaction between the plate dot and the anilox cell.

Standards

Without standardization, plates, aniloxes and ink will not produce good process printing. How do we certify that the three inputs are up to standard?

Prepress

Make sure the minimum dot you are trying to produce is within the specification of the plate material. If not, you may be able to produce a dot, but it will not last very long in press.

Plates can be easily checked for quality by using a light table. This is where you will see any wavy lines, underdeveloped or missing dots. Also check the thickness using a micrometer. Your plate should measure out as close to the specification as possible. .067 should be .067, etc. If it does not, then something in the process was rushed or not done at the proper settings to allow the plate to be developed thoroughly.

Typically, the rush is in the drying, and solvents in the photopolymer get trapped during post-exposure and finishing. You will know this is the problem if the plate is thicker than it should be. Don't forget to do exposure tests frequently to determine proper settings for back and front exposures.

Inks

Not all inks are the same. As an extreme example, you can make the mass tone of a bucket of transparent white appear to be black by adding just one cup of black. The print tone is what matters and therefore should be tested. This can be best done by hand-proofing all four of the process inks. Incoming process inks from the supplier should come with a certificate of analysis; but they still should be tested to a known, bottled standard of each color.

Saved inks from the last run should get even more attention: they may have been contaminated, washed out, have low solvency or pH or a different viscosity to the standard. Contamination by other colors is non-reversible, so don't bother chasing bad ink with good. Washed-out inks might be salvageable if used to reduce the ink you are preparing for the press if you would like to work it off. pH (waterbased), solvency (solvent) and viscosity (all types of ink) should be brought to standard before proofing.

Aniloxes

You have chosen a line screen and volume based both on your printing goals for plate screen and on ink density, so now you need to know the status of the current inventory.

This can be done initially with a visual inspection. If the dry anilox has an appearance of an ink color on the surface, the roll will need to be cleaned thoroughly.

Aniloxes can be further examined with a scope to see what the cells contain and the condition of the engraving. You can get scopes that measure depth and opening or even ones that measure volume using echotopography. Anilox verification needs to be done each time before they go in the press. You may find the need to increase your inventory and amend linescreens and volumes.

Process roll sets should stay together and not be mismatched or broken apart to fulfill other needs in your pressroom.

Process printing for the press operator can be as easy as regular line work if the proceeding steps have been taken. If he or she has to proof the ink, spot plate flaws and swap aniloxes during printing, the press quickly becomes no more than an expensive proofing system. ■

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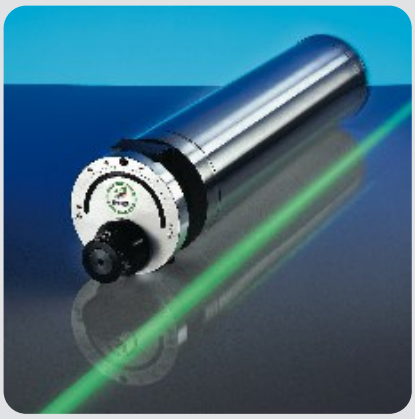

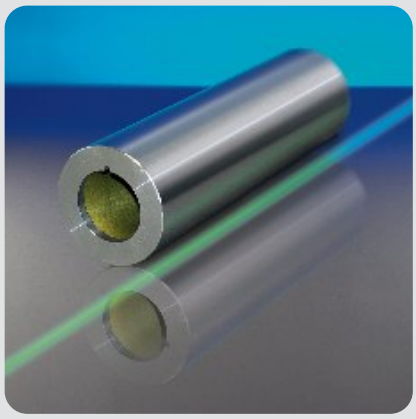
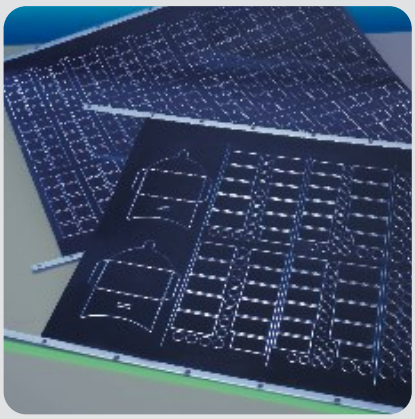


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Constructing the future

A move to a new factory has tripled production for Spanish specialty paper manufacturer Manter and enabled three new product lines to be launched at Labelexpo Europe 2007. But, as **James Quirk** reports, the company's philosophy hasn't changed

Savile Row. The name is synonymous with quality and superior design; famous around the world as the home of bespoke tailoring.

It is therefore appropriate that it is also the name given to a new range of papers that Manter, part of the Fedrigoni Group since 1993, is launching at Labelexpo Europe 2007. The Savile Row range will be displayed at the industry's leading trade show alongside the Sirio Pearl and Ultra US lines, both also new, as well as the company's existing products.

The new ranges are designed for wine and gourmet products – reflecting Manter's continued commitment to high-quality, value-added sectors. Around 50 new papers of 80-100 grams make up these latest ranges – an impressive number that has been made possible by the company's recent move to new premises.

"Whether the paper is used in offset or digital or whatever – that's not my war. My interest is in paper: I want the paper to become part of the design"

Just six kilometers from the company's former offices in Girona, outside Barcelona, the new factory opened in August last year after 18 months of construction. The 38,000 square meter site houses a 17,500 square meter factory with room for a further expansion of 10,000 square meters.

'The layout is the most important thing about the new factory,' says Clemente Porras, general director. 'It is specifically designed to optimize our processes. If the market grows and we need more machines, there is already room for them to fit into in the same layout.'

The factory is home to a new 2-meter coater, complementing the company's existing 1.5 meter machine and tripling Manter's production capacity. 'The new factory gives us the opportunity to produce new products that we couldn't have produced at our old premises,' says Juan Gil, marketing and national sales director. 'This new capacity exceeds what we need – so we are prepared for the future – although at the rate things are going at the moment, this expansion will have to be used before we thought.'

Manter, founded in 1944, can now produce 350,000 square meters of materials per year – but despite this dramatic increase, the company's core values remain. Gil emphasizes that this growth is not born out of a desire to compete with the high-volume paper manufacturers, but to continue to innovate in the value-added sectors in which Manter has made its name:

(Above) l-r: Manuel Criado, production director; Clemente Porras, general director; Juan Gil, director of marketing and national sales; and Christian Galí, marketing

(Opposite) Manter's new 2-meter paper machine

'We didn't move to a new factory to attack the high-volume market,' he says. 'We don't want to produce millions of square meters. We want to continue to do the same – but better. We want to continue to manufacture products of very high quality. Our philosophy remains the same.'

Indeed, Gil's passion for premium paper is demonstrated as he enthusiastically takes *L&L* through the new Savile Row range. 'It's a book of art,' he says. 'Whether the paper is used in offset or digital or whatever – that's not my war. My interest is in paper: I want the paper to become part of the design.'

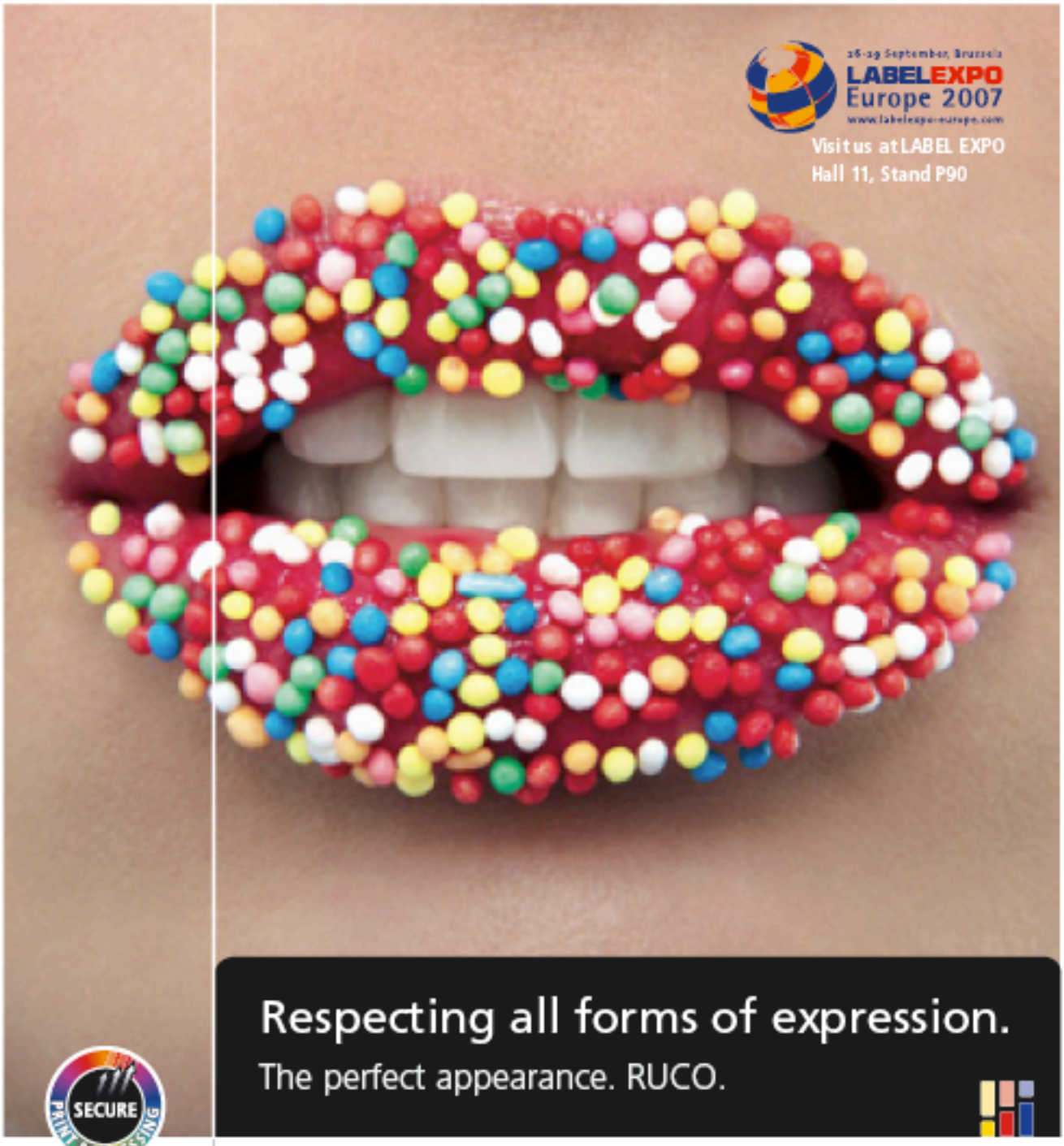
It is a philosophy that is supported by the current climate in the market, and allows Manter to export to 65 countries around the world. As countries develop and economies strengthen, the desire for quality decoration on high-end products will only increase.

'We have worldwide coverage,' says Gil. 'Where Manter isn't, Arconvert (also part of the Fedrigoni Group) is – and it can sell products from our range. We are present wherever there is a need for quality products.'

The new factory provides a state-of-the-art setting for this production. Certified by all European standards, it boasts panels in the ceiling for natural light and an on-site testing laboratory and health center. Its machines run in three shifts, 24 hours a day, and there is also a slitter and rewinder section. 'They have to be versatile machines that can change products quickly,' says Gil.

Manter also produces its own adhesive, and stores up to 30 days worth of it in stock. Up to 15 days worth of paper is also stored on-site.

The company employees 156 people, a number which hasn't changed despite the move. 'The most important thing is not the factory, nor the machines, but our team,' concludes Porras. 'We have the same team since the move, but it can produce more thanks to the new facility, and in better conditions.' ■



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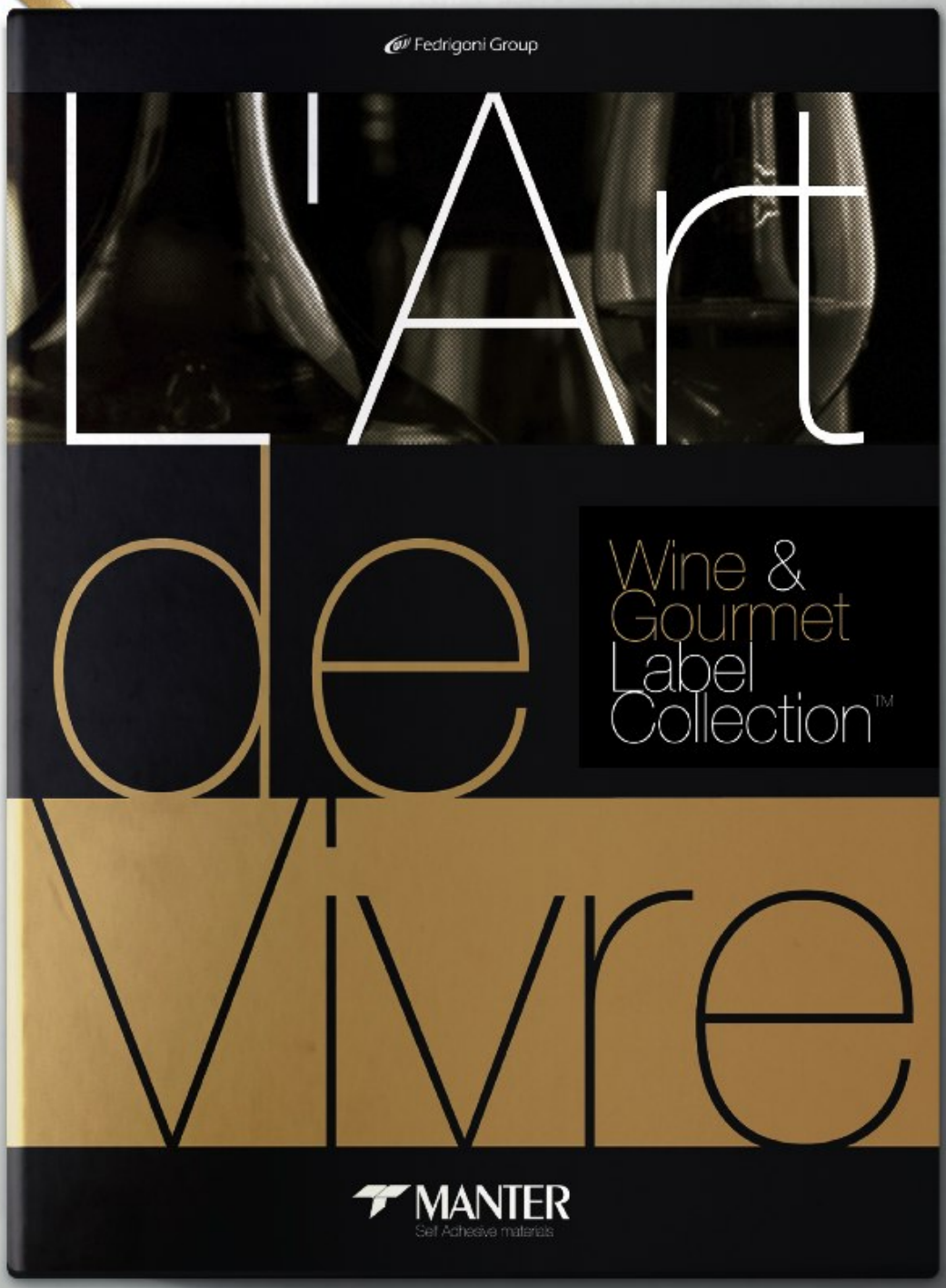

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David Jones, managing director of Liverpool, UK-based Alphasonics

Meet the cleaning ladies

Melanie, the new anilox cleaning system from Alphasonics, combines Alphasound technology with low cost. She'll join Mia, Megan and the rest of the company's 'cleaning ladies' at Labelexpo Europe 2007, as **James Quirk** reports

For a small company, Alphasonics has a big name. Based in Liverpool, UK, it has been producing anilox cleaning systems for nearly 15 years and boasts a worldwide presence that would be the envy of many a 'larger' supplier. Alphasonics sells around 100 systems per year, and has 1,500 installed everywhere from the US to Estonia, from China to Kenya.

David Jones, the company's managing director, cites two major reasons for Alphasonics' continued success: 'Our fundamental philosophy is to get the technology and engineering correct,' he says. 'If you get that right, you'll sell and have longevity.'

Secondly, the company has maintained a philosophy of exposure to foreign markets, and has been present at every single Labelexpo and Label Summit organized by the Tarsus Group for a number of years. 'Alphasonics is a small company,' says Jones, 'but we have had a strategy to market ourselves, particularly abroad. We jumped on the Labelexpo bus many years ago as a part of that strategy and have not looked back.'

He returns this year to Labelexpo Europe in Brussels, where the company will display the latest addition to its range of anilox cleaning machines – Melanie. This system is designed to attract interest from smaller printers, who may not have the budget for the company's other Alphasound models. It is supplied in either single or dual frequency, is available in two, three, four and six roll versions and can clean aniloxes from a wide variety of presses.

'It's a taster,' explains Jones. 'It is targeted towards the developing markets – South America, China and Russia, for example. We want to give even the smallest printer this quality of equipment.'

Melanie is born out of an understanding of the evolution of anilox cleaning. When Jones entered the industry in 1993, there was, he says, a real prejudice against ultrasonic anilox cleaning equipment. 'The systems available in the market back then had gained a reputation for damaging the anilox rolls,' he says. 'This was because equipment purchased in the early 1980s did not have the scope to evolve with anilox development. As screen counts rose, this equipment was left wanting and problems occurred.

'Competitive equipment – in the form of blasting systems – came to the market in the early 1990s, but screen counts continued to rise and by the end of this decade these systems too were getting a bad press.'

A design engineer by profession, Jones founded Alphasonics in April 1993. At Labelexpo that year, he was approached by Mike Richardson, then of Mark Andy UK, who asked him if he could design a machine that would clean six anilox rolls at once. Jones did so, naming the machine Mandy (for M Andy).

Interest in Mandy led Jones to develop different versions (while maintaining the female names moniker). The first was

Alphasound in practice

Ultrasonic cleaning works by applying high frequency sound to a vessel containing fluid. This creates millions of vacuum chambers that expand and subsequently implode. If they implode near to or against the component submerged in the fluid, a shock wave is produced, sucking away contamination from the component's surface.

Alphasound DF is a 'Designer Waveform Technology' where the sound waves are manipulated to enable the effective cleaning of delicate components such as aniloxes on a regular basis without fear of damage to the cell walls. As well as this sound wave manipulation, there is tight control over both the frequency and power levels used. In essence, the frequency controls the size of the vacuum chambers, whilst the power level has an effect on both the size and number of chambers produced. This flexibility enables Alphasound DF equipment to be produced to tackle specific cleaning problems such as anilox rolls, flexo plates and parts.

Miranda, at a time when the general screen count range could still be handled by one frequency.

In 2000, due to the ever increasing screen counts available, Alphasonics developed Alphasound dual frequency technology – resulting in the Megan machine. 'Megan was ahead of its time,' says Jones. 'People wanted the technology, but initially were put off by the price, but once they realized just what DF Alphasound could do for them, money became less of an issue.' He reports that Megan is most popular in Europe, due to 'the general mentality of buying the best'.

Other units developed included Melissa and Mia, available in either single or dual frequency. Jones reports that the company's best-selling equipment worldwide is Mia, though he expects Melanie to catch up fast.

'Alphasound DF equipment,' says Jones, 'has the unique ability to safely and effectively clean rolls with the flick of a switch over a wide range of screen counts. It sets us apart from all the other manufacturers and suppliers.'

There remains a lively discussion about which anilox cleaning system is the most effective, as Jones notes: 'The competition regularly cites roll safety as a reason not to use ultrasonics in general, however the truth is that through continual development, any safety contentions were engineered out of the equation several years ago. Today Alphasound is the safest, most effective, most controlled method of anilox roll cleaning available – by a long way.'

With the new Melanie, Jones feels he has found the perfect combination of Alphasound dual frequency technology and low price. 'There is now no excuse for companies to buy second best. Melanie is close enough in price to the lower end machines, but with much higher specifications.'

'There are no limits to the frequency and power levels that can be applied,' he continues, 'so any future technological advance in anilox/plate development holds no fear for us.'

The new Melanie anilox cleaning system from Alphasonics will be launched at Labelexpo Europe

Jones reports that customers using Alphasound equipment have won every single label printer award in Britain, as well as many abroad, since the development of DF in 2000. 'Using this equipment can give the printer unbelievable confidence,' he says. 'The cleaning action is so gentle that you can clean as often as you like, which in turn greatly assists in raising and maintaining print quality. The development of Alphasound represented a quiet revolution for flexo, as it has supported and held the door open to a more widespread successful use of high screen aniloxes and plates.'

The company's machines are spread far and wide. Russia and South America are regarded by Jones as the biggest growth markets, and he is also planning to open a manufacturing facility in Asia to serve that market.

'Russia has a potentially massive flexo market and South America is growing a great deal,' he says. 'We are now increasing our presence throughout South America, having made several contacts through our attendance at the Labelexpo Summits in both Mexico and Brazil.'

Alphasonics also has around 40 machines in South Africa and equipment installed throughout Europe. 'Every label printer in Finland has one of our machines,' says Jones. 'My agent tells me that some of them have two, so our coverage is over 100 percent!'

Around 60 percent of Alphasonics' machines go into the narrow web sector. Twenty-five percent end up in wide web, a number that Jones says is increasing due to added interest from corrugated board manufacturers. Ten percent is for gravure printing.

Two other new pieces of equipment will be displayed on the Alphasonics booth in Brussels: the totally non contact PC500 flexo plate cleaner and AS1000 Trojan UV parts washer with on board water treatment. 'These two systems have been developed specifically for the label industry,' says Jones. 'They are great examples of Alphasound Technology at work.' ■

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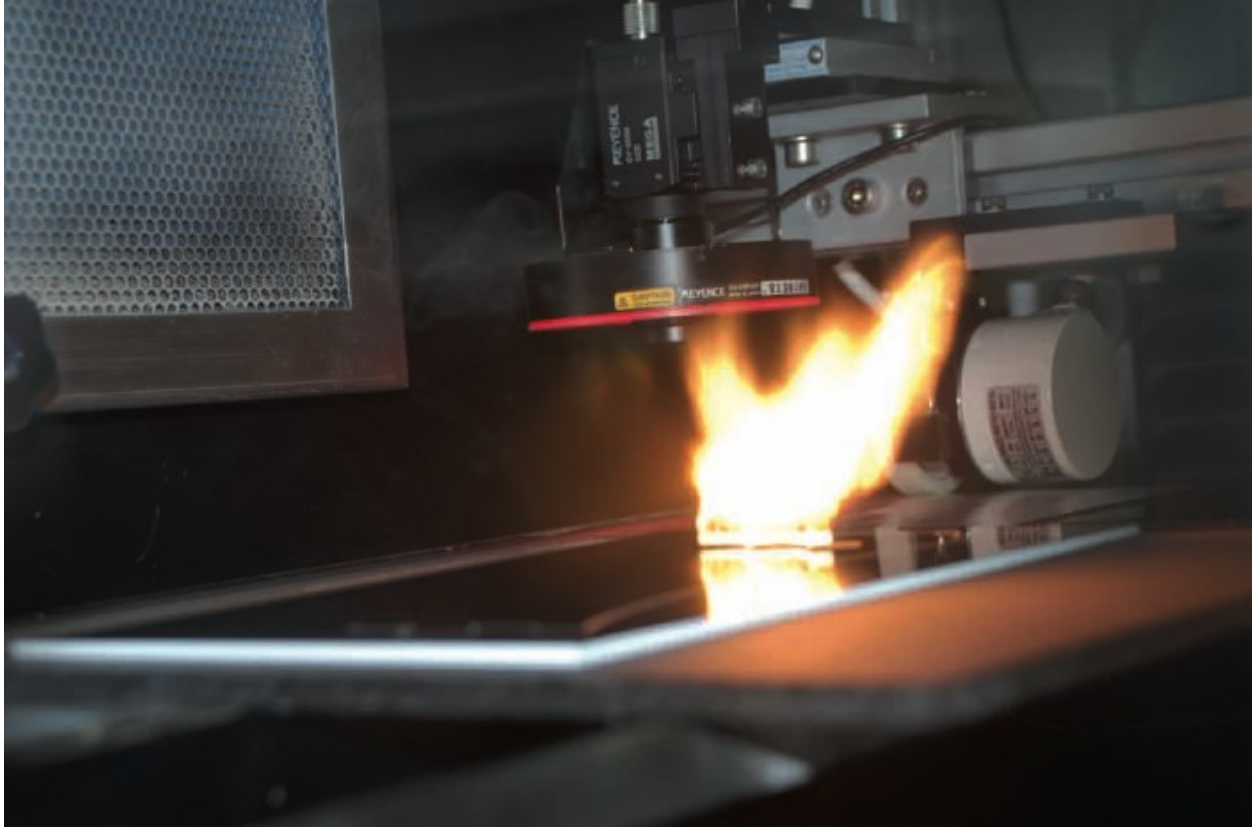


Die cutting advantage

Laser die cutting is delivering a competitive advantage to Southern Coating & Nameplate, allowing fast and accurate production of short runs and optimizing its conventional equipment, reports ***L&L***

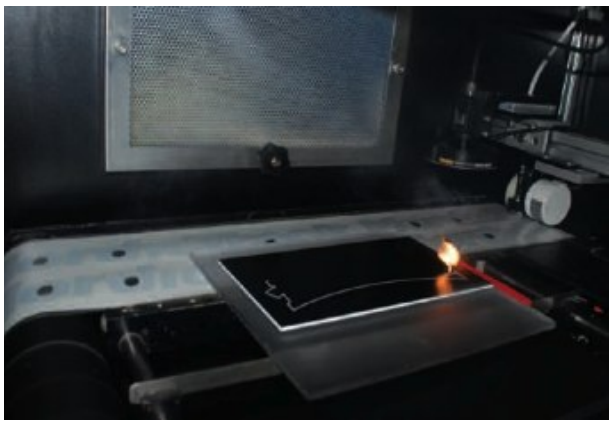
Southern Coating & Nameplate Inc. of Little Rock, Arkansas, USA, is in the business of product identification, serving customers in 17 countries with narrow web printed products in 15 languages. From labels of the thinnest Mylar to heavy gauge steel or aluminum nameplates with embossed or stamped features and more, Southern Coating offers its customers the full range of product identification products.

To succeed as a full service product ID source, Southern Coating has sometimes gone to great lengths. For example, to deliver intricate die cut labels with small die cut letters like 'a' or 'd', a tremendous amount of hand labor was typically required. Workers wielding Exacta knives carefully pulled the small dots of webbing away so the letters would read clearly. It was neither quick nor inexpensive, but it did get the job done.

Long a believer in technology investments being a significant driver of business success, company founder and president Bob Osborne thought that laser cutting might help with intricate die cutting jobs and help write a new chapter in Southern Coating's 35-year success story. Three years ago he set out to find a laser cutting system up to the demands of Southern Coating's customers. However, his first forays into the laser cutting technology marketplace were not all that encouraging.

'I seriously looked into laser cutting equipment for nearly three years and never found anything that did the job,' recounts Osborne. 'We would use contract manufacturing services to test laser cutting systems' capabilities. We went to see different laser cutting systems run but we just never felt comfortable with what we found. The systems we looked at just weren't up to our job requirements. That changed when we learned that Spartanics was now offering laser cutting systems.'

Southern had a long association with Spartanics, buying its first piece of the company's equipment in 1973 – an automatic shear. 'That worked so well we purchased a second one the following year and many other pieces of equipment through the years, including automated registration feeds for our die cutting equipment,' says Osborne.



The Spartanics Finecut laser cutting system at Southern Coating & Nameplate

This previous positive experience with Spartanics' equipment got Osborne's attention, but it was the powerful software in the Spartanics Finecut Laser Cutting System that made his decision to add digital die cutting capabilities very straightforward. 'The quality of the cutting is clearly superior for a wide range of products we create on polyester, Mylars, vinyls, etc. We found we could use this laser cutting system to make both small and large die cut parts, and especially those with the intricate cuts that had been so difficult before. Now we make cuts as small as 210 microns, the spot size of the beam.'

Osborne says Southern Coating now has the capability, for the first time, to ship jobs within one day. 'That's because we no longer have delays to make tooling, or the costs for tooling. Also the software allows us to completely set up a job in minutes. It was this user friendly software that made our purchasing decision so easy. All we have to do is take the artwork and transfer it electronically to the computer-operated cutting system and we are off and running five minutes after receipt of the artwork!'

The software's smart control systems make it extremely easy to operate, according to Osborne. 'Our initial training on the system took one and a half days to get five workers fully conversant on all operational details. It only takes one operator to run it. In the beginning we also made use of the combination of remote control software, video conferencing and internet phones Spartanics builds into the system that allow their engineers to make real-time adjustments for particular jobs. It's very impressive. We held a conference by video, turned the cameras on the system, their engineers made adjustments and it truly was like they were in the room with us.'

The laser cutting system has made Southern very on short runs jobs, says Osborne: 'These jobs have no tooling costs and very quick delivery, and that's the crux of our competitive advantage.'

Southern has made a point of promoting its laser die-cutting abilities to its customers – with impressive results. 'We invite them to see their job run on the laser cutting system, and it leads to discussions of other parts that Southern Coating might make for them,' enthuses Osborne. 'This has brought in new business because people can see with their own eyes how the digital die cutter enables us to do a superior job. Add to that the quick turnaround times we offer with laser cut jobs and you can see why our customers bring us new business.'

Since Southern Coating added laser cutting to its operation, it has been transitioning as many jobs as it can to the laser cutting system. Long runs without intricate cuts are still done with flatbed dies. But Osborne reports that they have also used laser cutting technology as a way to make other equipment more efficient.

'For example, if we're running a job on flexo and have completed the printing,' comments Osborne, 'we now take the roll and transfer it to the laser die cutter and die cut and remove the web and holes with the laser system in a way that was impossible to do with the rotary press. This is making the flexo system more efficient. We preserve production speed by moving these jobs onto the faster digital die cutter. Our plan is to do the same with our sheet fed presses. We determine the piece of equipment that is most productive or competitive for that job and calculate the most efficient solution. The more efficient we are the lower the prices we offer our customers. This has helped us increase sales. We'll continue to use our tool-based cutting systems, but the advantages of adding tool-free cutting are quite significant.' ■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Going solo

When Brazilian converter Prodesmaq was bought by CCL last year, its self-adhesive materials division, Flexcoat, branched out on its own. **James Quirk** reports

When Brazilian converter Prodesmaq was bought by CCL last year, its self-adhesive materials division, Flexcoat, branched out on its own. Now a new factory and planned expansion into another South American country are helping it to compete with the multinational companies from which it used to buy. James Quirk reports

Brazilian self-adhesive materials supplier Flexcoat may only be a year old, but already it has an interesting history. Formed in 2003 as a division of converter Prodesmaq, it went solo last year after CCL purchased the printer.

Prodesmaq had started as a manufacturer of mark-up and product coding machines in 1976, and moved into the production of self-adhesive tags in 1982. In 1989, when Brazilian president Fernando Collor opened the market for free trade for the first time in country's history, Prodesmaq reacted by immediately buying two flexo presses from Comco and becoming a full-time converter.

Prodesmaq formed its Flexcoat division in 2003 to provide self-adhesive materials after Jac, its biggest supplier, was bought by Fasson two years before. When CCL swooped in for Prodesmaq in 2006, Flexcoat branched out on its own under its owners, the Jocionis family.

Flexcoat, which employees 50 people, only began supplying the Brazilian market in May last year, having previously only provided materials for its parent company. But in this short time great progress has been made: the company has moved into a new 60,000 square meter factory and is already planning to open a plant elsewhere in South America.

'We are a new company,' says Carlos Eduardo Jocionis, 'so we are not exporting yet. But Brazil is going through a period of big investment, and the region needs another company like us to produce these materials – the markets are growing.'

Flexcoat's biggest market is for prime labels, while it serves the VIP, pharmaceutical, automobile, food, cosmetics and security markets. 'The markets in which we are working are markets of quality,' says Jocionis. 'Prime labels represent the fastest-growing market, and security is very big here in Brazil.'

The company produces a wide range of materials, including acrylic adhesives, paper glassine and film and paper facestock. It is the first company in Brazil to produce polyester liners, and only the second, after Fasson, to produce hotmelt adhesive.

Flexcoat's factory in Louveira in the state of São Paulo houses three slitters and a 1-meter coater for self-adhesive material lamination from German company BMB. ISO 9001:2000-certified within a year of opening, the site can produce 70 million square meters of materials per year, and also has an impressive laboratory with a wide array of testing equipment.

'We take a lot of care with the products we produce,' says Jocionis. 'We were a converter, so we understand the importance of testing.'

Jocionis says that the aim is for the Brazilian site to supply specialty products, while the proposed new plant will be home to a 2-meter coater, already ordered from BMB, which will supply the commodities markets.

Flexcoat sources much of its supplies from Europe – silicones come from Germany; paper from Finland; polypropylene from the UK – and Jocionis admits that Brazilians tend to look to Europe rather than the US when it comes to business. 'Southern Brazil was colonized by Italians and Germans,' he says, 'So we have a big European influence here. Printers in this region mainly have European machines, for example, apart from sometimes in flexo.'

Jocionis believes these are exciting times for the Brazilian label market. Also helping the growth of the industry is the country's currency, the Real, which has doubled in value against the dollar in the last five years. Infrastructure, however, can still be a problem: 'The market is very different here,' he says, 'it can take up to 45 days to get stock. I keep 90 days of stock in reserve

C2 receives European debut

Many European converters will get their first chance to see the Comco C2 press in operation at Labelexpo Europe following its launch at last year's Chicago show. **Andy Thomas** reports

The C2 builds on the success of the Comco ProGlide MSP press, and the new technology incorporated in the press is the result of an extensive global converter consultation exercise carried out by Mark Andy.

The first change over the ProGlide, is that this is a full servo-driven press from the ground up, utilizing servo drives for the plate, anilox and impression cylinders, and an electronic line shaft. The straight line arrangement of the anilox, plate, and impression positions produces no bounce or deflection at top run speed, according to Comco.

The C2 utilizes sleeves for both anilox and plate cylinders to make it easy for an operator to change over on an 813mm wide press with ease.

'The automatic set-up adjustments and convenient operator access of the in-line configuration will make the machine very profitable for producing short runs,' says Mark Andy president Paul Brauss.

The press certainly has a striking design – indeed, Paul Brauss says converters have remarked favorably about the 'European' look of the C2, which was conceived with aesthetics and easy operator access in firmly in mind.

The C2 can accommodate materials ranging from 12 to 610 microns with a print repeat variable between 254-914mm, so the press will handle a wide range of materials from paperboard packaging to unsupported label films as well as flexible packaging at speeds up to 300 meters per minute.

As with the ProGlide, extended drying paths are mounted above the print units, allowing the delivery of high capacity drying power for heavy lay-downs of water-base white inks, water base adhesives, and varnish coatings. Optional UV drying configurations accommodate UV curable inks, adhesives, and coatings.

Each C2 print station functions as a multi-process print deck, capable of utilizing UV, water or solvent-based flexo ink chemistries, as well as gravure,

The Comco C2 press will be shown at Labelexpo with a Martin Automatic LRD unit providing continuous automatic roll changing

rotary screen and hot & cold foil stamping. The press also has the capability for closed-loop densitometer control, feeding back to adjust print pressure in real-time.

Unused print stations can be safely made ready while the press is in operation, and flexo plate cylinders can be engaged without stopping the machine – ideal for copy changes such as multiple language versions.

Co-ordinating the functions of the C2 and providing the operator interface is what Comco calls the I-Drive (Intelligent Drive System). I-Drive integrates the servo drive systems with advanced control functions, including the programming, storing and recall of parameters such as automatic registration control, pre-register and multiple pass operation.

The SQL-based operating system is designed to integrate into plant MIS systems. It includes a database of different substrates for automated pre-setting, and supports web inspection, marking and mapping integration with suitably equipped slitter-rewinders. ■

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AB Graphic's new factory covers 35,000 sq ft

ABG Open House

New production facilities and a raft of new product launches for Labelexpo were showcased in a recent AB Graphic Open House. **Andy Thomas** reports

AB Graphic International has commissioned new production facilities in Bridlington, Yorkshire, in the UK, greatly increasing production capacity. The new site covers 35,000 square feet, including 9,000 sq ft of office space. The company now employs 150 people at its two production sites in the UK.

AB Graphic celebrated the new plant with an Open Day which attracted over 150 printers and allowed the company to preview technologies it will launch at Labelexpo Europe.

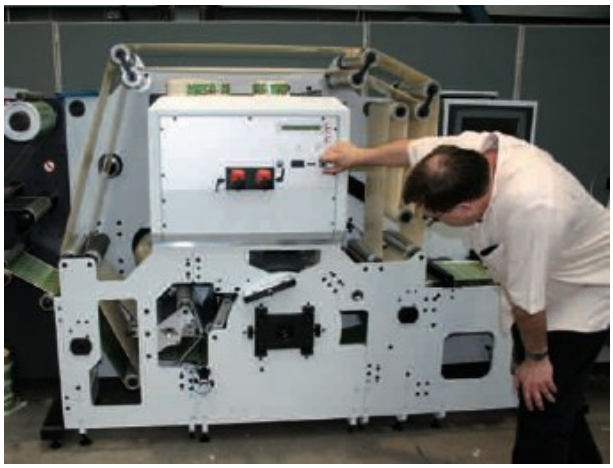
A key launch will be the 410mm wide Omega FSR slitter rewinder, optimized for the processing of unsupported film materials. 'We have seen a significant trend in the narrow web roll-to-roll press industry towards servo drive machinery capable of handling a wide range of unsupported film materials,' explained Tony Bell, sales director at AB Graphic. 'Our response was to design a machine specifically to handle the difficult, thin, unsupported materials, although the machine is also capable of operating with normal pressure sensitive label stock.'

The Omega FSR incorporates all the functions required to handle large rolls of unsupported film. These include a driven unwind station, multiple slitting options – rotary shear knives and oscillating static blades; dual rewinds able to handle rolls up to 700mm rolls with lay on rollers to eliminate air trapped at higher speeds, and a closed loop/taper tension system.

Inspection

Since AB Graphic acquired Flytec, the German company's inspection systems have been integrated into AB Graphic converting systems, including the new Digipharma 100% inspection system for digitally printed pharmaceutical applications which will be shown at Labelexpo.

The latest Flytec fleyeVision 100% inspection systems now have the ability to adjust to different print elements – for example



Delaminating the digitally printed web and laser die cutting on the backside of the label face before re-lamination

controlling hickeys independently from register control. New developments include the use of a PDF as the reference source for the inspection system instead of a scanned master image – this should be available by Labelexpo – and the ability to control Braille print using the new fleyeVision BrailleControl module.

ABG has also incorporated a fleyeVision 100% inspection system onto its Vectra turret rewind, with automatic rejection of rolls containing errors. This could give printers a more efficient workflow, since the slitter-rewinder can operate at faster speeds without the need to inspect good rolls, while bad rolls can move to a separate recovery/repair station.

Flytec also previewed its B5000 booklet making machine. This will be available with a range of options including flatbed and rotary diecut, a labeller for a sealing label or flag, a printing unit – for example a screen unit for printing Braillehot or cold glue coating systems, lamination tower, inkjet printer for register marks and fleyeVision inspection system. Web width will be 330mm or 410mm and it can handle booklets up to 32 pages on materials from 80gsm to 2mm operating at a maximum web speed of 40 m/min.

Digital solutions

As a strategic partner to HP Indigo, AB Graphic previewed some new converting and finishing solutions which will be at Labelexpo. These included a Digicoat 330 for priming PS substrates and the Digilam laminating system for digital flexible packaging applications, incorporating a gravure coating head with 4-stage dryer and sophisticated tension control system. Also new is a semi-rotary screen printing option on the Digicon S converting line and the Digipharma 100% pharmaceutical finishing system noted above,

At the Open Day AB Graphic was demonstrating the latest version of its Sabre Extreme laser die cutting system. Faster cutting speeds have been attained by active focussing of the twin lasers combined with the new Digi-Lase web tracking controller and smaller spots formed by larger, 45mmCA scan mirrors.

The laser-enabled Digicon workflow works as follows: the HP Indigo press prints a barcode, which is read on the Digicon infeed. This activates the cutting program via the Digi-Lase server, which also controls the positioning of the slitting knives, after which the web passes to the turret rewind.

ABG was demonstrating a prototype laser web handling technology which involves delaminating the web, holding the face on a vacuum drum and laser cutting it on the back (adhesive) side. The web is then re-laminated, followed by matrix stripping and rewind.

The Omega Filmic rewinder dedicated to handling unsupported materials

Over 150 printers attended the Open House

This promises to eliminate one 'tell-tale' sign of laser die cutting – a white bevelled edge where the print is burned away to reveal the substrate. By cutting from the back, a 'reverse bevel' is created which leaves the print intact. Another advantage is that there is no damage to the liner. Burning through to the liner tends not to be a problem for kraft liners, but on glassine, where the strength is given by the face stock, nicking the liner can easily cause web breaks downstream. ■

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Tel Aviv coastline on the Mediterranean Sea

HP welcomes user group

HP Indigo recently hosted a visit of the North American digital printing user group Dscoop at its Israel facilities. **Danielle Jerschefske** reports from Tel Aviv

In June a group of twenty-five North American Indigo partners and customers, industry analysts and press members traveled to Israel under the aegis of the Digital Solutions Cooperative (Dscoop) – the HP Indigo users group – for a close-up look at the company's operations and future strategy.

Digital print currently takes a mere nine per cent of the 600 billion dollar global printing market. Hewlett-Packard anticipates that this market share will expand, and is aiming at a position of leadership.

Shane Robison, Hewlett-Packard executive vice president and chief strategy and technology officer, told the Dscoop attendees that HP is a company 'transforming, not one that is already transformed' to meet this challenge. Of its $100 billion annual revenue, Hewlett-Packard plans to reinvest $3.6 billion into research and development. Robison said that industrial printing is a 'growth area which the world's largest information technology company is going to focus on.'

There are currently more than 700 industrial presses, spread throughout the world, being used to convert flexible packaging and labels. In 2005, HP Indigo sold 134 presses to the industrial market, very close to the numbers conventional press manufacturers were reporting in the same year. Currently, HP Indigo is on the cusp of becoming the largest player in the industry; in 2005, it was just behind Gallus in terms of the number of presses sold.

Alon Bar-Shany, HP Indigo vice-president and general manager, confirmed HP's 'extreme focus on label user needs', and said that offering complete end-to-end solutions for printers is key to growing the digital market.

Having recently released a new press for commercial printing applications, the HP Indigo 5500, there is great anticipation that HP has significant plans for its label and packaging technology.

Benny Landa talks

The Dscoop group was keen to listen to Benny Landa, founder of Indigo and now an advisor to Hewlett Packard, tell his story of how the company has come to be such an important piece of the HP technology empire. Landa realized back in 1977 that the printing industry was virtually untouched by digital. 'The big deal about digital printing,' he said, 'is the personalization. Personalization is so compelling. It's an extremely powerful thing.'

Landa founded Indigo to develop specialty photocopiers and the liquid inks to use with them. Although his ideas were regularly belittled by others in the photocopy industry, he was still able to obtain valuable patents for his technologies. In 1983 he moved the Indigo research focus towards digital offset printing presses. Eventually, he brought his prototype to

Indigo management with HP's Shane Robison

David Spencer of Spencer Lab

David Spencer, president and CEO of Spencer Lab, digital color laboratory, located in New York, for him to test the dpi (dots per inch) resolution that could be obtained. Spencer advised Landa that he needed a minimum 800dpi for high quality print, which the Indigo prototype did not have, so Indigo invested in further research. Landa publicly praised David Spencer, a Dscoop attendee, for his frankness and foresight which forced Indigo to set new boundaries.

Landa was able to self-fund Indigo through many years, but eventually R&D funding dried up. There were still no products to offer (at least not until 1993) and therefore no revenue coming in. Landa then wisely perceived that he could license some of his stronger patents to help fund further research and development, and thus ensure Indigo's future. He said, 'Every single copier in the world is an Indigo licensee. We earned USD $200 million from licensing profits. It's important to be the first one to discover a problem and the first one to fix it. Always be at the forefront of technology. Be first. Push the envelope because if you're second, you lose.'

When the first Indigo product came to market, the end users were not ready, nor were the machines, Landa said. Commercial printers were small family-run businesses that needed to be enabled to understand how to be profitable – and the machines needed to be tuned accordingly.

By the late nineties, Indigo was a household name in the printing and technology industries, and numerous companies wanted to be a part of the projected expansion. Hewlett-Packard was chosen as an investment partner, Landa says, first and foremost because of its commitment to put employees first. HP was the market leader in its field, but did not have a presence in the commercial and industrial sectors and Landa saw a great benefit from the technology alliance available by collaborating with HP Labs. 'It was a fantastic, exhilarating ride,' Landa says of the five years it took for HP to acquire Indigo in 2001.

Lean manufacturing

Pinni Perlmutter, director of technology, Indigo division, led the group on a tour of the HP facilities beginning at the assembly line for the HP Indigo presses. In 2005, Indigo implemented lean manufacturing in order to more efficiently supply rising demand – and there is much that converters can learn from the company's experiences.

> "With the various management teams pulling together and staying focused, the lean goals were achieved a year ahead of schedule"

Indigo saw a problem with the line when they calculated that 50 percent of integration time was spent troubleshooting. 'It was poor ergonomic design,' said Yoram Krivine, worldwide operations manager, Indigo division, HP. 'De-trash activity – clearing the assembly line of packaging from delivered parts – consumed 15 percent of our assembly line up time and it was time to fix the problem.'

Indigo removed everything from the assembly line that did not add value. One person was designated to lead the changes in the production process. Employees were taught best practices, a road map was created and followed, and Lean Manufacturing was implemented as a way of life for continuous improvement. 'The successful transition came from all of the managers being on board,' said Perlmutter.

With the various managing teams pulling together and staying focused, the lean goals were achieved a year ahead of schedule. The production time to build a press dropped by as much as 70 percent. Employees are extremely satisfied and constantly contribute to process improvement. Parts are organized and methodically stocked in bins next to the line. The bins are monitored by a third party company, which manually scans and reorders needed parts – similar to a kanban system. Indigo modeled its changes on Toyota, which made a similar, successful transition.

Testing center

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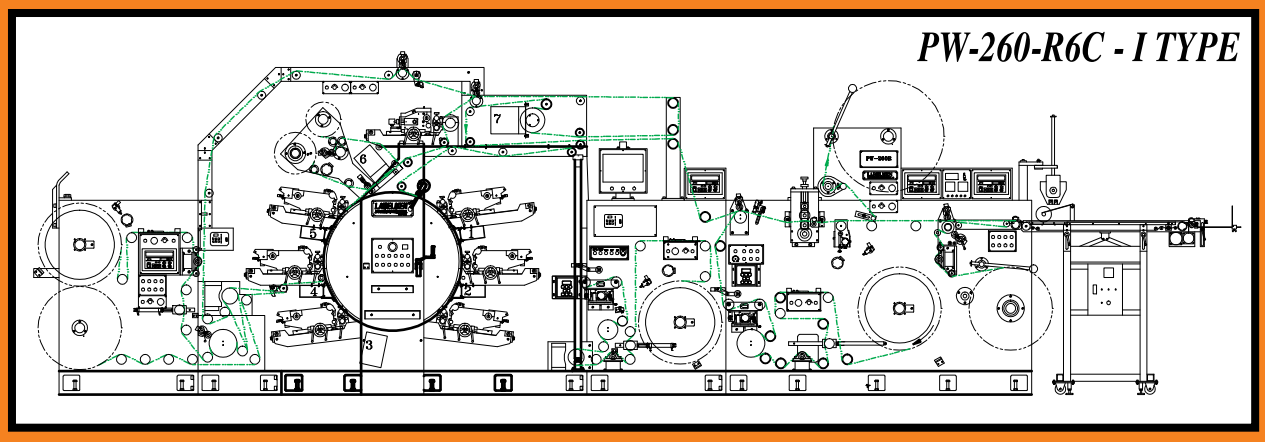

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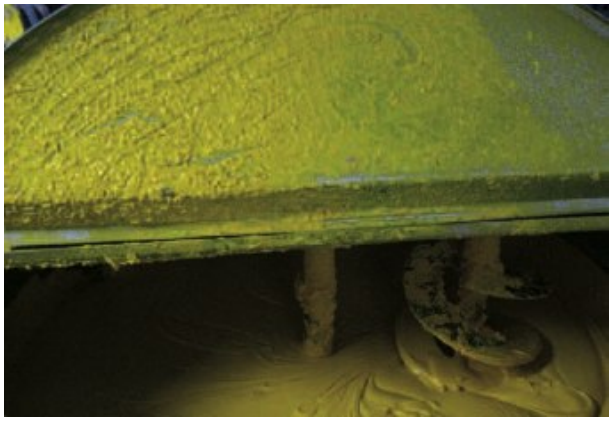

Vat of pigment slurry

Step one in Indigo's 'kanban' system

> "The entire print process is mimicked by an HP press operator with measurement tools in a precise, contained environment, just like a specific customer's"

on the machine. The entire print process is mimicked by an HP press operator with measurement tools in a precise, contained environment, just like a specific customer's. Print quality is tested and examined using substrates from the specific locale, anywhere in the world. The testing department creates reports on the improvement of the press after analyzing the sellable prints just as a printer would. Employees run tests on every type of substrate: flexible, shrink, thick papers. Final reports are officially prepared to evaluate the profitability of a real customer running a genuine job.

'We want to make sure,' explains Guy Bahar, 'that we know how our products will work for our customers before they do. In this contained environment, by using substrates from their region, we obtain the closest possible work they will with the Indigo. This way we can ensure that the process will continually produce the highest quality, every run.'

Kiryat Gat ElectroInk plant

In 2004, HP Indigo built a brand new ink facility in a town about a half an hour south of its headquarters in Rehovat. Electro is the main intellectual property of Indigo. Inks are produced through a series of regimented and closely documented steps, which are followed exactly the same way at the HP ElektroInk plant located in Singapore.

First, there is a toothpaste-like substance mixed with the pigments of each color and ISO mineral oil to produce what is called pigment slurry. Next, the attritors, three tones of metal balls, are added to create the base ink. From there, the electro additive is mixed in to produce the ElectroInk. Tests are run during the entire process to ensure specifications are kept and to make certain that every ink leaving the building is exactly the same. 'It is extremely important to Indigo that every can of ink is within the required specs,' said Arik Kochanovski, general manger of the plant. 'We want our customers to be able to reproduce any job because our product is consistent,'

Dan Masri, from Label Art of California, commented: 'This operation was very impressive. Built right across the street from the new Intel fab structure just shows the level of progression HP Indigo is at. The plant is automated at a very high level and is kept extremely clean.'

The future of Dscoop

Commenting on the visit, Eric Hawkinson, executive director, Dscoop, said, 'The amount of interaction with HP executives was unprecedented. We were given unbridled access into HP's production facilities and were able to witness all of the small things that go into making the Indigo press. Attendees experienced the following three epiphanies: first, they were able to network with other Dscoop members to discover new and interesting ways to grow their business. Second, attendees gained insight into how HP Indigo runs their business, and how they intend to help each member become more successful. Lastly, all attendees had the opportunity to see the breathtaking, beautiful country of Israel.'

Hawkinson concluded: 'An event like this creates more and more champions who acknowledge what a great advantage Dscoop is to the digital printing industry as whole. As a result of our success, these champions will continue to foster a community that companies can take a greater advantage of in the future.'

Jack Glacken, chairman of Dscoop, believes the trip will at least happen on a bi-yearly schedule. 'It helped to further build camaraderie among members,' he says, 'and was also very helpful to see behind the scenes of Indigo where our machines and consumables are made.' He plans to continue to be an ambassador of the cooperative relationship between Dscoop, HP and their partners. ■

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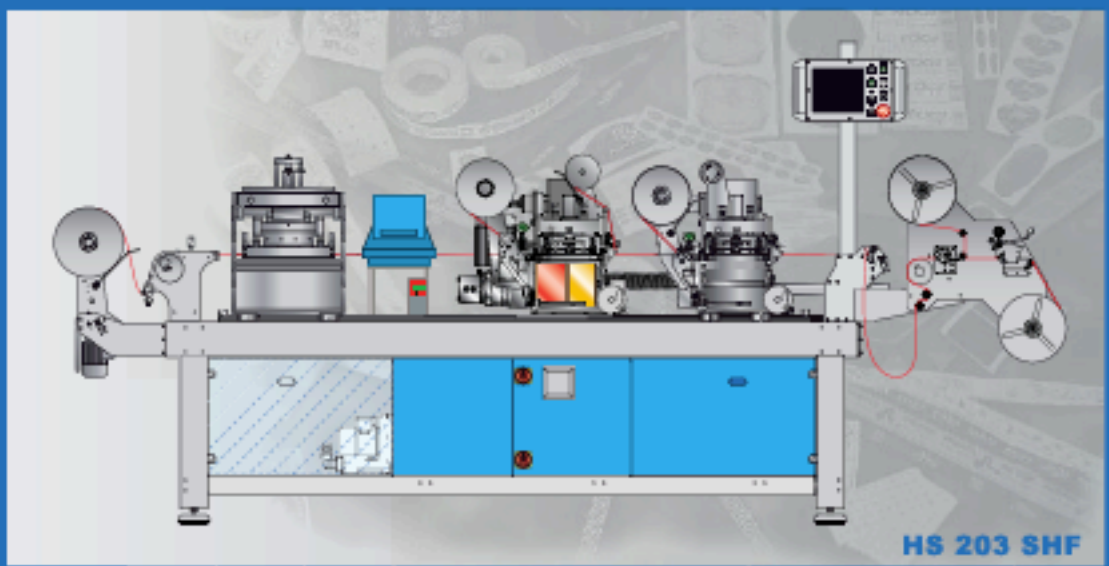

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CalPoly grooms tomorrow's leaders

It is a challenge for any industry-facing educational institution to keep students' knowledge at the cutting edge, but the record of California Polytechnic State University speaks for itself, as **Danielle Jerschefske** reports

California Polytechnic State University (CalPoly), home of the Mustangs, is located in San Luis Obespo, a college town of 44,000 nestled in the Santa Lucia Mountains, between Los Angeles and San Francisco. This year the Graphic Communication Department (GrC) celebrates its 60th year of preparing students for the printing, communications, packaging, digital technology and related professions. Turning out an average of 75 graduates per year, the GrC has a near 100 percent industry placement rating. In sixty years, the department has graduated over 3,000 students. A few of the successful alumni working in the industry include Dave Hoydal of Synectic, Tom Gallo of G-3 Enterprises, and Dr Malcolm Keif, current instructor for the GrC at CalPoly and winner of the Print and Graphics Scholarship Foundation's 2004 educator of the year award.

The department boasts one of the largest facilities of its kind in the nation at 33,000 square feet and, more uniquely, employs a staff of students who budget, design, print, and publish the daily newspaper for the school. Yes, the students do all the work with minimal guidance. In the facility, there is an extensive array of equipment for flexography, offset, and digital printing. To train flexo skills, instructors utilize an 8-color Mark Andy 2200 with a UV lamp, lamination unit, hot and cold foil stamping capability and three die cutting stations. Supporting the press, there is an EskoGraphics Scope workflow and CDI Spark for digital plate making; DuPont Cyrel FAST plate processor; and various other instruments for detailed instruction such as a Betaflex for dot measurement, and an Xrite spectrophotometer.

For offset instruction, there is a Heidelberg CD-74 sheetfed press, a Goss Community newspaper press, Kodak trendsetter 800 III Quantrum CTP and Kodak Prinergy workflow.

DeGrava Systems recently donated a DP8500 to train students about digital label printing. The digital lab also includes an HP Indigo 3050, a Xeikon 50D, a Xerox Docucolor 2060 and a 3535. Students gain supplementary knowledge working with several EFI Rips available and various proofing devices.

Two Macintosh computer labs have been opened this year. A materials lab allows students to test ink viscosity, color, pH, printability and ink tack. An ink rub tester in the lab lets students run tests with corrugated materials in addition to various substrates for the label industry. Substrate performance tests for smoothness, opacity, and porosity are feasible. CalPoly also maintains a separate lab for film and structural package testing.

There are nine full-time faculty members working in the GrC Department, plus four adjunct professors; their credentials are impeccable. This impressive staff continually publishes industry works, receives recognition from industry associations and pursues further research. Dr Penny Bennett has published a book titled 'The Handbook for Digital Printing & Variable Data

Printing', Lorraine Donegan won the 2005 silver award for digital books and manuals in the Printing Innovation with Xerox Imaging Awards competition, and Brian Lawler is actively involved in HP's Chameleon Federation. And Donna Templeton, a recent graduate, now leads her former peers.

Sophomore student Nisse Noble really enjoys being a GrC major because of the strong support she receives from her teachers and the inspiration they give in the classroom. 'My instructors are great,' she says. 'They are so supportive and helpful. Whenever we have questions they have answers. If they don't, they'll find out for us.'

Most of the student body is a California native. All performed well on their ACTs, SATs and maintained a high GPA during all four years of high school. 'The students are very bright,' says Dr Malcolm Keif. 'We get the crème of the crop of high school students. They are self-motivated, focused and eager to experiment with new technologies.'

The program takes about four and a half to five years to complete. The department maintains an average of 300 GrC students yearly, and has about 25 students pursuing a graphic communication minor. To earn a Bachelors of Science degree in graphic communication from the university, students are required to complete 102 credits of major core courses and must also choose a concentration comprised of 29 credits: design reproduction technology, electronic publishing and imaging, graphics for packaging, or printing and imaging management. In addition to the major courses, 56 credits of general education are completed. 'Classes are comprised of three main areas – aesthetic, manufacturing, business,' says Keif. 'When graduates enter the work force, they are prepared.'

Completion of both an on-campus non-paid internship and an off-campus paid internship are required to earn a degree. Furthermore, students work diligently on a senior project similar to a master's thesis, in which they choose a topic, conduct appropriate research on that topic, and finally, present intelligent conclusions based on their research. 2007 graduate Nancy Schueneman won a trip to Italy for her paper on technical

"Classes are comprised of three main areas – aesthetic, manufacturing, business. When graduates enter the work force, they are prepared"

innovations in the packaging industry. She and seven other winners traveled to Europe this past June visiting suppliers and printers in Bologna and Milan. Schueneman will be continuing her graphic communication education at New York University this fall. Nisse Noble recently won a scholarship competition run by the FTA: 'It is very exciting to be recognized for my work, but even more comforting to know I'll soon be joining an industry with such great people.'

CalPoly's GrC Department hosts a career day for students and potential employers each quarter. Around 100 students and over 20 companies including Collotype, Lithotype, K-1 Packaging, EFI, NCLA, G-3 Enterprises and Emerald Packaging attend. 'It gives the students face time with professionals,' says Keif.

Where are they now?

CalPoly Alumni

'71 Roger Ynostroza, former editor of Graphic Arts Monthly
'73 Emerson Hunt, engineering / quality manager, WS Packaging Group
'80 Ralph Boer, Western region sales manager, Mark Andy / Comco
'88 Tom Gallo, director & GM, G-3 Label Division
'91 Bob Tapella, public printer, US Government Printing Office
'92 Todd Everett, sales manager, Vintage 99 Label
'93 Dave Hoydal, co-founder SynEctic Packaging
'04 Abby Franz, prepress assistant, Emerald Packaging
'06 Adam Toqe, applications specialist, Artworks Systems
'07 Nancy Schuneman, New York University graduate program

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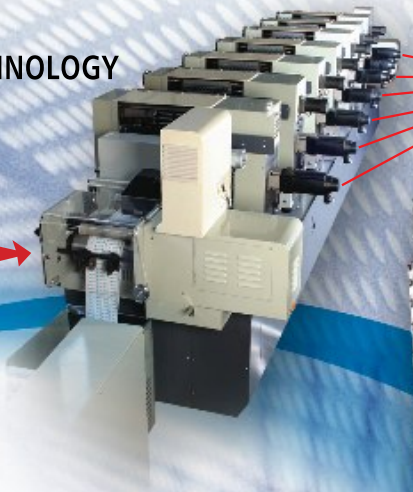

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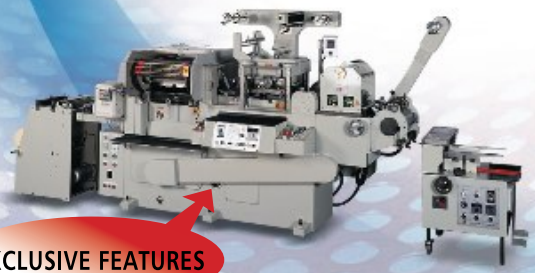

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"To enhance their program, they plan to address an even wider 'gamut' of printing markets, continually striving to touch on all the facets of communication while in the classroom"

'CalPoly has very strong industry support and therefore we have graduates filter into all areas of the industry.'

The university offers a Research Professors from Industry program where industry experts teach the students about the most state-of-the-art technology and the industry's most important trends. It is a chance for students to get acquainted with those who have already mastered the skills they are still learning.

CalPoly GrC staff members foresee the curriculum becoming much more digitized. To enhance their program, they plan to address an even wider 'gamut' of printing markets, continually striving to touch on all the facets of communication while in the classroom.

'It is extremely important for our facilities to have new technology,' Keif says. 'Students must know how to work with what is being used in the field. We pride ourselves on preparing students at a very high level and try to get them to answer questions that do not already have answers.

'Moving forward, graphic arts instructors and industry professionals need to grow a closer line of communication. Instructors need to be kept up-to-date in order to train the employees of tomorrow. It is extremely difficult for the academics to stay current.' CalPoly makes every effort to stay in touch with the latest developments in the industry as much as possible. And, they encourage experts to really get involved personally by coming and speaking to a classroom of students, and sharing their knowledge. 'It is really advantageous to collaborate together on industry research,' concludes Keif. ■

Labelexpo in brief

Melzer

RFID technology specialist Melzer will exhibit its SL-400LT, a high-speed 4-track electronic luggage tag machine equipped with the company's in-line selection system for 100 percent controlled products.

RotoMetrics

RotoMetrics will showcase its latest narrow web products including its RD200 machine-finished dies, proven adjustable clearance anvils and multi-port air-eject dies.

Also showcased is the new MyRoto.com online ordering and tracking tool.

Additionally, RotoMetrics will display its comprehensive line of rotary dies and accessories, including flexible dies, magnetic cylinders, CNC and EDM solid dies, print cylinders, specialty dies, sheeters, hot stamping and embossing tools, pressure gauging systems and more.

Newfoil Machines

Newfoil Machines shows its JEI1225C four color laser printer, with a 600x1800 dpi print resolution for photographic quality images. Printing a 300mm wide web at 5.4 meters per minute, the system is ideal for economical production of short/medium runs of high quality labels. Almost any material can be converted..

Holostik India

Holostik India Ltd, the first Indian hologram manufacturer to get ISO:9001 certification, will present its range of hologram labels, holographic films for wide-web, hot stamping holograms, holographic shrink sleeves, holographic scratch labels, scratch-off foils, holographic wads, holographic paper, holographic pharma foils, holographic strips, and security labels.

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New products

Pocket PC barcode-scanning smartphone
Barcoding.co.uk

Barcoding.co.uk has launched a smartphone that offers integrated barcode scanning with mobile, WiFi and Bluetooth communication. A fully-equipped mobile business device, the PDA-type phone incorporates a large liquid-crystal screen and slide-out QWERTY keyboard.

Manufactured in Japan by Opticon, the device is called the H-16 and uses the Microsoft Windows Mobile 5.0 operating system. Users can run the mobile versions of Microsoft Word, Excel and Outlook as well as barcode data capture applications supplied by Barcoding.co.uk.

The Opticon H-16 keyboard provides a familiar PC layout for entering information, messages and e-mails. The high resolution 2.8 inch QVGA LCD screen, which offers easy readability and plenty of space for data entry forms, switches automatically to landscape mode when the keyboard is open. With added software, the device can be also used as a personal navigator, mobile messenger and job despatch device.

The Opticon H-16 adds to an extensive range of barcode scanners and handheld devices offered by Barcoding.co.uk. The company provides end-to-end solutions for data collection and wireless communications and sees the PDAs as an ideal platform for business applications involving barcode identification and data collection.

Drinks marketing website
B&H Colour Change

B&H Colour Change Ltd has launched a new microsite for drinks brands and promotions showcasing the group's latest cold-reactive inks. Smart packaging and the creative use of specialist ink technology plays an increasingly important role in the way drink brands interact with their consumer audience, by enhancing the product, differentiating the brand from its competitors and increasing sales volume.

The group's most recent success is the launch of its color changing thermochromic cold reactive inks on beer and wine bottle packaging.

Products also include Chill reactive game cards for pub and bar promotions, a wide range of special liquid-crystal thermometers to ensure perfectly chilled served drinks, and new 'Smart' temperature sensitive wine labels and packaging.

'Many drinks are designed to be consumed at a particular temperature for an optimum taste experience and B&H's Smart ink technology shows when the correct chilled temperature is achieved,' comments Gilly Beaumont, marketing manager.

The website can be viewed at www.drinkpromo.com.

Chemical resistant film
Madico

Madico Graphic Films, a supplier of specialist pressure sensitive coated film products for durable label applications, has announced the introduction of Durafol, a new thermal transfer printable polyester offering chemical, elevated temperature, UV and scratch resistance.

Madico has introduced Durafol as a durable alternative to the more costly and time consuming process of over laminating labels with a clear protective film. Durafol is designed to be of particular use in applications requiring extreme chemical and mechanical resistance, including under-bonnet marking in the automotive industry, aerospace identification, laboratory facilities, the chemical industry and general industrial labels where variable information and barcode traceability are prerequisites.

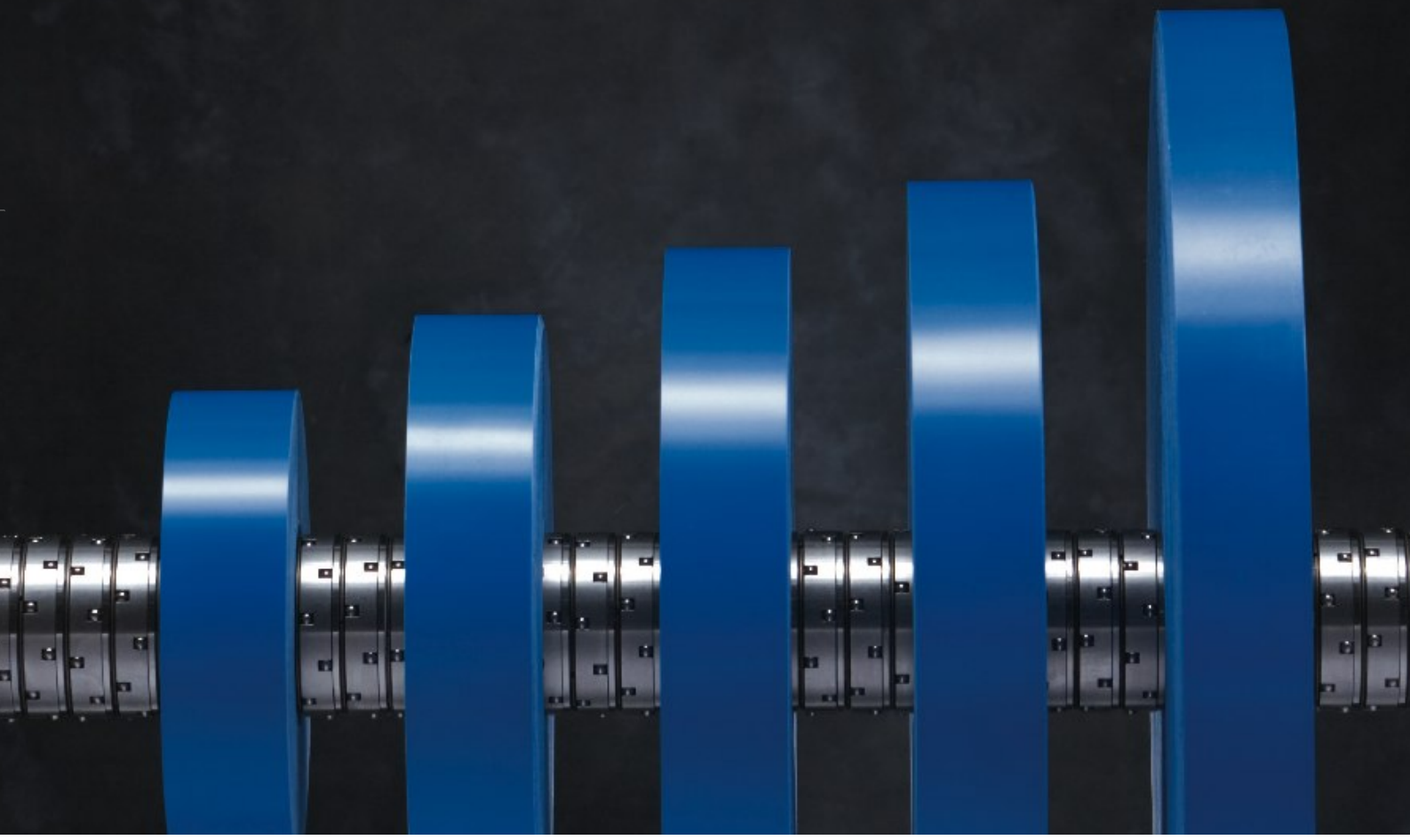
The material is designed to offer superior chemical resistance when printed with a Ricoh B110CU thermal transfer ribbon. Independent tests carried out by Ricoh confirmed the product achieved maximum levels of resistance.

'Durafol meets, and in most cases exceeds, the needs of users by offering 25 percent improved chemical resistance compared to other films used in the same applications,' says Andy Voss, managing director, Madico Graphic Films. 'Compared to a label that is thermal transfer printed and then overlaminated, Durafol offers potential material and production cost advantages since it is a single process, using only one material.'

Avery Dennison launches three RFID inlays

Avery Dennison RFID, a business unit of Avery Dennison Corporation and provider of RFID technology and services, has announced the continued expansion of its RFID inlay product portfolio with the introduction of three new inlay designs – the AD-430, AD-630 and AD-813. The new inlays are EPC Class 1 Gen 2- and ISO-180006-C-compliant and are designed to be read across the range of global RFID frequency bands – 860-960 MHz – and integrate into label converting processes. All three new products are scheduled for general release in the third quarter of 2007.

The latest trend in differential winding.



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New products

New models in H-Class series printers Datamax

Datamax Corporation has announced the release of four new printers in its H-Class series. The H-Class family of 4-inch wide label printers now includes models capable of 203, 300, 400 and 600dpi print resolution to meet the specific requirements of enterprise bar code and RFID label and tag printing applications.

'H-Class printers provide up to twice the speed and throughput of other printers in its class,' said the company in a statement. 'The gear-driven drive system provides rugged and reliable performance for demanding applications, and the modular design allows rapid repairs to increase up-time for the highest levels of user productivity. In addition, the H-Class printers are field upgradeable for RFID applications, and provide both EPCglobal certified UHF and HF RFID smart label capabilities.'

Ethernet, USB, Parallel and Serial interfaces are standard features, with optional Wi-Fi wireless LAN host connectivity across multiple platforms. A graphical LCD display gives operators an easy-to-read view of both the standard and advanced menu selections. All H-Class models can be MCL-enabled and programmed as stand-alone or host-interactive clients that utilize a display and keyboard/scanner on the printer. This allows the user to eliminate a PC or display terminal in the work area, saving the investment, operating expense and workspace while simplifying the labeling work process.

A host of options are available for the H-Class printers, including thermal transfer ribbon capability, a 240x320 LCD display which is the industry's largest, standard and heavy duty peel and present, linear scanner, GPIO interface, and expanded international font support.

The new ColorFlash line of fluorescent papers from torraspapel

Fluorescent papers
Torraspapel

Torraspapel, part of the Lecta Group, has expanded its range of specialty papers for the self-adhesives market with the new ColorFlash line of fluorescent papers.

ColorFlash is paper coated on one side with fluorescent pigments available in four colors: red, orange, yellow and green. In addition to the color, its smoothness and tensile strength reportedly make it ideal as facestock for self-adhesive labels.

ColorFlash has been designed for use in making pressure-sensitive labels and laminates for display and pricing labels, promotional purposes, exhibition and advertising, along with applications such as signage, information and posters.

Web-gripping vacuum rolls
Webex

Isoten vacuum rolls from Webex grip one side of a coated or adhesive-treated web for better control in transporting or pulling wet webs and/or isolating web tension. Isoten standard vacuum roll shells include a tungsten carbide plasma release coating that is claimed to provide an excellent general-purpose shell surface.

Other roll covering options include polymer compounds, stainless steel mesh screen or felt for delicate webs, and a rotary gravure seamless screen for magnetic media and optically clear applications. Rolls are readily available from 12" to 20" in diameters up to 160", with web wrap angles from 30 to 180 degrees.

Isoten vacuum belts, able to accommodate flat surface contact, help establish a specific web path and tension zones, and can be stretched length-wise to increase sustainable tension.

Isoten vacuum rolls from Webex

Adrian Simmons and Jacob Scherf, co-founders of Total Brand Security

Total security

Institutional financing and an impressive variety of products have enabled UK-based Total Brand Security to expand globally and corner a large part of the ever-growing brand security sector. **James Quirk** reports

Brand fraud is a rapidly growing problem. Fake goods infiltrate markets around the world in everything from cosmetics to pharmaceuticals, from designer clothes to wines and spirits. In the US, the FBI estimates that American companies lose up to $250 billion every year due to counterfeit goods, while the European Community believes fake goods are responsible for the loss of 100,000 jobs in Europe each year.

It is no surprise, therefore, that the brand security sector is developing an increasingly wide range of solutions to protect against counterfeit goods. Total Brand Security is one company that has benefited from increased institutional financial support to do just this.

CEO Jacob Scherf and managing director Adrian Simmons founded Total Brand Security (TBS) in 2003, after having run the European and Asian business for Westvaco Brand Security – a subsidiary of US-based packaging group MeadWestvaco.

'Counterfeiting crime is getting worse and worse,' says Simmons. 'The secret is staying one step ahead of the fraudsters, which is a challenge. As soon as we develop technology to protect one particular brand, another more sophisticated method to get round the security appears or a new brand is attacked.'

To combat this problem, Total Brand Security looks continuously to create new anti-counterfeit technology. The company now boasts around 20 different security solutions, and ten varieties of authenticating readers, while 40 percent of its turnover is put straight back into development.

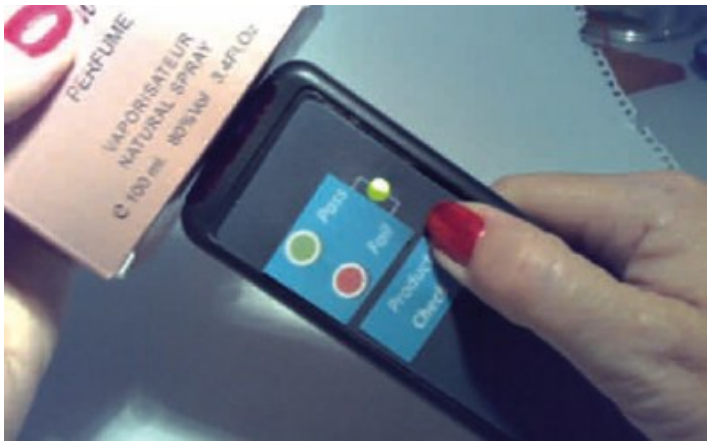
> "It helps if it is gimmicky: people like that. You have to get the end user involved"

'The key in brand security is for it to be multi-layered,' states Simmons. 'It has to evolve continuously.' He cites the example of the UK bank note, which has no less than 43 different levels of security.

Total Brand Security is most active in the wine and spirits sector, where it protects, among other brands, around 55 percent of all Cognac worldwide. Consumer electronics, cosmetics, pharmaceutics and document security are also important areas.

With its headquarters in London, the company also has offices in Singapore, Tokyo and Shanghai. A grant of £250,000 last year from The Capital Fund, a venture capital fund that invests in fast-growing companies in the Greater London area, was used to help the expansion into Asia.

'In many ways, the market is still embryonic,' says Simmons of the brand security sector. 'Many people are just playing



"It's very hard to put a cash value on a brand. In many cases we need to develop awareness of the value that needs to be protected"

around. The big brands get calls every day from someone who says they have a new great product, but they know that we have a wide range, and that's an advantage.'

In an environment where staying one step ahead of the counterfeiters is crucial at all times, the variety of security solutions that Total Brand Security employs has been fundamental to its success.

The company favors end-user authentication – whereby the consumer of the product is the one who can determine if what he or she is buying is genuine. 'End-user authentication is the holy grail of our sector,' says Simmons. 'The reader must be cheap and subtle, and ideally also can be used for something else. It helps if it is gimmicky: people like that. You have to get the end user involved.'

The company's UV/IR (ultraviolet infra-red) Detection and Authentication system is one that necessitates such a reader. With TBS' contactless handheld detector, the consumer can visibly verify the authenticity of a product containing different embedded identifying marks, which are read by different parts of the detector. Like nearly 50 percent of the company's technologies, the system can be applied to a label and printed using all standard processes.

'In this case the reader doubles as a pen,' says Simmons. 'The reader also has two points, so is also multi-layered.'

The technology that the company produced for various leading cognac brands is temperature-sensitive label that changes color when exposed to heat to reveal a hidden image. In keeping with TBS' philosophy of multi-layered security, two different parts of the bottle's label can be authenticated.

'It's a high-security color change label,' says Simmons. 'It can be authenticated by a lighter, which makes it great for bars.' The ink has even been adjusted to withstand the higher temperatures of Asia for applications in that region.

The company is a member of the Naginels consortium – a group of companies and universities sponsored by the European Community's Craft program to develop the Naginels System, which uses laser technology to enable very fine etching of security data onto plastic or glass surfaces. A 0.5x0.5mm mark that is invisible to the naked eye can be engraved in under a second.

Applications include fragrance bottles and pharmaceutical products, and TBS displayed the technology for the first time at the Pharma Secure Chain in London at the end of last year. The company received a grant of 1.2 million euros from the EC for this single development.

Simmons reports that more and more brand owners want to have authentication through the package – particularly in cosmetics, pharmaceuticals and electronic components. Because of the high margins in these types of products, counterfeiters will often either remove the original product and place it in fake packaging, or take the original packaging and insert a counterfeit product, allowing them to double the volumes of their original shipment.

The problem here, says Simmons, is that it is not easy to mark the primary package in a cost-effective way – with solutions such as RFID or EAS tags being typically removable, visible, or too expensive.

To combat this, Total Brand Security developed an authentication technology – NLS (non line of sight) – which is almost invisible, and often irremovable, from the primary packaging. It uses robust security taggants, which cannot be demagnetized or deactivated, that can be integrated into inks, adhesives, plastic components, or holograms.

Other technologies that the company has developed include the TBS Track & Trace System which can be incorporated into visible//invisible inkjet, a variety of security labels as well as security sleeves. This is a numbering system built for maximum security using special encryption that does not allow reverse engineering. A consumer, custom official or investigator can verify whether the product is authentic by logging on online or through SMS anywhere in the world.

Part of Total Brand Security's aim is to help companies become fully aware of the value of their brand. 'It's very hard to put a cash value on a brand,' says Simmons, 'and in many cases we need to develop awareness of the value that needs to be protected.' ■

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Bjarne Svensson, Production Manager, Flexiket Denmark

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Packaging Summit Europe

Packaging Summit Europe returned to Amsterdam for its second outing with a conference program that reflected the industry's increasing interest in sustainability. **James Quirk** reports

Environmental sustainability is undoubtedly becoming one of the packaging industry's core concerns. Packaging Summit Europe returned to Amsterdam with a section of conference program dedicated to subjects such as packaging's role in reducing carbon footprints; understanding the affects of ethical consumerism on brand packaging; and how environmental issues are affecting the packaging of tomorrow.

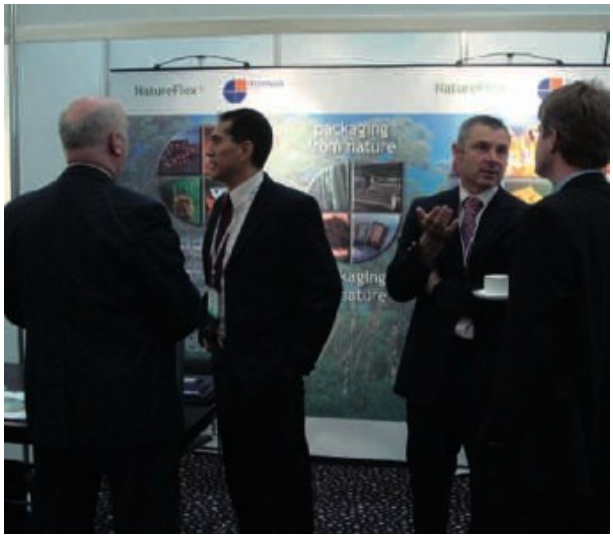
Over three hundred packaging professionals gathered to take part in two days of lively debate, where speakers and delegates tackled the big challenges facing the industry. The conference and adjoining exhibition saw a 50 percent increase in attendance on the inaugural event held in 2006.

Building on the success of the first event, there was a significant boost in attendees from Asia and the US, showing the summit's growing reputation for tackling tomorrow's most challenging packaging issues.

Many internationally recognized packaging experts presented their detailed insights to the delegation on topics ranging from consumer trends and effective packaging innovation to response and retailer perspectives.

Richard Inns, chairman, Unilever Packaging Group, said: 'The conference and exhibition provided a fantastic forum for the industry to get together to discuss and debate the key challenges facing the sector in the short- and long-term. The environment and sustainability are clearly at the heart of many future brand owner strategies and consequently the packaging industry must continue to adapt and innovate in order to meet these ongoing requirements.'

Delegates labeled the event a resounding success with major brands such as Cadbury-Schweppes, Carrefour, Friesland, GSK, Kraft, Marks & Spencer, Metro, Musgrave Budgens Londis, Procter & Gamble, Philips, Sara Lee, Unilever, United Biscuits and Wrigley attending the conference and confirming the importance of this event in the packaging industry calendar.



This positive sentiment was not restricted to the conference floor as delegates took this opportunity to meet with over thirty suppliers showcasing their latest products and services for more effective brand packaging. Ian Bates, CEO of PortaBrands, a first time exhibitor at Packaging Summit Europe, said: 'The event was very informative and had an excellent agenda and good networking opportunities.'

Andrew Furness, event director for Packaging Summit Europe 2007, said: 'The success of this year's event confirms that Europe's packaging professionals need and want a forum which genuinely challenges established practices and therefore stimulates new thinking and change.'

He continued: 'There is a growing recognition that packaging as an industry must adapt to new commercial and social norms and maintaining the status-quo is not an option. Packaging Summit Europe will continue to develop its role as an effective vehicle for packaging innovation and change in Europe. We look forward to returning to Amsterdam for the next summit on 1-2 July 2008.' ■

Labelexpo in brief

Weldon Celloplast

This leading Indian labelstock manufacturer will exhibit its wide range of labelstocks, security label materials, specialty tapes and release liners, as well as materials for variable information printing like Thermal transfer label stocks for barcodes, wood free for price marking and computer labels in fanfold and A4 format. 'This year our focus would be to become an outsourcing partner for leading label stock and label manufacturers around the world,' says CEO Harveer Sahni.

Lartec

Lartec will display the latest advances in flexible dies for new markets in addition to its new die for technical self-adhesive materials.

Primera Technology

Primera shows its LX400 and LX810 inkjet color label printers designed to print short-run, full-color labels at up to 4800 dpi print resolution. An optional Media Cutter can be used to produce full-color tickets and tags for admissions tickets, retail coupons, photo visitor badges and many other specialty applications.

Skjoldan

Skjoldan will promote its magnetic cylinder assembly machine. It can be built to fit any magnet size, and has a production rate of 12-15 units/hour.

Flexo Concepts

Flexo Concepts' newest doctor blade, TruPoint UltraFlex, is designed for use on high line screen anilox rolls, engineered from a thin weave fiberglass composite material to provide the same level of stiffness as a steel blade with up to four times the blade life, according to the manufacturer. Now offered with a 10° bevel option to provide a finer contact area. Flexo Concepts also features its MicroClean FineMedia, specially formulated for fast cleaning of high line screen ceramic surfaces. The dry media particles gently remove dried ink at the bottom of cells, restoring them to original volume.

Ritrama

Shows its wine range, HP Indigo range, seal and reseal products, oil canister-drum labeling, clear on clear films, conformable polypropylenes, matt films, overlaminating films, durable range, security products, transfer and double side adhesive tapes, plus its well known range of standard films and papers.

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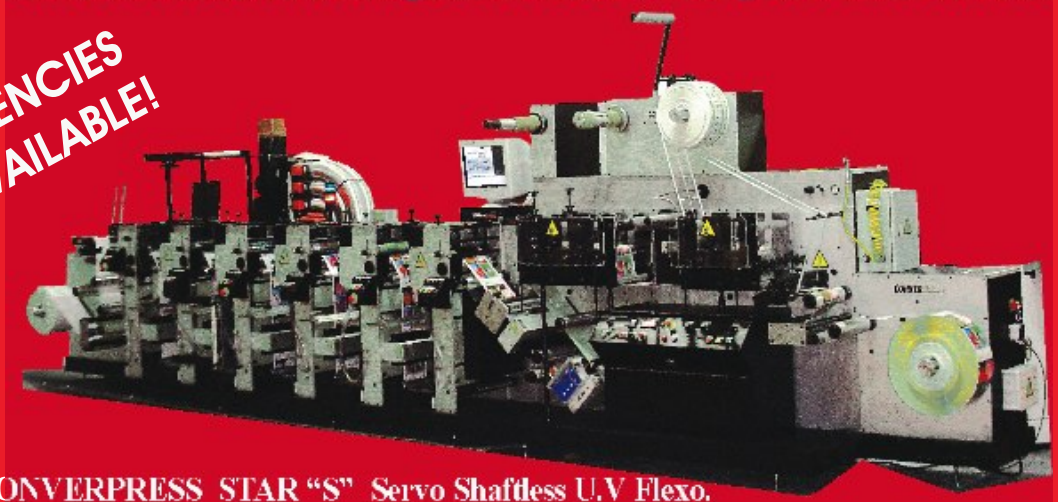

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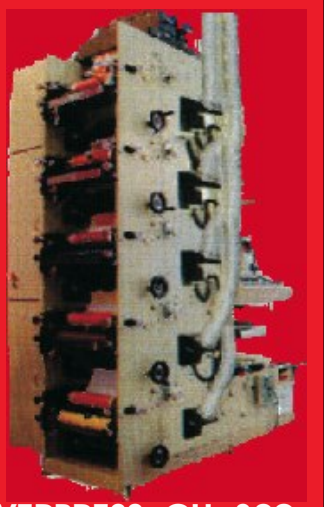

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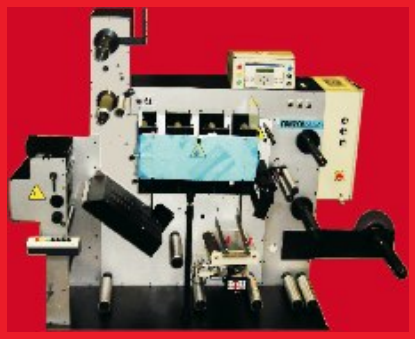

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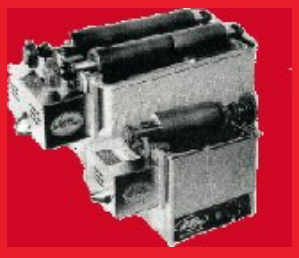

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Static electricity – causes and cures

Trevor Pimm, regional sales director, Meech International, looks as the causes and cures of static electricity

Static electricity is often referred to as the invisible enemy of manufacturing. Today's high-speed production processes, often involving synthetic materials, are more prone to the effects of static than was historically the case; an example of this is in labeling. Labels are now more often printed on plastic and applied at high speeds. This causes static charge to build up, resulting in misapplications, lost production, wastage and ultimately loss in profits.

What is static electricity?

When a material holds a net electrical charge, either positive or negative, it is said to have a static charge. The term static is a relative one as in many cases static charges will slowly decrease over a period of time. The length of time that this takes is dependent on the resistance of the material. For practical purposes, the two extremes can be taken as plastics and metal. Plastics generally have very high resistivities. This allows them to maintain static charges for long periods of time; on the other hand metals have very low resistances and an earthed metal object will hold its charge for a very small period of time.

Static electricity is usually measured in volts. Whilst mains voltages of 220 volts AC are considered dangerous, levels of static charge of 100 kV are common.

How is static created?

There are three main causes of static electricity: friction, separation and induction.

Friction

As two materials are rubbed together the electrons associated with the surface atoms on each material come into very close proximity with each other. These surface electrons can be moved from one material to another. The direction in which the electrons travel depends on the Triboelectric Series (see Box 1). Materials on the positive side will tend to give up their surface electrons and become positively charged whilst materials on the negative side of the series tend to gain electrons and hence a negative charge. The harder the two materials are pressed together, the greater the exchange of electrons and so a higher charge is generated. The speed of the rubbing action also has an effect, the faster the rubbing the higher the level. This is due to the surface electrons gaining heat energy generated by the friction.

Box 1 – Triboelectric Series

Air	
Human Skin	
Rabbit Fur	
Glass	
Human Hair	
Nylon	+ve Charge
Wool	
Silk	
Aluminum	
Paper	
Cotton	
Steel	
Wood	
Hard rubber	
Nickel, copper	
Brass, Silver	
Gold, platinum	
Acetate fiber (Rayon)	
Polyester	-ve Charge
Cling film	
Polythene	
PVC	
Silicon	
Teflon	

Separation
The method of charging by separation is similar to that of friction. When two materials are in contact the surface electrons are in close proximity to each other and upon separation have a tendency to adhere to one material or the other dependent upon their relative positions on the Triboelectric Series.

Induction
Whilst of interest technically, induction is of less significance in industrial processes and will not be discussed here.

What factors affect static electricity?

Type of material
Some materials are more readily charged than others. For example, an acetate material will gain a charge much more readily than glass.

Humidity
Generally speaking, the drier the environment, the higher the level of static charge and, conversely, the higher the humidity, the lower the static charge. In relative terms water is
a significantly better conductor of electricity than most plastics.

Repetition
Repeated actions such as friction or separation will increase the level of charge found on a material.

Battery effect
The combination of many charged items can lead to extremely high charges. For instance individual sheets of plastic with relatively low surface charges when stacked together can generate extremely high voltages.

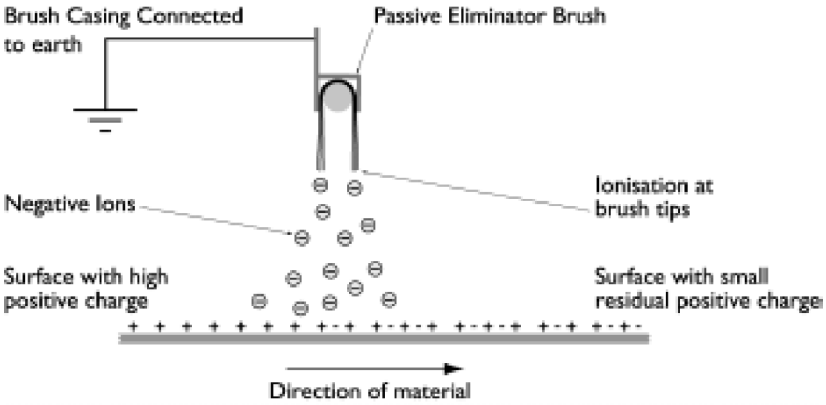
Change in temperature
As a material cools down it has a tendency to generate charge. The action of the cooling is to leave a net charge on the material throughout its entire volume.

Methods of elimination
The fundamental principle for neutralization of static charges is the same whatever the technique used. Where a material has a positive surface charge electrons must be delivered to the surface to bring the charge back into balance. Where the surface charge is negative, the excess electrons must be removed from the surface to neutralize the charge.

Modes of operation of static eliminators

Passive eliminators
A charged object will generate an electric field between itself and any surrounding earthed object. In the case of the Meech 974 passive eliminator, the field is between the surface and the tips of the carbon fiber earthed brush. (See Diagram 1.) The fine point at the end of the individual bristles causes the electric field to be highly concentrated at this point. When the strength of this electric field reaches a sufficient value, ionization of the air molecules surrounding the tip occurs.

Diagram 1



Passive eliminators are useful for reducing high levels of static charge, tens of kV's down to levels of a few kV's. However, by their very nature they are not able to neutralize the surface charge completely.

AC eliminators
AC eliminators operate at supply frequency. The mains voltage, 110 or 240V, is greatly increased using a ferro-resonating transformer to generate voltages of between 4.5 and 7 kV. This high voltage is fed to the ionizing pins, whilst the casing of the bar is connected to earth. (See Diagram 2.)

If we look at the positive cycle of the input waveform we will see that the electrode pin will be at a positive voltage compared to the casing. This generates a strong electric field between the two which is highly concentrated at the sharp point of the electrode pin.

This generates positive ions at the pin point and these molecules are then repelled from the pin due to their 'like' charge.

On the negative half of the cycle the opposite occurs. So, around the ionizing pin a cloud of positive and negative ions is produced. In the absence of outside influences, the positive and negative ions are attracted to each other or to a nearby earth. However, with the presence of a nearby static charge, an ion will be attracted to an opposite charge on the surface of the material.

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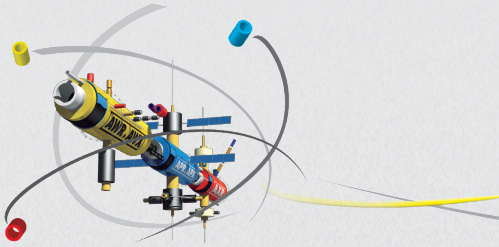

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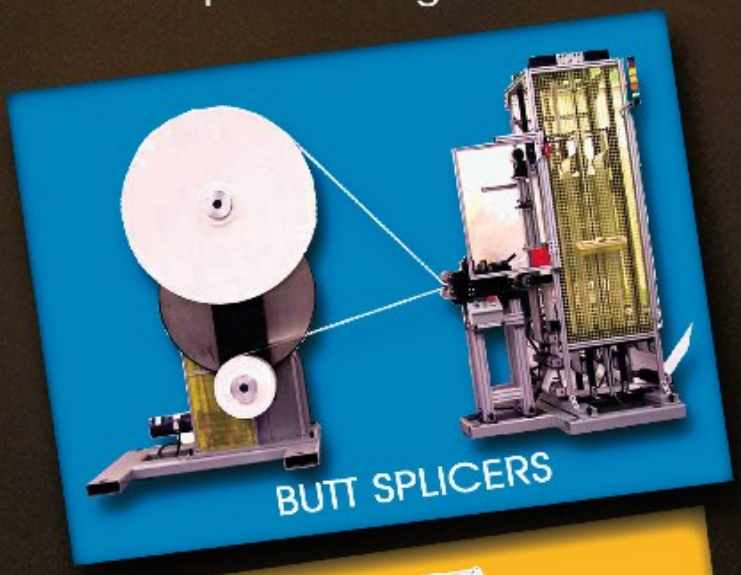

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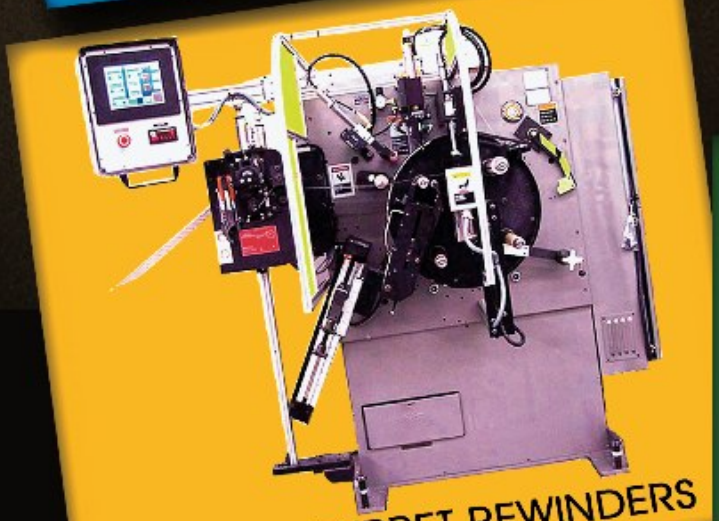

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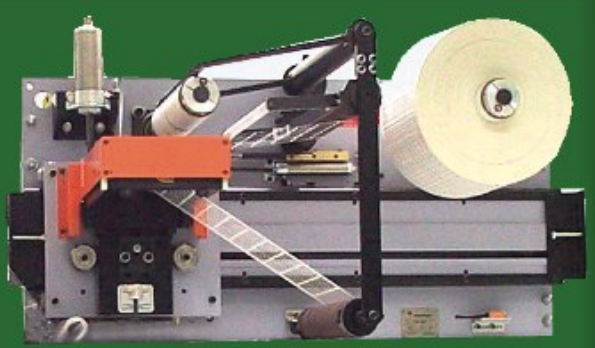


WASTE MATRIX WINDERS

At the surface of the material the electrons will be exchanged and the surface will be neutralized. As the ionization at the bar is not dependent upon the surface charge and ions are produced regardless of the proximity of a surface charge, complete neutralization of a surface can be achieved. This is a significant advantage over the passive eliminators.

Pulsed DC eliminators

Pulsed DC eliminators, like their AC counterparts, produce ionized air by using high voltage. Pulsed DC units operate at lower frequencies; in the case of the Meech Model 977v3 between 0.5-20 Hz. The ionizing bar consists of a series of emitters connected alternately to the negative and positive outputs of the 977v3. (See Diagram 3.) The casing of the bar is made of plastic and hence there is no proximity earth. The output from the power supply is effectively a square wave switching from negative to positive at the chosen frequency.

Diagram 2

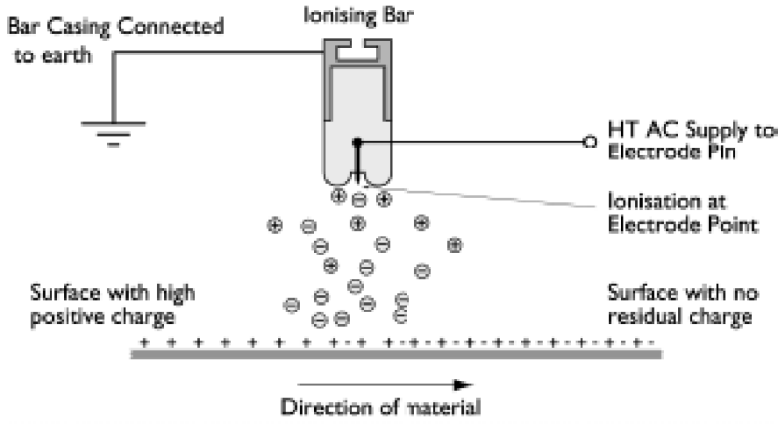
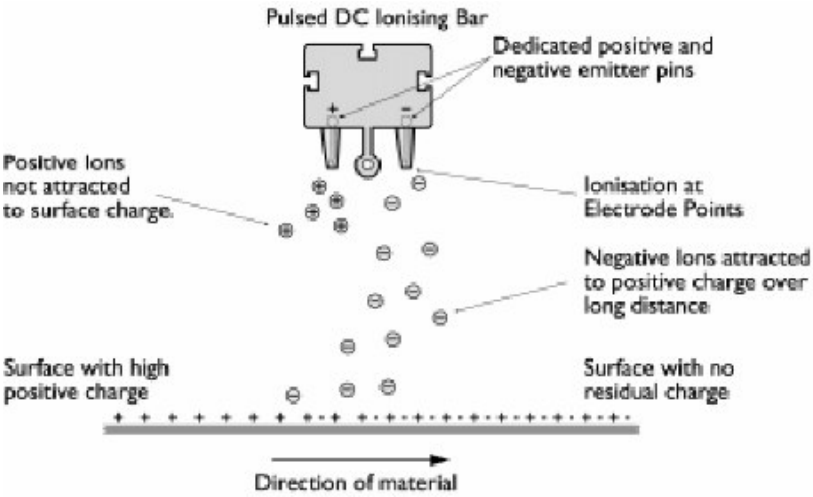


Diagram 3



A statically charged object in the vicinity of the ionizing bar will attract or repel the ions, dependent upon their relative polarities. When the ions reach the statically charged surface, neutralization takes place, as described in the AC eliminators section.

The low frequency of operation makes Pulsed DC equipment ideal for long range neutralization. At long distances from the bar, fewer ions are deliverable to a statically charged surface and hence the speed of neutralization is reduced. So, when using Pulsed DC equipment in dynamic applications such as labeling processes, thought must be given to the distance at which the bar will be mounted from the target surface.

An additional feature of the Pulsed DC system is that the output waveform can be altered and the duration of the negative and positive section of the wave form can be increased or decreased. For instance if the charge to be neutralized is known to be positive, the duration of the negative part of the output can be increased and conversely, the positive part of the wave form reduced. This will increase the production of negative ions and decrease the production of positive ions, making the system more efficient at neutralizing the positive charge.

Addressing common electrostatic problems

There are four main areas in which uncontrolled electrostatic charge can cause problems in industrial processes:

Electrostatic attraction (ESA)

Airborne particles are attracted to charged surfaces or indeed charged airborne particles are attracted to a surface which could be totally free of any charge. This problem affects most plastics processing industries in one form or another, spoiling finishes of painted products and causing rejects due to poor quality in the food, pharmaceutical and medical industries.

In the printing industry, dust attraction damages print finishes or indeed printing plates.

Material misbehavior

This is another form of ESA. However, instead of the contamination of products, the problem manifests itself in the form of the products, usually webs, fibers or sheets, sticking to themselves or equipment, misrouting or repelling. Automated processes are particularly prone to this problem.

Operator/personnel shocks

This is becoming increasingly significant as companies look to improve safety standards.

Electrostatic discharge (ESD)

This problem is associated with electronics assembly, installation and field service and also electronic component manufacture, where static voltages as low as 5V can cause catastrophic failure. ■

Leoma and LeRoy Baker with daughter Rhonda Capps in front of their XP5000

Riding the servo bus

Danielle Jerschefske visits LTI to celebrate the installation of Mark Andy's servo driven technology

Labels, Tags and Inserts Inc. hosted an Open House at its Burlington, North Carolina facility to celebrate the addition of the new Mark Andy XP5000 servo driven press to the shop floor. A. LeRoy Baker, who has been in the industry since 1959, opened LTI in 1994 with four Mark Andy presses and the help of his wife and children. He had previously owned a print plate shop called Roto-Plate, but decided to switch to a print house when the flexographic technology began to change in the 1990's. Butler says, 'I want only the best, and that's what we will pass along to our customers.'

Just two years ago, LTI invested $1.7 million into the newest equipment, replacing all of its older machinery. The 13-inch Mark Andy fully servo XP5000 press is a welcomed new addition to the high tech shop. The XP5000 possesses a fully electronic servo driven system programmed to drive minimum waste and maximum productivity. Designed as a multi-process platform, each print station can complete several converting processes, including rotary screen, die-cutting and hot and cold foil stamping.

Each of the eight stations on the XP5000 has a computerized interface control panel combined with internet diagnostics for pre-registration, auto registration control and re-register. 'Proprietary register control algorithms is what allows the XP to maintain exceptional print quality throughout the entire run, minimizing waste and delivering maximum throughput,' says Jeff Feltz, director, product management, Mark Andy.

LTI installed a re-lam and de-lam, two UV coating units and a corona treater to shock films so they are ink receptive. There is also a roll end auto shutdown feature in the XP that the saves the operator 2-3 minutes per changeover. With this feature, unwind tension automatically shuts off, splice clamps engage and the rewind motors shut down. When splicing is complete the press can start printing sellable product almost immediately with minimal adjustments to the tension.

'The servo press is the latest and greatest invention for flexo printers,' says Rhonda Capps, vice president, LTI and daughter of founder LeRoy Baker. 'It allows us to print on a wider range of substrates from thicker material to films. With the self registration controls on every print station we do not have as much waste and can run at faster speeds, giving the customer a product that is comparable to offset printing.' Capps reports that the set up time for the press is quicker and still prints great quality even when run at high speeds.

'This press allows us to complete orders we have never been able to do before,' continues Capps. 'Technology is very important to us. Even other print shops come to us to help them complete orders that they cannot do on their own equipment.'

Specifically, the XP5000 servo press is significant to LTI because of its Variprint capability. LTI wants to break into the film and shrink sleeve markets; now that they are able to change the plate roll to run at a different speed than the pacing roll, LTI can print elongated images on stretchy films leaving little to no print distortion once the film retracts again post-print. LTI is very excited about this.

In addition to the XP5000, LTI has three other Mark Andy presses in house, an 8-color 3000 UV and two 6-color 2200s. There is a BST ProMark video monitor attached to each press and all have sheet and roll capability. A butt splicer is attached in line onto the 3000 which increased productivity of the press by 40 percent.

Capps says, 'We feel that Mark Andy has been a partner to us in the truest sense, working together to make LTI the best it can be. We have certainly seen our production increase because of the improvements Mark Andy continues to build on.' ■

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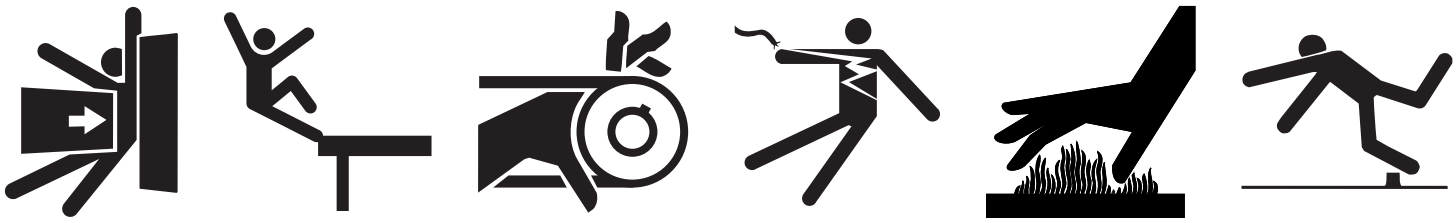

Safe label design

The correct design of safety labels is critical for manufacturers – and for the designers and printers who work for them. **Jim Heckman**, technical consultant, Standard Register, looks at how to ensure production of compliant safety labels

For manufacturers, safety labels on their products have never been more important. Inadequate warnings could have a wide variety of consequences for the manufacturer, its employees and its customers – consequences that range from non-compliance to lawsuits to minor injuries or even death. It goes without saying that just as important is the design and presentation of the safety labels themselves.

Because of the significance of these labels in the manufacturing process, industry standards have been developed. But these standards change every day, with more and more being required of manufacturers to meet the standards and to make certain the labels they design and use are in compliance. With this ever-growing list of standards, the label design issue has become complicated and confusing.

While it would take a multi-volume document to outline all of the standards and requirements of manufacturing safety labels, this article will provide a high-level overview of the label development process, including a look at the organizations setting the standards, the basic elements of label development, and how a properly designed label should look before it is placed on the product.

ANSI and ISO

For guidance in the development of safety labels, manufacturers often turn to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO). ANSI and ISO standards are, in many ways, very similar, and manufacturers in all industries typically use one or both sets of standards on their products. However, manufacturers must note that if a particular industry has its own set of standards (e.g., the window blind industry or electrical distribution), those standards supersede the standards set by ANSI and ISO.

ANSI labels are comprised of four key elements:

- The signal word panel (CAUTION, WARNING, DANGER)
- Identification of the hazard
- How to avoid the hazard
- The consequences of not avoiding the hazard

Standards set by ISO for safety labels include:

- An optional signal word panel
- A hazard pictogram inside a triangle
- Yellow background
- Optional text outlining the hazard and hazard avoidance

At the core of both sets of standards is the actual hazard – this is the sole purpose of using a safety label. In order to identify any potential hazards associated with a product, the manufacturer should use some type of hazard analysis or an actual physical review of the product. This will not only help determine the actual hazard but will also give guidance on how to avoid the hazard and the potential consequences of not avoiding the hazard. Once this step is completed, the severity of the hazard can be determined. Both ANSI and ISO (ISO 3864-2) use the following to define the severity of hazards:

- CAUTION: minor or moderate injury may occur (ANSI)
- CAUTION: minor or moderate injury could occur (ISO)
- WARNING: death or serious injury could occur
- DANGER: death or serious injury will occur

Once the hazard has been identified and severity has been defined, the actual design process of the safety label can begin.

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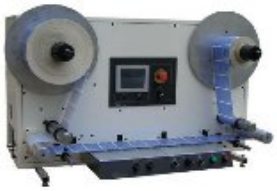

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Safety label design and development

There are several elements that must go into ANSI- and ISO-compliant safety labels, including the pictorials to be used as well as the verbiage outlining the hazard, hazard avoidance and consequences. Following is a look into each of these design areas as well as information on layout requirements and the importance of consistency in label design.

Pictorials

As the saying goes, a picture is worth a thousand words. That's because pictures are considered the universal language when it comes to communicating with everyone, no matter their native tongue or literacy level. Wherever possible, manufacturers should try to use pictorials to accompany their messages so that product operators have the opportunity to visualize the hazard and see how to avoid it without needing to read.

There is a wide variety of standardized pictorials available for use on safety labels, nearly all of which can be referenced through a number of resources. One such resource is the pictorial database available on the Association of Equipment Manufacturers' website at www.aem.org/technical/PictorialDatabase/. This free resource is keyword searchable and offers pictorials that are downloadable in multiple formats for use within particular design applications.

In addition to the AEM database, there are several other databases available for manufacturers to review pictorial standards, including the subscription-based ISO database which also provides for pictorial downloading. Within ISO, manufacturers can make reference to a variety of existing applicable standards, such as:

- ISO 11684 – Agricultural tractors
- ISO 13200 – Cranes
- ISO 15870 – Powered industrial trucks
- ISO 9244 – Earthmoving machinery

Use these resources or standards unique to an industry to identify the pictorials best depicting the hazard to be addressed by the safety label as well as pictorials illustrating hazard avoidance – accurately depicting how to avoid the hazard is a key component that is missing in many inappropriately designed safety labels. As pictorials are identified for specific manufacturer products, the development of an in-house pictorial library is highly recommended for quick and easy access to all of the commonly and often used pictorials by the manufacturer.

Verbiage

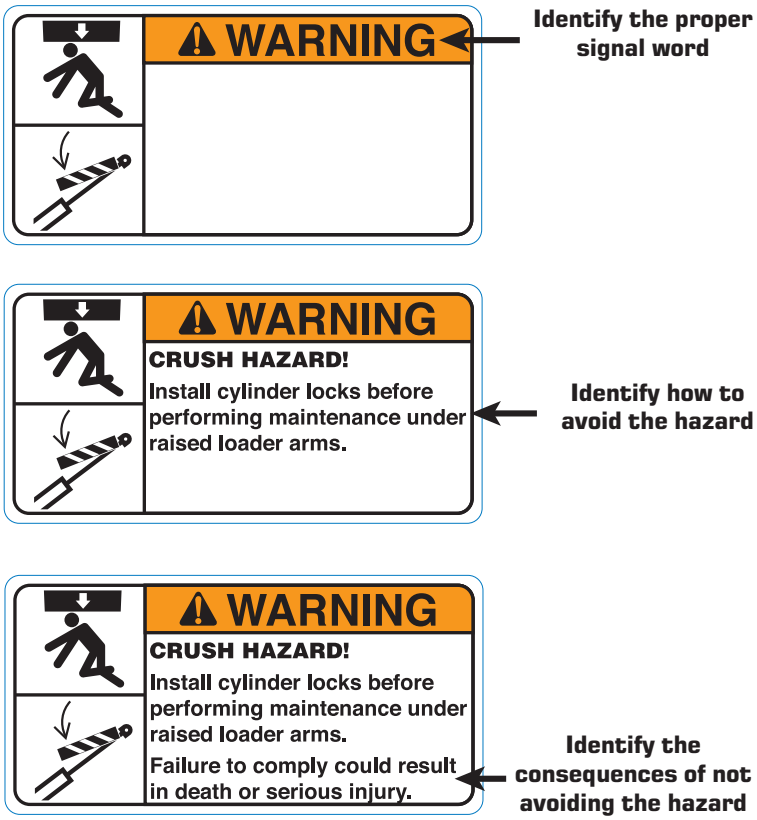
While pictorials provide the important visual component of the hazard, the verbiage included on the safety label provides more finite detail around the hazard, hazard avoidance and consequences. At this point in the label development process, a manufacturer has already provided the initial verbiage needed for the label – signal words CAUTION, WARNING or DANGER. The next step is to put the identified hazard into words and describe how do avoid the hazard.

For example, let's say that this particular piece of equipment could present a hazard of individuals being crushed. The label would begin with the signal word 'WARNING' with the identification of the hazard reading, 'CRUSH HAZARD!' Following would be the avoidance text: 'Install cylinder locks before

Use the headline style format

instead of

a long run-on sentence



performing maintenance under raised loader arms'. This text informs the end-user of the steps necessary to avoid the hazard.

The remaining verbiage is a description of the consequences of not avoiding the hazard. In our example, the text would read, 'Failure to comply could result in death or serious injury'. All of this verbiage would be coupled with pictorials illustrating the crush hazard and the avoidance action.

There are several keys to developing effective verbiage for safety labels. First, wording must be succinct and use a headline-style format. Label designers must avoid using excessive, unnecessary words (e.g., 'the') while presenting the text in easy-to-read upper and lower case letters. Note that it is acceptable to use all upper case letters in short phrases requiring impact, like CRUSH HAZARD.

Second, be mindful of the font size of the text and the space available on the label. Manufacturers need to determine the proper distance to view the safety label and avoid the hazard. ANSI has a set of font size guidelines that can be referenced for this very purpose (see ANSI Z535.4 Product safety signs and labels Annex B).

Layout and consistency

When designing a safety label, ANSI Z 535.4 standards indicate it can be laid out in either a portrait (vertical) format or in a landscape (horizontal) format. Both of these orientations are acceptable design layouts. This is something that can be determined by a manufacturer's corporate standards, the area where the label will go or personal preference.

Whether the label is vertical or horizontal in orientation, overall design consistency must be maintained. Through label design consistency, manufacturers will help ensure the recognition of hazard and avoidance pictorials by using the same pictorials outlined in ANSI and ISO stylebooks. It also ensures that a consistent message is delivered across entire product lines and between different products.

When looking at a label program from both an international and domestic standpoint, consistency of design is very important. It is a good practice to keep layout styles consistent across different labels. Generally, manufacturers want to keep the signal word panel, the pictorials and the verbiage in the same location within various labels when possible. This will allow the end user to recognize a safety message quickly.

Final label design and production

Once all of the elements are in place – pictorials, verbiage and consistency – take a final look at the safety label to make sure the artwork is clean and that the label accurately describes the hazard and avoidance steps. It is encouraged to test the label – an easy and effective way to do this is to gather a group of individuals to critique the label on symbol recognition and messaging. A group of employees who do not deal directly with the product can be used as well.

During this testing, it is important for manufacturers to remember that safety labels are not the 'end-all be-all' for identified hazards. The labels are there to remind the users of what they should have reviewed in the Operators Manual. It is always the responsibility of the user to read the manual before operating any piece of equipment.

After the label passes the test, work with a proven label supplier to produce the finished product, making certain to provide size requirements and any special instructions to the supplier. A good supplier should be willing to work with the manufacturer throughout the entire label development process, offering full design capabilities, translation services and a thorough knowledge of industry standards and compliance requirements. ■

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Filmic liners

When should you specify paper or plastic release liners? **Peter T. Vert** of Dow Corning Corporation examines the impact of the latest developments in siliconizing filmic substrates

Often paired with film face stocks, filmic release liners are used in many pressure sensitive applications today, ranging from no-label-look beverage labels to diaper closures, medical applications, and labels for health and beauty aid products. The market for filmic release liners is growing at a rate of 10 percent per year, fueled in part by the emergence of premium applications that require the level of optical clarity, water resistance, flexibility, and fiber-free performance films can provide.

Many factors influence the selection of materials and coating technologies for filmic laminates, such as end-user requirements; converting, laminating, die-cutting, and printing requirements; adhesive and substrate characteristics; environmental concerns; locally available material choices; and silicone release coating technology.

A self-adhesive laminate is a complex structure. The face stock, adhesive, silicone release coating, and backing substrate impact and are impacted by one another. The silicone release coating plays a critical, enabling role that allows the entire release construction to function. Compatibility and robustness are key, but the silicone technology used can also drive process decisions and other trade-offs.

Films offer a degree of surface smoothness and added value functionality such as flexibility, water resistance, and perhaps even stain resistance that positively impact label performance and appearance. Because of the surface smoothness of films, there is virtually no pattern transfer from the liner to the adhesive.

This is essential for clear-on-clear applications where surface roughness can translate into a cloudy or hazy appearance in the end-use application.

The flexibility and texture of films are benefits in applications like diaper closures. The water resistance of films makes them ideal for labeling health and beauty aid products exposed to moist environments. Filmic release liners are also ideal for building materials that require strong liners capable of withstanding harsh environments. Also, some medical applications require the use of fiber-free materials.

While on the rise, the use of films in label release applications is relatively low today, creating an excellent opportunity for future growth.

The global pressure sensitive marketplace is driven by the need to produce more labels, faster and at lower cost. Consequently, there is a growing need for release coating systems that can be applied at high line speeds and cure quickly. Low-temperature cure is desirable, as well, because it reduces energy costs and supports the coating of temperature-sensitive filmic substrates.

Another cost-reduction effort that impacts material selection is the trend toward reducing substrate caliper. Lower-caliper materials cost less.

However, in the case of paper, lowering caliper lowers strength and increases the potential for tearing.

Films potentially have several advantages over paper. Their surface smoothness facilitates even coverage during the coating process and their superior hold-out reduces the amount of silicone coating required.

Clear-on-clear is a growing sector for film liners

Additionally, films are relatively incompressible, and can have the required stiffness to provide sharp die-cutting. Their inherent strength, even at lower calipers, offers the potential for higher conversion speeds and better throughput while minimizing concerns over costly web breaks.

To balance this, however, films must be carefully selected to withstand the conditions in the siliconizing and conversion processes. Films are less able to withstand elevated temperatures compared to paper. This is particularly true of polyolefin films.

Polyester films are somewhat more robust physically, and are less difficult to handle as a web. It is advisable to measure shrinkage and tensile strength at the conversion temperature to ensure that the substrate can be processed at the required tension levels without an unacceptable level of shrinkage or permanent film stretching.

It also must be realized that paper manufacturers are making large strides to meet the growing demands of evolving end-user applications. For example, some grades of paper have excellent smoothness and hold-out performance and can cost-effectively compete with films in some of these

Table 1. Key substrate properties.

	Ease of Thermal Cure	Initial Silicone Rub-off	Delayed Rub-off	Caliper Control	Cost
Treated PET	★★★	★★★	★★★	★★★	☆
Untreated PET	★★★	★★★	☆	★★★	★
LDPE	☆	★★★	★★	★	★
HDPE	☆	★★★	★★	★	★
BOPP	★	★★★	★	★★	★★
MOPP	★★	★★	★	★★	★★

☆Difficult ★Fair ★★Good ★★★Very Good

Table 2. Pressure sensitive applications for filmic substrates today and tomorrow.

Applications	PE	PET	OPP
Labelstock	•	•••	••
Graphic Arts		•	
Tapes	•••	•	•
Hygiene/Health Care	••	••	••
Building	•••	•••	•
Covering Films		•	
Decorative Vinyl			

Table 3. A comparison of current release coating technologies for films.

Properties	Solvent	Emulsion	UV	New Solventless Technologies
Cure Speed	Slow	Medium	Very Fast	Fast
Cure Temperature	>85°C (185°F)	>85°C (185°F)	Ambient	>90°C (194°F)
Anchorage	Excellent	Good	Good	Good
Coatweight, lb/ream	0.4	0.4	0.8 - 1.3	0.8 - 1.3
Range of Release	Broad	Broad	Limited	Broad
Release Stability	Excellent	Excellent	Moderate	Excellent
Environment	Poor	Excellent	Excellent	Excellent
Material Cost	Low-Medium	Low-Medium	Very High	Medium

value-added segments.

One less-direct cost-reduction strategy that is beginning to find favor is that of involving silicone release coating and other material suppliers early in the laminate development process. By working together, suppliers are often able to help laminate makers take advantage of material synergies that optimize the cost effectiveness and end-use performance of the entire structure.

Technology trends

Due to environmental concerns and regulatory pressures, many release coating operations, especially in Europe and the Americas, have decreased their reliance on solvent-based coatings and moved toward solventless, emulsion-based, and UV-cure technologies.

On the adhesives side, water-based acrylics dominate the pressure-sensitive label market. However, the use of hot melt and UV-cure adhesives is growing. This has important release coating implications because the coating's primary function is to provide the appropriate release profile against the chosen pressure sensitive adhesive.

The market is seeing changes in substrates as well. The rise in the use of polyester (PET), oriented polypropylene (OPP), and polyethylene (PE) films, both as face stocks and liners, has led to the development of UV- and low-temperature-cure release coatings designed especially to meet the needs of temperature-sensitive materials.

Filmic substrates differ considerably in their filmic properties (see Table 1). Selecting the best one for any given application often involves making trade-offs. Polyester offers the best across-the-board performance, but often requires priming (which increases its cost) to achieve good release coating anchorage.

However, recent advances in silicone release coating technology now enable coating of less-costly unprimed polyester films.

For polyolefin liners, thermal cure, particularly with LDPE, is challenging, although rub-off issues tend to be less severe compared to general purpose-grade PET.

Polypropylene can have quite different properties depending on the method of manufacture. BOPP films can compete with PET in liner applications. Thermal cure and delayed rub-off can be quite challenging and the silicone system must be carefully selected to achieve the desired balance of properties. MOPP can generally withstand higher cure temperatures than BOPP.

Table 2 shows the pressure sensitive applications where PE, PET, and OPP films are most frequently used today. The highlighted boxes indicate where their use is expected to grow in the future.

Silicone release coating technologies

There are two basic ways to cure silicone release coatings onto films – via heat (thermally) or via UV or e-beam radiation. Thermally curable coatings employ either solvent-based, emulsion, or solventless (100 percent silicone solids) delivery systems. Solventless systems may be based on either vinyl or hexenyl polymers. Solvents are frequently added to solventless coatings to improve spreading and as an aid in processing.

Table 3 compares the performance of solvent-based, emulsion, UV-curable, and today's new solventless release coating technologies for films.

■ Solvent-based coatings

Solvent-based coatings offer the advantages of low coat weight, excellent anchorage to films, very good wetting, and optical clarity. However, they cure more slowly than solventless coatings and have a more limiting health, safety, and environmental profile.

■ Emulsion coatings

Emulsion coatings offer the advantages of low coat weight, good anchorage to films, very good wetting, and optical clarity. In addition, they do not have the health, safety, and environmental concerns that solvent-based coatings do. However, like solvent-based coatings, they do not cure as quickly as other available technologies.

■ UV-curable solventless coatings

UV-curable solventless release coatings can be used on a broad range of thermally sensitive substrates. They have excellent bath life, low misting potential, and cure

quickly. The capital investment in curing equipment for a dedicated UV line is significantly less than for a thermal line. However, raw material costs are high. Catalyst inhibition can be a problem on clay-coated papers and nitrogen inerting may be required. More importantly, only a limited range of release profiles can be created. Additionally, UV-curable coatings may become unstable against hot melt adhesives and some aggressive acrylics.

Thermally curable solventless coatings

Thermally curable solventless release coatings are compatible with a broad range of adhesive types. They offer a wide range of stable release forces and can be applied using conventional coating equipment. Although not suitable for very heat-sensitive substrates, some of today's new thermally curable technologies can be cured at temperatures as low as 90degC (194degF). Coat weights are limited to current solventless coating techniques (gravure).

Process considerations

Process considerations that affect the outcome of siliconizing films with thermally curable coatings include:

- Web tension control – Good web tension control is essential when using thin calipers of some substrates
- Temperature control – Some films are more temperature-sensitive than others, LDPE in particular
- Coat weight – Reducing coat weight can reduce costs; but reducing it too much can negatively impact coverage and consequently release performance. Filmic substrates generally offer the lowest coat weight potential
- Film variability – Different additives, such as anti-oxidant, anti-fungal, and anti-blocking agents, can affect anchorage and inhibit cure
- Process conditions – Corona versus non-corona
- Catalyst – Tin catalysts are less prone than platinum catalysts to catalyst inhibition

Key challenges for coating films

Key challenges for coating unprimed polyester are primarily anchorage related. However, it is possible to achieve excellent immediate and aged anchorage by:

- Changing process conditions (e.g. using corona treatment)
- Using anchorage additives
- Adopting one of the new silicone coatings designed especially for thermally curing on films; these innovative coatings have unique architectures that improve anchorage performance even on unprimed polyester

Key challenges for coating polypropylene or polyethylene are related to the temperature sensitivity of these substrates and the need for low-temperature cure. Improvements in low-temperature cure performance can be made by:

- Increasing the concentration of platinum catalyst in the release coating formulation
- Increasing the SiH:Vi ratio
- Using more reactive polymers and crosslinkers
- Selecting filmic substrates that are non-inhibiting
- Changing process conditions – corona versus non-corona

Summary

The use of filmic release liners is growing, fueled by high-value no-label-look applications. In addition to their ability to deliver optical clarity, films possess beneficial properties such as strength, hold-out, and surface smoothness that are likely to increase market penetration.

Different films present different challenges, including anchorage, low-temperature-cure requirements, and the need for release modification. However, major technology breakthroughs occurring in thermal solventless release coatings are making it easier to over-come those challenges.

UV-curable and especially the new low-temperature-cure solventless silicone systems designed especially for films are likely to out-pace solvent-based systems as the preferred vehicles for siliconizing film. ■

Release coating

Increased coating speeds, reduced platinum consumption and olefin-free release additives are key trends in release coating technology. Wacker Chemie's **Hans Lautenschlager** looks at the issues

The function of the release liner is to ensure that the label is not only securely held until it is needed, but also can be removed at any time. This is made possible by an ultra-thin silicone release layer, which ensures that the label can be peeled off easily and attached to a product without loss of adhesion.

Since customers must react flexibly to a variety of demands, which will be determined by the individual application, release agents are developed as a multi-component system. In the case of Wacker, for example, this comprises the Dehesive polymer, as well as a crosslinker, catalyst and additive.

It is the additive that determines how much force is needed to peel the label from the liner. Controlled release additives permit very large ranges of release force for a wide variety of adhesives.

Release-liner coating is all about speed. A few years ago, coating speeds of 300 meters per minute were considered standard. Today, new facilities are able to operate at over 1,000m/min. The world's fastest coating line reaches speeds of up to 1,600m/min, or 60mph.

Achieving higher and higher coating speeds does not just depend on the right machinery, however. Numerous side-effects occur at these speeds. Consequently, producers of release liners face major challenges as well. The worst problems are caused by:

- Air bubbles that produce streaking when the film of release agent is applied,
- The formation of undesirable silicone aerosols, and
- The greater concentration of VOCs produced by the higher throughput.

High coating speeds produce turbulence and air bubbles in the silicone, which may make the release film streaky. Streakiness is prevented with silicones that spread faster over the liner. This makes for uniform coating even at very high speeds.

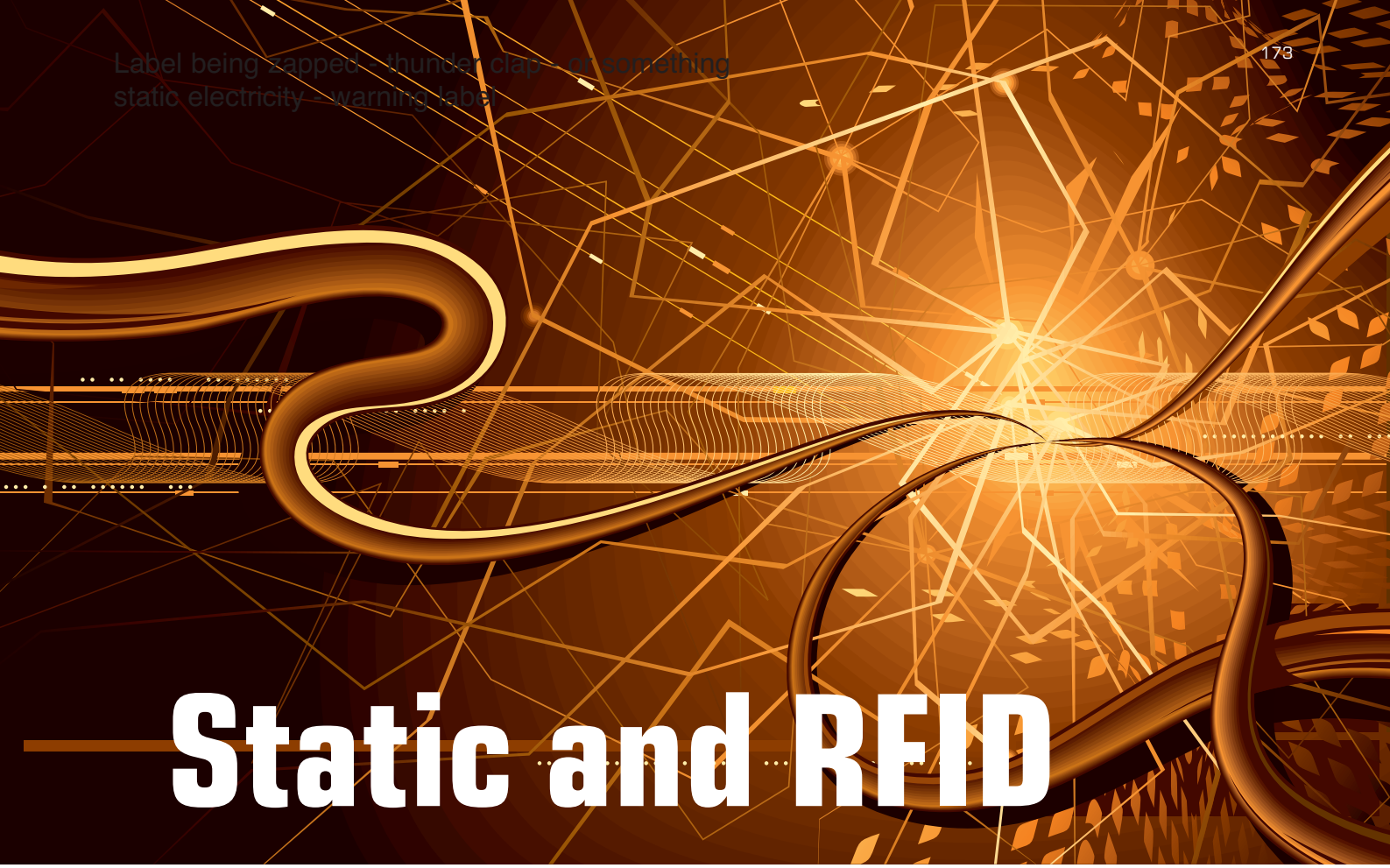
Integrating an anti-misting additive will make it possible to effectively prevent the formation of silicone aerosols even at top speeds. This additive consists of a high-molecular silicone that acts like a molecular 'octopus' and stops the silicone from flying off. To minimize VOC emissions, even at high throughputs, the originally olefin-based additives are being increasingly replaced by olefin-free systems.

Less platinum for lower costs

The catalyst required by release agents is a major cost factor. This catalyst comprises a platinum complex that ensures that the polymer cures reliably in one to two seconds in an oven immediately after coating. The problem is that other industries such as the jewelry sector or producers of automotive catalytic converters increasingly use platinum, too. Therefore, rising demand has made this precious metal much more expensive. The price of platinum has virtually tripled over the past ten years.

This has led to the development of more cost-effective systems which do not consume as much platinum. With its Dehesive 960 silicone release agent, Wacker has used an innovative polymer with greatly increased reactivity, which allows the platinum-complex content in the system to be reduced by as much as 60 percent compared to silicone types used before. This makes it an interesting option particularly for label applications.

What of the future? Firstly, mechanical coating speed is no longer an issue. Wacker's silicone release agents, for example, are already capable of far higher coating speeds than are currently possible with modern coaters. As an example, Dehesive 906 AMA silicone grades permit coating speeds of up to 1,600 meters per minute. Secondly, there is still room to further optimize the costs of low-platinum systems by developing release agents with even less platinum consumption. ■



Static and RFID

Trevor Pimm, regional sales director Europe at Meech International, considers how static affects RFID label converting

Static electricity is often referred to as the invisible enemy of manufacturing. Today's high-speed production processes, often involving synthetic materials, are more prone to the effects of static than was historically the case; an example of this is in labeling. Labels used to be printed on paper and applied slowly. They are now usually printed on plastic and applied at high speeds, causing static charge to build up, resulting in misapplications, lost production, wastage and ultimately loss in profits. This article will look at static as the enemy in RFID label production and how it can be controlled.

Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) is fast overtaking barcoding as the identification method of choice for a wide range of businesses. The retail industry was the first to utilize its potential for the identification and monitoring of goods throughout the supply chain, although now it can be used in such critical applications as patient monitoring in hospitals and access control. According to US market research firm ABI Research, 'Wider industry adoption will help grow the global market for RFID from $1.4 billion in 2003 to $10.9 billion by 2009.'

RFID is basically a contactless communication method. Information is stored on a small tag and this can be transmitted via radio waves to a reader. Its advantages over other tagging methods such as barcodes is that it has no line of sight requirements, it can store larger amounts of data and has both a read and write capability. Already companies who have implemented RFID strategies have seen reduced costs, better inventory control and improved customer relations.

An RFID label comprises a tiny radio device (the transponder or tag), which is a simple silicon microchip attached to a small flat antenna and mounted on a substrate. This is then encapsulated in different materials, such as plastic, depending on its intended usage. During the manufacture of these labels, the generation of static electricity is virtually unavoidable but has disastrous results. Even the smallest discharge, less than 400V, will cause chip failure and subsequent loss or corruption of stored data. An electrostatic charge is generated by the contact and separation of the insulative materials used in the label's manufacture. It is vital, therefore, to minimize this charge throughout the converting process.

There are a wide range of static control solutions that can be used by RFID label converters to help reduce the generation of static on the converting machine. Due to the fact that RFID labeling machines are small and compact, we at Meech find the most commonly used static control solutions are the Meech 915 and Meech 910 shockless static elimination bars.

It is important that converters manufacturing RFID labels understand the risks that static poses and take the appropriate measures. Studies have shown that between 1-5 percent of RFID labels fail during the converting phase, with electrostatic discharge being a key cause. ■

Error reduction

Errors and delays introduced at various points in the label design and pre-press cycle can significantly increase costs and lead times. **Andy Thomas** reports on one solution from New Zealand

With margins decreasing all through the labels value chain, the pressure is on to drive out costs and reduce cycle times for the development and launch of new products. One of the biggest problems for both converters and end users is the complexity of the path from label conception through to design, and from design to pre-press and plate making. During this process, errors can be introduced, amendments missed, or key players fail to make their input in a timely manner. This leads to costly rework, time added to launch schedules – and even product withdrawls.

Now Adhesif Print, a major player in the Australasian Labels market, has adopted the VAM Labels pre-press workflow system from software developer MH New Zealand (MHNZ) to increase the accuracy of the labels workflow from end user to platemaking.

With recent heavy investment in state-of-the-art Gallus printing technology and a policy of continual systems improvement, Adhesif Print was keen to streamline its processes but gain a competitive edge.

Malcolm Davies, national sales manager at Adhesif, explains: 'We have been working alongside MH as our major prepress supplier for two decades now, so when we were introduced to the VAM Labels system, it seemed an intelligent and natural progression to the relationship. One of the areas of improvement we have been looking at is cost containment – prepress is certainly a key part of the production process that can easily add both tangible and intangible costs to a job.'

VAM Labels and its partner program labelsforwine were released by MHNZ in 2000, reacting to a need in the market for a system that could provide an alternative to the inefficiencies identified in the traditional process of creating print-ready artwork for labels.

Previously, producing label artwork would involve an administrator overseeing several complicated processes, kicking off with a design brief and ending with printer liaison. Factor in the 'email merry-go-round' of content amendments and corrections from marketing, production and management teams, and you are left with a process that is not only costly in time and resources, but extremely vulnerable to errors and security issues.

General manager Ivan Gillat, a well-known face in the Australasian packaging marketplace for a quarter of a century, explained the motivation behind what has amounted to over $3 million dollars worth of ongoing technological investment.

'We kept hearing the same story – due to either time or budgetary constraints labels were being printed that were either way off brand or simply contained incorrect information. It was clear to us that an opportunity existed to put in place a simple system that would not only benefit the client, but also the label printer by ensuring that all the files produced were content correct and had passed through the appropriate prepress functions and were therefore print ready'.

The benefits to the end user in costs and speed to market are potentially huge, and the label printer is happy because they often gain valuable days production time out of the deal.

How it all works...

- The entire system is web-based, securely hosted from MH's Centre of excellence in Auckland, so clients worldwide need nothing more than an internet connection to get on board.

- First of all, a label template is designed in close partnership with

From vineyard to finished label there are multiple points at which errors can be introduced. MHNZ has a program dedicated to automating the design-to-prepress workflow

Adhesif Print has cut significant costs from its business after adopting the VAM labels automated workflow system

the client, identifying the areas of the layout that will remain static (logo's, address etc) and areas that may contain variable data, for example text and imagery.

- A workgroup is then created, using secure logins and protocols to identify which particular areas or fields within the label template each workgroup member is accountable for.
- Usually, a key member of the workgroup will initiate the label and be responsible for checking the final proof before submission; they are also automatically notified by the system as to the progress of each member of the groups contribution, as well as any comments they may have with regards to content.
- Once all the data is submitted into the appropriate fields, a proof is generated and a lo-res pdf is viewable online.
- Upon approval, background systems gather all the appropriate data, and the hi-res print-ready file is compiled, according to the relevant specs of the chosen printer.

The system can control the amount of content that is entered into a template and also allows a user to alter content and dynamically view any changes in context in real time.

As a web based system using email notifications and reportable work groups, the location of these individuals has no restrictions - indeed, MH says it is common for a template workgroup to be made up of stakeholders in locations all over the world.

Head of MH's development team, Robert Gaitau, says that creating software this complex whilst maintaining ease-of-use was not without its challenges.

'The system utilizes enterprise-level technology and is designed in line with client feedback, and as a result fits seamlessly into the industry and culture of those clients. We always work with our clients on a real partnership basis to maintain and enforce their branding policies by locking in common art components and only providing the option for their workgroups to use pre-agreed typefaces, styles and templated document layouts.'

Certainly Adhesif Print's experience has been overwhelmingly positive, as Malcolm Davies explains: 'VAM Labels has effectively removed the need for our responsibility for the pre-press aspect of a label job and also provided the ability for us to track the progress of a label as its being developed. We now not only know when the next job is scheduled, but also that when we receive label artwork generated by the system, it will print correctly, first time. All proofs have already been fingerprinted to our presses so the client can sign off on exactly what they will get. We are using VAM Labels for our work with several major clients and it has shown itself to be a key value-add to our offering.'

MH's Gillat cites one converter who adopted the VAM Labels program – developed specifically for the pharma and nutraceuticals markets – and reduced the number of processes within the company required to produce a product label from 43 to 28, 'a fact we are enormously proud of.'

Certainly as the market gets tighter, the demand to cut product lead times and take out cost will drive the industry towards automation. For companies in especially competitive, information-critical markets like pharmaceuticals and winemaking, systems like these offer the chance to work more efficiently, and for both end users and printers to gain competitive advantage. ■

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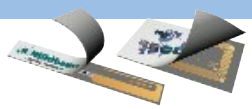

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Test Line TL 15000
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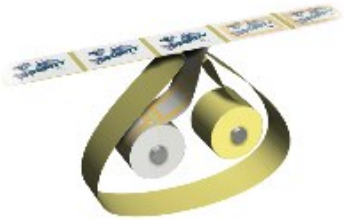

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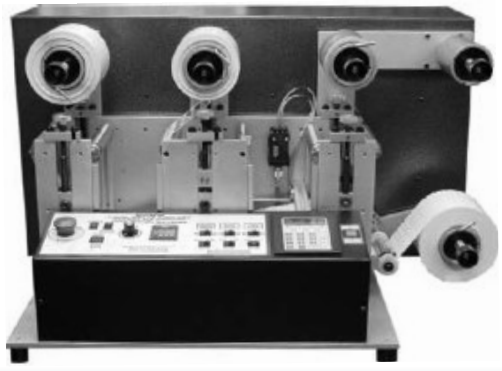

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Custom wines, custom labels

Custom winemaking – from fruit sourcing to labeling the bottles – is the name of the game at Judd's Hill Microcrush winery in Napa Valley, California. **Danielle Jerschefske** reports

For fifteen years, Art Finkelstein and family have been producing personally created wines in small amounts, for avid grape growers and wine enthusiasts. From fruit sourcing to labeling the bottles, Judd's Hill clients can truly customize their chosen wine – and wine label.

'Besides having a custom wine from start to finish, one of the most appealing parts of the process is the ability to have a customized label,' Finkelstein says.

John Henry Packaging Group, headquartered in Lansing, Michigan, runs about 60 percent of the custom labels Judd's Hill customers' request. 'Each Microcrush client purchasing their wine labels from John Henry Packaging creates custom label graphics with unlimited print colors, on a selection of eight papers, from hundreds of die shapes. Conventional label printing technology requires an economical minimum order that is higher than the 1,000–3,000 typically needed by Microcrush clients; therefore, John Henry offers the more appropriate digital printing technology,' explains Dan Welty, director of marketing, John Henry Packaging Group (JHP).

Judd's Hill has very little to do with choosing a customer's label besides helping them abide to the strict government regulations and specifications of wine labels. They help customers achieve the Federal Certificate of Label Approval from the Tax and Trade Bureau, the government office in charge of wine regulations. This is checked and confirmed once the client has designed a label and it is near ready for production.

Customers are given a list of printers and designers that have experience with wine labels and the customer is free to choose whomever. 'We do not get involved in the label decisions at all. It is completely up to the customer,' says Finkelstein.

'Many clients just send us a photo of their vineyard if they are grape growers,' tells Loretta O'Connell, account manager for JHP. Otherwise people send them the artwork or partial artwork electronically. About 75 percent hire a designer to ensure the process runs smoothly. Once the artwork is received, JHP creates a PDF proof to send back to the customer for them sign off on. Customers can receive a press proof if desired, otherwise, the job goes to press, after bureau certification, on an HP Indigo 4000, or HP Indigo 4050.

The characteristics of a digital press make it perfect for short-run, personalized applications like this. Consumers really enjoy the appeal of a personalized label. 'In the US, 25 percent of wineries are estimated to use digital label printing for a portion of their total production, up from less than 1 percent in 2000. Similarly to the transition from glue applied labels to pressure-sensitive in the 1990's, now increasing quantities of wine labels are transitioning from conventional to digital label printing technology,' continues Welty.

Microcrush has had customers create labels from refrigerator artwork to use on wine labels for bottles ordered to celebrate a grandchild's college graduation. Some use family heirlooms, a favorite animal or flower as the basis for the design of their label. The aesthetic options are endless. Welty adds, 'The more power you give your customers to personalize and customize, the more likely they will be attracted to a product and pay a premium for it. Digital label printing offers unlimited options to communicate small batch exclusivity, down to the individual bottle serial numbering and personalization.'

The unique combination of custom wine blended with custom label offered by Microcrush makes for a truly exclusive, personalized bottle of wine perfect for any occasion. 'Digital label printing has made an impact on an increasing number of winery businesses. Similar to music's progression from 8-track, to cassette tape, to CD, to a digitally delivered medium, digital printing provides customers with a higher level of flexibility, creativity, and quality at a lower cost,' Welty says. ■

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Labelexpo Europe 2007

Andy Thomas and **James Quirk** preview some of the new products and innovations that will be on display at what promises to be the biggest Labelexpo show ever

Labelexpo Europe 2007, the world's premier label industry event, will take place 26-29 September at Brussels Expo in Belgium. It is expected to be the biggest Labelexpo event ever, attracting over 23,000 visitors from across the globe, with a particularly strong contingent from the rapidly growing markets of Central & Eastern Europe and Russia. There will be over 500 companies exhibiting, and one quarter of these will have working machinery on their stands.

Technology

As the following pages of our Labelexpo preview show, there will be plenty of new machinery to look at, with the launch of new flexo, offset, letterpress, screen and digital presses and the related in- and off-line finishing and converting systems. We will also see new advances in digitally imaged flexo sleeves and plates, and in digital letterpress plates and digitally imaged rotary screens.

The show sees the launch of keyless inking for in-line offset presses – using an anilox roll/chambered doctor blade to ink an offset plate. Also of significance is the growing range of press control systems at the show, including video-camera based registewr control units, closed loop densitometry controls for offset and flexo presses and significant advances in web inspection systems linking through to the rewinder to create a seamless quality control workflow.

Inkjet looks to be making a particularly strong showing, and it will be interesting to see how far the quality and speed of these 4-color industrial systems has advanced in the last year. Laser die cutting and digital (inkjet) coating systems will also be added to the digital mix.

There will be a strong emphasis on digital workflows which link management information systems to graphics management systems using JDF protocols – a technology which is finally starting to realize its early promise.

On the materials side, we can expect to see a growing emphasis on high value products such as shrink sleeve labels/ink/finishing systems, and a new range of high performance films which are conformable, tactile and multi-purpose. As more converters look to move into narrow/mid web flexible packaging applications, expect to see food-contact compliant UV systems and slitter-rewinders purpose-built to handle thin, heat-sensitive unsupported films.

Seminars

New for this year's show, are three high-level seminars focusing on the latest label industry developments.

The first seminar, presented in association with UPM Raflatac, will take place on the morning of Wednesday 26 September and will be chaired by Mike Fairley. It will consider opportunities raised by RFID and by environmental issues.

On Thursday Mike Fairley returns with a detailed interactive presentation on 'The European and global label markets – trends, opportunities and issues'. The seminar will help label printers and converters to identify the key geographical areas to invest in now and in the future. For the first time, a detailed global survey will be unveiled at the seminar comparing and contrasting growth trends in the main label industry regions of the world.

The third seminar on Friday 28 will be delivered by Andy Thomas, editor of L&L, looking at 'The future of label converting – materials, technology, solutions and management,' analyzing the latest technological trends driving the market. Subjects will include how to achieve better performance and manage the constant changes in the industry. Achieving profitability and good margins will also be discussed.

A smarter future for labels

With a pavilion dedicated to smart label technology in Hall 12, global label industry expert **Mike Fairley** examines the untapped opportunities it offers converters to develop profitable new business

Labels of one form or another have been used for hundreds of years to carry information, identify products, describe contents, list ingredients, ship packages and goods, and help to market items on store shelves. Many are printed in multiple colors and are ultimately used by the consumer when selecting and using products of many different kinds.

But this world of traditional label production and usage is beginning to change. The future potential and growth for labels will not so much be about the printed content and presentation of labels but increasingly about making labels cleverer, smarter and more intelligent.

Indeed, think of a future for labels where they can be used to keep food fresher for longer, will be able to absorb odors, can stop moisture deterioration, offer proof of process control, perhaps provide evidence of compliance, or even monitor and track changes in temperature over a period of time.

Think these possibilities are all a bit too far fetched? Then what about labels that can detect gases, monitor expiry dates, indicate when food or drink is at its optimum to consume, can detect and kill bacteria, will enhance food, drug or hospital safety by identifying e-coli, MRSA, c difficile, bird flu and other health hazards.

What kind of timescale are we talking about for the introduction and use of such labels? One or two years? Five years? Ten years or more? No. All of the label solutions mentioned above are either already available or are close to market acceptance.

Even then, much of what is currently being discussed is only the tip of the iceberg. New developments in nanotechnology, nano-coatings, nano-sensors, smart dust, microwire, biological and DNA encoding, etc, are already starting to be applied to labels and these will have longer-term implications and applications for those that produce and use labels. Indeed it has been stated that nanotechnology will change up to 25 percent of the food packaging and label business over the next decade.

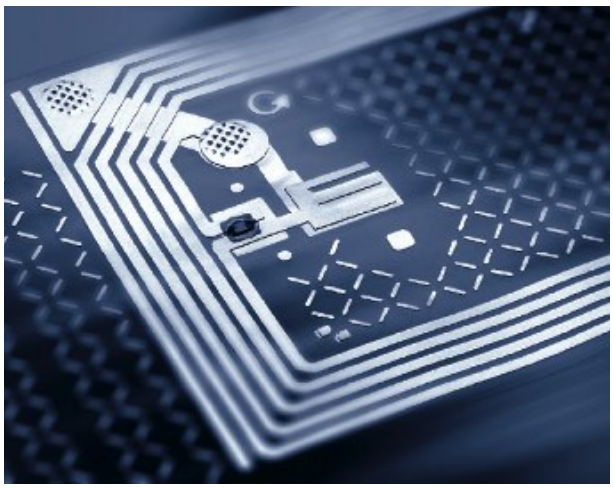
Some of these innovations are coming from existing label industry suppliers such as Avery Dennison, UPM Raflatac or Tenza. Others are being created by new and emerging companies currently unknown to much of the label industry. Companies such as Multisorb Technologies, Paksense, Espin Technologies, KSW Microtec, Ecology Coatings, NanoInk and Microtrace. Many more are already in the pipeline.

So why are label buyers and users so actively looking for these smarter and more intelligent label solutions? The reasons are many and diverse, but today include:

- To aid the automation of distribution, handling and storage operations
- To keep food fresher for longer in transit, on store shelves or in consumers' refrigerators
- To indicate damage or shocks to packs or goods in transit
- To indicate product deterioration of, say, food or drugs
- To aid asset management and assist returns control
- To provide a means of eliminating counterfeiting and improve brand protection
- To speed up checking and high-speed reading processes
- To offer a means of authenticating products or packs.

Even this list is far from exhaustive. It does not include some of the more traditional clever label solutions such as simple and multiple barcodes, snowflake or matrix codes, magnetic or optical encoding on labels, holograms, special designs and images, scratch and reveal labels, aroma and scented labels, invisible or security print, anti-theft label technology, void and ultra-destruct labels, or leaflet, booklet or extended text label

TOMORROW'S LABELS AVAILABLE TODAY



The future of smart labels includes a wide variety of technolgies, not just RFID

solutions, as well as tamper-evident label products – all of which have been around for many years.

It does not even include the developments that have been taking place in RFID smart labels over the past three or four years and which are now being implemented into labels for tracking and tracing in global shipping and distribution chains, moving into airline baggage handling, being used in the drug and clothing industry supply chains and for the monitoring of library and other books and various types of media products.

What we are talking about are many of the newer intelligent and smart solutions that have been introduced in the past one or two years, or products that are only just about being introduced to the market. In some cases it is new announcements that have been made in the past few months.

Just take some of the most recent advances in labels that have been developed for keeping food – or some types of drugs – fresher for longer, or at least are able to stop the products deteriorating before use. Labels for example, that are oxygen or ethylene scavenging; labels that are moisture or odor absorbing; labels that are freshness, microbial growth or pack leakage indicators.

Perhaps some of the more sophisticated solutions are labels that are hydrogen sulphide indicating to warn of specific pack leakage and/or provide information on disruption in the cold chain, or specially designed oxygen indicating labels that warn of pack leakage in modified atmosphere packaging, or labels that can be used to indicate the freshness of fruit or to stop fruit deteriorating too quickly.

The potential of such labels has enormous implications for the whole food chain. Much fresh food today only has a few days pack or shelf life after it leaves the packing and labeling station.

For example, if unsold on a Saturday afternoon, the food may not last until the store re-opens on the Monday. It then has to be disposed of or substantially reduced in price. Similarly it may deteriorate in the consumer's fridge if not used within a day or two. Using these new types of labels inside the pack to stop the food deteriorating can therefore offer significant benefits to retailers and consumers.

Similar issues arise with some drugs in tablet form. They will begin to deteriorate in the bottle if they are exposed to oxygen or moisture – which starts occurring each time the bottle is opened. Oxygen and moisture absorbing tags inside the bottle can therefore extend the product usage life.

Perhaps the biggest potential for the food and hospital sectors are new developments in labels that can detect – or kill – most kinds of bacteria and viruses. Such labels, of which the first are already now entering the market, will be able to detect MRSA and c-dificile bugs, or e-coli contamination in food products, or even bird flu and mad cow disease.

A whole new world is developing for label converters. Forget just competing on price to produce multi-color labels. Think about the opportunities to produce added-value labels that eliminate or minimize diseases; labels that can preserve and protect foodstuffs; labels that protect against bacteria and microbes; labels that provide proof of process control or reduce counterfeiting. It's a whole new future.

The future of labels and packaging is definitely getting smaller – indeed 'nano' smaller – ever more sophisticated and, over the next five years, will offer solutions previously undreamed of by brand owners and retail groups – solutions that will revolutionize the way we pack, identify, brand, enhance, store and sell all kinds of products.

But like many other types of label production, there is a downside to providing these new types of smart/intelligent label solutions. Firstly, converters need clever, intelligent and creative personnel that come up with the ideas and applications. Secondly, they need clever converting materials, technology and presses to be able to make the products and, thirdly, they need intelligent and creative sales and marketing personnel to present the benefits to potential customers.

Many companies may have one or two of these requirements in-house – but seldom have all three. It therefore also requires forward-thinking management to put the right personnel, procedures, systems and ideas into practice, to monitor all the new developments and to create a business environment that looks to the solutions of tomorrow rather than the products of the past.

In conclusion, today's smart label converters should be developing smart label solutions for a smarter and more profitable future. These latest developments will be on show at Labelexpo Europe 2007 in Brussels this September. The world's largest ever dedicated label show will have a dedicated smart pavilion to showcase and highlight new smart materials, products and technology. ■

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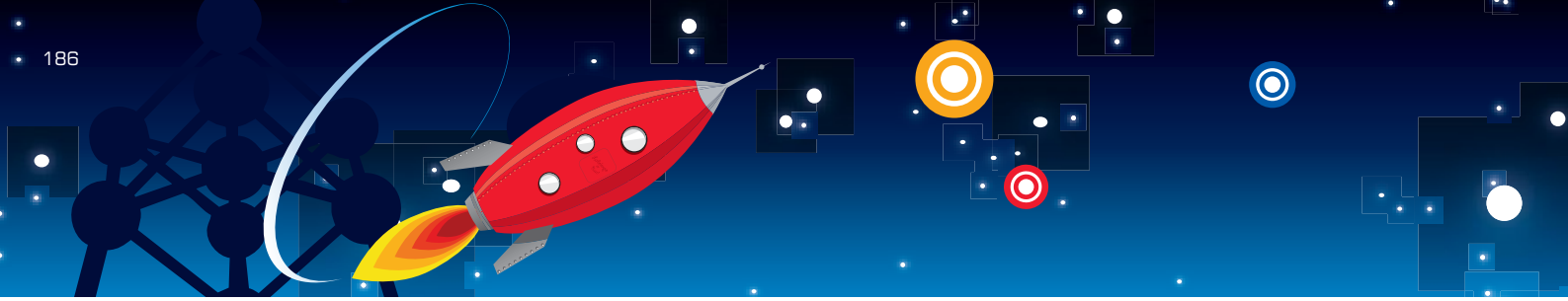

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L&L presents a preview of new products at Labelexpo Europe, received by the editorial team in time for the publication of this report. There will be many more products launched at the show, so be sure to check the website at **www.labelexpo-europe.com**

Ancillaries

ChemInstruments

ChemInstruments will introduce a number of new testing and measurement products, including the 'Tantec' CAM-Plus contact angle meter for surface energy measurement, with dyne measurement capability from 10 to 70 allowing for a precise prediction of surface reaction to specific coatings.

Also on display is a new family of economical peel adhesion testers – the PA-90 and PA-180. The capability to generate graphed data is available with the optional PC-based EZ-Lab System. ChemInstruments will also launch the new RDS-100 rotary die slitter, a hand operated unit to produce test samples quickly and consistently. Featuring hardened rotary dies, the RDS-100 will handle material 22.8 cm wide up to 1.5 mm thick.

Finally, the company will introduce the TT-1100 Tensile Tester, allowing testing of PSA labels and tapes for T&E, modulus, lap shear, peel adhesion, unwind force and tack values.

Corona Supplies

Demonstrates the new 'Easy Clean' (EC) cantilevered universal corona station, which contains an upgrade of the company's cantilevered universal corona treater. The discharge ceramic electrodes are now mounted in a sliding cartridge that allows for quick, easy and tool-less removal from the cantilevered corona station for cleaning and adjustment. The system is available in all standard web widths, single sided or two sided treatment, and suitable for easy installation onto any brand of press.

Fife

Fife has made it easier to access web guides over an existing network by embedding Ethernet IP into its D- MAX Series Web Guide systems. The D-MAX web guiding system is immediately recognized on an existing network as soon as it is connected, without the need for a separate communication card. For added functionality, ActiveX screens mimic the easy-to-use operator interface, providing access to the advanced system features and ensuring standardization throughout the plant without any additional programming.

Martin Automatic

Martin Automatic will have its systems running on two press manufacturers' stands. Taiwanese press manufacturer Labelmen will showcase a 6-color UV letterpress line equipped with Martin splicer and rewind. The STS butt splicer and STR turret rewind

Fife

offer a compact, economical non stop roll changing solution for narrow web printing and converting. At Mark Andy a high speed Martin LRD rewind will provide continuous automatic roll changing on a Comco servo driven flexo press.

On Martin Automatic's own stand there will be live demonstrations of an MBSF automatic butt splicer for label and film materials working in line with an LRD automatic transfer rewind. The splicer and rewind are sold to Austrian converter Ulikett GmbH for use on a new offset press.

Matho

Matho has developed its CP-4000 matrix and edge trim removal system with a compacting operation. The chopped material is transported through a central pipe to the compacting system with air filter and a baling press. Capacity is 13 tonnes. The system can service up to seven printing presses, depending on width of matrix and machine speed.

REA Elektronik

REA ScanCheck 3 is a new bar code verifier working to ISO/IEC 15416 which can be used fully portable or stationary. The ScanCheck 3 works with contactless laser technology and can accommodate GS1 and other specifications for print process control.

Teknek

Award-winning web contact cleaning system technology specialist Teknek will display at Labelexpo Europe a varied selection of equipment including the NWP, MWC and the XCH, as well as Teknek Sheeted Adhesive Rolls and the new Fast Pad.

The Fast Pad is the first fully automatic cleaning station for hand rollers. Designed to compliment the Teknek DCR range of hand held contact cleaning rollers, the Fast Pad uses a Teknek sheeted adhesive roll, driven by a small electric motor. When the DCR is placed into the Fast Pad holder the motor is activated and adhesive revolves cleaning the DCR.

Matho

Flexo Wash

Consumables

Alphasonics

A new anilox cleaning device, the Melanie System, is being introduced at Labelexpo Europe. It is designed to attract interest from the smaller printer, who may not have the budget for other Alphasound models. You can read more on page 111.

Apex

Apex Group of Companies will introduce a new lightweight construction anilox roll and the Ravol liquid volume test for the measurement of the volume of the cells.

AV Flexologic

New on the AV Flexologic stand are the Aquasupreme XL plate processor, Cosmolight DS water-wash digital flexo plate (CTP), and Printight DF/DM water-wash digital letterpress plate (CTP).

Cosmolight and Printight will be processed live on the Aquasuper MkII and – for the first time – on an Aquasupreme plate processor. The plates will be mounted in register on the Mount-O-Matic Table Top MKII video mounter.

Flexo Wash

New from Flexo Wash is a unit which can wash both plates and parts. The parts and plates are loaded from the side, cleaned with cleaning liquid, and then rinsed with high-pressure water and air dried. The washing units have an efficient cleaning process that reportedly only takes 5-20 minutes and leaves the rolls, sleeves, parts etc clean and ready for immediate use. Cleaning liquid is recirculated in a closed-circuit system.

Gerhardt

Gerhardt International has three new products to show. The DropSetter is an improved version of the adjustable anvil, with seamless adjustment, which is easy to drop into a die station.

A new hot-foil system, Econofoil, is claimed inexpensive, lightweight and addresses issues of cross web registration while keeping the quality of an engraved brass foiling die.

Gerhardt will also show a male/female flexible die system for the conversion of light carton board up to 600 micron. This system is non-contact between dies providing cut, crease, simple emboss and glue assist elements.

Harper Graphics

Harper Graphics presents its Harper Platinum XLT surface technology, now established in narrow web and wide web anilox applications. This year Harper Graphics also presents HPL 'High Performance Light' anilox rolls made of CFRP with a unique direct coating application.

In addition to the Harper Platinum XLT anilox rolls and sleeves, this year Harper Graphics will introduce its new HPS 'Harper Print Sleeves' and HPSA 'Harper Print Sleeve Adapter' to the market.

Jet Europe

Jet Europe will unveil several new digital solutions for flexo and UV flexo, letterpress and dry-offset printing. The Jet Line 700 CTP is a compact letterpress plate processor that integrates all post-exposure plate processing steps required after exposure into a modern in-line format. 'Additive CTP' stands for the in-line pre-rinsing station that removes the black CTP-layer before the actual washing of the plate. Also new on the stand will be the Jet Line 500.

MacDermid Printing Solutions

MacDermid will introduce the MAC, a new, medium-hardness analogue uncapped flexographic printing plate claimed to show exceptional chemical resistance to solvents, inks and environmental constraints such as ozone and high temperatures.

MacDermid also introduces the Digital Rave hard plate designed for the CTP technology, whilst ROK is the newly developed analogue hard plate.

Systec Converting

Systec Converting will exhibit its new Midi Serie plate mounting unit, featuring a patented manual or motorized reading system for camera position.

The company's established Virtual Image system recently has been integrated with new functions including print proof simulation

on screen (Virtual Proof), allowing users to verify correct alignment of all plates.

All the company's plate mounters are equipped with the Photosplit system and the Virtual Image system, which allow the operator to align plates without crosses or microdots.

Toray-Dantex

From the Torelief stable of products the company will introduce RapidoFlex, a hybrid UV flexo water wash printing plate. This new plate type is offered as a solution for fast plate making in existing letterpress plate processing equipment. RapidoFlex is also available in black mask CTP technology.

Toray-Dantex will also show a full range of AquaFlex processors and launch the new AQF 660 with a patented plate transportation system. Plates placed in the processor after exposure receive brush action wash out, rinsing, post exposure and de-tack treatment. AquaFlex technology combined with the new RapidoFlex water wash plates can deliver a dry-to-dry press ready plate in less than 20 minutes, says the company.

wink

wink established the detailed guidebook 'ABC of cutting tools' on the basis of experiences and technical knowledge of different label printers, machine manufacturers and of course wink's own long-time cognitions.

Label printing houses should be able to analyze, localize and solve the most frequent cutting problems on their own initiative.

The 'ABC of cutting tools' includes worth knowing suggestions and valuable tips for daily practice. Nearly problem-free working with flexible dies, magnetic cylinders and flat bed dies is guaranteed in consideration of some details.

Meanwhile, the 'ABC of cutting tools' is available in German, English, Dutch, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Polish.

Digital

Allen Datagraph

Allen Datagraph will be introducing its in-line Digital Label System, allowing production of custom labels on demand. The system includes a high resolution ink jet printer, computer, design software, RIP and digital die cutting.

AM

AM introduces a laser system equipped with an automatic feeder, able to execute sophisticated and complex cutting geometries including kiss-cutting, micro-perforating and marking of digital and serigraphy printed labels from A5 to A3++ format. Also new is the Nexus Vision artificial vision system with self-learning ability.

Atlantic Zeiser

Atlantic Zeiser will introduce its Omega 36/36i digital inkjet printer featuring drop-on-demand array jet technology. Atlantic Zeiser will also debut the Tagline: a high-speed RFID smart label personalization system that significantly simplifies quality control and encoding of RFID tags in the ticketing and labeling process.

The Omega 36/36i digital inkjet printer enables an easy integration into any existing equipment from Atlantic Zeiser or from another vendor, on either web or sheet-fed applications.

The 36/26i prints on a wide variety of substrates, including paper and carton, as well as specialized materials such as aluminum, polymer foils and plastic cards. Atlantic Zeiser is offering a series of UV-curable or solvent-based inks, formulated for specific application needs.

The Tagline high-speed smart label encoding system simultaneously handles RFID tag encoding while offering full quality control via optical OCR/bar code marking. The encoding module utilizes eight independent high frequency chip encoding units to perform encoding in a read/write cycle. This process verifies that information sent to a tag is correctly stored and enables production rates of up to 40,000 labels an hour. The labels can be printed with variable data (numbers and/or barcodes), or with additional security features, without any loss in speed.

Label Industry Global Awards

Labelexpo Europe will also host the Label Industry Global Awards, which take place on the first night of the show.

The winner of the R. Stanton Avery Lifetime Achievement award has already been announced as Andrew Jack from Dow Corning. Judges for this year's awards under the chairmanship of Mike Fairley were David Harrisson, president of FINAT, John Hickey, president of TLMI, Andy Thomas, editor of *Labels & Labeling,* Jack Kenny, editor of *Label & Narrow Web,* and Tony White, *NarroWebTech.*

The other 2007 finalists will be announced on the night. Nominees are:

European Converter of the Year – sponsored by Xsys Print Solutions

- Pago AG
- Schreiner Group
- Caposa Group

Label Industry Award for Continuous Innovation – sponsored by Labels & Labeling, NarroWebTech and *Label & Narrow Web*

- Rotometrics
- Rotoflex
- Dow Corning

Label Industry Award for New Innovation – sponsored by Esko and HP

- Stork Prints
- DiMS
- AVT

Digital Print

EFI

Digital Print

Digital Print (DPi) will introduce the TIJ 850, a wide-print thermal inkjet solution for variable data, at Labelexpo Europe. The TIJ 850 is designed for print widths of 8.5 inches, printing at resolutions up to 600 x 600dpi with speeds up to 600 feet per minute. The system works with web and sheet-fed presses, as well as transports, collators, converting equipment and material-handling transports. The system features Hewlett-Packard thermal inkjet technology, and a clean, water-based bulk-ink delivery system reduces handling costs. The system includes DPi's Winlabel Xpress design-layout software and DPi's Raptor (RIP) printer controller.

Domino Printing Sciences

Domino majors on its high-speed K-Series drop on demand printing technology capable of printing at 316dpi at a speed of 90 meters per minute, The K200 flagship product offers in-line digital ink jet printing to complement existing offset or flexo printed products. The ability to stitch multiple print heads together enables the production of complete full page documents and increases the range of print applications, such as the production of labels, direct mail and plastic cards.

EFI

EFI launches into Europe its Jetrion 4000 Series color UV inkjet printer, first previewed at Labelexpo Americas last year, and capable printing on labels and flexible packaging materials.

EFI will also show its Jetrion 3025 mono UV inkjet system that enables customers to produce hybrid-printed labels, barcodes and direct mail pieces with variable data. Both systems utilize Jetrion's UV ink technology. The inkjet units will be driven by the EFI Fiery XF RIP which, in conjunction with the Jetrion 4000 Series, provides a powerful production solution to handle the high volume and tight turnaround times of industrial applications.

EyeC

The EyeC ProofRunner combines fast and accurate 100% inspection with content verification. The in-line system the ProofRunner includes a link to pre-press to make sure every printed item gets ultimately checked against the customer proof, not just a 'golden template' that may or may not be flawless to begin with.

HP Indigo

On the stand will be at ws4500 digital press, with system partners SMAG, Esko, ABG. Key announcements will include a VDP (variable data printing) option for the Esko Scope Pack for the ws4500. This tool works in Adobe Illustrator environments and is focused on industrial VDP needs such as barcodes, sequential numbering and graphical codes. A new flexible packaging solution for end-to-end operations will also be announced.

On show will be the new ABG DigiLam laminator, which is dedicated to HP Indigo applications. With maximum speeds up to 100 meters/minute, it replaces the ABG Digicoater.

HP will also announce Pantone approval of seven-color conversions, CMYK plus orange, violet and green, also known as IndiChrome +. This will now be available to all HP Indigo 4xxx digital press users.

ITD Group

The ITD Group (International Textile Diffusion) will display its new ITD TAG printer – designed to be used in the printing of individual labels and equipped with high resolution technology. Also on show will be the new ITD Trilogy for multi-color printing of garment care labels.

Impika

Impika unveils its new color printing platform, PBX600, a full color printing press which is the fruit of a collaboration between Panasonic and Impika. It contains a new generation of printheads with advanced fluid and data management systems.

The printing platform combines high resolution, high speed, full color printing with a wide format. This PBX600 has a native of 600x600 dpi printing resolution with the possibility to use fixed (11 picoliters) or variable drop size at a high speed up to 150 m/min. When top quality printing is required with fine tonal gradations and features, the PBX600 uses four drop sizes modulating from 3 to 14 picoliters. Print width is 474 mm,

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obtained by 29 jetting modules organized in one linehead jetting one or two colors through 22400 nozzles. This means that a full color printing system uses only two lineheads with a very compact footprint.

Labelmate

Labelmate shows its PM-300 reel-to-reel label transport mechanism for inkjet heads. When fitted with the user's inkjet head of choice, the PM-300 provides all the label transport and control functions necessary to print or overprint labels at speeds up to 2,700-mm/second at a fraction of the cost of thermal transfer printers. The PM-300 is packaged in a convenient table-top reel-to-reel configuration.

The PM-300 has a universal Power Supply and a universal Print Head connector to work with the widest range of Inkjet Head applications. Roll diameters up to 300- millimeters and label widths to 115- millimeters can be handled. As an option, a six-digit Preset Counter is available to automatically stop the unit when the job is finished.

Matan Digital Printers

Matan shows its SprinG3 thermal 'digital screen printer', designed for short runs of many traditional screen printing-applications. It prints in up to 6-colors with a variety of CMYK and spot colors – including white and metallics.

Matan will introduce digital printing of Membrane-Switch-Overlays on the SprinG^3, which is capable of durable, full color, opaque white-backed printing on a range of polyesters and polycarbonates. Testing has confirmed that ink thickness is less than 2μm and switch life testing showed no ink loss after 2.5 million actuations, whereas in traditional screen-printing ink loss is common at one million.

Nipson

Nipson has expanded the capabilities of its VaryPress line of high speed digital printers with the introduction of the VaryPress 500, with a print speed of 150m/min (500ft/min) at a resolution of 600 dpi. Also, Nipson has announced the addition of spot or highlight color printing capabilities to its VaryPress line. The Nipson Spot Color System, Model SCS-1, enables full page spot color variable data printing that matches the VaryPress's speed and print quality characteristics. This capability is suited to applications such as labels and tags, where serial numbers, barcodes, jumbo numbers, and other variable data are printed in black and colors are required for logos and other distinguishing characteristics.

The SCS-1 integrates high-speed, high-resolution color ink jet drop-on-demand technology onto the 200 and 400 VaryPress platforms. The Nipson Spot Color System is capable of printing from one to four highlight colors on a full 18.63" wide web at a resolution of 600 by 600 dpi at speeds up to 125 meters per minute (415ft/min.).

These capabilities are offered in either a simplex (one-sided) or duplex (two-sided) configuration, making it possible to personalize one or both sides of the document with from one to four colors. Nipson's print control system manages the imaging and document handling functions, ensuring proper synchronization and registration between the black/white and the spot color printing. The SCS-1 is fully compatible with AFP or IPDS color data.

Spartanics

Spartanics announces the development of step-by-step instructional video wizards for laser cutting and plans to incorporate these wizards as semi-interactive Help Menu options on all Spartanics Finecut laser cutting systems. These interactive video wizards do not rely on language and are designed to help overcome language barriers that exist in many workplaces around the world and to quickly bring workers at all skill levels up-to-speed in operating sophisticated laser cutting technology.

Summa

Summa is making its debut at Labelexpo Europe with its resin thermal transfer print and cut system, the Summa DC Series. The printers have an integrated contour cutting system and they come in two models: DC4sx, print and cut width 67cm; and DC4, print and cut width 127,5cm.

The DC Series auto-changing ribbon charger can load five

AB Graphic International

Arpeco

(DC4sx) or eight ribbon cassettes (DC4). With the range of more than 20 spot colors, plus white and glossy metallic gold and silver, high effect full-color graphics and raster free logos, tags or labels can be printed with less ribbon cost.

Xeikon

Xeikon showcases a 'digital label factory' demonstrating the complete digital production process. Jobs move from order estimating/ entry using Digiquote from Time Harvest, to the Xeikon press via the Artwork Systems workflow system. Later, the customer places a reprint order through the website using the Deixis application.

The Xeikon 330 prints the job with multiple variants such as suppressing the shipping information on some jobs but not on others.

Finishing and inspection

AB Graphic International

AB Graphic International will unveil a number of new developments. New models include the Omega FSR, 410mm wide film rewinder and Digilam laminating system developed for flexible packaging applications; the FleyeVision 100% inspection rewinder and the Vectra turret with on board inspection and automatic rejection of rolls containing errors. In addition the new semi-rotary screen printing option will be demonstrated on a Digicon S converting line.

The company will also exhibit various models from its Vectra and Omega range including the Glue-less SGTR turret, the Omega SR330 inspection rewinder with die cutting and the Ti150 off-line RFID converter. Various lines from the Digicon range of converting machines for digitally printed webs will be demonstrated including the new Digipharma 100% inspection system for pharmaceutical applications.

A separate adjacent stand will feature the Flytec range of automated camera inspection systems – the first showing of these systems at Labelexpo Europe under the AB Graphic International banner. New on the pharma inspection system is the ability to use a PDF as the camera reference source instead of a master image.

On the HP stand a Digicoat 330 for priming substrates prior to digital printing will be introduced.

Arpeco

Arpeco will show the industry standard Tracker – demonstrating many features for basic label inspection and finishing. The more sophisticated Premier and servo drive Premier-SD machines will exhibit Motor-Drive Technology, converting capabilities including the patented Quickload die station and a 12' color Touchscreen HMI count and control system.

Being introduced for the first time is a Premier 20/20 model which combines the Premier-SD inspection and finishing machine with the patented Arpeco Shuttle Retrieval System and an AVT Helios 100% Vision Inspection System to provide bi-directional web movement for high security product inspection and finishing.

Ashe Converting Equipment

Ashe Converting Equipment will launch its Opal2 label inspection slitter rewinder with 100% inspection system for paper and filmic labels. Ashe says that the machine is set apart by its unique tension capabilities, which allow a wide range of substrates to be inspected, slit and rewound with ease.

AVT

New modules for AVT's PrintVision/Helios inspection system for presses and rewinders includes the Clear-on-Clear Module for inspecting clear labels sealed onto a clear liner. Other modules demonstrated by AVT include the JobRef Module for verifying a 'master label' with the prepress PDF file.

Also demonstrated on AVT's and partner stands is PrintFlow Manager, a QC management solution that delivers real-time production quality information direct to the print manager's desktop computer, and WorkFlow Link, which transfers quality information from the press to the rewinder for efficient removal of defective material.

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LABELEXPO EUROPE PREVIEW

Cartes

DPR

Bar Graphic Machinery

Bar Graphic Machinery is introducing two new models to its Elite product range of finishing and converting systems. The new models will consist of the Elite 400 SR Slitter B series rewinder which achieves speeds of up to 300m/min and incorporates BGM's rotary cartridge slitting system. Also to be shown is the new Elite 250DSR B series die cut slitter rewinder, which is capable of die cutting at speeds of up to 250 m/min. The new entry models are of a free standing design. BGM will also be demonstrating its Elite 400i inspection system fitted with a Tectonic K2 color imaging video web inspection system enabling automatic color default detection. BGM, Tectonic and vision experts will also be exhibiting for the first time a true 100% inspection system.

Brodbeck

Brodbeck introduces the Multi-ID Core Cutter UNI 1000A, a single tool for all tube diameters between 25-150 mm (1-6') which incorporates a pressure control system to prolong knife life, automatic feeding system and programmable cutting lengths and quantity – a multiple length mode enables cutting one core into several different lengths. The UNI 1000A is fully enclosed, with moving parts covered with safety hoods protected by a safety switch. The company also shows the HTE 1200 manual Core Cutter.

Cartes

Cartes launches two new versions of its best-selling machines. The HS 200is a new low budget label printing and die-cutting machine with the possibility to integrate silk screen, hot stamping, and laser die-cutting, to enable the production of a complete label from label stock to finished article.

The Laser 350C combines the Cartes laser cutting system with the practicality and compactness of an integrated unwinder and rewinder. This machine can cut, die-cut, engrave and micro-perforate any label shape. According to the production needs, label manufacturers can choose between the original version with in line unwinder and rewinder or the new all-in-one version.

Daco

Daco will be launching the Daco SI range of inspection/rewinding equipment, which now includes as standard an open inspection platform with splicing and a fault editing tables, web advance, quick set rotary slitting station, taper tension control for the unwind and rewinds, speeds of up to 300m/minute and a touch screen operator interface.

The Daco DTR 330 100% inspection system will also be unveiled, with the capability of bi-directional rewinding so that labels can be passed under the camera system again for true 100% inspection. The Daco PLD250 plain label die cutter with a semi-automatic turret rewinder is also being shown for the first time. The machine was developed for a client in the USA for the production of price marking labels. The Daco PLD allows for very quick setting of the semi automatic turret between each job.

DCM Usimeca

DCM Usimeca will display four machines for converting shrink sleeve labels, three of which are new to the market. The new products are a cantilevered narrow web slitter rewinder, Serval, which uses the latest technology for slitting and rewinding OPP, ROSO, paper and PSL shrink films, at a speed of 500m/min; a high speed shrink sleeve seaming machine, Sleeve Auto, with non-stop turret operation; and Sleevecut, a machine for perforating and cutting or rewinding shrink sleeve labels at high speed.

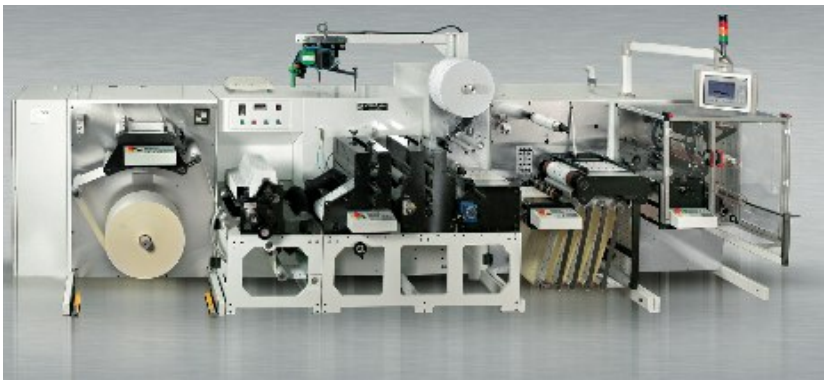
DPR

DPR will launch its new label rewinder and unwinder series with interchangeable core holder; a small rewinder and unwinder series; a new label dispenser series; and an all-in-one rewinder and unwinder specifically designed and manufactured for the Primera label printer LX400.

Drello

Drello will display the new DrelloScop V5000 video-web inspection system, which can be used for all web materials including paper, transparent foil, reflecting foil and stamping control. Features include Automatic-scan – an automatic

Grafotronic



Prati

camera traveling in the web direction with adjustable speed – Constant-scan, traveling across the web, Quick-zoom and Split-screen functions.

GIC

Taginnov is GIC's new finishing equipment for adhesives, a combination of various modules for a range of applications including application of compounds, gluing, die-cutting, RFID and/or booklet one-up or two-up insertion, flexo printing, etc.

Grafisk Maskinfabrik

Grafisk Maskinfabrik introduces its latest GM system for digital converting – a finishing line with varnishing or lamination and die cutting. Also on display is the new semi-rotary hot-foil station for adding silver or gold foil stamping to the web. The company also shows its auxiliary machines for label printers including rewinders/inspection machines, core cutters, sheeters, roll handling equipment, trim shredders and waste removal units.

New in this product range is a length slitting rewinder for 330mm web with.

Grafotronic

Grafotronic, the Swedish slitter rewinder manufacturer, will introduce Grafotronic Print, which allows one or two flexo printing units with IR or UV dryer to be added to the basic Grafotronic machine. The print option is available in all widths (280, 380 and 440mm).

Also on display will be the Grafotronic 450 film slitter – a new machine developed for slitting of unsupported thin film materials.

Karlville

Karlville introduces the KSI – Karlville Slitter Inspector – targeted at narrow to mid-web printers venturing into flexible packaging. The KSI tension system operates via independent AC vector motors, load cells and PLC controls. The KSI comes in 300mm, 400mm and 600mm web widths. At a speed of 300 m/min, the machine has features such as a trim waste removal system; dual 600mm diameter rewind air shafts with lay on rollers; single 800mm diameter unwind roll; two splicing tables; front view operator inspection and an optional 100 percent fully integrated inspection system.

In the continuous seaming technology arena, Karville introduces the K4 Compact, a sister machine to the K4 Jumbo. The K4 Compact comes standard in a 350mm lay flat width configuration and operates at 400 m/ minute. Like all Karlville seaming machines, the film thread design keeps the web straight throughout the machine without any interference to the seam. Lay flat width is maintained via a BST camera inspection system. This machine holds a 0.25 mm tolerance.

LeoMat

LeoMat will exhibit a LeoMat Booklabel machine for the production of multilayer-labels. Equipment includes unwinding station with web control and splicetable, register-controlled booklet feeder, lamination unit for self-adhesive materials and mono materials, register-controlled die cutting unit, matrix rewinding with driven matrix transfer roller and segment feeder for embossed products. Working width is up to 410mm.

Prati

The company's new Vega Plus system will be on display, a modular machine displayed in two versions: one to inspect print quality of pharmaceutical labels with s BST-Shark camera, and the other to produce price-weigh labels in one pass using two die cutting stations. Servo driven technology has been a standard feature of all Prati's machines for several years.

Other systems on show include a simple slitter-rewinder for opaque and clear-on clear labels, a doctor machine capable of working a wide range of materials, and a die cutting machine for blank labels.

Rapid Machinery

Rapid Machinery will introduce a new technology claimed to reduce the capital cost and at least double the output of a range of converting equipment including ribbon printers, hot foil machines and in-line die cutters.

The first machine in the series, a ribbon printer, is based on Rapid's proven servo indexing technology, but the head is an up-stroker rather than the better known down-stroker. This has proven very cost effective to produce, and has significantly

increased the unit's productivity, according to Rapid.

Next up will be a hot foil label press based on the same concept, expected to operate at up to 25,000 impressions/hour (40 meters/min) – three times faster than typical flat bed machines.

The head design will also form the basis of a re-registering die cutter which can be used in line with thermal transfer or ink jet printers to either laminate and die cut or just die cut labels in line with the printer.

The system could also be used to manufacture blank die cut label stock at the same high speeds. By using relatively cheap rule dies or magnetic etched dies, large-scale users of print-on-demand labels could save time and inventory by producing their own blanks in house.

Re spa

Re is to launch its RK-one compact webguide viewing system designed for resistance to harsh environments. The company also shows an enhanced 'Revision' video inspection system with two important new functions: color control – useful in applications where it is necessary to print using constant color tones; and a bar code reader capable of checking all the most common bar codes at any angle.

In addition, it can be used to store a sample code and compare it with the captured codes, generating a table summarizing the captured codes and the number of errors detected. The user can also set up a series of error thresholds, and the corresponding alarms.

Rotoflex International

Showcases for pharma-security applications re-engineered 'single-pass' and 'multi-pass' security machines designed to meet increasingly stringent pharmaceutical compliance demands, including the new Rotoflex single source universal controller recommended for counting and detecting clear labels with print, fault placement control, vision integration and barcode verification.

Rotoflex will shows its Vericut 2 digital finishing line, available with modules including semi-rotary die cutting, spot coating, cold foil, hot foil, embossing, rotary sheeting and stacking.

Rotoflex has leveraged technology developed for this digital web finishing series to launch programmable servo-driven die cutting machines incorporating motion control technology.

Scantech

For thin film and pressure sensitive label makers, Scantech introduces Printrack LR, designed with motor technology to answer today's need for larger, softer and more accurately wound rolls through repeatable tension profiling.

Other configurations built on Scantech's 'Flexibleformat' include Securitrack for vision inspection and fault retrieval, and Printrack FHD with reregistered die-cutting.

Stanford Products

Smag

Smag introduces the Galaxie Digital web screenprinting press, and shows digital converting solutions with one off-line priming unit, one Comet Digital on the Smag booth and one 'luxurious version' of the Galaxie Digital on the HP booth. New slitter rewinder inspection solutions are promised.

Spartanics

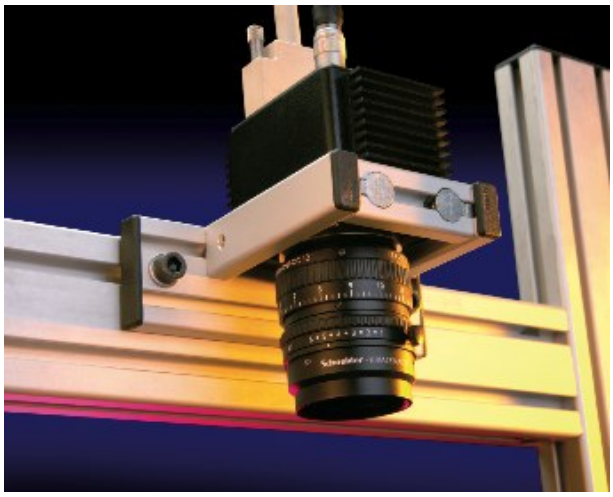
Spartanics has developed step-by-step instructional video wizards for laser cutting and plans to incorporate these as semi-interactive Help Menu options on all Spartanics Finecut laser cutting systems.

The instructional video wizards cover a range of topics such as camera set up, performing test shots, and job setup. When a topic is selected, a short step-by-step interactive video plays showing the sequence of operational steps required to perform that function. The videos play on one screen while the operator can directly interact with the laser system on another screen while the instructional video wizard is in progress. Lessons are taught by visual example rather than spoken or read-then-do techniques.

Stanford Products

Stanford will exhibit the latest versions of its SM10 Seammachine and DM10 Doctor Machine Inspector. The SM10 incorporates a new, patent-pending solvent application system with a unique approach to tension control and rewind roll oscillation.

Surfscan, the Cardiff-based provider of true 100% web inspection, will be demonstrating its CHECKrewinder in a joint development with Ashe Converting at Labelexpo 2007. The Ashe 'Opal Inspection System' has been developed in conjunction with Surfscan and is a unique machine which provides inspection and control of printed labels or printed web in the pharmaceutical, food or flexible packaging industries.



Surfscan

Surfscan

Surfscan's CHECKrewinder is designed for use at the final stage of a print process, providing the end user with 100% print inspection. The CHECKrewinder is able to pick up much more intricate and complex defects at a much higher rate than the human eye, enhancing both the value and the efficiency of final stage inspection.

On the Ashe Inspector Winder, a reel is placed on the rewinder and run at speed. Each time a defect is detected the rewinder stops, positioning the defect on the splicing table. The integrated camera system developed with Surfscan then provides an image of the fault for the operator to check. So that it can either be accepted, or rejected by splicing out product, or by replacing labels.

Surfscan also provides the CHECKpress system, which utilizes many of the components of the CHECKrewinder, and the two systems work hand in hand, but may also be used individually. The CHECKpress system is designed for 100% real time defect detection, 100% of the time. This is a web inspection system which can be customized to meet the exact requirements of end users, and can easily be installed onto any press. Providing accurate and repeatable defect detection, the system operates at high speeds and is able to detect the tiniest of specks in a very busy area. Both set up and ongoing configuration require minimal time and training.

Tidland

New to Tidland's product line is a core-lock style differential shaft to suit 6' ID cores, designed to increase productivity when rewinding multiple rolls of material that may be subject to caliper variation. The Equalizer – Model D4 Differential shaft allows converters to run ultra-thin films. A two-row, 12-ball, torque activated core-lock design ensures equalized tension across any combination of roll widths.

The company will also introduce the Ultrashaft XPRO10, a tough, lightweight carbon fiber shaft claimed to eliminate any safety risks associated with sleeved or unsleeved shaft models. Unlike rigid sleeves that can crack under high load cycles, this proprietary coating flexes with the shaft, while protecting the carbon fiber tube from core wear, cutting tools, and wear from normal shaft and roll handling.

Also on display will be the e-Knifeholder – an all-electronic knifeholder claimed to eliminate guesswork in knifeholder setup and increasing blade life, slitting accuracy and efficiency.

Inks and curing

Arets Graphics

Arets Graphics introduces a new range of UV curing printing inks and varnishes. The Excure range conforms to European environmental regulations and recommendations for food-packaging applications and covers the whole range of all printing processes including offset, flexo, letterpress, screen, gravure, intaglio and waterless.

Dr Hönle

pureUV is a new UV dryer generation for Hönle which enhances the company's arccure technology – more efficient, smaller, with lower energy usage and cutting heat to the web by 50 percent

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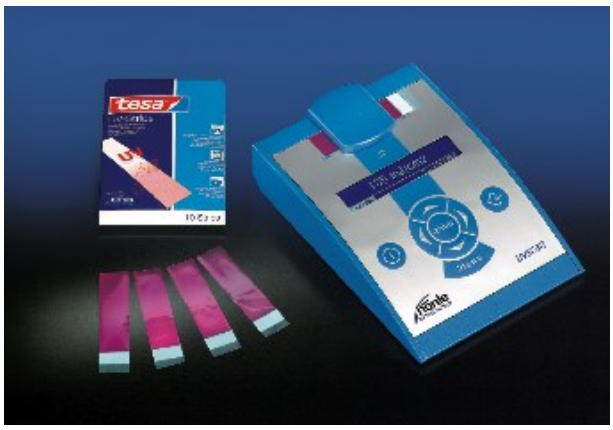

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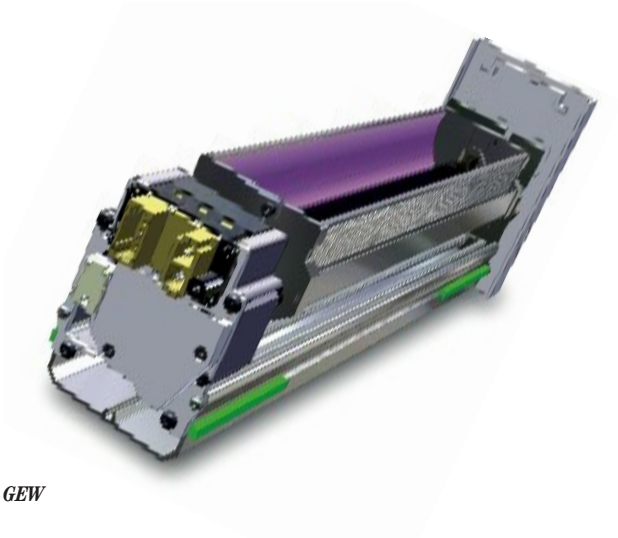


GEW

thanks to a new geometry and dichroic reflector coating and a barrier that prevents the direct irradiation of the web. Tests with Hönle's EPS electronic power supplies reportedly show an increase in UV intensity by up to 50 percent.

Hönle also shows a new measuring strip system developed with tesa for the reliable monitoring of UV dose, even on complex surface geometries. It measures the state of the complete system, not only the lamp.

GEW

GEW will exhibit its new XC 'extreme cure' UV cassette with fully focused, dichroic coated aluminum reflector and integrated clamshell shutters. The design ensures a broad UV output spectrum across both the UV and IR (infrared) range, which maximizes curing power.

The electrically actuated shutters automatically protect the substrate when stopping the press. The XC Cassette is available for GEW's existing range of VCP and eCP models and the recently launched, e-system Mini with 3.6kW 'plug and print' single phase power supply for10" (250mm) press widths.

Marabu

Marabu introduces its new silicone-free UltraRotaScreen UVSF, particularly suited for combining screen printing of flexo printing, and UltraRotaScreen UVRS. Screen ink developments include Ultrapack UVC, and the new deep-matt Opaque Black UVSM 181.

RUCO Druckfarben will present its new '3 in 1' system for combination printing. System components are the new UVFX flexo ink series, series 985UV/NV inks for high-speed rotary screen printing as well as series 960UV printing lacquers.

The new ITX- and silicon-free UVFX flexo inks are heavily pigmented and highly reactive. Series 985 UV/NV inks were developed for the decoration of plastic films by high-speed rotary screen printing. The low-viscosity printing inks are highly reactive and come in a high-gloss formulation.

985UV/NV inks boast good resistance to solvents and water and are suitable for pretreated polyolefins (PE/PP), PVC, other pre-treated plastic films as well as paper and cardboard.

The series 960UV printing lacquers are available in various formulations – from high gloss and matt lacquers with high resistances to specific media, all the way through to special-effect lacquers such as series 960UV393 tactile lacquer.

Siegwerk

Sleeve technology, in-mold labeling and new UV ink series are the most important topics to be unveiled by Siegwerk.

The silicone-free UV flexographic printing series Sicura Flex 39-9P-SF is formulated with the latest generation of polymeric photoinitiators, and its low migration properties make it ideal for labels in the food sector.

It can be overprinted and embossed. An equally low migration tendency and a negligible odor are the hallmarks of the new UV offset series Sicura LM 100. It is also ideal for substrates to be processed using in-mold labeling.

Sun Chemical

Sun Chemical plans to announce a significant development in digital label production as well as an innovation for the UV flexo market at Labelexpo Europe 2007. The show will also serve as a launch pad for a number of other Sun Chemical offerings for the narrow-web and labels industry, including innovations in brand protection and printable electronics.

Sun Chemical established itself as a growing force in the narrow-web market with Solaris, a global product line of inks and coatings for narrow-web printers. At Labelexpo 2007 new offerings will build off that successful platform, which will help printers and brand owners improve their productivity and efficiency.

The Solaris product line includes high performance inks and customized solutions that make labels stand out by being specially formulated to meet the needs of customers. These inks can be paired with coatings that add effects such as gloss, matt and chemical resistance. The full lineup includes products for virtually all narrow web-printing processes, including UV flexo; water-based flexo; screen whites and colors; letterpress and lithography.

Felipe Mellado, corporate vice-president, Sun Chemical Europe, said: 'We will be revealing a number of unique and innovative products specifically designed for the narrow-web market at Labelexpo 2007. These exciting new technologies open up new opportunities for printers.'

tesa

tesa shows a new measuring strip system developed for the reliable monitoring of UV dose, even on complex surface geometries. It measures the state of the complete system, not only the lamp.

The tesa UV strip can be stuck directly on the object. After exposure, the measuring strip changes color according to the UV intensity. The measured values can be read and stored for QC purposes. Also on display is the tesa Softprint platemounting tapes.

UV Ray

UV Ray has released a new water-cooled UV lamp system, the Maxwell WA, for wider web width presses. It is claimed to emit very low heat on the substrate – especially during stop/start conditions – at lower energy running costs.

Using new fabrication techniques the Maxwell WA uses low water pressure and is now available with arc lengths up to 1700mm and power on up to 400W/cm. The system uses a specially configured air duct arrangement together with carbon filter for ozone to reduce ambient air energy output, supporting the water cooling systems to reduce heat on the web.

Xsys

Xsys introduces a range of new products, including 'super-black' Flexocure Ebony ink; a new white low-odor, high-slip Flexocure XS ink; the next-generation Flexocure Ivory; and what is claimed a 'breakthrough development' in the next-generation CombiWhite opaque white UV screen ink. Stand visitors can also access detailed information on XSYS Print Solutions' complete inks portfolio for letterpress, flexo, UV flexo, UV offset, and UV screen for many applications, including self-adhesive, wrap-around and in-mold labels; sleeves; flexible packaging; and folding cartons.

Zeller+Gmelin

Zeller+Gmelin is introducing four new products: Uvaflex 'low migration' is a UV flexo ink series of low migration for the printing of food packaging like flexible packaging and labels; Esalux is an Electron Beam (EB) curable offset printing ink, special developed for printing on flexible packaging substrates, and designed to give the lowest possible taint, odor and migration properties when printed on packaging for food and sensitive products; Labelcure U5 is a UV letterpress and offset printing ink series optimized for printing on film; Uvaflex FW/FT is a new water-based flexo series for a wide range of applications; Interact is a comprehensive range of special effect printing inks introduced by the company's subsidiary Intercolor.

The range includes visual effects for promotional and security printing, such as pearlescent inks, bright metallic effects and fluorescent inks through to functional systems with tactile and texture lacquers. To arouse the senses there is a range of fragrance coatings and a range of inks which react to light or temperature.

Materials

3M

3M will be exhibiting six new technologies at this year's Labelexpo Europe: 3M patented radiant light films for decorative label and industrial applications; solvent resistant high durability polyester performance label films; various custom security polyesters; 76903E – non-residue tamper evident security label materials; 7555 – UV precision coated screen printable adhesive; and new CushionMount flexo mounting tapes.

API

Labelexpo Europe sees the unveiling of a key addition to API's solutions for the label industry: the range of cold foils, TD, which is already available in a wide range of gold, silvers and metallic colors, sees the inclusion of Overprintable TD, a foil that is overprintable by UV curable inks.

In addition to introducing overprintable features, API will also be publishing its new and improved shade and pattern swatch book.

Avery Dennison

Avery Dennison will celebrate the centennial anniversary of Stan Avery. During Labelexpo the company is sponsoring The Stan Avery Lifetime Achievement on the September 26 at a Gala Dinner for the Global Label Industry Awards ceremony and hosts an anniversary customer event on the 27th and in the exclusive Stan Avery Club.

Boise

Boise Label Release & Specialty Papers introduces AvantEdge, a new family of release liner products, building on the company's recent series of investments in capacity and new technology

Coating Plasma Industrie

Coating Plasma Industrie (CPI) will launch primed flexible films (polymers, metals, paper) with high and durable surface energy. Chemical surface activation is achieved using the new atmospheric pressure plasma Aldyne developed by Air Liquide and Softal, eliminating the need for primers, solvents and chemicals. Aldyne uses an atmospheric plasma discharge in a nitrogen controlled atmosphere containing specific gas mixtures, which forms stable bonds with commercial formulations of inks, adhesives or varnishes. CPI is able to customize treatments to meet customers' needs. Running at a speed of 300m/min, the Aldyne unit available at CPI can treat flexible films up to 800μm thick and 100mm to 2m wide.

Comercial Arque

Comercial Arque introduces its latest synthetic paper product Durasin, based on LDPP and suitable for many label applications.

Demak

Demak will be introducing its latest doming innovations: Kromex patented technology and the Continuous Vacuum System will be installed on all the company's new equipment. Converters can now offer durable, original--looking products fully in compliance with the strictest automotive directives.

Dow Corning

Dow Corning Corporation will introduce a new emulsion release coating, Syl-Off 7990, claimed to enable users to reduce their application costs through increased platinum catalyst efficiency, reduced coat weight, and faster line speeds. Additional cost savings result from the coating's 'outstanding coverage', which permits the use of less costly base papers, according to Dow. Dow Corning will showcase the new coating, along with its Advantage Series solventless release coating line, at the show.

Iimak

Fujicopian

Fujicopian (UK) will present two new products: the NR2 high-speed Resin film; and FSC2, a new range of wax/resin spot colors.

The new resin formula of NR2 is the company's latest innovation in the field of near-edge TPH (Thermal Print Head) based printing technology, developed for on-line printing modules, the main applications are in the food industry, where its high chemical resistance and printability on synthetic substrates makes it particularly suitable.

FSC2 is a new range of wax-resin spot colors for Flat head TPH. Available in green, red and blue, the inks have been optimized to produce high quality prints with vibrant colors on virtually all substrates, paper or films, without compromising light fading resistance. In addition, speciality colors such as violet and orange are also proposed for specific applications.

Gombau

Gombau Group will promote the recently introduced adhesive IE08. Developed for glass bottle labeling, the IE08 shows high water resistance and is suitable for ice-bucket application. Blending this main property with resistance to ageing and extreme clarity also allows its use in combination with clear films.

The company has also designed a range of products specifically for printing on HP Indigo digital presses. 'Digital Opportunity' offers a variety of products available for Indigo technology, including textured papers for wine labels, clear and white films and standard coated papers.

Finally, Gombau will display its catalogue of products for wine labels, named 'Wine is our passion'. During Labelexpo Europe, Gombau will present the third edition of its catalogue, featuring 37 products, including five new grades.

Hanita Coatings

Hanita Coatings launches its pure copper HF and UHF RFID tag antennas, together with specially heat stabilized, topcoated PET films for printing of flexible electronics by conductive inks. These films help provide the dimensional stability, flexibility and enhanced ink adhesion required for the successful production of printed RFID antennas, says Hanita.

HIP-Mitsu

HIP-Mitsu will present its range of equipment for the application of hot melt and UV-curable adhesives, allowing converters to apply the adhesive on labels directly in the plant, both in-line and off-line. HIP-Mitsu systems enable the application of the adhesive in different patterns such as continuous, intermittent, multiline or combined, and enable the use of both traditional hot melts and the new generation UV-curable adhesives.

Iimak

Earlier this year, Iimak signed an exclusive distribution deal with InkSure, a provider of covet machine-readable authentication solutions. Iimak now supplies thermal transfer ribbons to InkSure, while InkSure provides Iimak with security taggants where TTR technology is used for the printing of covert barcodes.

The deal sees both companies jointly develop and market TrackSure covert barcode solutions for the prevention of product diversion, which will be on display at Labelexpo Europe.

Iimak has also agreed to supply InkSure with color and invisible TTR incorporating InkSure security taggants for brand authentication, and the companies have agreed to work together to develop conductive ink TTR solutions for InkSure's new SARcode chipless RFID technology.

Innovia Films

Innovia Films is expanding its range of 'squeezable' label facestock films by launching two new grades at Labelexpo Europe. These latest developments are Rayoface CZDI, a high performance clear high gloss film and Rayoface WZDI, a white high gloss non cavitated film. Both biaxially oriented polypropylene (BOPP) label facestock films are coated with a new top coating which has full HP certification for WS2000 and WS4000/4050 digital presses.

Rayoface CZDI and WZDI are designed for demanding applications requiring resilient conformability on flexible containers such as squeezable shampoo bottles and shower products, lotions and cream tubes, as well as condiments and packaging containers.

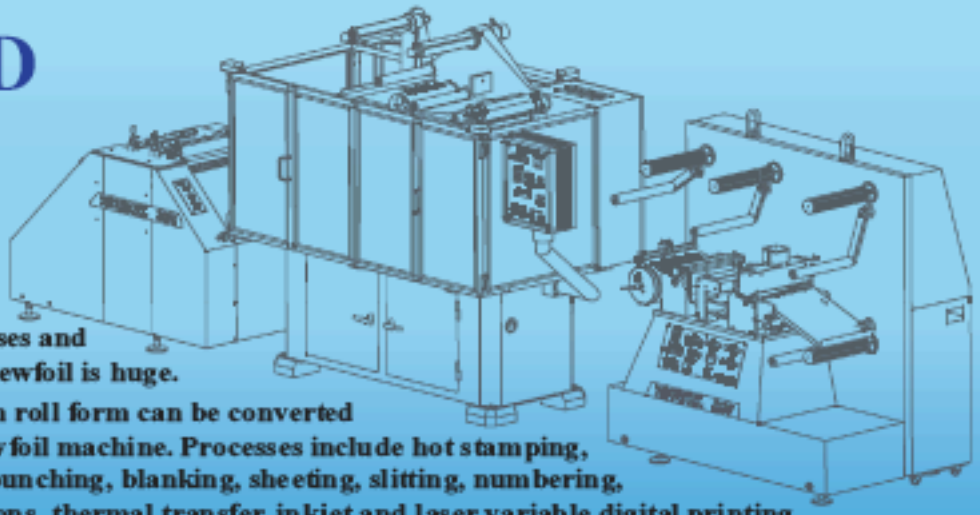
Rayoface CZDI and WZDI films are claimed to have high, balanced tensile strength and low elongation, coupled with a high dimensional stability at elevated temperatures, which provides excellent register control during printing and die cutting operations. The films' balanced orientation means sophisticated shapes can be evenly die-cut without feathering around the edges and corners of the label and matrix stripping is trouble-free, says Innovia.

Intercoat

Intercoat will present a new glassine liner, K5d, with a thickness of 55μm and a weight of 62gsm, the thinnest glassine liner in the company's range. The liner has a tensile strength in the machine direction over twice that in the cross direction.

Also on the Intercoat stand is its new range of HP Indigo-qualified self adhesive print media, including PE, PP, PET and PVC films.

NEWFOIL MACHINES LIMITED



Newfoil is more than the worlds leading manufacturer of quality hot stamping and die cutting label presses. The list of special processes and options available from Newfoil is huge.

Any material available in roll form can be converted for added value on a Newfoil machine. Processes include hot stamping, embossing, die-cutting, punching, blanking, sheeting, slitting, numbering, multiple laminating options, thermal transfer, inkjet and laser variable digital printing in four colours, holograms, heat-sealing, heat embossing, RFID insertions, various security solutions…. The list is endless.

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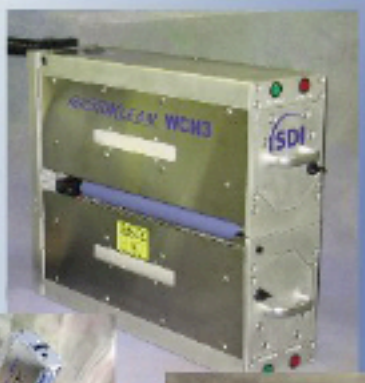

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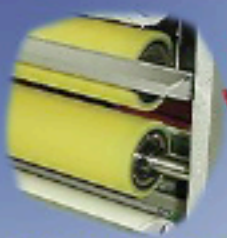

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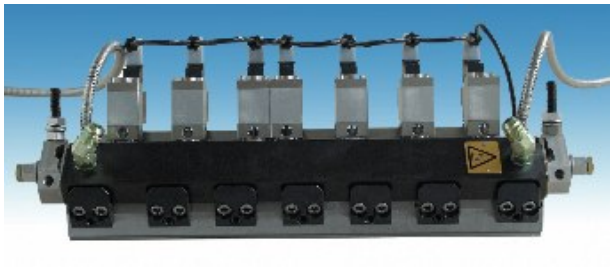


Nordson

Other new products include a white polyolefin film with high gas permeability and a highly conformable film – 50μm polyolefin 7752 – with a pronounced 'no memory effect' making it a good choice for tube labels or for complex substrate surfaces where products are hot filled in-line following the labeling process.

Italnastri

Italnastri, producer of self-adhesive paper and films for over 25 years, will be taking part in the Labelexpo Europe for the third time. The company will display new products for squeezable applications, new solutions for digitally-produced prints (Indigo, Xeikon), new products for recyclable packaging, as well as a wide range of articles for the oenological sector.

KWH Plast

KWH Plast Ltd, a film producer from Finland and a part of KWH Group Ltd, will display its synthetic paper-like product range SynPrint-KWH. SynPrint-KWH, developed both for pressure sensitive and non-adhesive labeling. The SynPrint-KWH family has now been expanded with new digital printable products designed for HP Indigo and Xeikon digital printing processes.

Also on display will be the MeriFlex-KWH product family – an alternative to squeezable no-label-look labeling for the cosmetic industry. This clear, pliant film is ideal for unevenly shaped packages, bottles and tubes and provides clarity and low haze to the end products.

Nordson

A new nozzle clamping design providing quick removal of dies for servicing will be shown by Nordson Corporation on its TrueCoat slot applicators. The compact units are designed to coat a wide variety of substrates including papers, foils, films and nonwoven materials in either continuous or intermittent applications. Standard application widths are available up to 28 inches (720 mm). Longer widths may be available upon request.

Novamelt

Novamelt will show Novarad RCL 6015, a newly developed UV-printable liquid pressure sensitive adhesive with higher tack and peel values. In addition to this new hotmelt PSA grades for permanent and removable no-label constructions will be shown.

Radici

Radici Film introduces a range of BOPP in-mold label films. Radil EML 45my and 65my are white voided films developed for in-mold applications including ice cream, butter and margarine containers, yogurt pots, and more. It can be used with all printing processes including rotogravure, flexo and rotary offset. Also on show will be its transparent version, the Radil S526 55my.

In addition to conventional wrap-around labels, Radici Film has a strong presence in the 'no-label look' market and will exhibit its high transparent films Radil LC30-40my and LB30/50my made for reel fed and cut & stack labels.

Ricoh

Ricoh introduces the B110CU thermal transfer ribbons, an ultra chemical-resistant grade, and in thermal papers, the 150LHB, a high sensitivity paper with sharp resolution and excellent preservation properties.

Torraspapel

Torraspapel, part of the Lecta Group, will showcase its extensive range of label papers: one-side coated, metalized, high-gloss and self-adhesive materials.

Featured will be the new Metalvac metalized paper catalogue with samples and data sheets for the entire product line, including the various finishes to give a different touch to labels and returnable and non-returnable packaging. Torraspapel's range of high-vacuum metalized papers is 100% recyclable and is designed for a wide variety of applications: labels, gift items, tobacco products and prestigious stationery items.

In terms of self-adhesive materials, Torraspapel will be showing its Adestor range of papers and films, in sheets and reels, providing solutions for segments as diverse as variable information printing (VIP), the wine and drinks market as well as for personal care and household items.

Univacco Technology

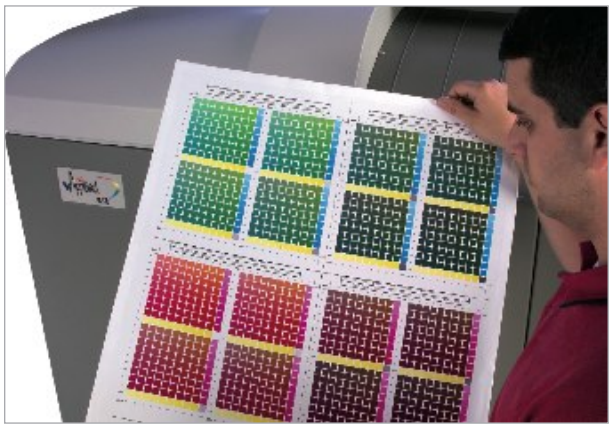
Univacco is a manufacturer of hot stamping foil and cold foil in Taiwan, and has successfully developed cold foil systems for narrow web presses including Gallus, Nilpeter and Mark Andy. The company will launch its latest in-line cold foil systems, including a module for offset presses.

UPM Kymenne

UPM will announce new products resulting from its investment of €100m last year in its C1S label paper business. New label face papers include the uncoated, surface-sized UPM Vellum and UPM Jetlabel, together with the VIP-tailored UPM LabelCoat TT, and UPM LabelCoat LC.

New base papers include a major improvement for UPM Brilliant Pro for filmic labels. Also new is UPM Polar, a high blue shade heavily calendared glassine transparent release liner.

Esko



Kodak

UPM Raflatac

At Labelexpo Europe 2007, UPM Raflatac is underlining the growth of the labeling industry in the largest single market in the world. Focus will be on the company's 90 million euro investment in Poland and the benefits to customers.

UPM Raflatac will also showcase its versatile filmic labelstock portfolio created especially for the beverage, oil, home and personal care industries.

The doubling of filmic capacity in Europe along with ongoing efforts to develop thinner, clearer and cleaner films will be highlighted, too. In addition to this, UPM Raflatac will present its ever-increasing range of HF and UHF RFID products.

VPF

VPF will discuss new product ideas from is recently commissioned hotmelt coating and laminating line. Besides standard hotmelts (composition rubber adhesives), this facility is also able to process UV-curable hotmelts.

Compared with dispersion acrylates even standard hotmelts offer advantages regarding resistance to humidity, and UV–curable hotmelts could replace solvent-based acrylics, offering high temperature- and humidity resistance, good resistance against sunlight and weather conditions as well as chemicals, and the possibility of systematic modifications of cohesion and adhesion.

Pre-press

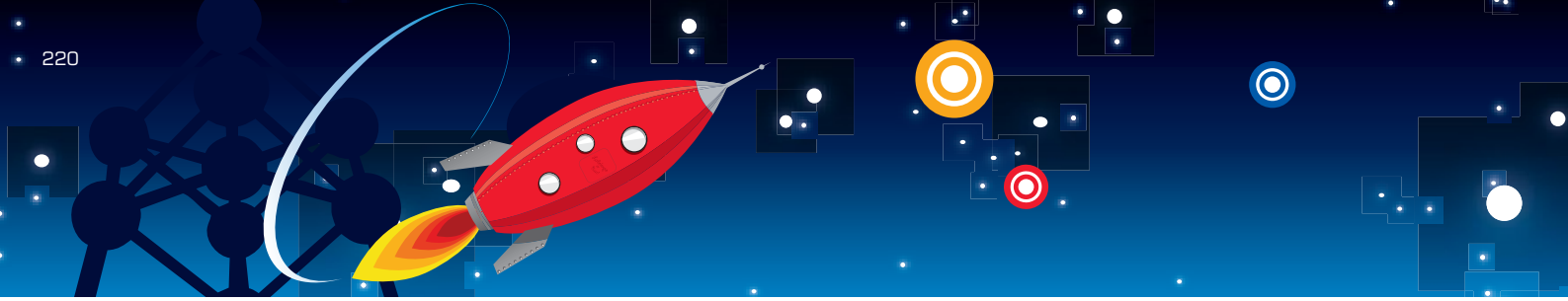
Artwork Systems

Artwork Systems shows a workflow combining its Odystar Label System with Neo – a 'last-minute' editing tool which gives the operator high-end editing and correction functionality in a native PDF environment that previously only existed in proprietary non-PDF systems. The company's new WebWay 5.0 has many extra functions over previous versions, and provides 'convenient, secure and cost-effective' communication and file sharing between the print buyer and label production plant via remote connection.

Esko

Esko will exhibit Esko Visualizer, Esko Variable Data Printing, and Esko Digital Flexo Suite—all part of the newly released Esko Software Suite. Esko Visualizer will be demonstrated live for the first time. It is the first product resulting from Esko's cooperation with (and acquisition of) Stonecube Ltd (UK).

Esko Visualizer takes graphic information of a label or package, interprets or adds information about substrates, special inks and finishes, and delivers a variety of realistic moving, interactive 2D and 3D representations of the final product. Esko Visualizer incorporates patented technology to accurately render the resulting effects from various paper grades and other substrates, types of inks including metallics, and finishes such as varnishes, foils, embossing, glitter and flitter, and this in a specific surrounding of choice.



Luescher

The Esko Variable Data Printing module expands Esko's capabilities in digital printing for HP Indigo industrial presses. The application works from one-up files, using Adobe Illustrator or Esko PackEdge, and focuses on variable barcodes, formatted texts and images.

Esko Design Wizard for Adobe Illustrator is a tool that reduces errors and automates repetitive design and layout operations by pushing content management to the brand owner by creating a dynamic link with the content management system.

The Esko Digital Flexo Suite for labels includes a number of post-Rip tools to increase efficiency in the plate-room, also specifically for label printers. For example, PlatePrep automatically crops, sorts and arranges labels on a large flexo plate. As soon as a plate is filled with label separations, it is sent to an Esko CDI flexo plate imager. At the same time, information about the plate is sent to a Kongsberg cutting table, where the individual label separations are cut automatically.

JM Heaford

JM Heaford will be demonstrating a new microscope inspection system based on white light interferometry. This very precise measuring instrument has a range of applications in flexo, gravure and offset.

The company also shows several TT Cobra plate mounters, configured for both sleeves and cylinders as well as its narrow web Flexo Proof Press.

Kodak

Kodak's Graphic Communications Group will demonstrate the Kodak Thermoflex mid hybrid platesetter, which has the flexibility to image offset, flexographic, and letterpress plates, as well as film, all on one device. Also the latest development in its Prinergy Powerpack workflow system.

In the critical area of contract proofs, the Kodak Approval NX digital color imaging system can accurately simulate all production processes, generating millions of spot, speciality, corporate and brand colors, including metallics.

Xanté

Luescher

Luescher shows FlexPose – a hybrid CTP thermal imagesetter which can process varying sizes of flexo, letterpress and offset printing plates in the same machine.

New are water-washable plate materials supplied by Lüscher for imaging on the FlexPose! under the brand names FlexPlate, LetterPlate and SteelPlate.

These plates do not require accurate positioning in Lüscher's internal/external drum and therefore can be easily and quickly placed in the imaging unit. There are no centrifugal forces caused by different plate thicknesses and sizes.

Printing plates for flexo printing and letterpress are imaged, washed, dried and ready for use in five steps, and both the water and the plate remain free of solvents during the entire washout process. Offset plates are made in the usual way.

Shuttleworth

Shuttleworth Business Systems shows the latest developments in JDF/JMF Workflow, External Internet Links and the new browser based shop floor system, DataFlow with real time integration with Productive.

Stork Prints

Stork Prints shows its hybrid Helios laser engraver for filmless engraving of flexo, offset, RotaMesh and, for the first time, RotaPlate meshes. The new engraver features a magnetic mandrel, enabling it to accommodate the mesh.

Stork's affiliated company AKL Flexotechnik will demonstrate seamless-endless photopolymer printing formes and Optiflex thin sleeve and adapter technology.

Tailored Solutions

Tailored Solutions will introduce Label Traxx version 5.1, with new features designed specifically for the European market. These include the ability to track packaging waste in accordance with European Union regulations regarding transit packaging. Label Traxx 5.1 logs all cores, cartons, liner material, pallets, and other packaging materials used for each customer, and provides an annual summary.

The upgrade also includes enhanced customer relationship

Edale

management tools which enable users to import trade show contacts directly into the program and compare data with information in their current databases. Duplicate names are automatically eliminated, and marketing groups can be defined for targeted promotions.

theurer.com

theurer.com presents the MIS-System C3 Labeling & Packaging, which covers all areas of estimating, order processing, CRM, production planning, job costing and logistics. New developments include the graphical scheduling board, where job-sequence optimization will drastically reduce make-ready times. Planning criteria can now include material and web width, color system, special colors, printing cylinders and much more.

This is the company's first Labelexpo show since joining forces with former competitor Medata Mod.X, The best features of Mod.X were integrated in C3 and most Mod. X customers have now successfully implemented C3. theurer.com also presents the recently developed W-Lan mobile devices for shop floor data collection and inventory management. These mobile devices are also used for inventory control and roll stock capture with EPSMA-Codes.

Xanté

With its recent acquisitions of RIPit and Exxtra concluded, Xanté will unveil the OpenRIP Flexo 6.0 Professional with SmartDie.

OpenRIP Flexo 6.0 features the Adobe PDF print Engine (APPE) and will drive multiple output devices including flexo CtPs, imagesetters, laser printers, digital copiers, inkjet printers and plotters from a single RIP workstation.

OpenRIP Flexo's resident Die Database allows customers to create, edit and store custom die templates. PostScript, EPS or PDF files are tagged with a SmartDie number and OpenRIP Flexo will automatically apply the correct steps, gaps, bearer bars, marks and distortion.

Presses

Codimag

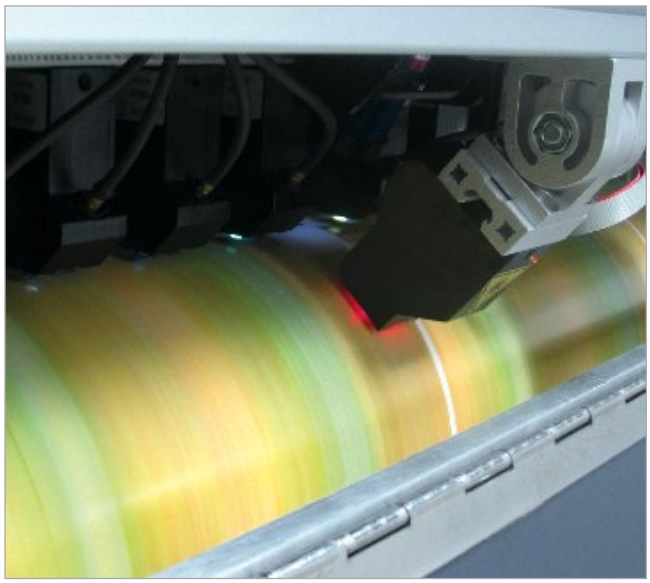
Codimag introduces its waterless offset Aniflo technology, a keyless offset system which brings a simplified anilox-style inking system to Codimag's waterless offset Viva 420.

Edale

Edale is set to show two new machines. The European launch of the versatile 'plug and play' converting concept, the Lambda, will be marked with a fully functioning Lambda RFID configured for offline RFID inlay affixing through the incorporation of the Tamarack P500 RFID unit.

Also on the stand will be Edale's latest development, the Gamma. The Gamma is a high-end, multi-substrate flexographic press. A Gamma print head showcasing the latest

LABELEXPO EUROPE PREVIEW



eltromat

servo technology and Edale's P.S.C. (Pit Stop Color Change) system will be available to view.

eltromat

eltromat shows for the first time its offcon-4 print quality system with a digital video camera controlling register using printed dot register marks. In job preparation mode video positions can be defined with a preview image taken from a CIP3 file. The image section can vary between 15 x 10 and 220 x 160 mm.

The system can also control other modules such as integrated flexo printing units or tool stations using printed dot marks, with length and side register automatically controlled by the camera.

Using the video, cameras the offcon-4 control system can compensate for web fluctuations and web flutter, symptoms which can defeat conventional register control systems.

Also new is an in-line ink density measuring and control system, the eltromat_densicon, designed for closed loop color control and quality measurement in offset presses.

densicon reduces the correction steps necessary for ink setting during a run, and automatically maintains consistent ink flow – particularly useful for repeat jobs. A hard copy of the print quality profile can be provided for the end customer.

ETI

For the first time in five years, ETI Converting Equipment will exhibit an ETI Cohesio line at Labelexpo Europe 2007. Previously shown at the Labelexpo Americas 2002 exhibition in Chicago, this machine draws label printers' attention on a new alternative to manufacture PS stock in house.

At the show, the ETI Cohesio will convert pre-printed face stock into a finished label, including in-line coating of silicone and adhesive, die-cutting and finishing.

Etipol

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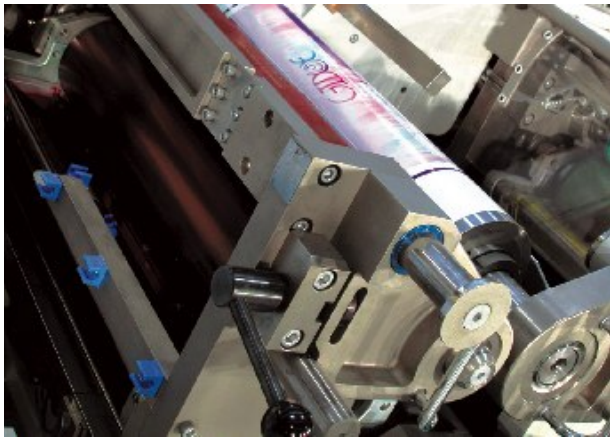


Gidue

Etipol
Etipol Printing Technology will be exhibiting its new drop in flexible silk screen unit.

Also available on the company's stand will be information about its Combi presses with offset, letterpress, flexo, silk screen, lamination, embossing and hotfoil; multi processor for IML label converting; multi stacker for non stop stacking in batches; slitting and perforation wheel holders; hole punching units; web splice detector; and roll lifter for roll cores between 70 and 150mm.

Etirama
Brazilian company Etirama, will launch its new central drum flexo press, the Flexo Wine. Features include: 1,000mm central drum, electronic web guide, drying between colors, final drying, six colors, varnish applicator, UV dryer, lamination, cold stamping, automatic tension control, triple die cut station, and a compact frame which allows for fast set-up and low material waste. The company will also launch its modular flexo press, the Superflex elite.

Gallus
Gallus launches two of its leading edge presses – the RCS and the EM'S' – in new widths at Labelexpo. The RCS will be shown in a 430mm (16in) version and the EM 'S' in a 340mm wide version.

The RCS430 offset press will be configured as an 8-color machine with one UV flexo varnishing station, cold foil and screen unit and will incorporate Eltromat's new closed loop color control system using densitometric readings of control marks on the web.

The EM340S press incorporates several new developments including Gallus' Register Control system, a multi-ribbon cold foil station, the latest GEW-ECP UV system and a rotary screen unit. Also on the stand is the latest variant of the 'entry level' EM280. This constantly evolving machine will be shown with a new outfeed section and substrate thickness compensation.

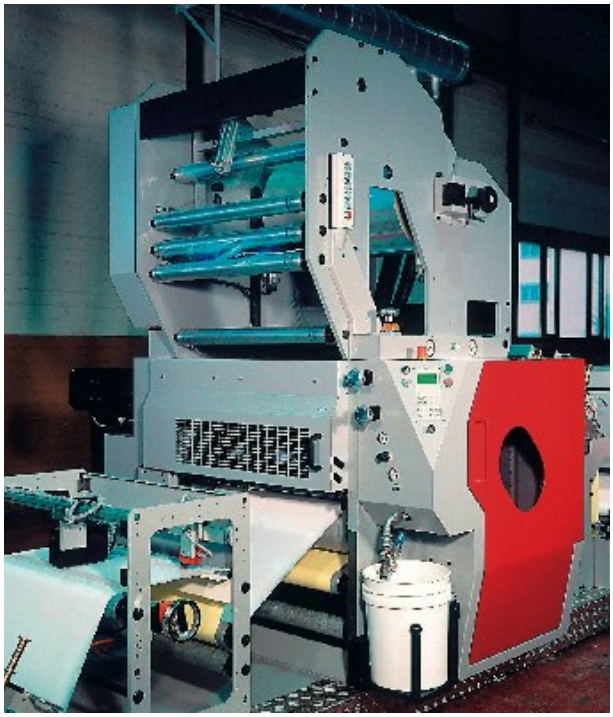
Gidue
Gidue shows offset and flexo presses dedicated to the label and packaging industry featuring the company's Intelligent control systems.

Graficon
Graficon shows its uniQ340 multi-combination press, allowing any print process – including gravure and letterpress, as well as offset, screen and flexo – at any point in the press line.

KPG
KPG is launching a new combination stack press utilizing four different print processes; screen, UV flexo and letterpress and cold-foiling.

The Euro 400 label press can be configured with a choice of web paths, and the order of printing can be varied to suit the product design. Auto register controls ensure accurate print registration between the different processes and converting,

Additionally the press is specified with a festoon enabling



Muller Martini

reverse side printing in complete register, even when printing filmic labels. At Labelexpo the press will demonstrate the accuracy of this, by printing on the adhesive whilst the festoon takes up the film backing web, prior to relaminating.

With a maximum operating speed of up to 100m/min, each letterpress print unit is fitted with a fully retractable print cylinder shaft, making plate changes a quick and easy process. Make-ready is further aided by the inclusion of automatic wash-up on each print unit for cleaning rollers and pre-inking.

Lintec

The company moves into offset technology with the introduction of the new SOF-330 - a servo-driven, offset semi-rotary press. Features include quick change, one blanket for all repeats and high speed plus constantly revolving rollers even when stopped.

Also on the stand is the LPM-300 semi-rotary letterpress with the optional system IP control – a computerized ink pre-set system to make the press ready faster. The ink feed data can be saved to allow for jobs to be re-run, reducing setup time and waste.

On the materials side Lintec will show a variety of self-adhesive materials for the electronic, automotive, security and other industrial sectors with technologies such as void, destruct and heat resistant materials.

Mark Andy / Comco

The Comco C2, successor to the ProGlide MSP, will make its European debut at Labelexpo Europe in a 5-color, 22" configuration running unsupported film and flexible packaging applications.

The press is controlled by the I-Drive - Intelligent Drive System – which integrates servo technology and controls focused on automation and quality control. Press speed is up to 1,000 fpm (305 m/min). The C2 is based around sleeves on both plate and anilox rolls.

Also receiving its European exhibition debut will be a redesigned 2200XL press. Mark Andy says new features include better operator ergonomics, better web tension management, touch screen control, more powerful drying options, faster running speeds and a new frame design for better web paths.

MPS

Together with web offset press manufacturer Drent Goebel, MPS will demonstrate its hybrid offset technology for the narrow web industry, with a fully equipped press on display.

MPS is also showing its EFhybrid machine, claimed to allow printers to enter into the world of print sleeves 'without any risk or excessive learning curves'. The EFhybrid comes with an Ultraflex rail system for fast changing of converting modules.

Muller Martini

To complement its Alprinta-V offset press for label and packaging applications, Müller Martini has developed a new laminating station. It sits on the flexo unit where UV-curing glue is applied to the web. Directly afterward, the laminating station dispenses a film onto the web. The web then runs through a UV dryer, where the glue is cured with UV radiation.

Roll diameter is up to 800 mm, which results in nearly double as many continuous meters per roll when compared with a 600 mm roll. Machine speed is up to 365 m/min, depending on substrate and available film widths are up to 740 mm (Alprinta 74) or 520 mm (Alprinta 52). Web tension is adjustable for proper flatness of the finished product

Also new for the Alprinta-V is a matrix-removal system for high speed production. Speeds of 280 m/min have been achieved producing self-adhesive labels on 40 micron OPP. The non-stop design means the press doesn't have to be stopped in order to change the matrix-roll, because the waste is removed to the gear side of the press by a conveyor belt.

Nilpeter

Nilpeter will unveil exciting new web offset technology, which *L&L* has seen, but details of which will not be unveiled until Labelexpo. The company also shows a new press technology dedicated to mid-web film production.

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Drent Goebel has specialized in the development, production and worldwide supply of web offset printing machines. For printers of labels, flexible packaging, folding cardboard and commercial printing is the revolutionary Variable Sleeve Offset Printing (VSOP) printing machine extremely interesting. The VSOP printing machine combines top quality offset with stepless, variable print lengths.

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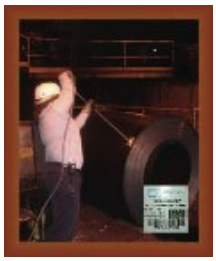

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Prisma

Omet

Omet promises a major technology announcement plus two presses on stand. A 330mm Flexy-S press will be shown printing high-end self adhesive labels. It will be equipped with the latest hot-melt technology from Hip-Mitsu and the twin-cut variable die-cutting unit.

The 520mm Varyflex-F1 press will run a thick plastic (PET) material at high speed, demonstrating both its gravure print head and new video camera-based Vision inspection system.

Orthotec Wan-an

Introduces the CSL3022 rotary intermittent label press, driven by shaftless servo technology to achieve precise registration at high speed. Also on the stand for the first time is a SRN3030 silk screen press claimed to operate three times faster than previous systems with a more steady squeegee pressure and tight registration.

The company also shows its LCM3028 digital web converting line, with modules including die cut and hot-stamp, and its flatbed RFID converting machine, the RFDL3022.

Prisma

Prisma shows its Seriprint 330 reel-to-reel screen press in a configuration comprising two modules for flatbed printing with hot air and UV dryers, a hot stamp module, a flatbed punching module, a reel unwinder and scrap rewinding group with longitudinal cutter and waste suction unit.

Rotatek

Also on show will be a new system for re-registering webs through silk-screen printing groups, useful for second pass printing work on rolls taken from digital or flexo presses.

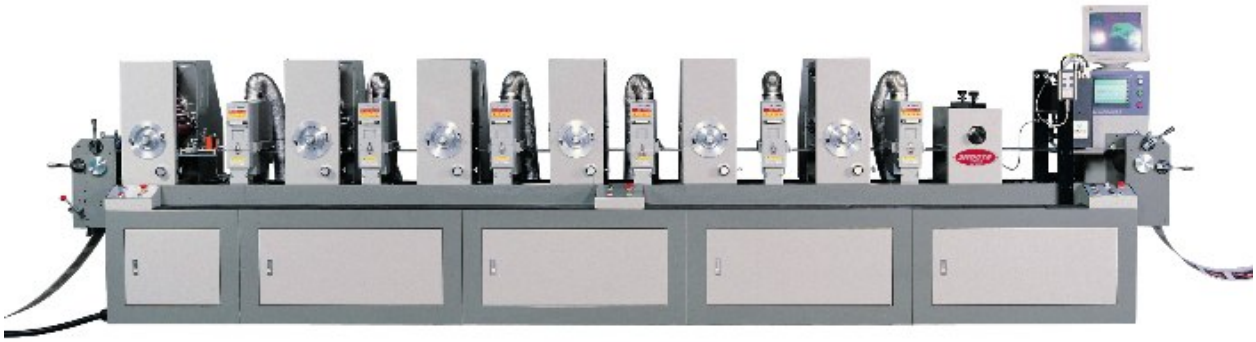
Rotatek

Rotatek has developed two new machines for the label and packaging markets: the Universal offset press with interchangeable sleeves, and the FCR, a fully automatic flexo machine with sleeve technology.

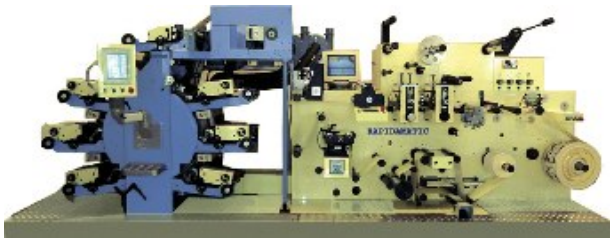
'The Universal machine concept comes from the need in the market of a variable repeat unit capable of printing in offset,' says the company.

The modularity of the machine allows the incorporation of in-line flexo units (with sleeves) for coating, printing or laminating, hot stamping or cold foil, rotary screen units, rotogravure units and other type of treatments. The combination machine can print self-adhesive labels, shrink sleeves, pouch materials, films and foils, paper and cardboard from 30 to 400 microns.

The new Flexo FRC press runs at speeds of up to 350m/min. Anilox, plate cylinder and counter pressure rollers are in a straight geometry instead of a triangle, with anilox and plate



Smooth Machinery



Societe OCC

cylinders direct driven by servo motors. Both anilox and plate cylinder come with removable sleeves. The press features servo controlled pre-register and linear movement control of anilox and plate cylinders.

Smooth Machinery

Smooth Machinery, in cooperation with a Japanese partner, will exhibit its latest shaftless full/intermittent rotary letterpress, the SPM-340LR. 'Shaftless is no longer an advantage exclusive to offset machines,' says the company. 'With shaftless and intermittent feeding technology you can achieve wonderful printing with many kinds of materials in an economical way.'

The advantages of the press are claimed to be: a shaftless independent servo drive for each printing station; centrally-controlled auto-positioning system; 100 job memory; fully automatic inspection status and alarm; and fully automatic computer-controlled inking. The press can print up to a width of 430 x 330mm at a maximum speed of 130 meters per minute.

Societe OCC

Societe OCC introduces its Rapidamatic 260 6+6R press, which can be configured for either flexo or letterpress.

The company says the machine has low wastage during makeready, fully automatic print cylinder adjustment and repeat length adjustment, and can handle all run lengths. The press also has a re-registration facility for multiple passes printed on both sides.

Tecnodis

Tecnodis will be presenting its new servo Converpress Star shaftless flexo press, utilizing technology, developed in association with Bosch Rexroth.

Also on the stand will be ancillary equipment such as inspection slitter rewinder (Converpress SRI FE), video plate mounting equipment (Video Mounting) and a slitter with a die cut station (Converpress SRD3).

Werner Kammann

Werner Kammann Maschinenfabrik will launch its third generation of screen printing presses, the K 61-OS, at Labelexpo Europe.

This multi-substrate printing press uses cylinder print stations with flat screens and works with constant web tension. 'A great advantage is the continuous-motion material transport through the screen printing stations and dryers, when printing on substrates of a thickness range of 0.025mm up to 0.5mm,' says the company.

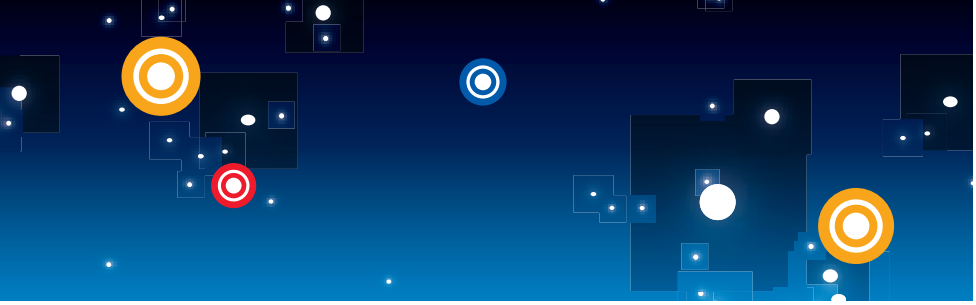
As well as labels, the K 61-OS can be used for medical test stripes, membrane switches, heating foils for the automotive industry, RFID antennas, and heat transfers.

The K 61-OS can be supplemented with a range of drying units, such as infra-red heaters and hot air ovens as well as UV-curing systems with chilled rollers.

Built in a modular design this shaftless, completely servo-motor controlledprinting press offers flexible configurations and integration of additional process stations. The showcased printing press includes not only screen printing but also flexo print stations, hot-stamping and waterless UV-offset printing stations.

Zhongtian Machinery Works

The company displays its RY-320A flexo press, incorporating 360° circumference register control per print unit, IR drying and oscillating inking roller. The press can handle a wide range of substrates from aluminum foil to cartonboard.



Schober

RFID

bielomatic

bielomatic presents a totally new solution for producing UHF tags, claiming that reduction in materials usage and converting costs makes the 5-cent label a reality.

Grillstone Electronics Technology

Grillstone Electronics Technology (HK) Ltd, a new enterprise specialized in RF-EAS security label production, research and development, will be present for the first time at Labelexpo Europe. Its electronic goods monitoring labels are compatible with all 8.2Mhz RF technology systems, especially where long detection range and deactivation is required, including supermarkets, department stores, shopping malls and libraries. Grillstone Electronics Technology was established in May 2006 in Guangzhou, China.

Muehlbauer

Muehlbauer will show its new label insertion line – IL 15000 – which is designed for fully automatic insertion of RFID inlays into already finished self-adhesive labels.

The labels are fed into the machine from a reel and transferred to the process module. First, each single label is lifted off the liner and the RFID inlays are inserted underneath the sticky side of the label. After this process step, the label will be put back to the liner.

Picosoft

Picosoft, a provider of RFID solutions for supply chain and asset tracking applications, will display its Asriel track and trace system and Tova IT security solution.

Asriel is a highly customizable web services based materials track and trace system well suited for auto-id applications, being fully RFID and barcode standards compliant. It is able to run on any Windows platform including MS Windows Mobile 5.0.

Schober

Schober will highlight its RFID technology including the redesigned RFID Ti inserting and inspection machine. Other systems include off-line rotary web converting machines for the processing/finishing of products such as in-mould labels, 'easy assembly' multilayer components and other products which have applications in the pharmaceutical, medical, electronic, automotive and telecommunication industry. ■

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WWW.GM.DK

Label Printing Inks & UV Varnishes

UV PRINTING INKS

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Germany
druckfarben@zeller-gmelin.de

Intercolor Ltd.
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info@intercolor-ink.com

Zeller+Gmelin SARL
France
info@zeller-gmelin.fr

Zeller+Gmelin B.V.
Netherlands
info@zeller-gmelin.nl

Zeller+Gmelin A/S
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adm@zg.dk

Zeller+Gmelin Corp.
USA
ink@zeller-gmelin.com

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Label Printing Presses

ETIPOL
PRINTING TECHNOLOGY

Etipol A/S Printing Technology
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DK-2630, Denmark
Tel: +45 4352 3511 • Fax: +45 4352 9003
E-mail: info@etipol.com
Website: www.etipol.com

- Etipol is a manufacturer of flexible and quality semi-rotary machines in different web widths and combinations as offset, letterpress, flexo, hotstamp and laminating. Any kind of converting can be added to these machines or converting lines for other purposes. Print feeding length is stepless from 50 to 420mm, with no extra costs for printing plate cylinders or magnetic die cylinders. Etipol Printing Technology offer value for money combining a flexible and efficient in-line production, including the finishing of labels in rolls.

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CH-9303 Wittenbach
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CH-9314 Steinebrunn
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- Intermittent rotary letterpress

Agent Wanted

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E-mail:htx@labelling.com.cn

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E-mail: tgordon@labelsandlabeling.com

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- Strong technical background in specialty surfactants for industrial applications, ideally release coatings
- High degree of self motivation and organisation
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The position is home based and will be responsible for sales to selected industrial segments. It involves frequent travel and customer visits particularly in the Midlands area and along the M62 corridor and will include occasional international travel.

The successful candidate will be given full product training at our HQ in Germany.

Salary and conditions would be commensurate with a company of our stature and include private health care, company pension scheme and a company car.

To apply for this position please send a full CV, stating why you believe you could fulfil this role to:

angus.smith@degussa.com

or by post to:

Mrs Sue Persaud
HR Department
Goldschmidt UK Ltd
Tego House, Chippenham Drive,
Kingston, Milton Keynes, MK10 0AF
sue.persaud@degussa.com

For a company profile please visit: www.degussa.com / www.goldschmidt-is.com

No agencies

LABELFORM graphics

FOR SALE

2002 NILPETER FA2500 270mm web, 7 colour flexo, GEW UV drying, 3 rotary die, matrix and product rewinds, Good selection of tooling. Excellent condition with low hours

2001 GALLUS EM280 280mm web, 7 colour flexo, IST UV drying, turn bars, over lamination, 3 rotary die, matrix and product rewinds, good selection of tooling. Refirbished 2006

2005 MARK ANDY SCOUT 10" web, 6 colour flexo, UV drying, turn bars, de-lam/re-lam, 2 rotary die, matrix and product rewinds. Selection of tooling included. Low production hours

1996 COMCO COMMANDER 16" web, 8 colour flexo, hot air + UV drying, Chill rolls, UV over lam, 3 rotary die, matrix & twin spindle rewind + sheet delivery. Good selection of tooling

1994 COMCO COMMANDER 10" web, 6 colour flexo, Hot air + 3UV drying, chill rolls, over lam, 3 rotary die + sheet with conveyor delivery.

1999 FOCUS WEBFLEX 330mm web, 6 colour flexo, hot air + UV drying, 2 rotary die, matrix and product rewinds

1995 ARSOMA EM410 410mm web, 6 colour flexo, GEW UV (fitted 2004) + hot air drying, turn bars, flat bed and 3 rotary die stations, matrix and twin spindle rewind, Large selection tooling.

1994 SANJO P270 270mm web, 6 colour letterpress + 1 flexo varnish, UV drying, Delam / relam, 3 rotary die stations, Matrix and product rewinds. Good selection of tooling

1985 SANJO P25 250mm web, 6 colour letterpress + 1 flexo varnish, UV drying, Delam / Relam, flat and 3 rotary die, Matrix and product rewind. Good selection of tooling

1998 LINTEC LPM300 300mm web, 5 colour semi rotary letterpress, UV ,rotary die cutting, matrix and product rewinds.

1998 ETIPOL COMBI 270 280mm web. 6 colour semi rotary letterpress, 1 flexo, UV, rotary die, matrix and product rewinds,

1997 CODIMAG VIVA 300 300mm web, 5 colour semi rotary letterpress, 1 flexo UV, cold foil, rotary die, matrix and product rewinds.

1993 KOPACK 250 250mm web 12 colour letterpress, UV, flat and rotary die, matrix and product rewind + sheet delivery

FOR A FULL LIST OF MACHINES FOR SALE, PLEASE LOG ONTO OUR WEBSITE

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- Edale E430M6C2D, 430mm, 6 Colour Roll Label Printing Press, (1998)
- DCM Babycat Inspection Rewinder, (2004)
- DFM Friedheim Sandman FC304 Transverse Cutting Machine, (2004)
- Graham Shrink Sleeve VF High Speed Bullet Applicator, (2004)

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Viewing:
Strictly by prior appointment
Location:
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Please contact Jason Hall or Mark Newman
TEL: 0113 234 4554
FAX: 0113 234 4774
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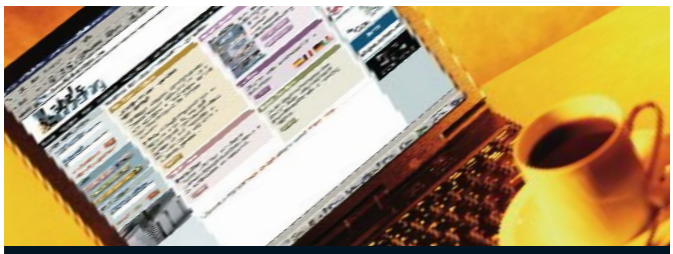

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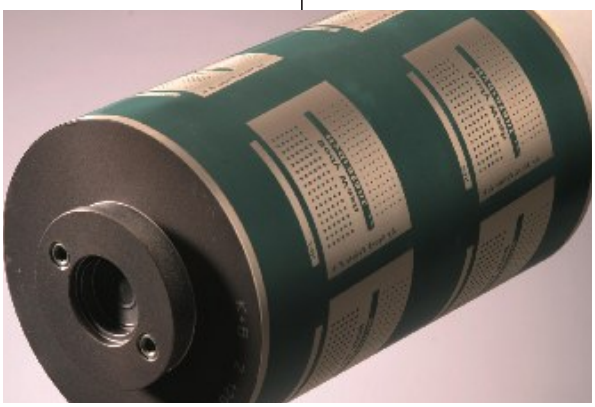
RotaPlate - the reliable, low-overhead rotary screen for non-Stork systems



The future of narrow-web rotary screen printing is non-woven, whatever unit you're using. Users of non-Stork rotary screen systems finally have a screen material that will bring long-term consumables cost savings and improved performance: RotaPlate.
Its electroformed, pure-nickel, hexagonally holed construction offers greater strength and stability, to withstand the rigours of higher-speed printing and handling.
Even at 50 metres a minute, back-up screens and line breakages are a thing of the past. What's more, you'll be able to use the same screen for as many as five repeat print runs.
Our customers are experiencing RotaPlate lifespans of up to 100,000 web metres. Isn't is time you enjoyed similar reductions to your bottom line?
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Come and see us at Labelexpo Europe 2007,
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